

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." "WHOM TO KNOW IS LIFE ETERNAL."

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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 Cor. i. 4.

DIFFICULTIES.

"And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great."—MARK xvi. 3, 4.

DISAPPOINTMENTS and difficulties are often made the most practical and effectual means of testing and strengthening the faith of God's dear people, yet, alas, we reckon them amongst the least desirable of all our crosses. In all ages, the pathway of the LORD's redeemed ones has been beset with difficulties, and strewn with disappointments. The written Word records this fact on well nigh every page. Sin, when it entered our world, brought with it the fruitful cause of all life's difficulties, for it dislocated the Divinely-constituted order and regularity of human life, turning Paradise from a scene of blessing into one of curse and confusion. Sin, while it thus reduced order to chaos, left man in darkness and ignorance. There are existing to-day problems, innumerable, which man's wisdom has for six thousand years utterly failed to solve. Many of these are, in their nature, physical; others are moral; and others still, spiritual.

But difficulties, in addition to all these, occupy our minds, not a few of which, however, are purely *imaginary*. We think and believe that our future steps will certainly be beset by this or that distressing difficulty, and how to meet it we know not. True, we have been brought through "six troubles," but in this "seventh" we expect to be overcome. A gloomy mountain seems to stand in our pathway, and we tremble to approach it. Yet when, at last, we draw nigh to the much-dreaded spot, lo, it is discovered to be but a bank of vapour, which a breath of wind scatters in a few short moments. Oh, how often, beloved in CHRIST, our condition of soul has been like that of the three timid, fearful-hearted women before day-break

on the morn of our adorable REDEEMER'S resurrection from the sealed tomb! "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" The stone, too great for our puny strength, has seemed to mock our faith and hope, and to present an insuperable barrier to our prayerful designs! Ah, yes; the LORD knows all about it. These poor foreboding minds of ours appeal to His tender pity. He remembers that we are dust. The stone of difficulty is rolled away by His unseen hand, and what lately appeared to us, in our shortsightedness, to be an impossibility, is made plain, and simple, for "Himself hath done it."

Our difficulties, even when they do exist, are often greatly *exaggerated* by us. This is another of our infirmities, beloved fellow-pilgrims, unto which we do well to take heed. As has been profitably remarked by one, "The children of Israel trembled at the high-walled cities of the Canaanites, and the huge stature of the giants. Yet they were obliged afterwards to confess, 'There was not one city too strong for us;' and there is no record of any of the giants doing them any harm." And we ourselves, alas, again and again, have, like doubting Israel, cowered before that which seemed to be walls of iron and brass reaching unto heaven, and defying all our spiritual resources to cast them down. But the arm of the LORD—engaged, as it is, by an everlasting Covenant to bring mighty things to pass for the poor and needy—has performed the good promise, and utterly spoiled our foes, razing their strongholds to the ground. Which of us, dear children of God, fails to call to mind instances not a few when that blessed word applied to his circumstances, "put to confusion his faithlessness and foolish reasonings, 'Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain'" (Zec. iv. 6). Temporal and spiritual difficulties alike are designed by our all-wise heavenly FATHER to empty us of self-trust, and to discover to us the ignorance and rebelliousness of our evil hearts. We see this illustrated in the case of God's ancient people in the wilderness, where difficulty succeeded difficulty for forty years. Thus JEHOVAH speaks: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (Deut. viii. 2, 3). It seems to be a principle in God's moral government that the greatness and prosperity of His people shall be the fruit of difficulties. Thus it is written concerning those

whom the Egyptians oppressed, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exod. i. 12).

Then, further, the difficulties of the believing people of God greatly *endear Christ* unto them. In the Great Cross-bearer, perplexed and distressed saints find a loving, tender, and true Sympathizer. He who in the days of His earthly difficulties testified, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I *straitened* till it be accomplished!"—can enter feelingly into all the circumstances which "*straiten*" His tried followers. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted," is a most real and precious truth, beloved friends. Oh, let us seek to prove it, to live upon it in all our multiplied and varied exercises of soul. Let us remember that "we have" a Great High Priest—One who *can* be touched in heart with sympathy for our infirmities—*your* infirmities, dear child of God, and *my* infirmities. Yes, "we have" JESUS. He is the Brother "born for" our adversity. Soul-difficulties drive us to His blessed feet, where we tell Him all. And He lends us His gracious, royal ear. "And the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him" (Mal. iii. 16). It is the heavy-laden whom He bids "Come!" Oh, what stories of distress, and fear, and tribulation JESUS must have heard during the six thousand years of His people's warfare and pilgrimage! How skilful is He to-day in dealing with our difficulties and anxieties, our unbelief and sinful doubtings! "Oh, thou of little faith, *wherefore* didst thou doubt?" Blessed SAVIOUR! how He bears long with us! Marvellous is His compassion, changeless His affection, and generous indeed His ready help! "Who shall roll us away the stone?" He answers, "*That* is *My* concern." The great stones which bar, or seem to bar, our access unto His presence—as we have already noted—are subject to His powerful will. Our difficulties give Him opportunity for the display of His all-sufficiency. They serve, in the hands of the HOLY SPIRIT, to make His loving pity toward us still more lovely, more sweet, more precious.

Beloved, have you just now some special anxiety and difficulty oppressing your mind? Well; JESUS, the Great Interpreter, the very Wisdom of God, is engaged to subdue all things unto Himself. Ask Him to shine upon your crooked path—and *He will*.

It is no small comfort to the faith-tried Israel of God that the doctrine of chance has no place in JEHOVAH's providential arrangements. The element of contingency is wholly absent from the decrees of the MOST HIGH. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.) The tears and the troubles of the righteous are in

His book. The difficulties of the Church have been *well thought out* in the counsels of our heavenly FATHER. Life's incidents may, to nature's eye, and to the mere reason of even a believer, appear at times a hopeless tangle, a confused mass of contradictions, anomalies, and mysteries, yet in reality, the unerring wisdom of Him who has declared that "all things *work together*" is ever active in *working together* the light and the darkness, things crooked and things straight, circumstances rough and smooth, and that for the good of His chosen, dependent ones. It is certainly true that no one's lot in life is *wholly* one of difficulty. Compensations are sooner or later forthcoming. Yet, alas, how prone we are to look on the difficult side of our path, and to centre our minds on the hardships of our condition, rather than to "consider" that the sure promise "CHRIST shall give thee light" is pledged to bear us through everything that betides us. Our difficulties are designed to lead us to prize more highly the overruling sovereignty of Him in whom the SPIRIT of grace has taught us to trust. Paul's thorn in the flesh, which at first appeared to him to be an intolerable experience, came presently to be viewed in the light of *grace*, and he learned to glory in it. Thus a very messenger of Satan may be Divinely made to minister "pleasure" to a perplexed, prayerful son or daughter of tribulation. "Therefore,"—that is, because the power of CHRIST rests upon him who wholly relies on *grace*,—"I take *pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for CHRIST's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong" (2 Cor. xiii. 9, 10). This question of *how* the stone shall be rolled away from the door of the sepulchre has, dear fellow-believers, been fully anticipated in the purposes of eternal love. It is a "part" of the ways of "*our own* GOD." Oh, let us be done, once for all, with "how" and "why." JEHOVAH is the GOD of "how" and of "why." They are His obedient servants. Every moment they are at His command. It was the question of a *child* in spiritual knowledge which was addressed to the LORD JESUS, "*How* can these things be?" When JESUS put that inquiry to Philip, "*Whence* shall we buy bread that these may eat?" it is added by the HOLY GHOST that He proposed the question to His disciple only to "*prove him*," for "He Himself *knew* what He would do" (John vi. 5, 6). That was a wise answer which Ezekiel, the Prophet, gave to the DIVINE INQUIRER's query in the Vision of Dry Bones, "Son of man, *can* these bones *live*?" for he responded, "O LORD GOD, *Thou knowest*" (Ezek. xxxvii. 3). It would be well were we New Testament believers more habitually ready to remit to the supreme judgment of the KING of KINGS every problem of our lives as it arises day by day, and to experience as the happy result of that habit "the peace of GOD which passeth all understanding." This, surely, is "the secret of the LORD," which, by Covenant right, belongs to all the

heirs of grace. It is the heritage of the servants of the LORD. It is children's bread.

Soon, the difficulties and perplexities of our time-state must come to an end. That end is in the roll of the Covenant. The HOLY SPIRIT has borne witness in the written Word that it is even so. Surely, the latter days of one who, through long years of Christian experience has *proved* that the GOD of truth has never denied His obligation to the promises, may well be characterized by a fuller and more mellowed confidence in JEHOVAH-JIREH than the bygone days of spiritual childhood. As He did not fail to roll away—beforehand—the ponderous stone from the door of the tomb of CHRIST crucified, so He will faithfully remove every hindrance, stumbling-block, and difficulty from the path of those who, united to the risen CHRIST, rely trustingly on that promise,—“Thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”

Oh, brethren, brethren, laden with burdens, borne down by difficulties, beset by unbelief, and taunted by fears and forebodings —“*in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us*” (Rom. viii. 37).
THE EDITOR.

AN AGED BELIEVER'S CONFESSION ON ENTERING HIS EIGHTIETH YEAR.

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?

Is thy proud heart subdued by grace
To seek salvation in His name?

There's wisdom, power, and righteousness

All centring in the worthy Lamb.

Jesus, my God! I know His Name!

His Name is all my trust;

Nor will He put my soul to shame,

Nor let my hope be lost.

'Twas well, my soul, He died for thee,

And shed His vital blood;

Appeased stern Justice on the tree,
And then arose to God.

O the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where God my Saviour bowed and died!

Her noblest life my spirit draws
From His dear wounds and bleeding side.

I would for ever speak His Name,
In sounds to mortal ears unknown;
With angels join to praise the Lamb,
And worship at His Father's throne.

Gloucester, New Year's Day, 1897.

[R. H.]

“HE *giveth more grace.*” What a peculiarly sweet adverb is this *more* to the child of God, as connected with the promises. “The *more* they were afflicted the *more* they grew.” “The Lord shall increase you *more and more.*” “They shall shine *more and more* unto the perfect day.” So it is stepping-stone progress; higher and higher, till the eternal mansion is taken possession of by its rightful owner.—Cowell.

Mystic Notes.

JOINED UNTO THE LORD.

"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."—1 COR. vi. 17.

BELOVED; our salvation, if traced to its origin, is found to be the result of a personal union with God in Christ. That union, like Deity itself, is in its nature eternal. The persons of the elect were ever represented in heaven by their Federal, or Covenant, Head—the Son of God. Christ mystical—that is, Jesus in union with all those whom the Father gave unto Him to be His portion and bride—was, from the ages immemorial, the Father's delight.

We may think of the mystical, as of the literal Christ, that when the heavens were prepared *He* was there (Prov. viii. 27); and that of whole Christ—Head and members—He was "as one brought up with" the Father. Union—*our* union, dear children of God—is no event, or fact, begotten in time. We were in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Ephes. i. 4). That sinners are now "manifested" as one with Christ risen is only the bringing to light of that which already existed. "*Because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). The full harvest is already in the field when the "bare grain" is sown, in the autumn or at springtide. The entire increase is contained in the vital seed planted in the earth; and Christ's members were planted together with Him when He died on the cross, and lay in the grave. "I am crucified with Christ," said Paul, and the same important truth applies to every grace-called sinner—to you and me, my believing reader. We died a penal death in Him when He bowed His blessed head on the tree of shame, in the place of reproach. We were a "curse" in Him. On us, in Him, the just strokes of offended Divine justice fell. In Him we paid the utmost farthing of the infinite debt we owed. As we had been "joined unto the Lord" before the foundation of the world, so we were "joined" unto Him in that mighty transaction on Calvary; "because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead,"—or, rather, "then all died" (2 Cor. v. 14). Yes, it is blessedly true that in the Crucified One the Church "hath received at the Lord's hands double for all her sins" (Isaiah xl. 2). Her justification before God is seen in His resurrection—"He was raised again for [= on account of] our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). God hath "raised us up together" (Ephes. i. 6), and the life we now live is *that* which the Apostle Paul describes when he writes, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

"Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee?

O height, O depth of love!

With Thee we died upon the tree,

In Thee we live above!"

All that is holy, spiritual, acceptable unto God, and fruitful, is

really Christ in us. Christ is formed in us by the Spirit, who delights to glorify Him and manifest Him in the persons of His saints. To unfold this great mystery of our being "joined unto the Lord" in eternal, vital, indissoluble union, is the peculiar office of the Spirit of revelation. Oh, brethren beloved, let us dwell more constantly on this wonder of Divine wonders. Remember we that this spiritual unity betwixt Christ and His Church will never be stronger or more sure than it is now! Of course, it is yet but partially evident in its glory, beauty, and fruition; still, for stability and reality it is all it will ever be! It is the sweet privilege of our souls to sing, with AUGUSTUS TOPLADY:—

"More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

Then, another important feature of our being, by the Spirit, "joined unto the Lord," is that we are in God's sight accounted *dead* to the law for justification, dead to sin as regards its dominion over us, and dead to the world out of which we have been elected and called. By faith we realize this—but by *faith only*, for, alas, how far from practical death are the frames, dispositions, and motions of our minds, and the actions of our lives! What constant need of the blood, the sanctifying blood, do our consciences bear witness within us! "In many things we offend all." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And if, in some evil hour of self-righteousness, we be tempted to say that our hands are so clean that they require not to be washed in the fount opened for sin and uncleanness, then, perforce, we must adopt the language of Job, "Yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Job ix. 31).

It is, however, dear brethren in Christ Jesus, all-important that we should intelligently distinguish between our *position* and our *condition*. For *position*, we are joined inseparably unto the Lord in glory. For *condition*, sad to say, we are daily short-comers in realizing our "calling," which is to "walk in the Spirit," and to "be perfect" even as our Father in heaven is perfect. God's dear people are often a strange paradox even unto themselves. The good that they would, they mourn that they cannot do; the evil that, in the Spirit, they would not, that they are too prone to do! In the language of NEWTON'S Olney verses:—

"I would, but cannot sing,
Guilt has untuned my voice;
The serpent sin's envenomed sting
Has poisoned all my powers.

"I know the Lord is nigh
And would, but cannot pray;
For Satan meets me when I try,
And frights my soul away.

"I would, but can't repent,
Though I endeavour oft;
This stony heart can ne'er relent
Till Jesus make it soft.

"I would, but cannot love,
Though woo'd by love Divine;
No arguments have power to move
A soul so base as mine.

"I would, but cannot rest
In God's most holy will;
I know what He appoints is best,
Yet murmur at it still.

"O could I but believe!
Then all would easy be;
I would, but cannot—Lord, relieve!
My help must come from Thee!

"But, if indeed I *would*,
Though I can nothing do;
Yet the desire is something good,
For which my praise is due.

"By nature prone to ill,
Till Thine appointed hour,
I was as destitute of will
As now I am of power.

"Wilt Thou not crown at length
The work Thou hast begun?
And with a will afford me strength
In all Thy ways to run?"

Where there is a spiritual joining unto the Lord, *power* must be present, and be visible also in its results. There is no possibility of the work, which the Divine goodness begins within us, failing through any *will-power* on the part of our Covenant God. No!

"The work which His goodness began,
The arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is 'Yea' and 'Amen,'
And never was forfeited yet."

It is by these conflicts of faith and nature that the children of God learn to live, and "*grow up into Him* in all things" (Eph. iv. 15). That "growth," as we know painfully, beloved brethren, is a most real experience. The branches which "*abide*" in the Vine are subject to oft-repeated prunings and rebukes, according to the wisdom and skill of the Heavenly Husbandman. Yet grace enables us to hold fast to the fundamental fact that He is righteous and holy in all His acts of chastisement and correction. Can you not, dear afflicted, distressed, and Satan-mocked child of God, adopt these lines as your own?—

"'Tis my happiness below,
Not to live without the cross;
But the Saviour's power to
know,
Sanctifying every loss.
Trials must, and will befall;
But with humble faith to
see
Love inscribed upon them all,
This is happiness to me.

"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."

"Joined" unto the Mighty One, to the Victorious One, unto Him whom the Father has exalted in righteousness at His right hand—oh, brethren, why should we not rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? This union in grace is "by the decree of the Most High" (Dan. iv. 24), *our title* to an inheritance "that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven" (1 Peter i. 4).

¶ This "joining" includes a celestial *jointure*—a jointure which, unlike an earthly jointure, is not conditioned by a husband's death, but is enjoyable during His *eternal* life-time! We are *joint-heirs* with Christ; while He, in the Father's counsel, is appointed "Heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2). Thus, "all things" are ours (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

"ONE SPIRIT!" Yes, truly so. "He that is joined unto the Lord [= JEHOVAH] is *one Spirit*." It must be thus, for "*that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (John iii. 6). The flesh has no recognised part in the heirship, because it has no part in the new-birth of the Spirit.

The spiritual man alone can enter into the kingdom of God. The flesh was nailed to the cross when Jesus died. For *that* there was no resurrection, just as the *grave-clothes* of Jesus came not forth with His revived body. They were left in the prison-house of the justified Sin-bearer. This is a precious truth for us, beloved brethren. Oh, let us live upon it! The flesh—*your* flesh—has no *status* now before your Father in heaven. It was judged, condemned, and done with eighteen hundred years ago. The new-birth has given you a place where nothing that defileth can enter in, and your daily goings are in that pathway “which no [carriage] fowl *knoweth*, and which the vulture’s eye hath not *seen*” (Job xxvii. 7). The feast on which *faith* feeds is spiritual, immaterial, Divine—even Jesus, the true Bread that cometh down from heaven. We are “one Spirit” with Him. We, believingly, assimilate *Him*—His flesh and His blood (John vi. 56; Rev. ii. 17). There is, perhaps, no union between two bodies closer, deeper, or more vital than that which results from the assimilation of our food. The properties of the nutriment we receive then become incorporated by us, forming living constituents of our personality—in some mysterious way—both corporeally and mentally. The union of body and mind is a mystery too deep for human science to define. But he that is joined unto the Lord is the subject of a more profound mystery still; which mystery, however, while it cannot be expressed in human phrases, is yet *realized* by the merest babe in Christ Jesus, and is daily proved to be a personal possession. The Holy Spirit bears witness with the “new man” that he *is* a child of God, and, if a child, then an heir of God, and a joint heir of God’s eternal and co-equal Son.

J. O.

WITHOUT Christ the bed is a bed of gravel; the cup is full of gall; nothing fills, nothing satisfies, but everything displeases, vexes, and leaves a sting behind it. Here is consolation against all soul infirmities: In a precious Christ there is all fulness—fulness of mercy to pity and pardon us, fulness of power to strengthen us, fulness of grace to heal us, fulness of love to comfort us. God’s dear children should not be so much dejected with the thought of their own emptiness and weakness, as cheered and revived with the meditation of Christ’s fulness. Oh, rest assured, then, the top and flower of the soul’s happiness consists in union with God and Christ Jesus. And what is the excellency, the joy, and comfort of the soul, but sweet and gracious communion with God in Christ? Christ gives the light of glory to the saints above, the light of grace to believers here beneath. The sun warms the earth, and Christ the heart with His Divine love; the sun casts his light upon the poor man’s cottage, as well as on the king’s palace; Christ shines as clearly and comfortably into the heart of the poorest as of the richest Christian. Behold Him—like Jacob in his love, serving in the heat and in the cold for Rachel—serving in manifold afflictions, from His cradle to His cross for our sakes, to make us a spouse unto Himself. As love constrains the wife to desire the presence of her husband, so doth love cause the spouse of Christ to long for His presence, to say, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”—*Alexander Grosse*, 1640.

