

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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

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

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

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New Series

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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 CORINTHIANS i. 4.

ALL-SUFFICIENT GRACE

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God: Who also hath made us able (R.V., sufficient as) ministers of the New Testament."—
2 Cor. 3 : 5, 6.

Three times Paul repeated the word "*sufficient*" in this passage. First, he said that "we are not sufficient as of ourselves"; secondly, he declared that "our sufficiency is from God"; and thirdly, he said that God had made them "sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant."

This felt sense of our own insufficiency and of our whole dependence upon God's sufficiency makes, we feel, a suitable message for all the members of God's family as they enter upon another New Year. As Miss F. R. Havergal wrote:

He will never fail us, He will not forsake !
 His eternal covenant He will never break !
 Resting on His promise, what have we to fear ?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year !

Near the end of the Epistle, when Paul was "buffeted" by "a thorn in the flesh" and after he had thrice besought the Lord that it should be taken from him, he received the supporting word : "*My grace is sufficient for thee*" (2 Cor. 12:9). To this we shall refer towards the end of this message.

We invite our readers' thought to the declarations in 2 Corinthian 3:5-6. Paul was defending himself against attacks on the ministry which had been given him by God. Various charges had been made against him, for instance, of "lightness" (or "fickleness." R.V.) in his attitude toward them. It seems that some ringleader (chapter two) had led an attack on Paul personally ; but Paul had already forgiven him, and now urged the Corinthians to do the same, lest the offender, after the censure, should be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. 2:7).

But, in defending himself and his ministry, Paul was very anxious to avoid even the appearance of self-commendation or of self-sufficiency. "Are we beginning again to commend ourselves?" he said (2 Cor. 3:1). He did not need Letters Testimonial to them, nor testimonials from them. "Ye are our Epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." The Corinthians themselves were "manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ"—Christ was the author of the good work ; the preachers were but instruments, insufficient in themselves.

We now come to Paul's threefold declaration, which we have been led to take as a message (2 Cor. 3:5, 6). It is true that the declarations have reference to the work of the ministry ; but we can at the same time use them of the life, work, and witness of the true child of God. May the Holy Spirit graciously guide our hearts and minds as we review the three declarations made.

I.

"WE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT AS OF OURSELVES"

Paul at once disclaimed any self-sufficiency. He would not take any praise to himself. "*Not that we are sufficient of (or,*

from) ourselves to think anything as of (from) ourselves. He would not ascribe anything, any power, any good thought, to themselves. In themselves there was weakness, inability, insufficiency. In chapter 2, verse 16, he had raised the question, "And who is sufficient for these things?"

He had stated all this before in his first Epistle to them (chapter three). They had been dividing themselves into parties, one eulogising Paul, another praising Apollos. Paul had indignantly written: "Who (or, rather, *what*) then is Paul? and who is Appollos?" They were "but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every (each) man" (1 Cor. 3:5). He added: "I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase" (verses 6, 7). And in chapter four he asked: "For who maketh thee to differ from another?" (4:7).

In all this there is a word for the child of God. Sometimes he or she is tempted, especially in early Christian life, to be self-reliant. Such are like Peter when he walked on the water—"Lord, if it be (since it is) Thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (Matthew 14:28). The Lord said, "Come," and Peter went down from the boat and walked upon the water. Then we read: "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him.

There was another occasion when Peter had the same lesson to learn. It is recorded in Luke 22:31-34, and it is very instructive of the Lord's knowledge of His own children and of His gracious care of them. "Simon, Simon," said Jesus, "behold Satan hath desired (has asked) to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Poor Peter, strong in his own self-sufficiency, declared: "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and into death." Such self-confidence brought its tragic consequence in denial of the Lord, in cursing and swearing; and after it all "Peter wept bitterly."

In the Collects of the Prayer Book of the Church of England there are constantly soul-moving expressions of our inability, our insufficiency, learned no doubt as God's people of old were

taught of God in their experience : " Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves "—" Of Whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service "—" Forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee "—" Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves "—" That we who cannot do anything that is good without Thee "—" Because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall." Such are expressions of the declaration, " Not that we are sufficient to think anything as of ourselves."

II.

" OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD "

Of one thing Paul was deeply sensible—it was this : "*Our sufficiency is of God.*" All that he had was from God. To Him be all the praise and glory ! " Not I," he said, " but the grace of God which was with me " (1 Cor. 15 : 10). And all his dependence was upon God.

The Lord Jesus had taught this in the Parable of the Vine (John 15 : 1-8). " As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me " (verse 5). " Without Me ye can do nothing " (verse 6).

One of John Newton's hymns expresses the way in which God's child is often taught this truth.

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.

I hoped that in some favoured hour
At once He'd answer my request,
And, by His love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

" 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 may'st seek thy all in Me ! "

William Cowper, the Evangelical poet, friend of John Newton, was taught the same truth.

God in Israel sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil ;
These spring up and choke the weeds,
Which would else o'erspread the soil :
Trials make the promise sweet ;
Trials give new life to prayer ;
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

III.

" HE HAS MADE US SUFFICIENT "

In speaking of the work of ministers Paul's third declaration was to speak of God, "*Who also has made us able (or, sufficient as) ministers of the New Testament.*" So it is with believers : God has grace sufficient to enable and to supply every need of theirs.

Let us look once again at the assurance (2 Corinthians 12 : 9) which was given to Paul in a time of need. Lest he should be exalted above measure by reason of the abundance of the revelations made to him, there was given to him " a thorn in the flesh," " the messenger of Satan," to buffet him, in order that he should not be exalted overmuch. We do not know what " the thorn in the flesh " was ; but it must have been something that was sharp and piercing, something that really hurt. Paul three times besought the Lord that it might be removed from him. The Lord heard his prayer ; but the answer was not the removal of the difficulty. It was the soul-supporting assurance, "*My grace is sufficient for thee : for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*"

So it is with all the Lord's people amid all their trials, sorrows, temptations, weaknesses, failings, fallings, fears. Their God knows all about them, and He has declared that His grace is sufficient. He will never leave them nor forsake them in

their hour of need. He may chastise those whom He loves and may scourge every son whom He receives (Heb. 12 : 6-9). But it is for their profit. For every trial there is " grace sufficient." He says to the believer :

" And when through the fire thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply :
 The flame shall not hurt thee ; I only design
 Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

Or, as John Kent expressed it :

Here, when thy feet shall fall,
 Believer, thou shalt see
 Grace to restore thy soul,
 And pardon, full and free ;
 Thee with delight shall God behold
 A chosen sheep in Zion's fold.

And when through Jordan's flood
 Thy God shall bid thee go,
 His arm shall thee defend,
 And vanquish every foe ;
 And in this covenant thou shalt view
Sufficient strength to bear thee through.

John Kent, 1803.

And, resting on God's promises in His Word, the believer can say :

The God of Abraham praise,
 Whose *all-sufficient grace*
 Shall guide me all my happy days
 In all His ways :
 He calls a worm His friend
 He calls Himself my God !
 And He shall save me to the end
 Through Jesu's blood.