Pilgrim Papers.

"WHERE HAST THOU GLEANED TO-DAY?"

(Continued from page 91.)

"AND in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah." How confirmatory these instructions are that all this points to the spiritual, *perfect character* of the sacrifices offered in the feasts and in the solemnities, as seen in the vision of Ezekiel. The burnt offering, always entirely consumed, "They shall put *whole* burnt sacrifices upon Thine altar" (Deut. xxxiii. 10), is to be accompanied by a meat offering that is a *perfect measure*, an ephah, an hin of oil, as He, that is the Prince, is able to give, and *no other offerer* was ever enjoined to give more than one, two, or three-tenths of an ephah, or one-fourth, one-third, or *half* of an hin of oil, that the inability of the creature may be emphasized and what *He is able to do* magnified. So, whatever we lack in our offering to God, whatever *measure* of the bread of life or of the unction of the Spirit we need in our approach to God, let us rejoice to remember *He is able to give*, and that "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." "What think ye; that He will not come to the feast?" "The Prince when they go in, shall go in."

The feasts of the old dispensation were seven; most of them distinguished as solemn feasts. Let us trace out *our feasts* from them, or we may fail to get *our measure* of the meat offering. The Sabbath stood first: we have already noticed its aspect towards believers, resting in the finished work of redemption; six working days ended. The passover and feast of unleavened bread came next; deliverance from bondage by blood. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: *therefore let us keep the feast*, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." What comment further need we of the passing away of the shadows of good things to come, because the Substance, the very Paschal Lamb of God, has been slain for us? and as the shadowy observance was passing away, He Himself instituted *a perpetual memorial feast*, "an ordinance for ever," till He come! "Ye shall observe it a feast by an ordinance for ever." And in proportion as we apprehend the perfection of the Lamb of God, putting away our individual sins, delivering us from bondage by the sprinkling of His most precious blood, will be our *full measure* of feasting upon Him. "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed!" And with the feeding be "partakers of Christ," and of "the unction of the Holy One;" "filled with the Spirit; an hin of oil. "Therefore let us keep the feast."

It may be a little divergence if we notice here "oil for the light" granted, while studying Exodus xii. with other Bible readers. The question had often arisen before, as then, Why was *hyssop* chosen for the conveying of the blood of the paschal lamb to the door of the

Israelites' houses? The door seems to answer to the heart and conscience. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the *issues of life*" (Prov. iv. 23). "Let us draw near . . . having our *hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*" (Heb. x. 22). Now the blood must be brought to the door, its preciousness applied to the heart, and the instrument is a bunch of hyssop! "Wilt Thou not tell us what Thou meanest by this?" "If there be an Interpreter," let us ask Him.

We read that "Solomon spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" (1 Kings iv. 33); that is, from the noblest in the forest, goodly, excellent, choice, to the meanest plant growing out of the stones. The Lord did not direct the use of a branch of majestic cedar, strong oak, or lofty pine; it would have been a dead thing, and some opportunity given for nature's pride to assert itself, diminishing their estimation of the unique importance and intrinsic worth of the blood, in that night of holy solemnity when redemption, by the lamb that was slain, was being so vividly portrayed. Not the hand of an angel is dipped in the blood to sprinkle it, nor the finger of Aaron, as was afterwards commanded, when the redeemed people are found worshipping, then the high priest typifies Christ, sprinkling His own blood in the holiest of all, even in heaven itself. Here it is only a bunch of hyssop. As "Christ is all" in the redemption of His people, surely "we see Jesus" here, applying His own blood. He is "the plant of renown," though "small and despised," "rejected of men, a root out of a dry ground," yet a *living Branch*, having life in Himself, to convey "the blood, which is the life and maketh atonement for the soul." This plant "springeth out of the wall" of salvation (Isaiah lx. 18).

Further on we meet with hyssop again, in conjunction with cedar-wood, when the blood of atonement is to be applied to the cleansing of the leper. Then in union with the living bird ("I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore"). God will use both "plants of the Lord's right hand planting" as means to bring the blood nigh to the sinner's heart and conscience. Between the great Apostle and "those women who laboured with me in the Gospel" (Phil. iv. 3) there is as great a disparity as between the cedar tree and the hyssop, but both *laboured in the Gospel*, and of both it is declared, "They shall not labour in vain" (Isaiah lxxv. 23). "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain *in the Lord*," which is special encouragement to be "*always* abounding in the work of the Lord," at the close of the solemn chapter that treats of death and resurrection, whether we shall *sleep or be changed* in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. xv.) So that the feeblest among us, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified, may cry to Him, "Oh, *use me, Lord, use even me*, as hyssop in close union with 'the living bird,' and 'running water' (John iv. 10, shows that thus the Spirit was signified), that the precious efficacy of atoning blood may be apprehended, appropriated, and enjoyed by some sinner till then afar off; and so *dip me* in that sovereign remedy for sin that, being saturated, *I may be entirely lost sight of*." Is there not also in the

dipping of the cedar and hyssop in the blood a setting forth of the great truth of believers being made partakers of His death? "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 19).

This divergence may at all events have given us further thoughts of what feasts and solemnities are to us, in the keeping of them; as children taught by an object lesson are generally best instructed. It may serve to lead some who are "planted in the house of the Lord, to flourish in the courts of our God," seeking to bring blessing to others. Infinite Wisdom has tested "every word of God," as pure, refined, adapted to convey the Divine meaning. Do not let us pass any by unheeded, but as Daniel "sought for the meaning," so should we, believing the wondrous declaration, "Then, behold, there stood by me as the appearance of a Man." Is He not the same to-day?

The next feast is that of the sheaf of the firstfruits. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept"—"firstfruits of the harvest of the earth, pledge of the resurrection and ingathering of saints! So we keep the feast of Easter. It was always observed by Israel "on the morrow after the Sabbath" (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11), on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, precisely fulfilled, as to time, on our Lord's Day, when He arose, after lying in the grave during the Jewish Sabbath. Resting in redemption-work finished. If we then be risen with Christ, seeking those things that are above, we shall keep the feast indeed. The feast of weeks, observed fifty days after the sheaf was waved, when *bread of the firstfruits* was presented before the Lord, was first observed by the disciples of the Lord at Pentecost, when three thousand souls were added to them. "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). Is it not beautiful to trace the exact fulfilment of the type in the spiritual reality? When the day breaks, the shadows flee away! This feast also was to be observed "on the morrow after the Sabbath," the eighth day, the Lord's day. Then comes the memorial feast of blowing trumpets. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound" (of the Gospel trumpet, proclaiming liberty to captives of sin and Satan), "they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted" (Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16). No need to wait for the jubilee now; "the year of My redeemed" is always present tense. "Now is the day of salvation."

Then follows, not a feast, but a "solemnity:" a day of atonement, an holy convocation. "Ye shall afflict your souls," and whether we keep this solemn day on Good Friday or not, surely every true disciple will seek, at some season of the year, to "know the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death." "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" Shall we not desire to keep this solemn day? not in a spirit of careless indifference or non-conformity, nor in superstitious, theatrical representation of those agonies, but with holy, reverent awe and self-abhorrence, desiring to have deeper views of sin in what it cost the Sin-bearer. There is one thing to be said for these ordinances and observance of holy solemnities, they are a *standing witness* "to the generation following." Divine wisdom ordained the

Lord's Supper to "*show forth* the Lord's death till He come," and doubtless overruled the minds of godly men to mark out certain days, to keep in lively remembrance these great events. "He that observeth the day, observeth it to the Lord;" he cannot *so* be blamed. Let them who *observe* it (seeking their own pleasure) *to themselves, not to the Lord*, look to it! "To their own Master they stand or fall."

Blessed be God, it is *the day* of atonement, and the *tenth* day points to men of all nations and languages included in its blessings (Zech. viii. 23). The marvellous transaction of *one* day, never to be repeated; "*once* for all!" Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many. "This He did *once*, when He offered up Himself." *Once* a year, in its foreshadowing to keep up anticipation. One day, that all believers may rest in its accomplishment! Sin so effectually put away, as in a land not inhabited! Alas! alas! for the dishonour done to His perfect sacrifice, *once offered*, by the infamous sacrifice of the mass!

Fellow believers, can we not testify that our "day of solemnity" has often been an holy convocation, a day of holy fellowship with our Covenant God and Divine Substitute by "the fellowship of the Spirit?" "He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Oh for such a faith's view of Him as we "keep the feast!"

Lastly, the feast of tabernacles, a feast we should be always keeping, "dwelling in tabernacles," "for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come," and so, confessing ourselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth; not in a spirit of morose asceticism, for ours is a rejoicing feast with palm branches, anticipating the victor's crown, being made "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." "Let your loins be girded and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when He cometh and knocketh they may open to Him *immediately*. Blessed are those servants." "And in the feasts and in the solemnities (which we have seen concern us so intimately), the meat offering *shall be* an ephah to a bullock, a *full measure*, not tenths, of the bread of life to feed our souls, in our apprehension of our Prince as mighty to save; strong to draw us to Himself, bear our burdens and cares, *cast* upon Him, as He was almighty to bear our iniquities away for ever; and the true yokefellow to whom we are yoked by an union never to be dissolved. A full ephah also as we view Him in the ram pushing out the foe, subduing our sins; "able to subdue all things to Himself," and to the lambs, *as He is able to give*. "To every one of us is *given* grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephes. iv. 7). The Apostle seems to be echoing the Prophet's words; an ever increasing, full, overflowing *measure*, grace for grace, as we feed upon the Lamb of God as Sin-bearer (John i. 29); and the Lord our Righteousness, implied in his walk (John i. 36). And an hin of oil to an ephah: a continual unction of the Spirit bestowed upon us out of His fulness, to anoint our heart and cheer our face. "The anointing which ye have received abideth in you," and yet your constant experience, "I am anointed with fresh oil;" for by the Spirit's influence we feast upon the Word of life, and have "light, gladness (yea, the oil of gladness) and joy"—joy in the Holy Ghost.

Does not the conviction grow with the search, that the glorious *reality* of all those typical feasts and solemnities being enjoyed by believers now, it never can be the will of God that even the Jew, in the day of restoration to the land of promise, should ever go back to the *shadows*! The Melchisedec priesthood has come. The Levitical has passed away for ever! "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is *ready to vanish away*" (Heb. viii. 13). So wrote the Apostle, by the Spirit, while the temple was yet standing and Jerusalem not then destroyed. Was there ever a son of Abraham according to the flesh converted to the faith of Christ who sought to offer a material sacrifice, or keep a feast according to the law of Moses? The Epistle to the Galatians forbids the thought that they ever will.

Leicester.

MARY.

(To be continued.)

WELL-SPRINGS.

"When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"—

JOB xxxiv. 29.

THE suggested subject for consideration at one of our recent and much-valued Bible Classes was, "Some 'Fear nots.'" I was unavoidably absent, but in thinking over the subject was led to search out a few of God's "Fear nots," whereby His children are encouraged and strengthened in faith to hold on their way, and prove, to the rejoicing of their hearts, what a stronghold is their God from every stormy wind and tempestuous sea, which oftentimes threatens to upset their frail bark. In the house of our pilgrimage, oh, how we daily prove the blessedness of this heavenly provision! As much needed and as appropriate to our use and emergency are these promises as the provided shoes of iron and brass, and all other equipments of the Gospel armour. Yea, they are a part of the armour itself, for with the strength and aid of Jehovah, whose Presence is salvation, and who goeth with us to battle, we need not fear, but rather cry unto the adversary, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." For mark: coupled with each injunction to "fear not," there is accompanying faith given to take God at His word, whilst we watch and wait—aye, and war, if need be—ere we see the fulfilment of the promise which gives Little-faith to mount her high places, and oftentimes to laugh at all impossibilities (though they rise high as the mountains), and cry, "It shall be done, since *He hath spoken it*." Nothing is impossible to Jehovah, and neither is it less possible for His believing child to stand still and see the salvation of his God and the fulfilment of His Word, which is kingly, mighty, powerful to the pulling down of all other strongholds. How He knoweth the frame, frailty, and divers needs of His children, from the least unto the greatest! True, we are children of one Father, and taught of one Spirit; but all are differently constituted, and severally conditioned, and individually circumstanced, to meet the demand of nothing short of a Divine God. As in a flock of sheep, all so apparently similar, yet no two identical, so the Great Shepherd knoweth

each by name, calling them out, and they, knowing His voice, will follow, "but a stranger will they not follow."

Well now, here is some comfort for the feeble Little-faiths of the flock of slaughter, who are often in fear, and whose fear will often lead on to bondage. Cry mightily, then, Little-faith, unto Omnipotence, and rest in His being able and willing to deliver. As dear JOHN BERRIDGE wrote—

"No cross or bliss, nor loss nor gain,
No health nor sickness, ease nor pain,
Can give themselves a birth;
The Lord so rules by His command,
Nor good nor ill can stir a hand,
Unless He send them forth.

"Since Thou so kind and watchful art,
To guard my head and guard my heart,
And guard my very hair,
Teach me with child-like mind to sit,
And sing at the dear Saviour's feet,
Without distrust and fear."

Sweet frame of mind! Would that we were oftener in felt realization of that "wealthy place" after the floods and waters from which He has delivered us. But "He knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are dust," and therefore He has indited and left upon record those many encouraging *Fear nots*! Whilst it is worthy of note that those of the New Testament were our Lord's own communication to His children.

Now, there is the "*Fear not*" of *unbelief*. He comes to us in the hour when all things seem to be going contrary, and the tarrying is shaking our faith in the promise, and says unto us, as He did to the ruler Jairus, "Be not afraid, only believe." I know of no harder lesson than that of sitting still, in that attitude of waiting faith when everything around one points to the necessity of being up and doing. Faith must in those cases rise superior to feeling, and wait upon the bare omnipotency of His Word. The delay of His going to this sick child, as in the case of Lazarus (when He heard he was sick, in spite of its being His loved friend), must have been a severe test of faith to his companions, and to the hearts of the bereaved sisters. On His way with Jairus to heal the little daughter of that ruler, His course was impeded by the throng pressing upon Him, and by her who

"Sought to touch Him in the press,
And healing virtue stole."

A messenger now arrives, and speaks the sorrowful word to Jairus, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any more?" Now, Lord, is Thy time to work. Thy servant came to Thee in faith, believing Thou couldst heal his little daughter; but what about the delay and the death? Will his faith be shaken, and his trust in this Divine Man be removed? Jesus knew all; He sympathized with his heart of sorrow, and turning to him, in loving tones He spake the word, "*Fear not*;

believe only, and she shall be made whole:" and arriving at the house, He suffers only Peter, James, and John, with the father and the mother of the maiden to go in with Him to witness this resurrection unto life of this "little lamb," as He calls her.

"He tarries oft till men are faint,
And comes at evening late;
'Tis His to hear and answer prayer,
'Tis ours to pray and wait."

Again. *He speaks thus oft in preparation for a coming trial and a test of faith.* "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." And remembering Jehovah's promise to him on a former occasion, to "make his seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall his seed so be numbered,"—whereas at this time Abram had no child, nor any likelihood of one—he reminds the Lord of His promise which as yet tarried in the fulfilment, inasmuch as, "Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed," and "what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" Fear not, Abram, "though the vision tarry, wait for it," for in the end God's word must be accomplished. Sarah may laugh in her old age at such a promise, and thou mayest be kept waiting for its fulfilment twenty-three years ere "the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken," but in the end the son of thine old age shall be given thee "at the set time of which God had spoken unto thee." Nor was that Fear not needed only for that waiting time, for we all know the wondrous test of Abram's faith when called to yield up that only and promised son, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises," and in whom consequently all his hope centered, offered up his only begotten son, "of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." Abraham's eye of faith rested on a Lord of resurrection life and glory, and, along that vista of ages, he received his son to life as in a figure. Say, was not this spoken word, *Fear not*, with power? None speaketh like Him; and when you and I hear Him coming unto us speaking thus, we may rest assured that grace and faith sufficient shall meet and surmount the coming trial, carrying us through it, so that we do not feel the burning heat of it ere it has passed over our heads.

But again. *There is the "Fear not" of felt poverty.* And how many of us can enter in here! How do we daily learn by experience, and that painfully so to flesh and blood, that we are but as the off-scouring of all things in the eyes of the world! True are the poet's words—

"Poor and afflicted, Lord, are Thine,
Amongst the great they seldom shine."

Are not the princes of His people more often than not found amongst those whom the world would disdain and disown? Is there not often the hidden gem found in some lonely cottage room, in some small workshop, or some obscure and unlooked-for corner of the earth?

Yes; and as though, knowing their plea of poverty, yet lovingly staying the words of pleading ere they fall from the lips, He chooses the poorest and most insignificant of his feathered creation, and reminds us, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." So that, with the promise afresh spoken, and faith again revived, whilst in ourselves less than nothing, and utterly unworthy of His notice, He has spoken, "Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Thus we may take our royally-appointed place, not in this world, but as sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, in the kingdom of grace and glory. As the children's hymn says—

"I am only a little sparrow,
A bird of low degree,
My life is of little value,
Yet the dear Lord cares for me."

But my accustomed space is filled. If the Lord will, our subject shall be resumed next month. And may the Lord bless His Word, and encourage some weakling, some hidden one, "a sparrow alone," to abide in His faithfulness, and command strength out of weakness, for Christ's sake.

R.

PASSING THOUGHTS.

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

How strikingly is this exemplified when we trace the writings and follow out the experience of Jehovah's believing, Spirit-taught people. Being led by that Spirit of truth who now dwells in them, their experience is necessarily the same, though their pathways in the wilderness may be very different; some running with delight, following on to realize more and more of His loving-kindness, while others are groping in darkness, and with but little, if any, faith to cheer them in the solitary wilderness, through which Jehovah (their Father) sees it good for them to pass.

The "Family Portion" in this month's Magazine, on "Quietness," has been balm to my wounded spirit, and the peace which flows therefrom must be from that same Spirit who speaks a word in season to them that are weary and often cast down at Jehovah's dealings with them. All is, all must be well, when they realize that Jehovah reigns, that His counsel must stand, that His salvation shall be for ever, and that His righteousness shall not be abolished. The same Jehovah who hedges up our pathway has promised to "comfort Zion, yea, all her waste places, and to make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Verily, "Salvation is of Jehovah" Himself; "none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" He has promised to "keep in perfect peace him whose mind is stayed on Him, because he trusteth in Him." "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." His commands are enabling, His Spirit helping our infirmities, and providing the needed strength.

Dawlish, February 4th, 1897.

V. P. H.

A SOLID GROUND FOR HOPE.

"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."—LAMENTATIONS iii. 24.

IT seems strange, at the first glance, that such cheering words as these should be found in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. They are there, however, not as a lamentation, but as a cordial for the depressed; for the consolation and support of the soul amidst its griefs. They reveal to us the Prophet's heavenly joys amid earth's sorrows; and we rejoice to find them where they are.

Is it not often so in our own experience, that when the desolations of earth are greatest, the consolations of God are richest and sweetest? I have a case very vividly in my remembrance. It was a time of deep sorrow and trial, a time of sore bereavement. I remember a dear servant of God sitting by my side, and saying, "I am not so ignorant as to suppose any words of mine can bring comfort in such an hour, but the words of God can;" and I found it blessedly true. It pleased God to bring this precious passage to my remembrance with, to me, unusual sweetness and power. Over and over it sounded like sweet music in the depths of my spirit, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him." By these words the Lord lifted me out of the slough of despondence in which I was sinking, and enabled me to mingle spiritual songs of praise with the natural tears of sorrow.

More than thirty years have passed away since that time, but I have never forgotten, and believe I shall never forget, the impression made on my heart by these words. It is not, however, to my own experience of the sweetness of these words, but to the words themselves that I would draw attention. They remain as true, as sweet, as helpful, as full of comfort and strength as ever. They reveal to us the happy persuasion of the Prophet that God was his Portion; and that this persuasion encouraged hope in Him amidst the heaviest trials and the most bitter lamentations. The more we are enabled of God to meditate upon such a sentence, the more full and precious it becomes. Every word seems emphatic, and each word in turn, as our minds dwell upon it, more important.

"*The Lord is my Portion.*" Not the gifts I have received, or hope to receive from God, but God Himself, the Giver of all. Not His promises merely, though they are exceeding great and precious, as to this life and the life to come, but it is Himself, the Promiser, who is my Portion. Not the thoughts I may have concerning Him, but Himself as He is, infinitely greater and better than all my thoughts. It is Jehovah: He who was and is to come; the ever-living, unchanging, Covenant-keeping God. It is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in all His infinite wisdom, power, and love; in all His infinite resources; in all His inconceivable perfections; in all His ability to accommodate Himself to my varied need, and to meet and supply it all. *He is my Portion.*

"*The Lord is my Portion.*" Not "has been" in some moments of special manifestation merely. Not "will be" in the perfection and blessedness of heaven merely, but *now*, in this time of learning, and discipline, and

conflict; in this time of weakness, and waywardness, and failure; in this time of imperfection of faith, and hope, and love; amid the varied difficulties, and trials, and perplexities of life. Now, in the ever-abiding present, the Lord *is* my Portion.

"The Lord is *my* Portion." This word of appropriation seems to be the most important word of all. I may know that the Lord was the Portion of Jeremiah; that He is the Portion of all the angelic hosts; that He was the Portion of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was here in the flesh (Psalm xvi. 5); I may know that He always has been, and always will be, the Portion of His chosen, redeemed, and regenerated people, but all this is not enough to support and comfort my soul amidst its trials. The general truth must become particular and personal by faith, which is of the operation of God. It is when I am enabled to claim, and to appropriate to myself individually, the Lord as my own Portion, that I know and prove its power and sweetness.

"The Lord is my *Portion*." How wonderful! How different from the portion I deserve! "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm xi. 6). This is the portion I deserve. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lam. iii. 22). Yes, it is all of God's mercy—of His rich, free, and abounding grace that I am delivered from the awful portion I deserve, and have such a blessed portion instead. It is all brought about through the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through faith in Him. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18), that we may know Him, that we may be reconciled to Him, that we may be saved by Him, and that we may have Him as our present and eternally satisfying Portion.

"The Lord is my Portion, *saith my soul*." We may repeat it with our lips, we may sing it in our hymns, but if the words uttered, and the hymns sung be not the intelligent persuasion of the mind and the Spirit-produced utterance of the soul, they yield no fragrance to God, and impart no spiritual joy to us. The true possession and enjoyment of God as our Portion is not head work or lip work, but heart work and soul work. It is the soul that is awakened to feel its desert of eternal punishment on account of sin. It is the soul that looks to the crucified Saviour for safety and peace. It is the soul that is knit to Jesus by faith; and it is the soul that learns and knows and delights that God is its Portion.

The happy persuasion of the Prophet's soul that God was his Portion awakened within him a cheerful and confident hope, and it is the will of God that all His believing people should have the same persuasion and the same hope. It cannot be that we know Him to be our Portion and have little or no expectation from Him. If a rich and benevolent man gives me a thousand sovereigns, I may well hope he will give me a bag to carry it home in. If God is pleased in His wondrous grace to give Himself to me, and the blessed assurance that throughout eternity I shall possess Him and enjoy Him as my Portion, what is there that is really for my good that I may not hope for, and pray for, and expect to receive at His hands? If we would please and honour God, let us

cherish large expectations from Him, for "the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Psalm cxlvii. 11). "He will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm lxxxiv. 11). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us [not a few good things, nor many good things, but] all things?" (Rom. vii. 32.) "The Lord is my Portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."

Bristol.

H. WELCHMAN.

THE LOVELINESS OF CHRIST:—

HIS HANDS.

"*He is altogether lovely.*"—SOLOMON'S SONG v. 16.

"*His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl.*"—VER. 14.

THE Person of Christ is faith's object, and it is the special prerogative of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Jesus, and reveal them to the eye of faith, possessed by humble seeking souls, to which alone such revelations are made. In very beautiful, but highly figurative language, the loveliness of Christ's *hands* is described, "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl." We must notice, in the first place, His hands; secondly, the comparison—"as gold rings;" and thirdly, their glory—"set with the beryl."

1. *Christ's Hands.* The hands by which the Lord Jesus exercises the power given to Him as the Mediator, and the Head of creation, are His grace and providence, and these are found by all His children to *work together* in the accomplishment of His own glorious purposes. It is given to those who love Him to know something, and see something of this precious truth in their daily experience.

His hands afford protection from all foes, in fulfilment of the ancient promise, "I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand" (Isaiah li. 16). Here is perfect security. Nothing can reach those so covered, but through and by the Lord's hand.

So far as we are concerned, His hands operate in a threefold manner—*giving, withholding, and taking away.* Every good thing, whatever its nature, is His gift. If any imagined good is withheld, it is His hand which keeps it back. Then His hand often removes our idols, withdraws our comforts, and deprives us of our cherished possessions, to teach us they were but lent for a time. In all these things He is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind."

The operations of His hands are manifold. His hands perfect the work He Himself began (Phil. i. 6), preserve the feet of His saints (1 Sam. ii. 9), and uphold their goings in His ways (Isaiah xli. 10). His hands provide all things needful (Matt. vi. 33), chasten for disobedience (Heb. xii. 7), support the weak and falling (Isaiah xl. 29), confirm the wavering (Isaiah xxxv. 3), and establish the tried (Psalm xl. 2). The hand of His providence interposes as oft as extremity of need arises (Heb. xiii. 5). Thus, His humble followers rejoice in the operations of His hands in grace and providence.

And now, look up into heaven, and see before the throne the pierced hands of our glorified Redeemer stretched forth in perpetua

intercession, and then, in the confidence of faith, commit we our all into His kind care and keeping for time and for eternity.

2. *The Comparison.* "His hands are as gold rings." We need spiritual caution in the attempted interpretation of these similes, lest, on the one hand, imagination should trespass beyond the bounds of sobriety; and lest, on the other hand, we should fail to discern the mind of the Spirit in the figure. Christ's hands are compared to "rings of gold." Here are "rings" and their material—"gold."

(i.) In ancient times rings were marks of sonship and lordship; no slaves or servants of any kind were allowed to wear them. We are quite certain that none but the Lord's free men (no slave of sin and Satan) ever felt the kind, strong, soft embracings and layings hold of the dear Saviour's lovely hands. A ring stands as the one great emblem of *eternity*. It has no beginning and no end. This emphatically describes the eternal nature of Christ's Person, power, and work. A ring has ever been a fit symbol of *love*, encircling its object; and hence the hands of the Beloved being likened to rings shows us the love of His heart actuating the work of His hands in all His dealings with His own. A ring also denotes *union* of the tenderest, dearest kind. The gracious hands of Jesus laid upon His people rescue them from a state of alienation and enmity, and in this exercise of omnipotent grace bring them into closest union with Himself. Thus they are given to experience that *drawing power*, spoken of so frequently in the Scriptures of Truth (Jer. xxxi. 3; Hos. xi. 3, &c.) Moreover, a ring was given as the sign and seal of *adoption*; when one, not being by nature a member of the family, was by an act of grace and favour made and constituted a child. Happy those who are in His hands.

(ii.) We proceed briefly to note the material—the rings are of gold. In the first place, this speaks to us of *purity*. "His hands are as gold rings." Truly His handiwork was in perfect purity. Even His enemies acknowledged that no fault could be found in Him. Gold is the most *pliant* of all metals. How sweetly and tenderly the blessed hands of Jesus lay hold of and twine so securely round the most unlikely and often the roughest natures, easily accomplishing His purpose. And, then, how *far* He can reach! "His hand is not shortened that it cannot save."

Gold signifies *preciousness*. What is more precious than the work of the Redeemer's hands, whether we view it as done for us on Calvary's cross, or done in us by His good Spirit? The former is finished in purpose and fact; the latter is finished in purpose, and will shortly be in fact, because "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it [carry it on to completion] until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6).

Gold is the most *durable* of all metals, and the work of Jesus will outlast all beside; the furnace which destroys all else does but make manifest and perfect that. In the great day of the Lord, no work shall stand except the works of His hands. Look, lastly, and see—

3. *Their Glory.* "His hands are as gold rings set with a beryl!" It is the stone which gives glory and adornment to the ring. The beryl is a most rare and valuable species of precious stone; resembling, but superior to the emerald. Its colour varies, and often passes into a

sky-blue, and sometimes even into a golden hue, like the heavens bathed in golden sunlight. The beryl, therefore, very aptly sets forth that which does so blessedly adorn the dear pierced hands of Immanuel, namely, His own heavenly, golden *Righteousness*, which is His own handiwork. View this beryl in its two-fold aspect, as consisting in the matchless, perfect *obedience* to the Law which His hands "wrought out and brought in," which the hand of grace imputes to, or puts upon, the believer; and in those substitutionary *sufferings* which were the penalty due from us for our sin, but which He paid. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The beryl is "set" in the ring. Thus, the righteousness of Christ can never be removed. It is the sign that grace reigns, peace is procured, and reconciliation eternally established by Him whose "*hands are as gold rings set with the beryl.*"

Bath.

E. C.

"I HAVE LOVED THEE."

(ISAIAH xliiii. 4.)

"I HAVE loved thee." Blessed message,

Sent by Him whose words are true,
For the joy of each believer,
In this world where "friends are few."

Lately read with holy reverence,
In a simple house of prayer;
Made a blessing to my spirit,
While I sat with others there.

'Twas the very word I needed,
For my heart was sad and sore
With the memories of a friendship
Which enriched my life no more;
And it wakened recollections
Of the Master's friendship sure,
And it changed my bitter sorrow
Into gladness deep and pure.

"I have loved thee." He is changeless,
(Oh, what rest this thought creates!)

Still He loves the one whose wanderings
Brought His soul to death's dark gates;

And my heart is well persuaded,
Nought beneath heaven's shining floor

Shall estrange Him from His servant,
He will love me evermore.

Me He loves! the Great Creator,
Who alone created all,
Loves the poor unworthy creature,
Marred and stained by many a fall:

One All-sinless loves the sinful,
(Matchless marvel, passing sweet!)
He whom high archangels worship
Loves the worm beneath His feet.

Me He loves! and He is Ruler,
Therefore I should fear no ill;
Great events and trivial matters,
All are ordered by His will:
And His power will work together
Grief and gladness, peace and pain,
For His everlasting glory,
And my everlasting gain.

Me He loves! and every blessing
Is at His disposal wise;
He will give me all things need-ful,

In my path beneath the skies;
And in yonder heavenly pastures,
Where the living waters glide,
He will feed my soul with sweet-ness—
There, I shall be satisfied.

Lord, whene'er I feel the coldness
Of Thy servant, once so kind
(And Thou know'st it pains me often).

Bring Thy message to my mind;
By the wondrous revelation,
"I have loved Thee!" stay the smart,

Give me joy, and draw me nearer
To Thine own unchanging heart.
ISA.

“HANDFULS OF PURPOSE.”

“Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them.”—RUTH ii. 16.

“HANDFULS, of purpose.” How frequently the child of God finds, as he traces cause and effect, this wonderful and beautiful truth verified in many ways. Daily and hourly “handfuls of purpose” are scattered for the believer, and gathered by him, the scattering and the gathering both illustrating the “dovetailing,” so to speak, of events, or more scripturally speaking, the “working together” spoken of in Romans viii. 28.

Why do we sometimes turn, almost unconsciously as it were, down a special street? We have often done so, and been met by some one coming along, who has greeted us with, “How strange! I was so specially longing to see you this morning.” There was a “handful” unseen “of purpose” in this meeting. It was not chance. Why do we sometimes write to a friend with the impression that we must write just then, although we do not, perhaps, feel altogether in the mood for it? We find often, on hearing from this friend in reply, that that was a “handful of purpose,” in the warm words, “Your letter came just at the right time, and your words just what I was needing.” And how often the words are said with regard to some visits and some gifts, “Oh, this is indeed an answer to prayer.”

Very recently I heard of a circumstance which, though very simple, illustrates the “handfuls of purpose” in little things. A friend handed to a lady a rug to give away where it would be useful. The lady put it by, thinking she should be hearing of some special need perhaps before long. At last the friend who gave it to her was coming to see her, and she thought, “Now she will imagine I do not care for any gifts for the poor, if I tell her I have not yet given the rug away.” She then thought of a Mrs. C—— who would be likely to know of some one needing it. She, however, to her great disappointment at the time, was detained on her way to Mrs. C——, and was obliged to return home without fulfilling her intention to call. She found Mrs. C—— at her house (so would have missed her if she had called), and on explaining matters to her, Mrs. C—— exclaimed, “Oh, this is marvellous! just an answer to prayer. I have been asked only this morning if I had anything in the shape of a blanket or carpet, or any covering, for a poor afflicted child of God who has seen better days, and who is in the greatest need of some additional covering for her bed.” This, dear reader, was a series of “handfuls of purpose”—the giving of the rug, the delay in distribution, the disappointment in being detained on the way to call, all links in the chain of the “handfuls of purpose.”

Some sunny-natured Christians are in the habit daily of watching the providences of God, and seeing His guiding or preventing hand in every little detail; and to such the Lord reveals many sweet secrets. To them, when “disappointments,” as many would call them, occur, they furnish but the watching for some better thing to arrive out of it. “God takes away only when He is going to put in its place something infinitely better,” is the substance of what a good

man wrote once; and the believer *knows* his loving Lord *too intimately* to look upon the apparent disappointment or trial as without cause. He looks to the "afterward" of glad surprise and explanation.

The Heavenly Boaz commands these "handfuls of purpose." Oh, let us, dear reader, take heed also to another feature in this most instructive chapter (Ruth ii.), a direct exhortation from Boaz: "Go not to glean in *another* field." May we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James i. 27); separate from the world; abiding in Him; going not out of His field, but "abiding fast by Him," and with Him. For it was in that field, and no other, the "handfuls of purpose" were scattered; and we, too, shall find that the prepared blessings, even though sometimes veiled before we perceive them, are found only in His field. If we wander out into other fields, small wonder is it if we lose touch with Him, and mourn His absence, and find no blessing, for the "handfuls of purpose" are not scattered in those fields. Wandering brings unknown dangers and sorrows; let us then, dear reader, "go not out to glean in another field."

Ruth's ultimate destination was a home with Boaz, and the ultimate destination of the believer is "with Me where I am." This is the great purpose of God, the redemption of the sinner for His own glory, to be eternally one with Him in glory. It is a glorious "afterward." Asaph recounts his inability to understand some of God's dealings, in Psalm lxxiii. 24, but he triumphantly exclaims, "Nevertheless . . . thou shalt . . . afterward receive me to glory." How trivial all the purposes and plans, and disappointments and trials, and pains and losses and crosses of the time-state, as we view them bathed in the light of the coming One, whom, though unseen, we love, *because He first loved us*. We shall see Him ere long, and be with Him for ever. Let us therefore eagerly scan His "handfuls of purpose" for us in doing, in watching, in communion with Him.

Very recently I read a beautiful anecdote of WENDELL PHILLIPS, the American orator. He was much devoted to his invalid wife, and it is related that at the close of a lecture engagement he was urged not to return to Boston that night. "The last train has left," his friends said, "and you will be obliged to take a carriage into the city. It is a sleety November night, cold and raw, and you will have twelve miles of rough riding before you get home." Then came the beautiful reply, "But at the *other end* of them I shall find Anne Phillips."

And so with us, dear reader, whatever the roughness or darkness of the pilgrim state, let us run the race with patience and courage and faith. For at the *other end*, we know, the face of Christ will greet us, and we "shall see His face with joy" (Job xxxiii. 26).

Harborne.

NETTIE.

"WEIGHST the path of the just" (Isaiah xxvi. 7). Not only weigheth or considereth their work of what sort it is, but balanceth their strength to their work. Thus in making the world, God is said to "weigh the mountains in scales," that its parts might have an equal balance.—*Rev. J. Berridge.*

"THE SONG OF SONGS."

BY THE REV. WILLIAM FRITH, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA.

WHAT a rich storehouse of spiritual food is this spiritual song! Here the renewed soul can feed on the finest of the wheat. No one who has passed from death unto life can fail to realize the sweetness and blessedness of those sacred and heaven-sent words. Ever since Solomon, as led by the Holy Ghost, penned this series of choice metaphors, "the spiritual" of all ages have delighted to revel in these whispers of redeeming love and Covenant grace. No age has existed in which there have not been many who have found light and instruction and comfort from this wonderful book. From Dr. GILL and WILLIAM ROMAINE, of the last century, to this day, there have been thousands of the Lord's hidden ones living in solitude, far away from the public fellowship of His grace, who have found this Song to be a rich repertory of spiritual truth—real "hidden manna" from the "Ark of the Covenant," which is now "within the veil," "whither our Forerunner is for us entered." May the Blessed and Eternal Spirit anoint us in writing a few thoughts which may prove helpful and refreshing to those who, though weak and weary, are yet walking the rough and rugged path of the pilgrim-life, while "looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great Saviour Jesus Christ!"

The Authorship of this sacred book is noteworthy. It is not so much Solomon as the Holy Ghost through him! for "holy men of God spoke as they were moved [*φερόμενοι*, "borne along"] by the Holy Ghost!" (2 Peter i. 21). And that this book was included in this declaration is proved from the fact that it formed at that time an integral part of "all holy Scripture," which was included in the sacred canon of the whole Hebrew Church, and which our blessed Lord called "the Scriptures," in John v. 39. We may therefore affirm that they are included in "the true sayings of God," and also in the "whatsoever was written of old time was written for our learning." This book therefore is the "voice of God," to all who have believed through grace," through all the ages, until He come, who is "Head over all things unto His Church."