Thomas Olivers, 1772.

Sermons and Notes of Sermons.

"IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?"

A NEW YEAR'S DAY SERMON

By the Rev. W. H. KRAUSE (Dublin), January 1st, 1847.

"*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*"—Genesis 18, part of verse 14.

WE have been permitted to meet together, brethren, according to our annual custom, and for the *seventh* time, we record the name of the Lord in this place, at the opening of a new year. With humility and thankfulness, we desire His presence in the midst of us at this time.

We desire that the portions of Scripture, that we bring before you on these occasions, may be fixed upon your minds. We do not say that we can impress them; but we ask God to infix these portions deeply and impressively on all your hearts. They are chosen prayerfully, and with a desire that, during the current year, or during such part of it as we may see, for "we know not what a day may bring forth," we may be enabled to roll ourselves upon the portion that the Lord has given us, and have many a satisfying meal at the hand of a gracious God, when the poor soul is desiring its health, or hungering for its comfort.

Those members of the congregation who are in the habit of attending on these occasions, will remember the texts that have been brought under their notice from time to time. They have been such as present the Lord to us, in some of those precious and sweet relations, in which He stands to His dear people in Christ Jesus. We have from time to time endeavoured to lay before you a little text that may bring before your mind some of the Lord's precious attributes or perfections; or some little word, that may lead you to see what a privilege it is, for a child of God to have a covenant God to go to. We know that the Lord has been pleased to make these little crumbs of comfort very precious to many of His dear people, in the various scenes and circumstances in which, in the providence of God, they have been placed through the year. With this view, I have taken for our consideration the text that has now been read to you.

You remember the circumstances under which it was spoken to the Lord's servant. God had made a promise to Abraham, which we read this day, in the 17th chapter of Genesis. He had said, that He was going to do a thing improbable, highly improbable. He was beginning to handle what men would call impossibilities; and poor man, when he sees God going into the department of

improbabilities and impossibilities, he thinks that God is such an one as himself; and thus we find Abraham and Sarah gazing, as it were, at the Lord's trial of His strength, and these servants of God seemed to think that the Lord had met His match; that it was a hard thing for Him to do. After Sarah had been laughing within herself at the very thought of such an impossibility, the Lord speaks to her husband, and through him conveys the rebuke to her—*"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"*—so that He at once brings before her and her husband His own character, His own prerogative, one of His own attributes; *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"*

I would desire, brethren, to speak :—

First, of the great truth that is contained in that question.

Secondly, I would endeavour to show the bearing of that truth, on the interests and circumstances of the Lord's people.

Thirdly, I would endeavour to bring your minds, as the Lord shall permit me, to the consideration of the practical use which we should make of this great and precious truth.

May the Lord the Spirit give His blessing to the Word! May the Lord the Spirit give power to him who stands before you, to speak the Word, to the glory of the name of our covenant Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, for Christ's sake.

I.—THE GREAT TRUTH IMPLIED

A great truth is implied in the question—*"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* If translated, it means merely this, nothing is too hard for the Lord. Thus He seems to lay bare the attribute of His omnipotence, His prerogative to exercise universal sway and dominion over creatures, over circumstances (circumstance is His creature), over all these things that we are too apt to think independent even of the Lord's grasp.

I shall not say a great deal upon this part of the subject, because it has lately come under our consideration. For the last four Sabbath days we have been dwelling upon the 1st verse of the 17th chapter of this book, where God tells Abraham to look at the stars, the earth, the large region of creation, and then says to him: *"I am the Almighty God"*—you are well off, as my servant—look around you—it is all mine; I can take all these things, and bend them, and mould them; they are all subordinate to my will; I can bring them all into subserviency, for the good of the humblest, the weakest of the dear children of my covenant and loved family.

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The Lord asks Abraham this question at a time when Sarah seemed to have doubted His power. We merely say upon it, that the omnipotence of the Lord is a tremendous attribute. He is able to take His creatures, and

use them as He pleases, in reference to any individual. I mean that He can take the world, if He pleases, and shape it, and mould it, and bring all its circumstances to bear upon any special, particular interest and case.

The Word tells us, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Looking at it in its largest fulness, the declaration means this, that God can take every heart here, and make it beat in unison towards any one of the weakest of these little children; He can make all the arrangements of men in this city work for good to any one of these little children; He can take the whole world, and shape it, and mould it, and bring it into subserviency to any one of these little children, if He please.

No doubt, we all say what a precious attribute is this. Which of us ministers of the Gospel, has not had to do with ignorant people, people who have no knowledge of God in the covenant of grace, who speak of the Almighty God, tell us of what He can do—which of us, as ministers of the Gospel, or as Christian friends, has not been pained when we have had to take that attribute, to lay it bare before them, and to show them that the same attribute that is a shield to the Lord's people, is an attribute of tremendous lightning, that can come against the soul, the body, all the circumstances of an ungodly man; so that it is a two-edged weapon; it speaks mightily to the people of God, and it speaks mightily to those who are not the people of God.

What is the reason, that there is such an instinctive shrinking from the view of God, when He lays bare His power? It is that man is not acquainted with Him in the covenant of grace. The Christless man; the man who has never felt the soothing drops of the blood of Jesus must instinctively shrink from the laying bare of the power of the Lord. If we could imagine such a scene as this, that an individual should be allowed to see the whole artillery of heaven; that he should be made to stand whilst the thunders of the Lord should roll over his head, and whilst God should dart His lightnings from His quiver, the man would quake, as he should see the fragments of this material creation splintering around him; as he should see the flashing of the lightnings, as he should hear the sound of the thunders, the crackling of the elements; and, think you what would his feeling be? He would feel that he was too near tremendous Deity, he would feel that one of those splinters might fall on his head and crush him to the earth.

You remember it was not such large demonstrations of power; it was not Sinai thunderings and lightnings, but it was merely the consciousness that man was very near to a power that had infinite resources in His hand, that made the Apostle Peter fall down at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man,

O Lord." He felt that he had come near a Being of another order; One who had the deep itself in His hand, as well as the fishes of the deep, and so his mind reasoned rapidly; he felt that he was within the reach, the grasp of such an One, that could bring the world about his ears as quickly as He could bring the fishes to His net. All this flashed across his mind, and he felt startled, because he was a sinner.

Bear this in mind, that this attribute, which is everything to the people of God, and in which they can take shelter in every time of difficulty, saying, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"—this same attribute exhibits God in all the sternness of judgment, filling the soul of the ungodly with exceeding terror and dismay.

II.—ITS BEARING UPON THE CHILDREN OF GOD

We have now to speak of this great truth in its bearing upon the children of God. They, and they only, are the people to whom this is a bright cloud; to all others it must be a dark cloud.

There was a very wonderful manifestation of the power of the Lord, when God said, "Let there be light," and creation echoed back the word in obedience unto Him—"There was light." But what does the Scripture of the New Testament tell us? It compares the work that is wrought in the sinner's soul, to the work of creation. The Apostle Paul says, in the 4th chapter of 2nd Corinthians, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Apostle Peter reminds the people of God that they had been called "out of darkness into His marvellous light." It is thus that the Lord grapples with that power that had usurped authority over the sinner's soul. Satan was the usurper, and the Lord manifests His power in dethroning Satan.

We desire that you who are learning the Gospel, and you who know the Gospel, may have this great truth impressed upon your minds, that it was for this very work that He came, who is called in the 9th of Isaiah, "*The mighty God*." "For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil" (1 John 3 : 2). Who is Satan?—"The god of this world." What does he do?—He "blinds the minds of them that believe not"; he "leads the people of this world captive at his will." Now, it was to destroy him, of whom we are also told, that he has the power of death, that the Lord Jesus Christ came; and no doubt it was in order that there might be an evident demonstration of His having dethroned him, who had taken such possession of the souls of God's people, in their natural state, that, during His earthly ministry, He showed forth His power in ejecting Satan from the bodies, as well as from the minds of men.

III.—PRACTICAL APPLICATION

But, brethren, we desire to make some practical application of our text, to the circumstances of the congregation assembled within those walls at this time. And we pray, that the Lord may apply the word with power to your hearts. This passage has been selected for this purpose, that it may be of practical use, and practical comfort during the coming year, or during such part of it as we may be permitted to see.

When we look around us, we ask who amongst us has not known something of the sorrows and perplexities of life?

We take the aged, and if they were to begin to recount their histories, they could tell us of many dark, and deep, and trying passages, through which they have been brought.

We turn to the young; they seem to have the world before them—all beauty and all flowers—all fair, and smooth, and easy. And it may be, brethren—it *is*—that in this congregation, there are some young members of it, who have been brought to put their lip to the bitter cup, and young though they may be, and at a time when it would seem as if all were to be sweet to them, they have tasted some little bitterness of life—a little foretaste of what they shall have to pass through as they go further on; for it was said by One who is truth, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.”

Our text is everything to the children of God. Looking at their spiritual course, what is it? When a man becomes a Christian, he becomes a *warrior*; the enemy will be very busy with him; he will be the butt of Satan’s shafts. What is a Christian called in Scripture? A *soldier*. How is his course described? It is spoken of as “*The good fight of faith*.” The man of God will have his temptations and conflicts; he will have besetting corruptions, that are like so many fiery darts in the breast; he cannot pluck them out, and as he attempts it, the wound seems to be getting worse and worse.

We may be speaking in the hearing of some of God’s children, who would tell us, if they could only get rid of some one particular sin, they could go on their way smoothly; but it is this that terrifies them; they fear lest they should bring dishonour on their profession.

There are others who tell us of their besetting fears, fears as to their spiritual course, fears as to what may be before them in the way of temptation, fears that grieve the poor spirit.

There are others who tell us of their doubts, doubts as to God’s truth,—fearful doubts, that sometimes arise in the mind.

This is a little sketch of the Christian’s course, and what a word is this for him—“*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*” He can give the strength that we need to grapple with the corruption,

whatever it may be; He can throw His shield over us in the hour of temptation; He can give us wisdom to guide us in perplexity; the Lord can do all this for His people.

God's children are cheered and comforted when they turn to the Scriptures and read what God has done for His servants in every age. They read, in the 12th of Acts, of the Apostle Peter being put into prison; there guarded by four quaternions of soldiers; and afterwards delivered by the mighty power of God Himself. They turn to the Old Testament Scriptures, and they find how God shut the lions' mouths; how God made the sea to stand as a wall, till His ransomed ones passed over; how God discomfited the enemies of His people by His lightnings and hailstones; and all these things show them that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

EVERY-DAY EXPERIENCE

But, then, there are other circumstances that we must take into account, in man's complex life. Not only are there the spiritual trials that some of us know well, but there is the every-day experience. If every family here this day could come forward, and give a sketch of its trials and difficulties, what histories we should have!

I have children, one would say, and these children are such a care to me; I see them growing up unconverted, ungodly—the Word does not seem to dwell with power on their hard hearts; I tremble for their souls.

Again, another would say, I see the poor, pale cheek of my child; I fear it indicates that a worm is gnawing at that bud.

Another would tell us, there are mine growing up, going forward into the temptations of a world that is ready to seize them, and bring them into trouble. What am I to do?

Another would tell us, I have my relatives and friends, as dear to me as my own soul, who are dead in trespasses and sins. What am I to do? How am I to speak? How shall I lead them to lay hold on the things that concern their everlasting peace before they are for ever hidden from their eyes?

What does our text say? There are many things too hard for us, but "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

It is when we think of the covenant relation in which Jehovah stands to His people, that we take comfort in such a word as this.

Children of God, think of the Father's love, His gratuitous, free, spontaneous love to the chief of sinners—"Yea, he loved the people." Plead it with Him; tell Him of His own love—do not

tell Him of yours; tell Him what He has done for His people; tell Him that you expect Him to do great things for you.

Think of the Saviour's precious blood, and then ask: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" He that came into your heart, and grappled with the deep-rooted prejudices, the old besetting sins that lodged in your heart as a servant of Satan; He that took the precious blood, and sprinkled it upon your heart—Is anything too hard for Him?

Think of the Spirit's comfort; He that has often spoken to you, child of God, and told you of the Saviour's blood; told you that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; He that has given you faith to live upon these precious truths; He that has done all this for you—Is anything too hard for Him? O, may the Lord give to you who know these things, faith to live upon them, to use them from day to day; we do not say from year to year.

ARE THERE ANY HOPES FOR ME?

Let us address a word, in conclusion, to those who may say, You have been speaking of all the good things that belong to the children of God, but are there any hopes for me? Am I privileged to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I to take all those good things, and claim them as my own?

Dear brethren, what is the sinner's warrant? It is not any worthiness of his own; but it is the truth, the promise, the faithfulness of a covenant Jehovah, and the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The man who has been brought by the Spirit of God to believe the record which God has given of His Son, and who asks those blessings through Jesus Christ, not for his own worthiness sake, but for the sake of Christ, is privileged to take the largest, the richest treasures which the Lord bestows upon His people.

This is the word that we leave with you for the coming year, or for such part of it as you may be permitted to see. May the *Lord's own Word*—man's word is nothing—but may the *Lord's own Word* be brought with power to your hearts, in many a season of conflict, and in many an hour of difficulty. May you be enabled during the year, to roll yourselves upon the Lord, believing that nothing is too hard for Him.

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Our Young Folks' Page.

TEN POUNDS REWARD !

LONG before the days of Old Aged Pensions and all the other advantages of a Welfare State, two sisters lived together in the country on their dividends from the small capital which (I suppose) they had inherited. This provided each of them with a little less than seventy pounds a year, and on this hundred and forty pounds the two managed to live. It meant that they were poor, and could never afford to buy anything except necessities; but Lavinia and Harriet Brown were rich in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. His Father they knew to be their Father too, and they believed His Word when He promised that He would never leave them nor forsake them.