The children of faith therefore need harbour no doubts about the plenary inspiration and canonicity of this book. Our Covenant Jehovah has ever taken care of His Book, and every chapter of it, which He has ordained to be the channel of light and instruction to His people, through the teachings of the Holy Ghost, through all the centuries. To use the choice and expressive words of the Holy Ghost by Peter, it is "the incorruptible seed of the Word, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). Being, therefore, assured of this, we can come with confidence, assurance, and hope to this precious treasure of spiritual truth, and see by a spiritual perception—"the eyes of our understanding being enlightened"—the delicate and suggestive teaching which the Heavenly Teacher intended for us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest."

The Title and Character of the Book is specially remarkable, being as it is in the form of the superlative degree, a fact which demands more than a passing attention. The Hebrew form of the title suggests high and superlative excellence, both on account of its

source and subject. All Evangelical commentators have both felt and admitted this. See KIEL, HENGSTENBERG, DELITISCH, Dr. CHALMERS, ROBINSON, and many others.

That it is an Epithalamium, or Love Song, will be admitted by all who have studied it. Love deep, delicate, reciprocal, and connubial and spiritual, is its special and characteristic feature. And the more closely it is studied, the more it will be evident that it is the spiritual foreshadowing of that everlasting and unchanging love which exists between Christ and His Church, "that mystical Body" to which Paul refers when he says, "I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. v. 32). Its character is therefore spiritual and not carnal, heavenly and not earthly, though many of its allusions may be taken from earthly relationships, in accommodation to human weakness, which can often understand only the analogy, metaphor, or parable. And in this we see the divine condescension of God's grace.

It is therefore a book of spiritual experience, which only they who have been already brought into gracious union and communion with Christ can possibly understand, because "they are revealed unto us by His Spirit," in His holy ministry, as our Lord said, "He shall take of things of Mine, and show them unto you" (John xvi. 14, 15).

For Whom the Holy Spirit prepared it.—In Old Testament times "they were not all Israel who were of Israel;" there was ever, from the days of "righteous Abel," to the advent of the Messiah, a "spiritual seed" (Rom. iv. 16, and ix. 8), like Abraham, of whom Christ said, "Abraham saw My day and was glad" (John viii. 56), and to whom this book was a great spiritual treasury, and who saw *under the letter an eternal purpose of grace*, to be consummated "in the fulness of time," at "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. xix. 9). Whoever fails to see this, fails in a right interpretation of its delicate and delightful language, and can but bewilder himself to no purpose; for "the carnal mind" can never "perceive the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him, for they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

The book therefore is exclusively for those "who are spiritual" (1 Cor. ii. 15). Such as are in the Church's *high school*, and who sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed in His robe of imputed righteousness, and in their right mind, will see the Bride and the Bridegroom in the metaphors of this sacred book, and realizing by a blessed experience their espoused relation, they will trace their spiritual privilege, fellowship, and destiny, and, through the fellowship of the Spirit, will enjoy spiritual communion with their Bridegroom-Lord.

"THUS saith the Lord, this people [Israel] have I formed for Myself," for the knowledge, love, service, and enjoyment of Myself; therefore not capable of happiness but in Myself. For nothing can satisfy a creature but the obtaining its proper end. Therefore fishes can only be happy in water, birds in air, moles under ground, and the human race in God.—*Rev. J. Berridge.*

Sermons and Notes of Sermons.

ELECTION IS OF GOD.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON ON ROMANS VIII. 20, PREACHED AT
LONG ACRE EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, IN 1836.

WE must refer it back to God's own sovereign will as its only source. He wrought it after the counsel of His own will. His own good pleasure is the *only cause* that can be assigned. If you inquire, Why should God select a nation to be the depository of His truth, or an individual to be a vessel unto honour? Why is England evangelized and China left in darkness? Why is one of a household taken and another left? The only answer that can be given is, "So it seemed good in His sight;" "He loved because He loved;" "He sheweth mercy where He will have mercy." And if this does not satisfy you, we can only say, "Strive not against Him, for He giveth not account of any of His matters." "What He purposed, He purposed in Himself."

I observe, first, that the election is irrespective of the creature's choice. It is God who chooses us, and not we who choose God. Thus the Lord Jesus, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go, and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Thus St. John, "Not that we loved Him, but that He loved us." Thus St. Paul, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Will not your own history confirm this Scriptural statement? Is it not the consciousness of God's having made the overture, and inclined your rebel nature to accept it, that tunes your song of praise? Ask your own hearts when, and where, and how He found you? You were straying and stumbling on the dark mountains of sin when the Chief Shepherd sought you and fetched you home. You were descending, with all the momentum of your fallen nature, to hell, when He arrested you. You were caught and fascinated with some painted allurements of the world, when He discovered to your hearts the pearl of great price, and you gave up all to secure it. And if so, will you not admit that the choice was God's—that He not only chose you, but disposed your heart to say Amen?

But again; God's choice is irrespective of the creature's works. "Not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Nor was it for good works foreseen, for Moses says, "They were a rebellious and stiff-necked people." The works of faith are not the *cause*, but the *fruits* of the election. God chooses not *for* works, but *to* works. "You," saith St. Paul, "hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Ask your own hearts, beloved in Christ, what there could have been in you to attract the electing love of a holy God? You were by nature children of wrath, even as others. By practice you were enemies to God through wicked works. Earth had all your affection, and all your thoughts. God was thrust from His rightful throne in your hearts. You have often, since your eyes were opened, wondered that you are out of hell—that God had not swept you away with the besom of destruction—that instead of making you trophies of redeeming grace, He had not made you ever-

lasting monuments of His wrath. Can you deny that the election was of God's free love, irrespective of works—that He hath saved you with an holy calling, not according to your works, but according to His mercy?

Viewed in this light, how profitable is the doctrine of election! It exalts the *sovereignty* of God, and lays the creature low in dust. It magnifies God's grace and glory. It excludes boasting. It humbles the soul in self-abasement, melts it in contrition and love, lifts it up in wondering and adoring gratitude. It makes heart and lip break out into hosannahs, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

The end to which all who are elect are predestined. They are predestined to holiness as a means to glory. St. Paul does not say, "For whom He foreknew He predestined to be glorified," but "whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." He hath chosen them in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before Him in love." The boon for which, as His elect children in Christ, they bless God is that He hath chosen them *to salvation* through sanctification of the Spirit *unto obedience*; the blessed Saviour, by whom God has appointed us to obtain salvation, is the *great example* to which we are predestined to be fashioned.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST AS REDEEMER OF HIS PEOPLE.

CHRIST is especially glorified in the faith of His blood-bought children. Then let us live upon Him for spiritual supplies, live upon Him for temporal supplies. Let us go to Him in dark and trying providences, that we may be kept from falling. Let us go to Him when the path is rough, that we may walk in it contentedly. Let our daily history be a travelling to Him empty, and a coming from Him filled. Let His will and ours be one. If in the course of our wilderness journeys He has permitted us to be in a great strait, yea, to the very margin of the sea, still, at His bidding, "Go forward," though it be into that sea, trust Him to cleave asunder its waters, making a dry passage, and causing those waves which threatened to engulf us to prove a wall of strength, fencing us in on every side.

Let us ever remember, too, that it is our peculiar exercise and precious privilege of faith to "wait patiently for the Lord." The Divine command is, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him," and in this blessed posture will ever be found the true secret of our peace. Especially should we ever guard against unlawful and doubtful measures in order to disentangle ourselves from present trials and difficulties. Let us pray for grace to endure the pressure, submit to the wrong, bear the suffering, rather than sin against God, by seeking to forestall His mind, or antedate His purpose, or by transferring our interests from His hands to our own.

Truly is this "precious faith," and truly is the "trial of our faith precious," for it renders more precious to the heart "His precious blood," who, in His glorious Person, is unutterably precious to His believing children.—*Octavius Winslow.*

PASTORAL NOTES.

ASSURANCE.

"We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."—ACTS xv. 11.

WHAT a precious thing is a full assurance of faith! Well might Dr. WATTS sing—

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

The Apostles evidently possessed this assurance, and rejoiced in the possession of it; why should not every child of God do the same? It is a Divine gift, no doubt, but is it not obtainable by earnest seeking and prayer, in accordance with the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find?" It is an invaluable blessing; it brings with it joy, peace, light, comfort, fruitfulness, and power; it tends to the glory of God, and the advancement of His kingdom; will He withhold it from His children—unless there be some special reason for His doing so—if they earnestly seek for it? will He not rather fulfil the encouraging words, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?"

In the words before us this assurance is expressed very simply and clearly. The words were spoken upon a special occasion, namely, when the newly-formed Church at Jerusalem was gathered together to consider a difficult, and at that time a very perplexing question, namely, were the requirements of the laws of Moses to be pressed upon Gentile converts? There was, we read, much disputing about the matter; but afterwards the Apostle Peter rose up and said, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe; and God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

"We believe that we shall be saved." There is no doubting here, no uncertainty, no misgiving, but holy confidence and boldness. The Apostle does not say, "we hope," or "we expect," or "we think," that "we may be saved," but, "*we believe that we shall be saved.*" And he evidently does not use the word "believe" as it is sometimes incorrectly used in modern conversation, when persons say, "*we believe that such and such is the case, but we are not sure;*" he uses it as expressing that which it really means, assurance and confidence. This assurance, as thus expressed, is also very strikingly united with humility, for the Apostle does not say, in reference to the Gentile

converts, "We believe that *they* shall be saved even as *we*;" but, regarding their salvation as assured, he says, "We believe that *we* shall be saved, even as *they*." He likewise states distinctly upon what this assurance was founded, namely, upon grace, all upon grace—"through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." He makes no mention whatever of works, or of sacrifices, or of penances, or of anything of the kind, but only of the grace—that is, the favour, the free and unmerited favour—of the Lord Jesus.

Beloved, our assurance of eternal salvation, if it be genuine, must rest upon the very same foundation; not upon works of righteousness which we have done, or upon works which we suppose that we may yet do; not upon any fancied merit of any kind which we think we possess; not upon any human intercessions or efforts made on our behalf; not upon the idea that our transgressions are less than those of others, or that they are not so hell-deserving; but solely upon "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Is this assurance ours? then we may rejoice in the possession of it with exceeding joy. For, in the first place, it does not extol the creature, nor does it in the leastwise exalt human nature, but it extols the Creator, and it gives all credit and glory to Him to whom alone they are due, namely, the Lord Jesus. Such an assurance cannot proceed from the naturally proud and conceited human heart, it cannot be earth-born, it must be divinely inspired and heaven-born.

And see in how many different circumstances it may be a source of comfort and of help. For example, we think, perhaps, of the saints of old, and of the noble army of martyrs; we think of their wonderful devotion to the cause of God and truth; we think of their self-denial, of their courage, and of their unflinching faith; or we read the biographies of noble Christian men and women of later days; and, as we compare ourselves with them, we perceive so great a difference, that we feel inclined to despond, and to imagine that whilst there is no doubt of their acceptance, there may be grave doubts about ours, and that whilst their salvation is certain, ours may be by no means so. Yet, if we reflect upon the fact that their salvation must be attributable, not to their devotion, and not to their self-denial, not to any noble qualities which they possessed, nor to any praiseworthy and wonderful deeds which they performed, but solely to the grace of the Lord Jesus; and if we also know that our hope of salvation rests upon exactly the same foundation, surely we may exclaim rejoicingly, in spite of our numerous shortcomings and infirmities, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *we* shall be saved, *even as they*." We may not occupy the same exalted position in the heavenly kingdom, we may not expect to "sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel," or to be rulers over "one city," or over "ten cities," but we shall be saved nevertheless; and, as in our "Father's house are many mansions," we shall find a place specially prepared for us there, and we shall be inconceivably happy and eternally safe, and we shall give all the glory and all the honour to our adorable Lord, and rejoice in and with Him for evermore. Will not that be sufficient for us?

Mrs. C. H. SPURGEON, in one of her recent writings, touchingly says, referring to her own future state and that of her noble and glorified husband:—"It is my confident belief that I shall see and know my

beloved one again in glory, and that there our earthly love, purified and sanctified, shall continue, and, maybe, increase in the perpetual light of the presence of our King and Saviour. Even the thought that there are *degrees* in glory does not trouble me. I may have the very lowest place of service in the Heavenly City, while he who was nearest and dearest to me on earth will certainly shine as one of God's brightest saints in His kingdom; but my love will exult in his exaltation, and rejoice exceedingly in all the honour put upon him by the Master he so loved and served on earth; and I am persuaded that he will seek me out sometimes, to tell me of some new glimpse of the Master's glory, or some fresh discovery of the sweetness of His love."

Or again, perhaps, we are "in heaviness through manifold temptations." The assaults of the great enemy of souls are so persistent and so overpowering—he does indeed "come in like a flood"—and with the inherent weakness of our fallen nature, we are so repeatedly defeated, that it seems sometimes as if it is utterly impossible that we can ever be otherwise, but that we must continue to be defeated, and finally be completely so. Oh the heart-sinking then, the fear, the all-but despair! But, beloved, the chief question is, are we to overcome by our strength, and to be conquerors by our own prowess? In such a case, would not the credit be ours, and should we not be able conceitedly to say, "Our own right hand, and our mighty arm, have gained for us the victory?" But that will never be the boast of the redeemed. Israel could not thus boast after their deliverance from Egypt, nor after their entrance into the Promised Land. Israel had to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord;" they had to see what He was able to do on their behalf; how He could make a way for their escape, even through the mighty waters; how He could smite their enemies, and cast them all dead upon the sea-shore, without one stroke or effort on their part; how He could disperse all the forces of the opposing Amalekites at the appeal of prayer; and how He could cause the walls of Jericho to fall down merely at the sound of praise. Just so is it with His beloved people now; and when they enter into possession of the heavenly inheritance, they will give Him all the glory of their successes and of their triumphs; and they will echo again and again Israel's exulting words: "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. . . . Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation."

It is related in connection with the tremendous struggle which took place in the Netherlands between the forces of the PRINCE of ORANGE and the cruel and powerful Spaniards, that the former were so frequently defeated by the latter, that at length they began to regard their defeats as unavoidable, and although they continued bravely and doggedly to oppose their foes, they never expected to overcome them. But one memorable day, after the contending hosts had again met each other, and the first fierce onset was over, when the forces of the Prince began as usual to retreat, they saw their Prince calmly sitting upon his horse on a small mound in the centre of the field of battle, with his face

towards his foes, and awaiting their expected attack with the utmost intrepidity. Could they leave their commander thus? No, they stopped, they gathered around and behind him, and in this way they formed a solid phalanx, which appeared to be like a rock in the midst of surging waves. On came the hitherto victorious Spaniards, never expecting that there was an insuperable obstacle in their way; but such an insuperable obstacle the Prince and his followers proved to be; and soon checked, and thrown into confusion, they were driven from the field, and a great victory was won, the effects of which probably continue to the present day. Is it not so in our spiritual conflicts? Satan may laugh at our puny efforts to oppose him, but he cannot laugh at the might of Omnipotence; and if that might be exerted on our behalf, we shall undoubtedly be—and only so can we possibly be—victorious. What can we do better, then, in our spiritual conflicts, than to rally around and behind our great Commander? We know that He can stem the tide of battle; we know that He can triumphantly resist the attacks of all our foes; we know that He can turn even apparent defeat into victory; and when we think of those whose warfare is over, and whose victory is won, who have been made more than conquerors solely through Him, we—depending upon Him, and clinging to Him, relying upon His willingness to help us, and His almighty power—we also expect to be victorious, and therefore we venture boldly to say, “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

Again, when troubles come, when cares and vexations worry us, when we are tried by bereavements, losses, sickness, or suffering, when our hearts are stricken with grief, how sweet it is to be able to remember that it can only be for a “little while,” and that no sorrows can be sent to us but such as we shall be enabled to bear, and that they will all be overruled for good. They may be sometimes very hard to bear, but there is some good purpose in them, they are all needful, and “heaven will make amends for them all.” When we think of the bliss of the saved, we can imagine in some measure how small and insignificant must their former trials—their “light affliction,” which was comparatively but “for a moment”—now appear to them. May we not, then, with the same hope that they had, and the same prospect before us, thankfully and joyfully exclaim, “Let us not mind these troubles, let us bear them patiently and uncomplainingly, whilst we can truly say, ‘We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.’”

“They are happy now, and we
Soon their happiness shall see.”

Hastings.

D. A. DOUDNEY.

SATAN never can make the least impression upon this mighty bulwark, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Fill thy mouth with this argument, beloved, and it will tell mightily against thine adversary.—*Cowell.*

THE LATE MRS. HOBLYN, OF BATH.

PART IV.

(Continued from page 117.)

WE give a further instalment of the precious letters penned by the Lord's faithful handmaid. As already stated, the letters are taken promiscuously, as regards both subjects and dates.

[1884.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am much concerned to hear that you are so ill. I hope you are under medical care. That wicked, surly old ABERNETHY was not far wrong, when, in reply to a patient who said he had *only* a cold, exclaimed "Man alive! do you want the plague, then?" I am glad to hear your husband has recovered, so am in hopes you may soon follow his example. Mr. HOBLYN says colds are in the air, and in a weakened state of the body people get cold, with all imaginary care and distance from persons who could infect, so they generally, on this principle, run through a house, and will begin or end even with animals. I remember in former days we always felt the cat was the first to get a cold.

It is very refreshing to my heart, your sweet energy about the Tracts. Mrs. P—— is a particularly nice woman, and deeply interested in the Tracts that she says have been blest to her. They are honourable in their dealings, and show a gracious spirit in their conduct. The little volumes are cheap, for the way they are got up, and *Divine Dealings* look pretty in their new clothes. *William Young* is a cheap little book at twopence, and would be a nice little gift-book for Sunday Schools.

I have it in weight on my spirit that these Jesuits are concocting schemes which before long will prove restrictions to the truth, that will try the saints of God. I believe the living family of God will have to bear another sort of testimony to that they bear now. Opportunities abound, but the state of things now with the Church seems much after the pattern Isaiah spoke of, third chapter, and forty-seventh chapter. The spirit of slumber is fallen upon the people of God. No zeal for truth, no discernment for error, no felt poverty, no laying out of means on the cause of God, no living for another world. Oh, my dear friend and sister in Christ, do you not find this amongst all classes you happen to fall in with? I do; and I feel it creeping over *myself*. I write not this as if to say, "*myself exempted*;" oh, no! but "*myself infected*." So the Word speaks to me (Isaiah lii. 1-3). "Lord, do it!" I cry; "I cannot; but, oh, do Thou, for Thy Name's sake." Believe me, in true Gospel affection, yours,

A. B. H.

[1886.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Many thanks for your kind letter. We are both well, thank God, and creeping on in the old way, in our little circle, chiefly poor, and thoroughly happy in having a little to do. My husband keeps well, enjoying Gospel liberty and true Gospel teaching we have in an old, uneducated divine, who has come from God's own college.