At this time the sisters were getting on in years, and Lavinia especially was far from strong. But they had always gone to London twice a year to receive their dividends personally, and the visit was always the great event of their lives.

The day had come round again, and the Miss Browns had made the short journey to town. They went at once to the Bank of England, and drew out each her money. It was counted out in golden sovereigns, beautiful coins about as large as a farthing, and the proper amount handed to each lady. It is not recorded how Harriet disposed of hers, but Lavinia produced (as she always did) a holland bag, and her money was safely put inside it. Then she had an arrangement by which the bag was pinned to the bodice of her dress under her coat. All this being satisfactorily accomplished, the two old ladies left the Bank.

Outside, they took a bus to St. Paul's Churchyard—a horse-bus it would be, of course. They went into St. Paul's, and stayed for the short afternoon service. Coming out of the Cathedral, they visited one of the shops in the Churchyard. Lavinia had found what she wanted, and now she felt under her coat for the bag of money.

It was gone!

Harriet could hardly believe that such a thing could have happened, but she confirmed it for herself. It does seem strange that the heavy bag—for it would be quite weighty—could disconnect itself and fall without its owner's knowledge. But Lavinia had no

idea at all of anything having gone wrong. Of course, they searched painfully around, and went back to St. Paul's to enquire there. It was in vain; the precious bag had completely vanished.

Greatly dismayed, the sisters went to the lodgings they had engaged. There they consulted a friend as to whether they should advertise the loss. He did not advise it, for he said it would only be throwing away more money.

But Lavinia and Harriet felt that they ought to make some effort; they had been much in prayer about it, and both felt led to put in one advertisement. So they sent in a notice to a London paper to this effect:

"Lost by an old invalid lady on Wednesday, the 17th inst., a brown holland bag, containing £34 15s. 6d. in gold, her income for six months." A reward of ten pounds was offered, and the name added with the address of the lodgings.

Nothing happened. At the end of a week Lavinia and Harriet decided that there was no longer any hope. They left their rooms, and went to stay at a friend's house.

A day or two later, a visitor was announced for the sisters. A man was shown in, who said he had come about the advertisement which he had seen in the paper; he had been to the address given and had been sent on to the friend's house. He said that he himself had picked up the bag at the end of Paternoster Row, where they had got out of the bus for St. Paul's. He had kept the bag, and had been terribly tempted to use the money and do nothing to discover the owners.

Lavinia and Harriet were greatly moved, and one of them told the man that it was God Who had restrained him from stealing, "for (said she) we had left the matter in His hands, and He knew how much we needed the money."

"Well, here's your bag," said the man, "and you might give me a receipt to say that the money's all there. My friends know I've been losing badly from gambling with them, and they'll never believe I really brought it all back if I haven't a receipt to show."

The acknowledgement was written out at once, and the reward of ten pounds was handed over. The man departed with many warm expressions of gratitude from the sisters; and they never saw nor heard of him again.

Shortly after the return of the bag the Browns were visited by a Christian lady, who also had read the advertisement. She had come to offer sympathy, and finding that they were fellow-believers, she was eager to do something to help them, even after hearing that the money had been returned. But neither Lavinia nor Harriet felt

that they could accept the stranger's kind offers, though they both said how touched they were at her kindness.

The Browns now returned to their own home. They had, it was true, lost ten pounds of their scanty income; but they were full of thankfulness that the bag had been restored. They felt that the Lord had not forgotten them, that He had been caring for them, and that when they cried unto Him in their distress, He had answered them. It was worth losing ten pounds to have this fresh assurance of the loving-kindness of the Lord.

A few months later came the Christmas season, and with it a letter from the same kind friend who had visited them as a stranger. She enclosed a Christmas gift of ten pounds, writing in such a way that Lavinia and Harriet both felt it was impossible this time to refuse. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Is this God your God?

DAMARIS.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA No. 24

The whole was presented to Christ by the wise men.

1. He told Paul that much learning had made him mad.
2. He tried to save his young brother's life.
3. Priscilla was his wife.
4. Grandson of Ham—"a mighty one."
5. Herodion was Paul's.
6. Son of Amoz.
7. Near this city's gate our Lord met a funeral procession.
8. To this mount Elijah told the king to call all Israel.
9. Paul described him as "my companion in labour."
10. His son succeeded Moses.
11. Among the women who ministered to the Lord.
12. A memorial of victory over the Philistines.

SOLUTION OF No. 23

The whole is: "Sustenance" (II Sam., 19 : 32).

1. Shadow (I Chron. 29 : 15).
2. Upper (Mark 14 : 15).
3. Storm (Nahum 1 : 3).
4. Trucebreakers (II Tim. 3 : 3 and 4).
5. Eli (I Sam. 3 : 18).
6. Nathanael (John 21 : 2).
7. Apollyon (Rev. 9 : 11).
8. Nod (Gen. 4 : 16).
9. Cleopas (Luke 24 : 18).
10. Elisha (II Kings 4 : 8, 10).

Protestant Beacon.

WILLIAM HUNTER

THE BOY MARTYR OF BRENTWOOD (March 26th, 1555)

WILLIAM HUNTER was a godly young man, born of godly parents, by whom he was not only instructed in true godliness, but also confirmed by them unto death after a rare example worthy to be had in admiration of all parents. In the instance of William Hunter appears a singular spectacle, not only of a marvellous fortitude in one so young, but also in his parents, in whom can be beheld natural affections striving with adherence to true godliness. The latter overcame and prevailed, demonstrating their possession of that grace of faith which is the gift of God. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4).

The account given by John Foxe, the martyrologist, of the experiences and sufferings of William Hunter, was faithfully drawn out by Robert Hunter, William's own brother, who was present with his brother till his death.

I.—"FLEE FROM IDOLATRY"

William Hunter was by trade a silk weaver, and apprenticed to Thomas Taylor, of Coleman Street, in the City of London. The Easter after Mary's accession to the throne, he was commanded by the priest of the parish to receive the sacrament at a Mass. But this young man refused to obey, having received divine instruction to "flee from idolatry" (1 Cor. 10: 14); for which conduct he was threatened to be taken before the popish prelate Bonner. On this account his master, fearful of incurring the resentment of the bishop, and wishing well to his apprentice, advised him to leave London.

The honesty of this youth should teach us not to connive at those things which are contrary to God's Word and the dictates of conscience. Men, from a mistaken notion, suppose they should conform, from courtesy, to the custom of their connections; by which truth is invaded, conscience set aside, as not to be attended to, and the opinions of others become their directory of faith and practice. It becomes us to search for truth with a desire to find it, and diligently to pursue it where only it is to be attained, that is, in God's Word, and, when acquainted with His will there so clearly revealed, to make that our unalterable standard for our rule of action. Thus shall we discover "that without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11: 6).

It is not only our duty, but should be our happiness, to act as we shall find William Hunter did, appealing "to the law and the testimony," as the only rule of action and standard by which our conduct should ever be tried. This faith then should be the grand object of our desire in prayer to God, that, instead of grovelling below and fixing our attentions upon earth, we may emulate the conduct of those who through faith subdued their enemies and, dying in the lively exercise of this soul-exhilarating principle, entered into the joy of their Lord.