I am glad you have had the society of my dear friend of many years' standing. Bright, intellectual, and spiritual, she was a charming companion; not that I agreed with her in minor points, but on salvation matters she was clear, and a solitary path she had, as far as her own family were concerned. Religion is a jumble *now*—doctrines and practice alike have the unhallowed mixture of worldliness, and to be religious now is to believe everything but God's truth, and to make religion an amusement. Bath is getting worse and worse; men who are ignorant of God's truth call themselves Evangelical, and so people are deceived.

Do you take the *Remembrancer*? You will see on the cover the Tracts are alive. America has sent for 1,000, and Australia has had a very good supply, from a cheque of some pounds. This you will be glad to hear. I have been busy with a sixth volume, which will complete my earthly work. The Lord seems to smile upon these little messengers, and I trust they may be owned and blest, but they have their enemies.

My kind regards to your husband. He explained a text to me I have never forgotten.

Yours affectionately,
A. B. H.

[1890.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We have passed into another decade of years, but what of the ten years' sins, and all the back numbers! I have been looking a little into the worth, the almighty value of the word "*all*"—such as "having forgiven *all* sin." It is a sovereign declaration—kingly, and eternal, and complete. What a mercy when the Spirit satisfies a poor sinner upon this all-important, this vital point, to want and to enjoy. The world does not want it—they show their native enmity to the truth in all that leads to this most blessed fact when revealed to sinners; but the world hates it, and rushes to generalities for hope and help. It is a mercy to be broken off from false religion and Arminian professors, for there is no profit to be had in their free-will scheme, but it often leaves a sting behind. I hope your husband is better. So far, Mr. HOBLYN has had a very good season. I find the reproach of the cross has not ceased: people will bear with some truths if error be added whereby it is neutralized, but if distinctive truth is put before them, then the enmity is soon seen. Oh for grace to cling to Jesus, "sink or swim," as HART says.

Yours affectionately,
A. B. H.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was glad to receive your letter, and deeply appreciate your kind sympathy with me in my trial—for such it is. My sight has been failing for some time, and I am glad of the hand of a friend to write my letters. I was so glad to hear you had such a pleasant time at Mr. BRADBURY'S chapel. I highly esteem him, and he is a favoured minister of the Gospel, a truly godly man, and a gracious and affectionate friend. It was gracious of our God, at such a crisis, when truth is low and the friends of it are few, that the life of such a man should be spared by God, for the strengthening and confirming of the truth in the hearts of His people. We cannot in these times help

trembling for the ark of God; false religion, with a bit of pleasure tacked to it, is now regarded as the right way to heaven; yet it is only the devil's bewitchment to lead people on the way to hell, for Satan has snares for all ages and all classes. May the Lord open our eyes to His truth—to the power of it on our own lives, and to the enjoyment of it in our own experience. Doctrine, experience, and practice make up the entirety of God's holy religion; and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. My Christian regards to your husband; and with much affection to yourself,

I am, yours sincerely,

A. B. HOBLYN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your own and your dear husband's affectionate good wishes for us. I, too, enjoyed your little visits to me, so pleasant memories are mutual. We are both fairly well, and have much, very much, to praise our loving and unchangeable God for, "who hath not seen iniquity in Jacob, or perverseness in Israel." We find and see plenty of these things in ourselves. But the Lord sees His children in Christ Jesus, their Elder Brother, so says of and to her, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." This is what you rightly say in your dear letter, is "having to do with a precious Jesus." May you and your dear husband, as well as ourselves, realize more of His precious love at this season.

Accept all thanks and good wishes from us both, and believe me to be, yours in true affection,

A. B. HOBLYN.

[1891.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was very much pleased to get your letter and enclosure, and I consider it very kind of you to remember us year by year for so long a period. There is a sweet bond in and through the truth of God, whereby the one body is maintained by the power of God in peace and love. In our day there is such an unholy jumble of truth and error that it requires the teaching of the Holy Ghost to separate what is wrong from what is right, till the children of God are oftentimes at their wit's end, and they seem hardly able to judge whether they themselves are right or wrong. Our Bible tells us "the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth," so when we are brought to the end of our own wisdom and can do nothing, and often fear we know nothing at all, God comes by His Spirit and shows us it must be all of grace. Then we learn a lesson that we shall never forget, and that is the core of God's truth—the doctrines of the Gospel—which are all "Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus" for a ruined, wretched, sinful, helpless people. Indeed, we may say this includes the Thirty-nine Articles that you will find in your Prayer-book. There is no "yea" or "nay" there; no *do*, *do*, *do* there; but what a difference there is between them and the pulpit. I hope you are able to get a bit of good bread in Plymouth somewhere, and the true ring is discernible. If so, you have much to be thankful for, for "Evangelicals" here and elsewhere are going to the dogs.

We have had a very severe winter, which has tried Mr. HOBLYN very much. I am very well, except my eyes. I hope sincerely you and your husband keep well. I thank you much for your kindness to Ireland. I

believe the Lord's work is going on there, despite the criminal and political wickedness of PARNELL. The priest party are so occupied with politics that they have no time for persecuting the readers of the Bible, and they are opening their eyes to God's truth, and to the wickedness of their priests. Wishing you all Covenant blessings for the year, and to your life's end,

I am, in much love, yours most warmly,

A. B. H.

(To be continued.)

ENOCH.

AND what of Enoch? "a man of like passions with ourselves;" for Scripture teaches us that every one of the seed of Adam is a transgressor from the birth, being born in sin, a partaker of every corruption which flowed from Adam's fall, and, as our Ninth Article teaches us, he "deserveth God's wrath and damnation." The history of this man, Enoch, is very short, but much may be learnt therefrom.

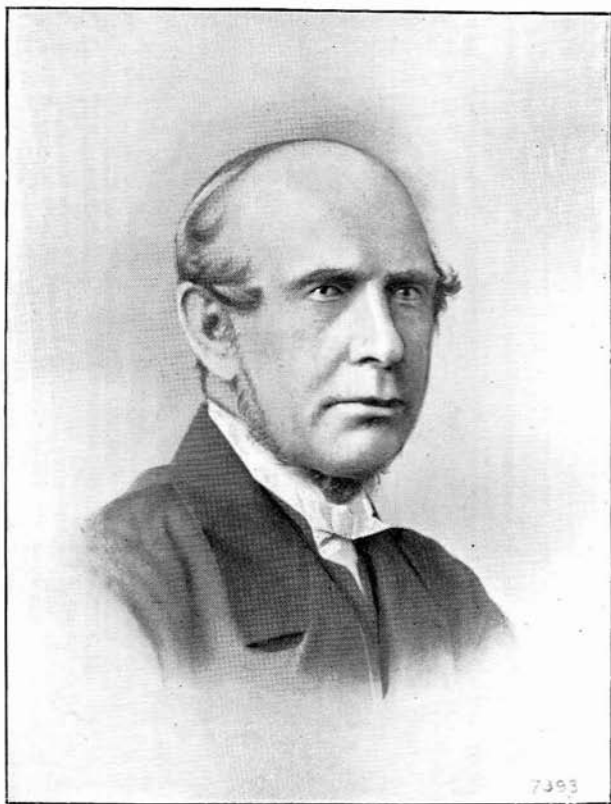
Enoch walked with God. Now, we know two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. As Enoch walked with God, they must have been of one mind, and their walk must have been in holy communion and sweet fellowship. Adam, after the fall, shrank from communion with God, and "hid himself among the trees of the garden, for he was afraid because he was naked." Whence, then, this fellowship between Enoch and God? Jehovah could not have communion with any who by grace knew Him not, or rather was not known of Him. In the patriarchal dispensation there was no written Word, but "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" therefore, Enoch, being instructed by the Third Person in the blessed Trinity, must have fled for refuge, and *accepted His testimony*, "that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" and, having fled for refuge to *that Christ who should come*, had embraced the promise given in Eden, and walked with God. "And Enoch was not, for God took him;" or, as the Apostle expresses it, "he was not found, for God took him."

What instruction is here! Jesus, before leaving His disciples, assured them that His people should be made willing in the day of His power—should be gathered out of the wreck of Adam's fall; that He would pray the Father, and that He would give them, *after His removal*, another Comforter, who should abide with them, and "bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them." That Spirit was to guide them into all truth, and enable them to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to continue faithful unto the end.

May that Spirit still guide His people, that we may be faithful in every good work, and enable us to praise the Father for His unspeakable gift; and to the Triune Jehovah shall be all the glory.

V. P. H.

NOTHING is so sweet to the spiritual palate, when it is in taste, as the Word of God.—*Romaine.*



From a Photograph by Graham, Leamington Spa.

THE LATE REV. HENRY FISHER,

Incumbent of St. Luke's, Leamington.

THE PORTRAIT.—THE LATE REV. HENRY FISHER.

THE late Rev. HENRY FISHER, whose portrait appears this month, was a faithful standard bearer in the King's army. Spiritually, he was the worthy son of a worthy father—HUGH MCNEILE, of fragrant memory in the annals of the Lord's worthies.

Being brought to a knowledge of the truth under Dr. MCNEILE's ministry, he in due time entered St. Aidan's College, and, having completed his course of studies, was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Chester, in the year 1850, and Presbyter the following year. His first curacy was at Boughton, 1850-52; next at Kirkheaton, 1852-55, whence he removed to St. Andrew's, Birmingham, for about a year, entering upon his labours at St. Luke's, Leamington, in 1856. This Episcopal chapel was the property of the Rev. EDMUND CLAY, who had removed to St. Margaret's, Brighton. During Mr. FISHER's long ministry, the building, together with schools adjoining, was purchased, and designed to remain in perpetuity as a centre for the proclamation of the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace.

In his appeal for funds, issued in 1875, Mr. FISHER said, "In order, as far as human precaution can do so, to ensure a Gospel ministry in perpetuity, so long as the building is appropriated to Divine worship, I purpose introducing into the deeds a clause to the effect that the teaching within St. Luke's Chapel shall be in accordance with the doctrines contained in the 1st, 5th, 6th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 17th, and 18th Articles of Religion, as stated in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England."

This excellent intention being postponed from time to time, was finally frustrated thus: though very ill, Mr. FISHER had no idea his end was so near; but being told by the medical attendant that if he had any business to attend to, it should be done with despatch, he was troubled about the church and schools, and caused a codicil to be added to his will, leaving them in trust. This codicil, however, proved invalid, through the witnesses not realizing the exacting nature of the attestation clause, for having seen the testator perform his part, they signed the document in another room. It was with consternation that the congregation heard of this failure, as the aged pastor had often referred to his intentions from the pulpit.

The executors claimed the property as private estate. The congregation were loth to enter an action at law; but, through chosen representatives, they made every effort to come to an amicable understanding with the executors, but after more than twelve months of anxiety, received information that the executors would not sell the property to the congregation at any price, and so the flock and children were turned out of church and schools to fare as best they might. The trial was, of course, great, and it led to further and greater trials. It has, however, also prepared the way for a truly wonderful display of the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord.

Thus first arose what has been known as the Leamington Church Difficulty, in which both the congregation and the present Pastor have been treated by the Bishop of the Diocese and by a section of the

clergy, in a manner that has evoked the deepest public sympathy for Mr. FISHER's ejected followers.

But to return to the subject of our sketch. Mr. FISHER was a most faithful adherent to the precious truths of the Word of God, and the witness he bore, being faithful, was greatly blessed by the Holy Spirit. Many attacks were made upon him, but through good and evil report, he continued to bear fearless testimony, neither courting the favour, nor fearing the frowns of man. The Rev. Dr. A. NICHOLSON, though differing widely from his views and practices, bore this testimony: "Mr. FISHER was a consistent, conscientious man, who never compromised his opinions. . . . I felt, in meeting him, whatever the discourse or argument, that I was privileged to converse with a true and holy servant of God. I often thought that, were I to find myself upon a dying bed, there was no man whose spirituality and prayers could be to me at such a time more sustaining and comforting. For thirty-eight years in this town, according to his views, within the broad limits of the English Church, the Rev. HENRY FISHER preached and taught honestly, conscientiously, without fear or favour, and did his work, in health or in sickness, without the recognition of so much as a beggarly canonry. But such things were as little to him then as they are now. After the burden and heat of the day, he is gone to his rest. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'"

If such a testimony could be borne by one differing very widely from him, it is not difficult to believe that he was greatly beloved by the flock to whom he ministered through so long a period. One of the Lord's handmaids, now in glory, testified her appreciation of his ministry in a little poem, entitled—

GRATEFUL REMINISCENCES OF ST. LUKE'S, LEAMINGTON.*

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO ITS PASTOR, REV. H. FISHER.

"He brought me to the banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love."—SOLOMON'S SONG ii. 4.

SWEET house of prayer, no spot below
Can share my love for thee;
No tongue can tell, no heart can
know

What thou hast been to me:—
A blessed school, a resting place,
A feast from Heaven's store,
A bond of love, a throne of grace;
Thou wert all this—and more.

Thy Sabbath bell, thy quiet courts,
Thy very atmosphere,
Are almost daily in my thoughts,
And often with a tear—
A tear of tender gratitude
For all my soul recalls
Of blessing given, since first I stood
Within thy sacred walls.

A Father's loving hand had brought
My ignorance and pride
Into the furnace, to be taught,
And to be sorely tried.
The fires were burning fierce and
keen,
The flesh was proud and strong,
And under this sharp discipline
I strove and suffered long.

But He who lit the furnace flame
The antidote supplied,
The trial and the teaching came
From Jesus, side by side.
The teaching made the trial clear,
Its purpose and its aim:
The trial made the teaching dear,
And Him through whom it came.

* From *With Him for Ever*. By E. R. V. Published by Jas. Nisbet and Co.

Oh, hallowed spot, the happy hours
 Passed in thy quiet aisle,
 Were like cool streams and shady
 bowers,
 Where I might rest awhile;
 Leaving the daily scenes of life,
 The world's ungenial air,
 Its hostile hearts and weary strife,
 Outside the house of prayer.

It was such happiness to meet
 My brethren in the Lord
 In worship round the mercy-seat,
 And listen to His Word.

Communion, teaching, rest, and food
 Were all obtained in thee,
 And carried back with gratitude
 Into the world with me.

Nor did they lose their living power,
 Nor have they passed away;
 They live unto this present hour,
 They strengthen me to-day.
 Then let the whole world reckon
 thee
 As but of little worth,
 To me thou wilt for ever be
 The dearest spot on earth.

After bearing aloft the banner of truth to the verge of fourscore years, he fell asleep in Jesus on the 21st of June, 1894.

The Lord's Day following, the services at St. Luke's were conducted by the Rev. GEORGE THOMPSON, of Brighton, who in the morning preached from Genesis v. 5, "And he died," prefacing his sermon thus:—

"Many of us are met together this morning under the sense of a loss, and we can say from our hearts a great loss. You have lost a faithful minister, and I have lost a beloved elder brother in the Lord. And I may say that I, too, in a measure, have lost a minister. For it was my happy privilege, on many occasions during the past twenty-three years, to listen to his word, as he was enabled, according to the grace and gift bestowed upon him, to bring forth out of his treasury things both new and old; and I scarcely ever (if ever) remember hearing him without gathering something for my soul, and without feeling in my heart as I left the chapel that it had been 'good for me to be here.' The twentieth chapter of 2 Chronicles has often made me think of him. For it was whilst he was preaching on one occasion in a pulpit, which was then at the farther end of the chapel, about how Jehoshaphat and Judah, with their wives and their little ones, stood in their helplessness before the Lord, that my heart was first bound to his. To be of one heart, one mind, and one spirit in the things of God, is no small mercy. It constitutes a union which will stand a good strain. Don't run away with the idea that it is necessarily all God's people who are thus united to all God's ministers. Were it so, the bonds, when tested, would not snap like so many gossamer threads, as they often do. Be thankful then if you felt union of heart to your late dear minister, and that union remained unbroken."

There was a true union, and his memory will be fragrant with the spicery of Immanuel's Land to the many souls who sat under his teaching, and are still in the flesh, waiting for the Master's summons to join him who has gone before.

Never did the value of his testimony become more apparent than when the flock, under the young Pastor whom God had appointed to follow in his steps, were called upon either to forsake their goodly Gospel heritage, or endure all that the ecclesiastical powers could do against them; for now, of all who counted it a privilege to worship in the old St. Luke's, so far as is known, only one or two are missing

from the new St. Luke's, and the Lord has graciously added the seal of His approval in increased numbers, signs following the preached Word and supplying every need as it has arisen.

The aged widow, who survives the departed Pastor, has erected a marble tablet in the new St. Luke's, bearing this inscription:—"In loving memory of my dear husband, the Rev. HENRY FISHER, for more than thirty-eight years the devoted Pastor of St. Luke's Church, Augusta Place. He entered into rest June 21st, 1894, aged seventy-nine years. 'Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him' (1 Thess. iv. 14).—J. C. FISHER." She has delighted to manifest her practical interest in the welfare and continuance of the work so dear to the heart of her late husband.

JOHN CALVIN.

THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE, in its first year's issue (1766), contained a very interesting biography of the Great Reformer and sound Divine, JOHN CALVIN, which we propose to reprint, after the lapse of one hundred and thirty-one years. The readers of the MAGAZINE to-day hold the name, life, labours, and writings of CALVIN in as high esteem as did their predecessors for whom the first Editor published the original biographical sketch. The article is headed "Biography," and appeared in the April number for 1766. A short preface, in italic type, precedes the article, and is as follows:—

The Life of JOHN CALVIN; a famous Reformer. The great and judicious CALVIN was so eminent for piety and knowledge of the Evangelical principles of Religion, that many of the Reformed Churches have declared his doctrine to be agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and on that account are called CALVINISTS. He was born at NOYON, in FRANCE, fifty-eight miles north-east of PARIS, in 1509, and died at Geneva, in 1564. Aged 54 years.

JOHN CALVIN, an eminent Reformer, was born on July 10th, 1509, at Noyon, a city of France, in the territory of Soissons, fifty-eight miles north-east of Paris. His parents were Gerard Calvin and Jane Francke, of good repute and competent estate, who bestowed on him a liberal education. They intended him for the service of the Church, and sent him from the Grammar School to the College of La Marche, in Paris, where he was instructed in the grounds of literature by Maturinus Corderius, who was one of the best grammarians and schoolmasters in France: for he was a man of probity, and understood the Latin tongue well, and diligently applied himself to his function. Calvin afterwards dedicated to him his Commentary upon the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. He was removed from under his tuition, and placed under the care of Hispanus, a Spanish master, in Montague College, where he studied logic and divinity.