II.—"HOW READEST THOU?"

In compliance with his master's inclination, he went to his parents, who resided at Brentwood, in Essex, and who had not been wanting on their parts to give him instruction in divine things. After abiding a short time with them he went into Brentwood chapel, where he found a Bible, and, delighting himself in the sacred contents of that blessed book, he read therein aloud. A man who was known by the name of Father Atwell, coming in at the time, and hearing him, enquired how he dare meddle with the Scriptures, and whether he understood or could expound them. To which interrogation the youth modestly replied: "That he did not presume to expound, nor should he, without being called thereto; but seeing the Word of God, he read therein to his comfort." To which his enemy answered, "There was no good since the Bible was translated into English"; so tenacious are the papists in keeping the people in ignorance. The heart of the young man, sensibly affected with this expression, said, "Say not so, for God's sake, Father Atwell; for it is God's book, out of which we are taught both what pleaseth, and also what displeaseth him." To which Atwell replied, "That we were as well acquainted with those things before now." The youth, who valued the Scriptures, still contended, saying, "No, not so well as by having the reading of that blessed book," adding his prayer to God for its abiding with us continually. The other, who lay in wait to catch him in his words, in order to put him into their hands who sought the blood of the saints, told him, he found he was one of them who disapproved of the Queen's laws, and it was for that reason he left London, but he must alter his conduct or broil for it. The youth, not fearful of his threat, replied, "God give me grace to believe His word, and confess His name, let consequences be what they may." To which Atwell harshly answered, "Confess His name! No, ye will all of you go to the devil, and confess his name," and, leaving the chapel in a great rage, told him he would bring one able to talk with him; and immediately went to Thomas Wood, vicar of Southweald, and gave an account of his conversation with William Hunter, who still remained searching the word of life; and to whom in a short time this vicar came, reproving him for daring to read the Bible, and telling him that it

did not become him to meddle with the Scriptures. William retorted upon him by saying, "It was not attending to the duties of his sacred office to discourage men from reading the word of God, but rather to exhort them to a diligent perusal of it." This was very grating to the pride of this priest, who said, "Truly it was not in his province to advise him of his duty," and told him he was a heretic, and reasoned upon the reality of Christ's bodily presence; which the young man steadfastly denied, and, the term heretic being frequently used against him, he rejoined, saying, "After the way you call heresy, so serve I the Lord."

III.—JOHN 6TH AND THE SUBJECT OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION

"Thou art meddling, Father Atwell tells me," continued the vicar, "with the sixth of John, in which thou mayest perceive how Christ saith, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.'"

Then Father Atwell said, "When you read it, I said, that you might there understand how in the sacrament of the altar is Christ's very natural body and blood." "Ah," said the vicar, "what say you to the blessed sacrament of the altar? Believest thou not in it, and that the bread and wine is substantiated into the very body and blood of Christ?" William answered, "I learn no such thing in the sixth of John," and added, "You understand Christ's words very much like the Capernaïtes, who thought that Christ would have given them His flesh to feed upon, which opinion our Saviour corrected when He said, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'"

"Now," said the vicar, "I have found you out; now I see that thou art an heretic indeed, and that thou dost not believe in the sacrament of the altar." After more altercation the vicar departed, leaving many threats behind, which he put into practice, as William Hunter soon experienced in his sufferings.

This young man, finding a cloud gathering over his head, retired from Brentwood to escape the danger; but the vicar had given immediate information to a neighbouring Justice, who sent, by an officer, for William's father to come to him. The Justice enquired of him respecting his son, desiring to have him brought forth. His father declared that he was ignorant of the place whither he had fled, but the unnatural monster threatened him with imprisonment unless he sought after and found his son. Parental affection forbade the attempt, and he argued the cruelty of the mandate for a father to seek a son to be burnt; yet he was dismissed with a command to seek for his son, which he promised, and departed.

The father, to satisfy the Justice, set out on a journey as though he would seek for him; and having travelled about three days he unexpectedly met with his son on the road, to whom he com-

municated his errand, but said he would return and say he could not find him. The son, fearing that his father would be brought into distress on his behalf, determined to return home and abide the event. The officer, who was lying in wait, apprehended him as he entered Brentwood, and made his feet fast in the stocks. He was soon taken before this Justice Brown, who entered into a dispute with him on the subject of transubstantiation, and though a youth of only nineteen he was able to confute every argument, and threw his adversary into a rage.

Justice Brown commanded the Bible to be brought, and opened it; and then he began to reason with Hunter, saying, "I hear say you are a Scripture man, and can reason on the sixth of John, and expound it as pleases you"; and he turned to the sixth of John, and then laid to his charge the exposition he made when the vicar and he had talked together. Hunter said, "He urged me to say so much as I did."

"Well," said Brown, "as you can expound so well, how say you to the twenty-second of Luke? Look here, for Christ saith that the bread is His body."

Hunter said, "The text saith that Christ took bread, and not that He changed it into another substance, but gave that which He took and brake that which He gave, which was bread, as is evident by the text; for otherwise He should have had two bodies, to affirm which I see no reason." At this answer Brown was very angry and took up the Bible and turned the leaves, and then flung it down in a fury. Then Brown said, "Thou naughty boy, wilt thou not take things as they are, but expound them as thou wilt? Does not Christ call the bread His body plainly, and thou wilt not believe that the bread is His body after the consecration? Thou goest about to make Christ a liar."

But Hunter answered, "I mean not so, sir; but I mean rather more earnestly to search what is the mind of Christ in that holy institution, in which He commends us to the remembrance of His death, passion, resurrection, and coming again, saying, 'This do in remembrance of me.' And also though Christ call the bread His body, as He also says that He is a vine, a door, etc., yet is His body not turned into bread, any more than He is turned into a door or a vine. Wherefore Christ called the bread His body by a figure."

IV.—NINE MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT

He then sent Hunter up to Bonner, the Popish bishop of London, who resumed the same subject with him and endeavoured to allure him by fair promises to believe as he dictated; but, though he threatened him with the faggot for disobedience, and promised many advantages for compliance, it was of no avail. He told the bishop

he would go home and evidence himself an obedient subject, if they would not meddle with his conscience, by which he was determined to be guided. Bonner told him, if he would go to confession and receive absolution from the priests, he should be liberated; but these conditions he rejected and said he would not comply with them, for all the advantages he could receive; and upon being further threatened, he told the bishop he was convinced he could do no more than he was permitted by God, and that he would not recant, God giving him grace, so long as he lived.