As Calvin was designed for the study of divinity, his father early obtained for him a benefice in the Cathedral of Noyon: and he had a

curacy in Marteville, a neighbouring village, which he exchanged for the curacy of Pont l'Eveque, a village near Noyon. He afterwards became acquainted with Robert Olivetan, his kinsman, and was instructed by him in the doctrines of the reformed religion. His father, changing his mind, chose to bring him up to the law; so that after he had finished his studies at Paris, he was sent to Orleans, where he studied the civil law, under the direction of Peter l'Etoile, who was president in the parliament of Paris, and called in Latin, Petrus Stella. Calvin made great progress in the civil law at Orleans, and was highly esteemed by the professors in that university. He at the same time did not neglect the study of the Holy Scriptures, and was esteemed so good a casuist, that many who loved the doctrines of the Reformation, came to him to be satisfied in their doubts, and were great admirers of his learning and his zeal for these doctrines.

He became acquainted with Melchior Wolmar, who was Professor of Greek at Bourges, and famous both for his religion and learning. Calvin was some time at Bourges, and studied with success the Greek language under Wolmar. He afterwards dedicated to him his Comment upon the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, as he had done that upon the First Epistle to the Thessalonians to his Latin master, Corderius. While Calvin was studying the civil law, he neglected not that of divinity, and preached several sermons in a neighbouring town called Liveria. But his father dying in 1532, on that account he went to settle his affairs in his own country, and afterwards went to Paris, being in the twenty-third year of his age, with a resolution to make divinity his principal study. At this time he wrote an excellent commentary upon Seneca de Clementia. After a few months' stay at Paris, he became acquainted with those that professed the reformed religion; and particularly with Stephen Forgeus, an eminent merchant, who afterwards sealed the truth with his blood.

At the earnest request of many godly persons, who held their private meetings at Paris, Calvin laid aside all his other studies, and wholly applied himself to that of divinity, and was prospered greatly therein. He was esteemed in the French congregations as one of the most able and best qualified men to teach and defend the doctrines of the Reformation, which had lately been introduced into that kingdom. Nicholas Cope was then rector of the University of Paris, who had a speech to make on the 1st of November, 1532, in which, by the advice and assistance of Calvin, he spoke about religion more purely and clearly than usual. This greatly displeased the members of the Sorbonne and the Parliament of Paris, insomuch that the rector was summoned to appear before them, but he fled out of the kingdom to Basil. They also sent to apprehend Calvin in the College of Ferteret, but he escaped out of the window by the help of the sheets, and they seized his papers, among which were letters found that discovered several of his correspondents. It pleased God to appease this storm against Calvin by the pious and prudent diligence of the Queen of Navarre, the only sister of King Francis I., a princess of extraordinary talents, and much esteemed for her piety, wit, and the productions of her pen. She married, in 1527, Henry d'Albert, King of Navarre, and would gladly have introduced into his dominions the

Reformed religion. The Reformers were protected under her patronage; and she wrote a book in French rhyme, called "The Mirrour of the Skilful Soul," which was censured by the College of Sorbonne. No mention was made in it either of male or female saints, merits, or any other purgatory than the blood of Jesus Christ. Many of the Reformed clergy were maintained in schools at her expense, not only in France, but also in Germany. She took extraordinary care to preserve and secure those that were in danger for the Protestant religion, and to succour the refugees at Strasburg and Geneva. She sent for Calvin to her court, treated him with great respect, and heard him gladly.

The princess was poisoned at Paris in 1572, a little before the bloody massacre in that city. Henry IV. of France was the son of this queen. This prince was a Calvinist by profession, which religion he loved; but the temptation of a crown prevailed upon him to renounce the reformed religion and to declare himself a Romanist. Gratitude would not permit him to destroy the Calvinists, to whom he was indebted for his crown, and therefore he cherished and protected the Protestants. It may not be thought improper to have given this short account of the family of Navarre, who protected Calvin and promoted the reformed religion as taught by him. After Calvin escaped out of the window from Paris, as before related, he retired to Xaintonge, where he gained the friendship of Lewis de Tillet, canon of Angoulesme, at whose request he composed Christian exhortations, which were read as homilies in some parishes, to accustom the people gradually to search after the truth. He went from Angoulesme to Poitiers, where he drew after him new disciples, to whom he administered the Sacrament in caves and grottoes.

He paid Stapulensis a visit at Nerax, in Gascony, and returned to Paris in 1534, at the time that Roussel and Coralduus were banished that city, and orders were issued for apprehending the reformers. Servetus was then at Paris, where that unhappy man dispersed his books against the sacred Trinity, in which he was opposed by Calvin, who agreed to meet him: but Servetus would not appear at the appointed conference, being afraid of the very sight of Calvin.

Francis I. persecuted the Reformers, and commanded eight of them to be burnt alive in the four principal parts of Paris. This persecution made Calvin resolve to quit France as soon as he had published a treatise at Orleans concerning the Psychopannychia, against the error of the soul's sleeping after leaving the body to the Day of Judgment. He chose Basil for the place of his retreat, where he was accompanied by his brother, Anthony Calvin, and Lewis du Tillet. He soon contracted a particular friendship with Grynaeus and Capito, with whom he studied Hebrew. He endeavoured to conceal himself, yet was forced to publish his *Institutions*, which work greatly contributed to his reputation, and was dedicated to Francis I., on August 1, 1536. It was afterwards translated into many of the European languages.

When Calvin had published this book, he took a journey into Italy, to wait on the Duchess of Ferrara, the daughter of Lewis XII. She was a princess of exemplary piety, and a favourer of the Reforma-

tion. Calvin endeavoured to confirm her in the truths of the Gospel, and on this account she had a great esteem for him all his life, and even after his death honoured his memory. He soon set out for Basil, and was obliged, on account of the war, to go through the Duke of Savoy's dominions. This seemed a particular direction of Providence that designed him for Geneva, where he was kindly entertained by William Farel, who prevailed with him, with great difficulty, to continue there; for when Farel saw that persuasions alone would not prevail, he said to him, "Behold, I declare to you, in the name of the Almighty God, that unless you will here become fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord, His curse will be upon you, as seeking your own, rather than the things of Jesus Christ." Calvin being much affected with these awful expressions of Farel, who was seconded by Viret, submitted to the judgment of the presbytery and magistrates, by whose votes, together with the hearty approbation and consent of the people, he was chosen preacher and divinity professor. He complied with the latter, and would have declined the former; but he was obliged to undertake both functions, which was in the year of our Lord 1536.

This year was also remarkable for a stricter league between Bern and Geneva, as also for the establishment of the Gospel at Lausanne, where a free disputation was held between the Romanists and the Protestants, at which Calvin was present.

Calvin was to the Genevese the father of their liberty, and the former of their Church. The people solemnly agreed to a form of faith, and publicly renounced popery. He also compiled a short catechism, which contained the principal points of religion, and was taught in Geneva; and he endeavoured to reconcile the principal families to one another which had been divided into several factions.

Hooker, in his preface to his "Ecclesiastical Polity," gives a great character of Calvin, as head of the Genevan discipline: "A founder it had, whom, for mine own part, I think incomparably the wisest man that ever the French did enjoy, since it enjoyed him. His bringing up was in the study of the civil law. Divine knowledge he gathered not by hearing or reading so much as by teaching others; for though thousands were debtors to him, as touching knowledge in that kind, yet he to none, but only God, the Author of that blessed fountain, the Book of Life; and of the admirable dexterity of wit, together with the helps of other learning, which were his guides; till being occasioned to leave France, he fell at length upon Geneva, which city the bishop and clergy thereof had a little before forsaken, as some do affirm; being of likelihood frightened with the people's sudden attempt for the abolishment of the popish religion. At the coming of Calvin thither, the form of their civil regiment was popular, as it continueth to this day; neither king, nor duke, nor noblemen, of any authority or power over them, but officers chosen by the people yearly out of themselves, to order all things with public consent. For spiritual government they had no laws at all agreed upon, but did what the pastors of their souls could by persuasion win them unto. Calvin considered how dangerous it was that the whole estate of that Church should hang still on so slender a thread, as the liking of an ignorant multitude, if it hath power to change whatsoever

itself liketh. Therefore taking unto him two of the other ministers, for more countenance of the action, albeit the rest were all against him, they moved and persuaded the people to bind themselves by solemn oath, *first*, never to admit the papacy among them again; and *secondly*, to live in obedience unto such orders concerning the exercise of their religion, and the form of their ecclesiastical government, as those their true and faithful ministers of God's Word had, agreeably to Scripture, set down to that end and purpose."

(*To be continued.*)

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE temple of Solomon was a figurative description of the Church of God. They who are living stones, foreordained of God to be built up a spiritual house, are, each in the appointed time, taken from the pit whence they are digged, and by Him made meet for that place where He puts and keeps them. He brings them out of the horrible pit, He prepares them by His grace, and makes them meet for a name and place in His everlasting kingdom. The spiritual body of Christ's Church is not the work of perishable tools. Every part of that glorious body was "completed from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Every living stone "stood in its lot before the hills were, or the mountains were settled." The Church of God, in its superstructure, as well as its foundations, standeth sure. Every stone, from the foundation stone to the keystone of the eternally indestructible arch, is God's workmanship from everlasting. He chose them while as yet He had not made the earth. He justified them before the foundation of the world.

He calls them to receive the adoption of children when they are without God in the world, having no hope. "He is found of them who seek Him not." He hears their cry of deep distress before they call. He speaks to them in a still small voice, of the hidden mystery which He ordained before the world to their glory, when they have no ear to hear, nor heart to receive the joyful sound. In all these things, in building up His people into a spiritual house, whether He elects, prepares, brings in, or establishes, all, all is of free, sovereign and unchangeable grace. When He works none can let, and when He begins to build, it shall not be said that He is unable to finish. "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! His ways are past finding out, and His footsteps are not known."—*Bible Magazine*, 1816.

WHEN Alexander came against a people who dwelt on the rocks, they smiled at his approach, and bid defiance to his power, boldly saying, "Unless your soldiers can fly in the air, we fear you not; we are safe; our defence is impregnable." So, O my soul, dwelling in Christ, the Rock of thy salvation, thou art safe and secure from every foe, for thou dwellest on high, and thy defence shall be the munitions of rocks.—*W. Mason*.

Protestant Beacon.

MILTON ON THE GROWTH OF POPERY.

IN the year 1673, one year prior to his death, JOHN MILTON wrote and published the following remarkable treatise. It bears the title, "OF TRUE RELIGION, HERESY, SCHISM, TOLERATION, AND WHAT BEST MEANS MAY BE USED AGAINST THE GROWTH OF POPERY." Many of the sentiments expressed by the great Puritan Poet may well be laid to heart by us at the present time, when the Roman Antichrist is concentrating all his forces on England in order to subjugate her to his iron sceptre:—

IT is unknown to no man, who knows ought of concernment among us, that the increase of Popery is at this day no small trouble and offence to greatest part of the nation; and the rejoicing of all good men that it is so: the more the rejoicing, that God hath given a heart to the people, to remember still their great and happy deliverance from Popish thralldom, and to esteem so highly the precious benefit of His Gospel, so freely and so peaceably enjoyed among them. Since therefore some have already in public with many considerable arguments exhorted the people, to beware the growth of this Romish weed; I thought it no less than a common duty, to lend my hand, how unable soever, to so good a purpose. I will not now enter into the labyrinth of Councils and Fathers, and entangled wood, which the Papists love to fight in, not with hope of victory, but to obscure the shame of an open overthrow: which yet in that kind of combat, many heretofore, and one of late, hath eminently given them. And such manner of dispute with them to learned men is useful and very commendable. But I shall insist now on what is plainer to common apprehension, and what I have to say, without longer introduction.

True religion is the true worship and service of God, learnt and believed from the Word of God only. No man or angel can know how God would be worshipped and served, unless God reveal it: He hath revealed and taught it us in the Holy Scriptures by inspired ministers, and in the Gospel by His own Son and His Apostles, with strictest command, to reject all other traditions or additions whatsoever. According to that of St. Paul, "Though we or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema, or accursed." And, Deut. iv. 2: "Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it." Rev. xxii. 18, 19: "If any man shall add, &c. If any man shall take away from the words, &c." With good and religious reason therefore all Protestant Churches with one consent, and particularly the Church of England, in her Thirty-nine Articles, artic. 6th, 19th, 20th, 21st, and elsewhere, maintain these two points, as the main principles of true religion; that the rule of true religion is the Word of God only: and that their faith ought not to be an implicit faith, that is to believe, though as the Church believes, against or without express authority of Scripture. And if all Protestants, as universally as they

hold these two principles, so attentively and religiously would observe them, they would avoid and cut off many debates and contentions, schisms and persecutions, which too oft have been among them, and more firmly unite against the common adversary. For hence it directly follows, that no true Protestant can persecute, or not tolerate his fellow Protestant, though dissenting from him in some opinions, but he must flatly deny and renounce these two his own main principles, whereon true religion is founded; while he compels his brother from that which he believes as the manifest Word of God, to an implicit faith (which he himself condemns) to the endangering of his brother's soul, whether by rash belief, or outward conformity: for "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin."

I will now as briefly show what is false religion or heresy, which will be done as easily: for of contraries the definitions must needs be contrary. Heresy therefore is a religion taken up and believed from the traditions of men, and additions to the Word of God. Whence also it follows clearly, that of all known sects, or pretended religions, at this day in Christendom, Popery is the only or the greatest heresy: and he who is so forward to brand all others for heretics, the obstinate Papist, the only heretic. Hence one of their own famous writers found just cause to style the Romish Church "Mother of error, school of heresy." And whereas the Papist boasts himself to be a Roman Catholic, it is a mere contradiction, one of the Pope's bulls, as if he should say, universal particular, a catholic schismatic. For catholic in Greek signifies universal: and the Christian Church was so called, as consisting of all nations to whom the Gospel was to be preached, in contradistinction to the Jewish Church, which consisted for the most part of Jews only.

Sects may be in a true Church as well as in a false, when men follow the doctrine too much for the teacher's sake, whom they think almost infallible; and this becomes, through infirmity, implicit faith; and the name sectary pertains to such a disciple.

Schism is a rent or division in the Church, when it comes to the separating of congregations; and may also happen to a true Church, as well as to a false; yet in the true needs not tend to the breaking of communion, if they can agree in the right administration of that wherein they communicate, keeping their other opinions to themselves, not being destructive to faith. The Pharisees and Sadducees were two sects, yet both met together in their common worship of God at Jerusalem. But here the Papist will angrily demand, "What! Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Socinians, Arminians, no heretics? I answer, All these may have some errors, but are no heretics. Heresy is in the will and choice professedly against Scripture: error is against the will, misunderstanding the Scripture after all sincere endeavours to understand it rightly: hence it was well said by one of the ancients, "Err I may, but a heretic I will not be." It is a human frailty to err, and no man is infallible here on earth. But so long as all these profess to set the Word of God only before them as the rule of faith and obedience; and use all diligence and sincerity of heart, by reading, by learning, by study, by prayer for illumination of the Holy Spirit, to understand the rule and obey it, they have done what man can do. God will assuredly pardon them, as He did the friends of Job:

good and pious men, though much mistaken, as there it appears, in some points of doctrine. But some will say, "With Christians it is otherwise, whom God hath promised by His Spirit to teach all things." True, all things absolutely necessary to salvation; but the hottest disputes among Protestants, calmly and charitably inquired into, will be found less than such. The Lutheran holds consubstantiation; an error indeed, but not mortal. The Calvinist is taxed with predestination, and to make God the Author of sin; not with any dishonourable thought of God, but it may be overzealously asserting His absolute power, not without plea of Scripture. The Anabaptist is accused of denying infants their right to baptism; again they say, they deny nothing but what the Scripture denies them. The Arian and Socinian are charged to dispute against the Trinity: they affirm to believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to Scripture and the Apostolic Creed; as for terms of trinity, triniunity, coessentiality, tripersonality, and the like, they reject them as scholastic notions not to be found in Scripture, which, by a general Protestant maxim is plain and perspicuous abundantly to explain its own meaning in the properest words, belonging to so high a matter, and so necessary to be known: a mystery indeed in their sophistic subtilties, but in Scripture a plain doctrine. Their other opinions are of less moment. They dispute the satisfaction of Christ, or rather the word "Satisfaction," as not scriptural: but they acknowledge Him both God and their Saviour. The Arminian, lastly, is condemned for setting up free will against free grace; but that imputation he disclaims in all his writings, and grounds himself largely upon Scripture only. It cannot be denied that the authors or late revivers of all these sects or opinions were learned, worthy, zealous, and religious men, as appears by their lives written, and the same of their many eminent and learned followers, perfect and powerful in the Scriptures, holy and unblamable in their lives: and it cannot be imagined, that God would desert such painful and zealous labourers in His Church, and oftentimes great sufferers for their conscience, to damnable errors and a reprobate sense, who had so often implored the assistance of His Spirit; but rather, having made no man infallible, that He hath pardoned their errors, and accepts their pious endeavours, sincerely searching all things according to the rule of Scripture, with such guidance and direction as they can obtain of God by prayer. What Protestant then, who himself maintains the same principles, and disavows all implicit faith, would persecute, and not rather charitably tolerate such men as these, unless he mean to abjure the principles of his own religion? If it be asked, how far they should be tolerated: I answer, doubtless equally, as being all Protestants; that is, on all occasions to give account of their faith, either by arguing, preaching in their several assemblies, public writing, and the freedom of printing. For if the French and Polonian Protestants enjoy all this liberty among Papists, much more may a Protestant justly expect it among Protestants; and yet sometimes here among us, the one persecutes the other upon every slight pretence.

But he is wont to say, he enjoins only things indifferent. Let them be so still; who gave him authority to change their nature by

enjoining them; if by his own principles, as is proved, he ought to tolerate controverted points of doctrine not slightly grounded on Scripture, much more ought he not impose things indifferent without Scripture. In religion nothing is indifferent, but, if it come once to be imposed, is either a command or a prohibition, and so consequently an addition to the Word of God, which he professes to disallow. Besides, how unequal, how uncharitable must it needs be, to impose that which his conscience cannot urge him to impose, upon him whose conscience forbids him to obey! What can it be but love of contentions for things not necessary to be done, to molest the conscience of his brother, who holds them necessary to be not done? To conclude, let such a one but call to mind his own principles above mentioned, and he must necessarily grant, that neither he can impose, nor the other believe or obey, aught in religion, but from the Word of God only. More amply to understand this may be read the 14th and 15th chapters to the Romans, and the contents of the 14th, set forth no doubt but with full authority of the Church of England, the gloss is this: "Men may not condemn or condemn one the other for things indifferent." And in the 6th article above mentioned, "whatsoever is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man as an article of faith, or necessary to salvation." And certainly what is not so, is not to be required at all; as being an addition to the Word of God expressly forbidden.

Thus this long and hot contest, whether Protestants ought to tolerate one another, if men will be but rational and not partial, may be ended without need of more words to compose it.

Let us now inquire, whether Popery be tolerable or no. Popery is a double thing to deal with, and claims a twofold power, ecclesiastical and political, both usurped, and the one supporting the other.

But ecclesiastical is ever pretended to political. The Pope by this mixed faculty pretends right to kingdoms and states, and especially to this of England, thrones and unthrones kings, and absolves the people from their obedience to them; sometimes interdicts to whole nations the public worship of God, shutting up their churches; and was wont to drain away greatest part of the wealth of this then miserable land, as part of his patrimony, to maintain the pride and luxury of his court and prelates: and now, since, through the infinite mercy and favour of God, we have shaken off his Babylonish yoke, hath not ceased by his spies and agents, bulls and emissaries, once to destroy both king and parliament—perpetually to seduce, corrupt, and pervert as many as they can of the people. Whether therefore it be fit or reasonable to tolerate men thus principled in religion towards the state, I submit it to the consideration of all magistrates, who are best able to provide for their own and the public safety. As for tolerating the exercise of their religion, supposing their state-activities not to be dangerous, I answer, that toleration is either public or private; and the exercise of their religion, as far as it is idolatrous, can be tolerated neither way: not publicly without grievous and unsufferable scandal given to all conscientious beholders; not privately, without great offence to God, declared against all kind of idolatry, though secret. Ezek. viii. 7-9: "And He brought me to the door of

the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I digged, behold a door; and He said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here." And ver. 12: "Then said He unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark?" &c. And it appears by the whole chapter, that God was no less offended with these secret idolatries, than with those in public; and no less provoked, than to bring on and hasten His judgments on the whole land for these also.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

GOSPEL BOOK MISSION TO THE ARMY AND NAVY.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR SIR,—May I ask some of our kind friends to help us with new reading matter? Dear Mrs. HOBLYN's would be most acceptable. The Mission has many openings to circulate sound Gospel literature. In these days, when man is exhorted to do the Holy Spirit's work, there is great need for the pure Gospel. "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." The following letters have come to hand lately:—

FROM A LARGE MILITARY TOWN.

I shall be so thankful if you can spare me another parcel of books, as I have run out of them. Those already sent have been made the very best use of, and eternity alone can reveal the good they have done. When any of my people are laid aside, I generally leave them a GOSPEL MAGAZINE. Many ask for it.

On receipt of this letter we at once despatched a large grant of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE and other periodicals, and the following letter of thanks was received:—

I write to thank you for the lovely books you sent; we don't know how to thank you enough. The GOSPEL MAGAZINE is so suitable for the people of God, and we are glad to tell you it has been blessed to many.

FROM A SEAPORT.

Will you kindly accept my thanks for the parcels of books?—which will be a great help to my work among the sailors. The Lord is blessing the work.

I am still very unwell, and should value the prayers of God's children. With Christian regards,

Yours very sincerely,

ANN EVERARD BRIDER.

1, Wilton Place, Salisbury, February 6th, 1897.

[We cannot too cordially recommend Mrs. BRIDER's efforts to scatter the good seed of the Word among our soldiers and sailors. Sound literature, and donations for the purchase of such, may well be contributed for this work.—ED.]

THE REWARD OF OUR LABOUR.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR SIR,—I feel constrained to take this opportunity of bearing my feeble testimony to the spiritual refreshment I am privileged to find in your "Family Portion," and "Wayside Notes," and I cannot forbear to specially mention the "Portion" for last March. The sacred Word your mind was then led to was Psalm cxix. 160, "Thy Word is true from the beginning." Every line seemed sanctified with the holy anointing oil, and I was favoured with such a believing glimpse of the *faithfulness* of a Triune God to His own promise, that it was to my soul as "a river to swim in." Sweetly appropriate was the whole of that precious hymn of WATTS', "Begin, my soul, some heavenly theme," concluding with the lines you quoted which were *clothed* with the Spirit's power, "The Voice that rolled the stars along spake all the promises." It has often been a source of regret that I did not pen a few lines to you when "the dew was on my branch." Being feelingly "less than the least" in our Father's house—of a retiring nature, with an utter incapacity to rightly convey the "indeed" blessing the Lord has indulged me with—all conspired to keep me silent. Yet I would desire to be amongst those who hold up your hands in the Lord's work, and to our Covenant God we would desire to ascribe all the praise. It is sweet when our "hill Mizars" are brought to our remembrance, and under a fresh anointing of the Spirit we find something of the same savour upon our souls as when "the Lord commanded the blessing." Thus there is *an eating again of the old, because of the new*. . . . May the Lord still continue to make His goodness to pass before you in this matter, and may it be His gracious will long to spare you to "feed the flock of slaughter" by lip and pen, and in watering others may you be abundantly watered yourself—even with a Naphtali's portion, "satisfied with favour, and *full* with the blessing of the Lord."

A READER.

[It is interesting to note that two correspondents, writing to the EDITOR from places upwards of a hundred miles apart, sent him *on the same day* those precious words, "Full with the blessing of the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 23). He feels deeply indebted to the Master's goodness for thus moving two of His dear servants to call his attention to that soul-satisfying portion of the Word. Such incidents as this are reckoned by the EDITOR as among the choicest tokens of the Divine favour. The above-printed letter was not written for publication, but such "morsels" of heavenly bread ought not to be eaten by us alone. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth."—ED.]

IF Christ has your good will, He will certainly have your good word; if you truly love Him you will not be ashamed to speak for Him.—*Toplady*.

A CHOICE LETTER.

THE following is a copy of a letter written to a lady by the late Mr. ARTHUR TRIGGS, minister of the Gospel:—

October 14th, 1852.

MY OWN DAUGHTER IN THE FAITH,—Begotten of God the Father, quickened by the Spirit, born of God, and passed from death unto life, who shall never come into condemnation: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father in truth and love, the Mediator and Intercessor, Emmanuel, God with us, who is Himself the great God and Saviour, our Jesus Christ: who is Jehovah our Righteousness, the Way and the Truth and the Life, our Brother born for adversity. In Him I again hail you, and bless Him on your behalf for His great love and mercy manifested toward you; and to you I say, "Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." I believe your position and situation is of the Lord, who is your Portion and Inheritance, and as you "apprehend that for which you also are apprehended of Christ Jesus," you will "wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He will strengthen your heart."

The bounds of our habitation are fixed as safely and surely as our election of God is: there are no peradventures with the Lord our God, and "He is in one mind, and none can turn Him." Abraham got nothing, nor did he alter anything of the purpose of the Lord by his several peradventures; and the simple truth is, as we belong to Christ, there shall not, yea, cannot, any evil befall us, for we are preserved in Christ Jesus, who "holdeth up our goings in His paths," and saith, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye," and for believers in Jesus it is most simple and blessed—yea, easy—to walk by faith, knowing that "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

My child will meditate on these things, and with me rejoice, saying, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for Jah Jehovah is my strength and song; He also is become my salvation." This known and believed will produce real happiness in all states, circumstances, and places, and we shall "cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us."

I hope this will find you in "meditation sweet, and contemplation dear" of Him who is the Tree of Life, and who bears twelve manner of fruits; and in the knowledge of Him to say, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Himself is the true Vine, and we are the branches, and the vine will not communicate any sap or nourishment to any graft or branch but to its own nature. This preaches that Christ and the Church are one nature and life. He is the Plant of Renown, and we are the right hand planting of the Lord. He grew up as a root out of a dry ground, and we grow up into Him in all things. He was the green tree that was cut down, and we, the dry, are made to flourish; and so we spring up as among the grass, like "willows by the water-courses." Of willows baskets are made; and the Lord useth some of His for seed-baskets, and saith, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening

withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

The preceding hints are just an outline of Bible-botany for you to ponder over and enlarge upon; and not to pass by unnoticed the Rose of Sharon, who was crowned with thorns, but never partook of their nature. Hereby we see the word fulfilled by the Second Adam which was spoken to the first Adam, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." And, so to speak, the first Adam sweat water, but the Second Adam "sweat great drops of blood, running down to the ground." And He saith concerning Himself, the Bread of Life, "He that eateth Me shall live by Me." "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever." And such have eternal life, cannot die any more, are the children of God, being "the children of the resurrection." May the Lord expand our heart and mind to take in by communication more and more of the spiritual and divine importance and meaning of these holy truths, that we may live dead to sin, to the law, to self, and the world, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Life, and who saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Hallelujah!

It is with pleasure I write unto you such truths as the Lord in tender mercy hath given me a heart knowledge of, for "it is with *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." These things are familiar, and daily blessed, and I believe my child experiences the same blessedness, being, with me, a believer in Jesus the Son of God; and I also think that you find that these truths are matters for faith, and are not tangible to sense and reason. Therefore I add, relative to your question concerning Ezekiel xl., &c., that I am no prophet or prophet's son, neither have I the wisdom of Solomon to be able to answer your hard questions, although the subject is plain "to him that understandeth," and Jesus saith, "I am wisdom, I am understanding." I pause with you to consider the words. It is too high, I cannot attain to it: and if we look at the mystery we find their rings were so high that they were *wonderful*. Beloved child, most professors dwell in their comments upon abstract abstractedness, but the prophecies of each Prophet form together one glorious whole, and the *fortieth* chapter of Ezekiel is not separate from the *first*. Therefore, had I knowledge and ability I should begin to answer your question with the very opening of the subject by the *four* appearances of the Divine glory to the Prophet (chapters i. and x.) *First*, at the river Chebar (chapter i. 1). *Secondly*, in the plain (see chapter iii. 15-23): this is the second captivity with Jehoiakin, the first was with Jeconiah. (I only hint at things that you may search the Scriptures and "compare spiritual things with spiritual.") The *third* appearance was in the temple (chapter viii. 4); and the *fourth* at the renewed temple (chapter xliii. 2, 3). If you can in sober-mindedness ponder these things over, it will serve as a key to open the truth of what you ask me; and the references in your Bible will point you to other parts of the Word of God which refer to the same subject, but not to explain it. And after you have duly pondered chapter i. to the end of chapter x., and considered well the precious truths of chapter xi., you will then find it plain and easy to sit and ponder

over the record of the Spirit from chapter xl. to the end. And as in chapter i. you will find a wheel in a wheel, so you will find a city in a city, a temple in a temple. The first measured by cubits, the other round about eighteen thousand measures: the measurableness of Jehovah's measure, and the name of the city from that day, Jehovah-Shammah, *the Lord is there*. This goes beyond the old city and temple, and declares the same things or truths that John doth in Revelation xxi. 2, and xxii. 3.

I add another word for consideration. Although the temple, its furniture, vessels, and worship had the resemblance of heavenly things figuring Christ's body (John ii. 19), enjoying God's presence (2 Chron. vii. 16), and ancient Israel's worship (Psalm cxxxii. 4), yet the building, being earthly, was subject to changes and casualties as all earthly things are; and perhaps no building had more vicissitudes and alterations than the temple.

I cannot enlarge. May the Lord instruct you in the mysteries of the kingdom, in the mystery of Christ, in the mystery of faith; and may Jesus and salvation be increasingly precious unto you, and may "godliness with contentment be great gain" unto you. The Lord bless and comfort you, that you may rejoice in Him.

Yours in our precious Lord Jesus (Psalm lxiii.),

A. TRIGGS.

A LETTER TO AN AFFLICTED CHRISTIAN FRIEND.

(Reprinted from the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, 1775.)

DEAR BROTHER,—I can truly say I tenderly sympathize with you in your present trouble and distress. Your trials are indeed numerous and heavy, but do not give way to overmuch sorrow. I trust I have known something by experience what such scenes are. In these circumstances, I learned the value, importance, sufficiency, and excellency of the comforts of the Gospel. Did we never know what trying seasons are, we should not be able to taste the sweetness of comfortable ones. Reflect, for your comfort, that though you have had many burdens, you have hitherto been upheld under them; and this being the case, you have abundantly more satisfactory proof that the Lord is with you, than if you had had none at all. Think of God's promises to, and care over His people. We are exhorted to cast our cares, our burdens upon Him, and we have the fullest assurance He will sustain them. The royal Psalmist, in Psalm xxxvii. 23, leads the Christian to a most consolatory reflection; one that is eminently calculated for his comfort, through all the stages of his Christian course, and circumstances of his life: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." This is his distinguishing privilege, a *good* man; one that is the subject of a good work of divine grace on his heart; that is convinced, that he has no goodness in and of himself; that delights in good works; that acts from a good principle to a good end; this man has his steps ordered by the Lord. His path in *providence* is marked out; his steps are ordered *where* they shall be. He it is who fixes the bounds of our habitations. Many changes take place in this respect,

which now we cannot see through, but afterwards we can discern the hand of the Lord in every one of them. He orders his steps, of *what kind* they shall be, whether *pleasant and delightful*, or *dark and gloomy*. He strews the road of some with roses, and others are full of pricking briars and thorns. Some have sunshine all the way, while others have their path covered with clouds and blackness.

Not only so, but in a spiritual sense, "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord"; all the different scenes he has to tread and walk through; his troubles, trials, afflictions, &c., of a spiritual nature, they are all ordered; they are ordered in *number*. Not all the enemies the Christian has can bring one trial upon him without the Divine permission. Satan, who is the good man's grand enemy, has every link of his chain to lay at Christ's feet before he can move. They are ordered in *nature*. One Christian is exercised with a trial of this kind and another with a different one. One trial is for the exercise of this grace, and another for that. They are ordered in *measure*. There are degrees in them. Some have a heavier weight than others; this is plain from a moment's observation on matter of fact. And likewise they are ordered as to their *continuance*. To each of them He says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther." As soon as the end in view is answered by the trial it shall be removed. By the way, then, let us be more concerned to have our afflictions sanctified than removed, for when they are sanctified they will be removed; but they will never be removed in *mercy* until they are sanctified. But to proceed. His steps are ordered by the Lord; his services he has to perform, his works he has to do, his duties to discharge; they are all ordered; ordered as to their *nature*, *number*, and *importance*. Through all his works he shall be carried. Let the branches of it be ever so great or many, he is immortal until all is done. Yes, again, his steps are ordered. His comforts, joys, and consolations are all ordered—ordered as to their number, few or many—as to their nature, strong or weak.

It may not be amiss to observe, that many of the good man's steps now are such as to him appear doubtful and distressing; he cannot see through them; but this is no argument against the sentiment advanced. We cannot see the propriety of them at present; what then? Is there none? When the sailor at sea sounds the water to find the bottom, and cannot reach it, does it follow there is none? No; just so in this case. It is only allowing God to be wiser than we are, and it is all accounted for. However, there is one comfortable reflection, and that is, though now they are dark they shall be bright by-and-by. All present intricacies shall soon be unfolded. That which now seems confusion shall then appear to be the most consummate order. Even while here, in future paths of life, many present difficulties shall be made plain. With a degree of joy, gratitude, wonder, and amazement, we shall behold the propriety of the present steps by which we are led; and, joyful thought! in a little while all shall be over. Our happy feet shall stand in full triumph on Salem's peaceful shores. Then we shall look back on the dangers of the way with holy rapture of soul; we shall see every dark scene made bright, and behold every mystery unravelled. Then in the fullest sense we shall see the propriety of the words, applied to the present purpose,

(John xiii. 7), "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Then we may break forth and say, in the rejoicing language of the Church (Micah vii. 9), "I will," &c. Then when we come to stand on the banks of the heavenly Canaan, we shall behold His righteousness, the truth and equity of all His doings.

In short, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." They are guided by infinite wisdom, regulated by uncontrollable power, marked out by everlasting love, all calculated for the good man's advantage and God's glory; and what would you have more?

And now, my dear distressed friend, what do you say to these things? Can you heartily believe them? Then take, oh, take the comfort of them. Happy the men who is in these circumstances! he may sing with a certain poet—

"The Lord is become my salvation and song,
His blessing shall follow me all my life long!
Whatever condition He places me in,
I am sure 'tis the best it could ever have been."

When the soul can sweetly, can feelingly, can experimentally sing such lines as these, then a sacred security, a divine tranquility, will fill the soul. Such a person as this will be happy in all circumstances; will be content with present dispensations, and leave future events with God. Such an one will delightfully add, with a sweet singer in Israel—

"Great God, I would not ask to see
What in futurity shall be;
If light and bliss attend my days,
Then let my future hours be praise.
Are darkness and distress my share?
Then let me trust Thy guardian care;
Enough for me, if love divine
At length through ev'ry cloud shall shine."

And now, dear brother, I would draw towards a conclusion. I can again add, I sincerely sympathize with you. These views of things I have found singularly comfortable to my own soul. Shall accompany them with my most fervent prayers, that they may be so to you. And in the midst of our troubles, let us not forget to bless God for the many sources of comfort He has opened unto us. In hopes that you will taste the sweetness, and rejoice in the experience thereof, I rest,

Your most affectionate well-wisher in our dear Redeemer,

MYRON.

LEARN to trace everything to its right source, and you will possess two keys that will unlock mighty difficulties. Trace *all good*, be it what it may, to God, and *all imperfection* to the creature. Consider the nature of sin as being enmity against God, enmity against Him who is infinitely lovely, glorious, and excellent. The natural man has exceedingly crude and imperfect ideas of sin. He may feel it to be an evil as committed against himself or against society, but he cannot—no natural man can—live under a right sense of it as an evil committed against God.—*Howells*.

Passing Events.

A MONTHLY RECORD.

A VERY serious condition of things exists in Crete. The whole island is in a state of ferment. Mussulmans and Christians have in several cases furiously attacked and slain each other; and the Turkish troops, who ought to have endeavoured to keep order, have looked callously on. The Greeks are interfering, and sending a flotilla of torpedo boats to the island, under the command of one of their princes, with the pretext of attempting to restore order, but with—it is apprehended—the real design of attempting to take possession of it for themselves, and of annexing it to their own country. It is to be hoped that they will not persist in attempting to carry out such a design, and that order will soon be re-established; but the Continental Powers are evidently watching the matter very closely, because, in the present critical condition of Europe, a mere spark may cause a conflagration, which may spread far and wide, and lead to the most terrible and disastrous consequences.

MANY projects have been suggested for the purpose of permanently marking this year as the year of the Queen's "Diamond Jubilee;" but perhaps no project is likely to meet with such universal approbation as that which has been brought forward by the PRINCE OF WALES, namely, a general effort by universal contributions, to relieve from all burdens of debt the hospitals and other medical institutions of the Metropolis. This proposal has already met with a hearty response, and if it continue to be so met, and if it be universally supported by the contributions of both rich and poor all over the metropolitan area, these noble institutions will be immensely benefited, and they may be enabled not merely to maintain, but also to extend, their invaluable work. In recommending this project to the community at large, the PRINCE OF WALES points out to the vast population of the Metropolis, which has grown to depend more and more upon the succour and skill of these excellent institutions, that, apart from the purely philanthropic work carried on in relief of our sick poor, we look to the hospitals for the means of medical education and the advancement of medical science. Those people, however, who profit most by their services forget to maintain them, so that it would need a sum of one hundred thousand pounds per annum, added to their present revenues, to set the hospitals and convalescent homes free of encumbrances, and to equalise their resources with the work which they have to perform.