Thus, in dependence upon, and in submission to the divine will, he resolved steadfastly to abide; but the bishop, presuming that his youth and inexperience would cause his faith to fail, ordered him to be imprisoned in his gatehouse for two days, giving him only a crust of brown bread and a cup of water. This confinement producing no effect, he ordered him to the common prison, among the felons, with only an allowance of a halfpenny a day for his subsistence, and commanded that he should have as many irons laid on him as he was able to bear. Having previously asked him his age, and being informed nineteen years, he told him he would be burnt ere he was twenty, except he recanted; to which he made no reply, but by praying to God to be kept steadfast in His truth. In this state of imprisonment he lay nine months, during which time he suffered hunger and bore the weight of his chains with a fortitude becoming an old experienced Christian.

V.—CONDEMNATION AND MARTYRDOM

Bonner was diligent in his endeavours to persuade him to Popery, for he was brought before him no less than five times, but none of his afflictions moved him; after which, on the 9th of February, 1555, he was, with five men, taken before the bishop, who passed sentence upon him, that he should go from thence to Newgate, and in a short time after to Brentwood, to be burnt.

Making perverts to Popery was the aim of the Papists, that being the most likely means of strengthening their cause; whilst, in the eyes of the people, the steadfastness of the saints was the best evidence of Christianity. The cruel persecuting bishop used remarkable assiduity with this young man, proffering him the freedom of the city, with forty pounds to set him up in his business, or to make him steward of his house, if he approved of it; and that, if he would but recant, he should not want for preferment. For which offers William thanked the prelate, but told him that if he could not persuade his conscience by Scripture authority, the love of this world was insufficient to turn his heart from God, adding, "I count all worldly things but loss and dung in comparison with the love of Christ." The bishop finding his efforts in vain, said that dying in such sentiments he was condemned for ever. To which he calmly

answered, "God judgeth righteously, and justifieth those whom man condemneth unjustly." After which conversation he parted with the bishop, with a mind perfectly to the trial he had before him.

When this youth came to Brentwood, he was lodged at the Swan Inn, whither many resorted to him, as also his father and mother, who, instead of persuading him to choose life, exhorted him to constancy and comforted him with their prayers. At one time he said to his mother, "O mother, for my little pain I have to suffer I shall shortly receive a crown of joy." From which, and a similar conduct in others united to the suffering saints, it appears God was pleased wonderfully to influence the affections of the minds of Christians, to give up their nearest relatives, and their most favourite concerns, in an assertion of God's truth, and even to die in defence of it.

At the time appointed for his martyrdom, the officers came to lead him away, armed with various weapons; and the Sheriff's son saying to him, "Be not afraid of these men," he replied, "I thank God, I am not afraid, for I have reflected upon the costs before now." Thus was he ready to take up the Saviour's word, that he who would lose his life for the sake of the gospel shall save his soul. Cheerfully leaving the house, in the way he was met by his father, who offered his endeavour to support him in the trial, saying, "God be with thee, son William!" To which he replied, "God be with you, father, and be of good comfort, for I hope we shall meet to partake of true joy." His father then bade him farewell.

He then proceeded to the stake, where he repeated the fifty-first Psalm, the favourite of the martyrs, but was interrupted at the seventeenth verse by a contention about the proper translation, and was once more offered pardon if he would recant; which proffer he still boldly resisted, voluntarily going to the stake, and standing erect, ready to be bound thereto.

Justice Brown being present, said, "I would no more pray for thee than for a dog." And the suffering saint told him, "He had now what he sought," meaning his life; but William gave evidence of the merciful disposition produced by Christianity, saying he freely forgave his cruelty, and prayed to God that his blood might not be laid to his charge at the last day.

After this unmerciful Justice had left him, a Popish priest came, desiring his brother to take him a book, to prevail upon him to abjure; which he perceiving, addressed the people in an audible voice, "Beware of them, good people, and come away from their abominations, lest you be partakers of their plagues. Away, thou false prophet! Away!" The priest, mad with rage at his fortitude, told him, "That as he burnt there, so should he burn in hell";

but William, in the confidence of faith, answered, "Thou liest, thou false prophet. Away! thou false prophet! Away."

The people united in hearty supplications to God for him; and the fire being made, his brother led him for comfort to a view of Christ's sufferings, that he might not fear. He said he was not afraid, and lifting up his eyes, prayed, "Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit!" Then bowing himself forward into the flame, he was shortly consumed, and yielded himself freely into the hands of God, who called him to suffer, for the truth's sake, on the 26th day of March, 1555, and in the nineteenth year of his age.

F.C.

Poetry

A BLIND FRIEND IN SPAIN

[The compiler of these verses is totally blind, as well as the Spanish lady of whom he has written.—Editor.]

Her eyes the earth no longer do behold,
But scenes of youth do oft themselves unfold
On memory's table for a mental feast;
Through borrowed eyes the menu is increased.

Of Nature's beauties she delights to hear,
For the Creator she has learned to fear;
From out of darkness she has come to light,
Her blindness recompensed by inward sight.

Though in a land where dwells a subtle foe,
She labours in God's vineyard here below,
Telling the children and the youth of Spain,
"For sinners Jesus died and rose again."

To friends abroad she writes a cheering word;
Once as she wrote, the lovely thought occurred:
"Though far apart by language, sea and land,
Each one can pray, and God can understand;
And if, by Grace, through Jesus Christ we come,
Washed in His Blood, to our Eternal Home,
One language only 'mongst that countless throng
The voice of the redeemed joined in a song."

Poor in this world and often poor in health,
Possessor of that Pearl of untold wealth,
She labours on—a credit to her race,
A Spanish lady—saved by Sovereign Grace.

Alistair Grewar, October 1955.

[Communicated by Mr. Albert T. Tasker, Foreign Aid Committee.]

REPENTANCE

A LETTER TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS

By Joseph Irons, formerly Pastor of Grove Chapel, Camberwell.

THE great subjects of the gospel proclamation are said to be, "*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts 20 : 21), both which have been counterfeited by the deceiver of souls, which renders it important that you should know how to detect the false, and discover the true, in the early stages of your experience.

The effect of divine calling is genuine repentance; hence our beloved Lord assures us, he "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance": and I trust you will find, while perusing these lines, an evidence of your calling in the nature of your repentance, then the very tears you have shed, and the godly sorrow you have felt, will be but the preludes to joy, and peace in believing.

Repentance is of two kinds, according to the statements of the sacred volume; the first is *legal*, and is common to the carnal mind; the other is *spiritual*, and exists only in renewed minds.

The first deprecates the consequence of sin, but leaves the sinner in love with sin; it exists only in the apprehension, or suffering of punishment, and is accurately described by the apostle, as "*the sorrow of the world, which worketh death*" (2 Cor. 7 : 10). Esau and Judas were awful instances of this legal repentance, but both were strangers to that godly sorrow, of which, I trust, you are the subject.

To satisfy your mind of this, I will present you with a Scriptural view of *that repentance which is unto life*, and surely I cannot adopt a better plan, than to direct your attention to its genuine properties. The text I have just cited, in which the apostle calls it *godly sorrow*, is, I think, as full to the point as any portion of the word of God; for repentance is sorrow which comes from God, and leads to God. It is produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit, opening the eyes of the sinner to his guilt and danger, showing him the odious nature of sin, and creating in his soul a holy hatred to it. Then, he cannot but grieve that such a monster should have a dwelling in his heart, and still more, that he should so long have cherished it there. Now this godly sorrow, coming from God, must of necessity lead to God, according to the prophetic declaration, "they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them" (Jer. 31 : 9).

Wherever genuine repentance is bestowed, there will be a coming to God, for pardoning mercy, cleansing grace, and quickening influence; for the repenting sinner will not be satisfied with having the guilt of sin removed (could that be effected alone); he has such

a fixed aversion to it, in his new nature, that nothing short of its subjugation, its crucifixion, and its total destruction will satisfy him; and knowing that omnipotence only can accomplish all this, he cries to God to perform all things for him : this the apostle calls, "*repentance towards God*," because it comes from him, and leads the soul to him.

Godly sorrow, or genuine repentance, comes not from Sinai, but from Calvary, and, when the sufferings of Christ are presented to the mind of the sinner by the Holy Spirit, with a strong conviction, that his individual sins were the cause of them, contrition, shame, and deep humility will be produced; and these are the properties of genuine repentance; nor can I safely conclude, that he is a repenting sinner, who is a stranger to these things. This godly sorrow is perfectly distinct, from both legal dread, and that cold speculative system, which views sin with indifference, and the sufferings of Christ with callous presumption.

Repentance is indeed a change of mind, but not a mere sentimental change; it is such a change of mind, as produces a change of conduct; reversing the current of the affections, and causing the things, which were before the very element of the soul, to become disgusting. Hence, as long as sin exists in the heart (which will be as long as we are on the earth), there will be daily cause for repentance; not under the apprehension that sin can finally ruin the child of God, but on account of its very nature being offensive to him; and all its workings, annoying his spiritual exercises and insulting his Father, must produce godly sorrow.

Look into your own experience and say, whether one day passes over your head without bringing repeated cause for grief, that you live so little like an heir of glory. Was your repentance one solitary act, which took place at the commencement of your experience, and died in its performance? Or is it a grace of the Holy Spirit, which first melted you into contrition, then turned you unto God, and now produces compunction daily, on account of your heart backslidings from God? This godly sorrow is not obliterated, but increased by a sense of forgiving love, and that man is most grieved and annoyed by sin who has the sweetest and best evidence of divine pardon in his soul.

So that repentance does not necessarily give place to faith, but dwells with it; yea, they are like twin graces, and the very grief you feel on account of sin puts energy into faith's appropriation of Christ, and is emphatically the expression of your need of Christ. In a word, it is a holy melting of soul to receive the image of Christ—it is spiritual regret, arising from the want of likeness to Christ—it is the profusion of love, produced by acquaintance with Christ, yea, it is the overwhelming sense of our insignificance, brought to

our view by the glories of Christ, dissolving the heart in genuine humility at his footstool.

Genuine repentance is not the mere fever of the passions, excited by human powers, but the sacred emotions of the soul, *not past feeling*, which prove its spiritual health. Tears are not essential to it, but *spiritual feeling* is, and many of the household of faith are living under the influence of this grace, who are incapable of venting their godly sorrow, otherwise than as the "groanings which cannot be uttered." These are some of the best evidences of godly sorrow, which are the preludes and companions of holy joy. I trust you will never be destitute of them, until you are destitute of sin, nor ever be betrayed into that benumbed, stupid, hardihood in sin, which boasts of faith, to the exclusion of repentance.

Godly sorrow is *not to be repented of*, i.e. not to be relinquished or abandoned. But modern stoics tell us they have done with repentance, and in such a declaration they leave me room to suspect whether they ever began; for, though I give place to no man on the ground of confidence in the justifying righteousness of Christ, and sweet assurance of eternal and irrevocable pardon, yet, I know not the day in which I am not grieved and annoyed by sin, nor can I conceive how sin exists within the soul, without causing grief, except where it is loved.

Paul, indeed, exclaims under a sweet sense of interest in the righteousness of Christ, and participation of the divine nature, "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me": but, hear him immediately after that exclaim, "O wretched man that I am!" and say, did not his believing confidence and godly sorrow, go hand in hand?

We are repeatedly assured in Scripture, that gospel repentance is unto life, i.e. the dawning of spiritual life, and the pledge of eternal life; if, therefore, my dear young friend is the subject of godly sorrow, it is certain that spiritual life is communicated, and eternal life shall be bestowed. Angels have already rejoiced over you—God the Father looks with complacency upon you—Jesus intercedes for you—and the Holy Spirit dwells in you; yea, the very sorrow which you feel on account of sin is a daily testimony of the Holy Spirit's work, which none possess but the children of God.

Moreover, genuine repentance is *the gift of Christ*, which He is exalted as a Prince, and a Saviour to bestow—a divine grant (Acts 11 : 18), in which His eternal power and godhead are proclaimed, and His everlasting love to you is testified. For He never gives repentance without giving remission of sins also; and, while it is certain that "without repentance all must perish" (Luke 13 : 3),

it is equally certain that every sinner who is brought to the footstool of divine mercy in deep contrition, and is taught to hate the evils which exist in his heart, is the subject of repentance unto salvation; his remission of sin is past—his acceptance with God in the person of Christ is ratified, and his eternal bliss is infallibly secure.

In closing this letter, I will just refer to the difference between legal and spiritual repentance. The one comes from Sinai, the other from Calvary—the one melts the heart before God; the other moves the passions, but leaves the heart hardened—the one drives to moral observances instead of believing, the other is accompanied with believing, which naturally, and infallibly, produces good works—the one originates in self, and never leads us out of self; the other comes from God, and leads to God—in fact, legal repentance is a compound of ignorance, pride, and rebellion, while spiritual repentance is the union of humility, wisdom, and love, descending from above, to qualify the soul to enjoy God and heaven.

Go visit Calvary frequently, in devout meditation, and there, I trust, you will obtain those holy meltings of soul, which are coveted earnestly by

Your affectionate friend,

JOSEPH IRONS.

At Jesus feet, where Mary sat and wept,
I would be always found; and there, like her,
Pour out th' affection of a melted soul,
In godly sorrow, mix'd with holy joy.
Or, if from thence I move to Calvary,
O! may His wounded side, and precious blood,
Engage my thoughts—dissolve my stony heart—
And bid repentance flow in tears of love.

Letter 14 in *Jazer, Twenty Letters on Gospel Doctrines, addressed to Young Christians*, 1821.

MODERN MARIOLATRY.—The Rev. Mariano Rughi, formerly a Roman Catholic priest, has written a useful booklet on Roman Catholic worship of Mary. He has examined its origin and modern development, discussing the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854) and the recent Dogma of the Assumption (1950). His booklet is thoroughly Scriptural, and we recommend it to our readers. Price 6d., it can be obtained from the Secretary, Irish Church Missions, 11 Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

Miscellaneous Papers

FOR OR AGAINST?

THINGS were going well at Antioch (Acts 15), when Paul suggested to Barnabas that they should go and see friends in the various cities where they had been before. I have wondered if he (in the mounting of his spirit at the thought) was sufficiently balanced by the conviction that, without the Lord, he could do nothing.

I cannot forget the feeling I once had that I had "obtained a good degree" in my spiritual standing; but (let him that thinketh he standeth take heed) in less than a week I had to leave the ramparts of my goodly Babylon, take a lower place, and keep it until I could say with Nebuchadnezzar, "Those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

But Paul might tell me that my comparisons are ill-placed—he had no doubt about it; he had prayed for direction; he wanted to go, and was "recommended by the brethren to the grace of God." He took Silas. All was by God's command and governance. It does not always appear that the Lord has any preference. In divisions, the friends who "go out" are heard and answered by the Lord Who said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst." The same prayer is offered by those who remain, and the years roll on. In unspeakable mercy He keeps His word: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end."

* * *

In considering dissensions, I have thought of what we are told in 2 Sam. 19:43: "And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel." Israel (the ten tribes) and Judah (two tribes) were quarrelling over the return of the king, after the defeat of Absalom. Judah held that, as David was of Judah, they should have the priority in affairs of the king. The ten tribes thought that, as they were first in the recall, and were by far in the majority, Judah should yield, and so cease contention. But, whether they were right or wrong, their fierceness did not help their cause nor hinder it. It might be spoken of as a "bad spirit." But, before long, it was very manifest that all the *love* was with the fewer—his own people, and the ten tribes, though of more self-restraint, soon left the hold they professed to have and joined the next revolt.

* * *

When Joshua was on the victory side of the Jordan and about to attack Jericho, he was met by a Man having a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua's direct question, "Art thou for us, or for our

adversaries?" was not answered. If the Man had said, "For Israel," Joshua had not needed to beg help. The same, if the Man had said that he was with the adversary. But the Man said that He was the Captain of the host. Joshua's place was to listen for, and obey, a greater One than himself. Then he would not have been so entirely disquieted about the defeat at Ai—that also was of God.

Joshua had many a contention of one kind or another, but the Lord was always with him—not one thing failed; peace had overtaken the misunderstanding about the altar "*Ed*" (Joshua 22). What a mercy that it was settled before Joshua laid himself and his burdens on the north side of the hill Gaash and rested from all his cares and labours and this last one, when it looked as if the two and a half tribes were already going into idolatry. The long explanation that Reuben and Simeon made settled the matter, and Phinehas said: "This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD" (Joshua 22: 31).

* * *

Many a child of God has wondered if God is really for him, or against him. Is he cast off and forgotten as a dead man out of mind? The whole army of Christ's soldiers whose arms are laid down would tell them to pray on, to fight on. If God is for them, who can be against them? "Thanks be unto God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

FOLLOWER-ON.

SPANISH CHRISTIANS

The native Spanish church still flourishes; quietly but with confidence seeking to make known the Gospel of Grace, men and women, after a long day's work, meeting here and there to hear the precious Bible read. Some are discovered at times and fines and/or imprisonment follow.

One recent case was that of a labourer's wife who used to gather a few little children on Sunday afternoons to tell them of "Jesus and His love." This dear woman spent 15 days in prison, and her husband was fined about £12 for allowing it.

In another case, some friends visited a bed-ridden old lady, prayed with her and sang a hymn or two. They were all fined. No court, no trial; just notified of the amount of the fine.

Some day, the story may be partly told; but we are sure it will never be fully known until Everlasting Day.

—Foreign Aid Committee Leaflet, October, 1955.

FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF CRANMER'S MARTYRDOM

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21ST, 1956

WEDNESDAY, March 21st, 1956, will be the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Cranmer. Special plans are being made to mark the anniversary.

CRANMER'S BIBLE STUDY

Special notice was taken of Cranmer's Bible study in preparation for the work of the Reformation. In the *Narratives of the Reformation* his biographer wrote :

"Then he, considering what great controversy was in matters of religion (not only in trifles but in the chiefest articles of our salvation), bent himself to try out the truth herein : and, forasmuch as he perceived that he could not judge indifferently in so weighty matters without the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures (before he were infected with any man's opinions or errors), he applied his whole study three years to the said Scriptures.

After this he gave his mind to good writers both new and old, not rashly running over them, for he was a slow reader, but a diligent marker of whatsoever he read; for he seldom read without pen in hand, and whatsoever made either for one part or the other of things being in controversy, he wrote it out if it were short, or at the least, noted the author and the place, that he might find it and write it out by leisure; which was a great help to him in debating of matters ever after. This kind of study he used till he was made Doctor of Divinity, which was about the thirty-fourth year of his age" (p. 219, quoted in Prof. A. F. Pollard, *Thomas Cranmer*, 1906).

Such was Cranmer's early Bible study before 1523. Prof. Pollard remarks that Cranmer himself was influenced by his industrious examination of the Scriptures and of the new doctrines and about 1525 began in private to pray for the abolition of the papal power in England.

Before this, when he was entrusted with the task of examining candidates for degrees in divinity, he sought to raise the standard of Biblical knowledge by requiring from them some evidence of their having studied the Scriptures (Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, viii. 5).

The Reformation had begun in the secret Bible-readings of the Cambridge reformers.

CRANMER'S DELIGHT IN BIBLE READING IN THE CHURCHES

In 1537 Cranmer secured what he had long set his heart upon—the publication of an authorised version of the Bible in English. This followed the Injunctions of 1536, ordering the provision of an English Bible in every Church before August, 1537. It pleased Cranmer so much that he wrote to Thomas Cromwell: "My lord, for this your pain taken in this behalf, I give unto you my most hearty thanks, assuring your lordship for the contentation of my mind, you have shewed me *more pleasure herein than if you had given me a thousand pound.*"

(Editor).

"HE IS PRECIOUS"

WE must first have a discovery of Christ's love manifested to us by the Holy Ghost before we can love Christ, for "We love Him because He first loved us." And when the love of Jesus has taken place in our minds there will be a walking in Jesus, and an abounding in the work of the Lord.

How precious Christ is to a believer is impossible for anyone to describe. He is the believer's meat, and drink, his physic, his garment of salvation, his all-sufficient Saviour, his fountain of happiness, his foundation, his comforter; and the whole of his hope and confidence is built upon the doings and sufferings of Jesus Christ the Righteous.

There is no friend like Jesus. He is a Friend indeed. He shewed His friendship towards His people in engaging in a Surety for them from all eternity; when our case was desperate He engaged for us. When Justice was ready to give the blow our transgressions deserved He interposed and averted it by taking it on Himself. And, when He knew that we should run through all our stock and become bankrupt, He became our Bondsman, and engaged to pay our whole debt. When He saw we should fall into the depths of sin and misery, He undertook to bring us out of them, to cleanse us from all our sin, clothe us with His righteousness, and bring us safely to glory. His dying for us, paying our debts, purchasing our persons out of the hands of law and justice, and procuring all things needful for us is a proof of His friendship. Oh, let us look to and live upon Jesus as our All in all.

—The Rev. S. Eyles Pierce.

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