THE famine in India continues, and it has greatly extended. It is the most serious and severe famine which has been known in India for the last twenty years or more; and in spite of every effort made to lessen it, it will in all probability continue for some months longer. The Government is pushing railways in the direction of the most

severely afflicted districts, carrying out public works, and sinking an immense number of wells, with a view to relieve the suffering; large sums of money also have been subscribed and forwarded to supply the wants of the poor starving people; but the extent of the stricken districts is so vast, and the number of the starving is so great, that to effectively relieve all is a work of stupendous difficulty. The accounts of the effects of the famine are extremely sad. For example, a secretary of the BISHOP THORBURN Fund writes from Allahabad:—"The horrors of famine are indescribable. In one place I found 137 little children, mostly under twelve years of age, many not more than four or five, whose parents had died or deserted them. These children were in the streets and bazaars picking up grain which had fallen on the ground and eating it raw. In another village I found one hundred more picking up one grain at a time in the market place. We called them to the rest-house, where we were staying, and fed them with parched grain, which they ate with great voracity. With the children came a number of men and women, who were living skeletons. It was awful to look into the faces of these starving people, and to know that every day their sufferings must increase until death ends their misery. . . . As our train stopped at station after station, it was terrible to hear the hungry people crying in the darkness for food. In one place it is estimated that twelve thousand people die every month from the effects of the famine. It is utterly impossible for the Government to provide relief for all the people when the famine is so widespread." The Rev. E. D. PRICE, C.M.S., at work in the Gond country, Central India, gives also a terrible picture of the distress all around him. He writes from Mandla:—"Poor Gonds, Baigas, &c., are coming in from different directions seeking food. I saw skeletons in the compound—fearful objects. Imagine a skeleton with a membrane tightly stretched over it; in that state I saw a poor boy and baby, and the mother of the children lying in a stable here. Also in a shed some three or four in a similar condition. We are having deaths in our compound from starvation daily. They come to us too late to be saved. We are feeding about fifty families at Marpha, and forty individuals here. All the latter are on the brink of starvation, and would most assuredly die but for the food they are daily receiving. Yesterday I went down to the rest-house, and saw such sights as I shall never forget. The place was crowded with men, women, and children in a fearful condition—some dying, one dead, others just able to crawl." It is said that sixpence, expended upon the simple food which the natives eat, suffices to feed one poor creature for a week; and in one place, Basharatpur, a native Christian widow, of very small means, manages to feed four hundred children on the small sum of three rupees a day! Many or most of these children are orphans, whose parents have died of hunger. The Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society, Salisbury Square, London, will cheerfully forward any sums, small or great, which may be sent to them for the famine relief, to be distributed by their missionaries in India,

WE are glad to notice that a most foolish project has come to an end,—never, we hope, to be revived again,—namely, the Channel Tunnel

scheme, which sought to rob our country of its insular character, and to connect it by a large underground passage with the Continent. It is all very well to say that this underground passage could be closely watched, and could be easily destroyed, if war were to break out between us and our Continental neighbours; but ere war broke out an insidious enemy might take steps to seize possession of the passage, and if he were able to hold it for even a short period, the advantage which we enjoy in the bulwark of the sea would be speedily rendered null and void. Why should we throw away a bulwark which our Creator has so graciously given to us? Is it worth doing so for the sake of the convenience of the travellers passing to and from the Continent? If the reign of the Prince of Peace had come, and the nations had learned "to make war no more," the case would be entirely different; but when we know that the nations are more than ever arming themselves for war, and watching one another with perpetual suspicion and jealousy, our wisdom is surely to put up with some inconvenience for the sake of our national security. We are glad therefore to notice that the company which was got up to carry out this dangerous project has been dissolved, and we hope that it will never be resuscitated.

MR. EDISON, the well-known inventor, claims to have made another discovery, which he thinks will be of great service to humanity, namely, a fresh development of the far-famed Röntgen Rays. He hopes still further to extend his discovery, and he thinks that it is possible to construct an instrument which will show, by means of the X rays, the internal organs and tissues of the body as well as the bones, thus immensely increasing the powers of diagnosis possessed by surgeons in cases both of wounds and of the processes of disease; and he expects that if these increased powers are well used, they will have the effect of greatly lengthening human life, and lessening human suffering. Whether he is correct in his expectations can only be proved by actual experiment. Every discovery which lessens human suffering and mitigates the ravages of disease is very welcome, and may be hailed with satisfaction, but it does not seem to be the Creator's will that suffering and disease should be eradicated in this time-state. We know, however, that He will overrule them all for His children's good and for His glory.

It is stated, although it has not yet been officially announced, that an important change is about to be made by the Education Department, namely, to admit to employment in the elementary schools of Great Britain teachers holding the certificates issued by the Irish Education Board. Hitherto these documents have been valid in Irish schools only, and the Education Department has always justified the restrictions on two grounds—first, the peculiar denominational conditions prevailing in Ireland; and, second, the lower educational value of the Irish certificate, compared with those issued for England and Scotland. Grave apprehensions are entertained by teachers in these two countries that the standing of schools on this side of St. George's Channel may

be lowered, and theological dissensions increased. A large majority of Irish teachers are Roman Catholics, and the change will empower them to teach in British Protestant schools, although they are not entitled to do so in similar institutions in their own country; and as the ordinary salary of an Irish certificated teacher is some £40 less than the average in Great Britain, a considerable immigration may be expected, and the pecuniary temptation to employ them will be great. We earnestly hope that this suggested change may never be carried out, for it can do no good, and it may do a large amount of harm.

A BRILLIANT reception has been awarded to another brave arctic explorer, a Norwegian, Dr. NANSEN, upon his return home after two winters spent in the extreme north. He has been feasted and flattered, and a gold medal—struck expressly in his honour—has been publicly presented to him by the PRINCE of WALES. He is a brave and a clever man, and he fully deserves credit for the successful and indefatigable manner in which he accomplished his difficult enterprise; but we cannot see that such enterprises as his are of much use; they cost large sums of money, and they are undertaken at a great risk to human life, but they add very little to our knowledge of the desolate regions of the north, and of what practical use is that knowledge, after all? When a missionary goes out to evangelize the heathen, and to enlighten the dark places of the earth, he embarks upon a far more difficult, self-denying, and often dangerous enterprise; and he frequently exhibits wonderful courage and indefatigableness. His enterprise, if successful, benefits thousands of human beings both for time and eternity; it checks cruelty, slavery, and bloodshed; it promotes commerce, and it extends the influence and power of his fellow-countrymen; but when he returns home—not merely after a couple of winters, but after a whole lifetime spent in such a task—he must not expect to be feasted and flattered, and to have gold medals struck in his honour! The world does not care about him or his important work, nor does it delight to honour him; but his gracious Master does and will.

SUCCESS has again been granted to our arms in Africa, and in a very remarkable manner. For some time past the Foulahs, a fierce and warlike nation of slave-raiders in the Niger territory, have given us a good deal of trouble; and at last the Royal Niger Company considered it necessary to send an expedition against them. The expedition was wholly composed of native troops, trained by English officers. It merely numbered about six hundred men, with twenty-four officers; and, as it was known that the Foulahs could bring large forces into the field, it was regarded by some persons as a very hazardous thing to attack them with so small an army. But the result has justified the proceeding. The expedition met with determined opposition, and it was furiously attacked by a force of some thirty thousand horse and foot; but it was completely successful; and with the loss of only one English officer, and a very small number of the native troops, the enemy was completely routed, and their capital taken. Thus another reign of

terror has been brought to an end, and a large tract of country freed from the devastating effects of the most cruel tyranny. The native black troops, under our officers' direction, seem to have behaved in the most gallant manner, displaying the utmost coolness and the most perfect discipline. The case shows what an immense amount of warlike material and martial power may be placed at our disposal in our colonial possessions; although we hope that we shall never require extensively to use it, and it would be unwise nationally to trust in it, for it is only, as it were, after all, an arm of flesh.

D. A. D.

Reviews and Notices of Books.

Reveries and Realities: or, Life and Work in London. By the Rev. F. B. MEYER, B.A., author of *The Bells of Is,* &c. London: Morgan and Scott. Price 2s. 6d.

BRIEF sketches of life and work in London, issued with the view of answering many questions respecting the best methods of work in the large centres of our population. Some of the methods here described seem decidedly strange in their details, and they certainly must require much care in their working; but exceptional circumstances may possibly justify exceptional treatment. Mr. MEYER says:—

We keep late hours at Christ Church! But why complain? The young people, for the most part, get out so late from their business places, that it is impossible to expect them when the evening is yet young. The children of this world are certainly wiser in these respects than we are. The public-houses are kept at full blast till midnight. The music-halls and theatres do not close till past eleven. The streets are thronged with people long after most respectable householders have retired to rest. It is indispensable, therefore, that churches situated in the midst of a business population should have at least one service in the week at such an hour that the young people can attend. For this reason we hold our P. T. E. [Pleasant Thursday Evenings] from nine to ten. And we hold them in the church. It would, of course, be possible to throw open the Hawkstone Hall, with its spacious accommodation, and its beautiful incandescent light. It might save trouble and expense to do so; but we should lose the immense benefit of accustoming hosts of young people to look upon the church as associated with some of the gladdest, happiest experiences of their lives. . . . In many of its features the P.T.E. is worked on the same lines as the P.S.A. The doors are opened a quarter of an hour before the meeting begins. In the lobby sit the markers to receive the pennies of those who are subscribing for books, and to mark the attendance of all who come regularly, and are counted as members. Inside the church, the stewards, young men and young women, wait to marshal the audience to their seats. It is not easy to give the reason, but it is nevertheless a fact, that the young women sit on one side of the great central aisle, and the young men on the other side. There are exceptions, of course, when happy couples protest against being parted, and insist on sitting together. This, too, is quite to my mind. It seems to me that their young love will be cemented, and rightly founded, if it be based on mutual enjoyment of that holy love of God, to which all human love tends, as rivers to the ocean from which they originally came.

The Catholic Religion. A Manual of Instruction. By the REV. VERNON STALEY. Oxford: Mowbray and Co.

THE title of this book is an utter misnomer; it ought to be, "Popish Errors, as taught by a professed member of a Protestant Church." If the author really wishes to set forth "Catholic" or "Universal" truth, he strangely misrepresents it. For example, he says, "The Bible is the best and most enduring book in the world . . . it is an inspired book, and in this it chiefly differs from all other books;" but then he argues, after the manner of the Romish Church, that "it is the most difficult of all books to understand," and therefore that it needs an interpreter, and that that interpreter is the "early undivided Christian Church"—which we may describe as a non-existent body! He says, "For every man to study the Bible for himself, putting his own meaning upon its words, cannot be a right plan." Why then, we may ask, did our Lord say to the Jews, without any restriction, or mention of such an interpreter, "Search the Scriptures?" Why did St. Paul write 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?" And why was the command given by God through Moses to the children of Israel, "These words . . . thou shalt diligently teach to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou walkest by the way," &c.? We think that probably the author's real opinion of the Bible is something like that expressed to us by a Ritualistic clergyman whom we met in Scotland some time ago; he said, "I believe that if all the Bibles in the world were cast into the bottom of the sea, the world would be none the worse for the loss!" He who said this was a man who had publicly stated, on two of the most solemn occasions in his life, that he "unfeignedly believed all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament," and that he was "persuaded that they contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ," and that he was "determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to his charge." He also had publicly read the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England to the people committed to his charge, and had expressed his unfeigned assent to those Articles, Articles which say, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation," &c.

The author of this book appears largely to rely upon the ignorance or the credulity of his readers, in his misrepresentations of truth. For example, he says that the real meaning of our Lord's words, "This do in remembrance of Me," is—"Offer this as My memorial before God;" because, he says, the word translated "do" means "offer." It means nothing of the kind. The Greek word translated "do" is "ποιεῖτε," and it is used ever so many times in the New Testament, but never in the sense of "offer." This can be seen plainly by a reference to some of the other passages in which it is used. For example, John xiii. 27, "That thou doest, do quickly" ("ὁ ποιεῖς, ποίησον τάχιστα"); if the word here meant offer, our Lord must have said to Judas, "That thou offerest, offer quickly," when he had no offering to make. Similarly, John xiii. 15, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" ("ἵνα καθὼς ἐγὼ, ἐποίησα ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιῆτε"); did our Lord mean to say, "Ye should offer as I have offered to you?"

The only attempted proof which the author brings forward for such an assertion—and a very lame attempted proof it is—is a reference to some such use of the word in a *Greek translation of a Hebrew word in a Greek version of the Old Testament*! Similarly he tries to make out that the word used by our Lord, and translated “remembrance” (“ἀνάμνησις”) has “a distinctly sacrificial meaning,” because it is used once in the New Testament (namely, in Hebrews x. 3), in connection with an allusion to sacrifice, thus:—“In those sacrifices [of the Levitical law] there is a remembrance again made of sins every year;” but because a word is thus used once in such a connection, is no proof whatever that it should be understood as being always thus connected.

The author teaches transubstantiation, sacramental confession, seven sacraments, and other doctrines of the Church of Rome; and he evidently hates the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, although as an ordained minister of that Church, he distinctly declared that he “willingly and from his heart subscribed” to them, and “acknowledged that all and every one of them were agreeable to the Word of God.” How can an honest man act thus?

He evidently also extremely dislikes the second commandment, and would fain get rid of it if he could—as the Papists would! How silly is his interpretation—or rather his misinterpretation of it! He says that we sin against this commandment—“Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath,” &c.—by “omitting morning or evening prayers, or by shortening them through not getting up in time; by omitting to use confession, by neglecting acts of reverence in church, or going to places of worship not belonging to the Church,” &c.!

If this book were brought out by a Roman Catholic, and as a professedly Roman Catholic book, it might be understood as an honest description of genuine belief; but to be brought out by a minister of a Protestant Church, in palpable subversion of the teaching of that Church, is extremely dishonourable.

Words of Counsel for Christian Workers. By C. H. SPURGEON. London: Passmore and Alabaster.

WISE and weighty words. Would that all Christian workers would carefully study them. For example:—

I have been struck lately, in looking through the history of the Reformation, and of the times before the Reformation, with the remarkable downrightness of the testimony of the early preachers. If you look at the life of FARREN, you find him not preaching *about* the Gospel, but preaching *the Gospel*. So it was with JOHN CALVIN. He is looked upon now, of course, as a theologian only, but he was really one of the greatest of Gospel preachers. When CALVIN opened the Book, and took a text, you might be sure that he was about to preach “Through grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” And it was the same with LUTHER. LUTHER’S preaching was just the ringing of a big bell, the note of which was always “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and live! It is not of works, lest any man should boast, but by faith are ye saved, and by faith alone.”

They spake this, and they spake it again; neither did they couch the doctrine in difficult words, but they laboured with all their might so to speak, that the ploughman at the plough-tail should understand, and that the fish-wife should comprehend the truth. They did not aim at lofty periods and flowing eloquence; of rhetoric they had a most contemptible opinion; but they just dashed right on with the truth, "He that believeth hath everlasting life;" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If we are to see the Church of God really restored to her pristine glory, we must have back this plain, simple, Gospel preaching. I believe that the hiding of the cross beneath the veil of fine language and learned dissertation, is half the cause of the spiritual destitution of our country. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. We must have not only plain preaching but plain teaching. Sunday School teachers must teach this same Gospel. A certain denomination has made confession, that after having had their schoolrooms crowded with children, they do not know that any of those children have afterwards come to be attendants at the places of worship. Miserable confession! Miserable teachers must they be! And have we not known teachers who believed in the doctrines of grace, and they would have fought earnestly for them, but in the schoolroom they have twaddled to the little children in this kind of way, "Be good boys and girls; keep the Sabbath; do not buy sweets on a Sunday; mind your fathers and your mothers; be good, and you will go to heaven!"—which is not true, and is not the Gospel; for the same Gospel is for little children as for grown-up men—not "Do this and live," which is after the law that was given by Moses, but "Believe and live," which is according to the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Teachers must inculcate the Gospel if they are to see the salvation of their classes; the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel; for without this no great thing will be done.

A Carillon of Bells, to Ring Out the Old Truths of "Free Grace and Dying Love." By Mrs. C. H. SPURGEON. London: Passmore and Alabaster.

THERE is no uncertain sound in this "Carillon," but the clear notes of Gospel truth and harmony. See the following extract:—

"What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe."—
EPHESIANS i. 19.

COME, my heart, satisfy and delight thyself this morning, with the thought of what thy mighty God can do for thee—the grace He is able to give thee now,—the glory He is reserving for thee,—the uplifting, upholding, strengthening, and preserving power which is all vested in His loving hands on thy behalf. Here is a storehouse of riches on which thy largest demands can make no perceptible diminishment, and all this is thine! "Exceeding greatness." Yea, Lord, more vast and wonderful than my poor mind can conceive. Thy power bids the sun pour forth his radiant light and heat,—Thy power holds the stars in space, and hangs the world upon nothing,—Thy power rules the universe with a word! Is it not exceeding great? All nature shows Thy handiwork; and Thy wondrous power is as much seen in the lowest forms of life and growth, as in the higher developments of Thy creative hand. All the discoveries of science, all the revelations of its secrets, which have of late so surprised and delighted us, are but glimpses of the infinite might and wisdom of the God whose "love is as great as His power, and neither knows measure nor end." But, Lord, it is not on the majesty of Thine omnipotence, as shown in Thy material world, that I would meditate at this moment; it is the "power to us-ward who believe" that enchains my heart, and thrills my soul with

oy. Help me to draw nigh to Thee, dear Lord, humbly and reverently, that I may "see this great sight;" for, though this is holy ground, and the bush burns with fire, there is no barrier, as of old, to prevent a near approach to Thee, seeing that, now, we "are made nigh by the blood of Christ." If I have true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then the exceeding greatness of the power of the Most High God, "according to the working of His mighty power," is to me-ward, is on my side, or—I say it with deep reverence—at my service, always at hand to help, to guard, to defend, and to provide for me. My pen pauses as I ask myself, "Do I believe this? Do any Christians really hold this faith? Is it possible that there can be among the feeble, doubting, self-engrossed, and half-hearted people that I see and hear of, any who possess the assurance that the power of the living God dwells in them, and that they 'can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth' them? If there be any such, why, oh! why do they not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called?"

Look to thyself, my soul. Is the exceeding greatness of thy Lord's power manifest in thee as it should be? Blessed be His name, thou canst say, "He has redeemed me from death and hell, pardoned my sins through the shedding of His precious blood, and given me a promise of life eternal in His presence." But what more? Those are the cardinal gifts of His grace, the corner stones of His mercy and love. What dost thou possess of the details of His mighty working, the filling up, as it were, of the great plan of His will and design concerning thee? What does "the effectual working of His power" produce in thy heart and life? Art thou wholly consecrated to His service? Hast thou given thyself and all that thou hast into His loving hands? Art thou filled with the Holy Spirit? Does He control every thought, and word, and deed? And are all the powers of thy being and all the possessions of both soul and body subject and surrendered to His absolute sway? Ah, Lord! Thy poor child sorrowfully confesses to falling very far short of the high standard of Christian life to which Thy Word expects us to attain. In common with so many others, I seem to live at a "poor dying rate" when I might have "life more abundantly." I know that the possibilities of conformity to Christ are only to be measured by the exceeding riches of Thy grace, and the exceeding greatness of Thy power, and yet I sometimes seem content without a full participation in the glorious experience which Thy love offers. Lord, enlighten and quicken me, I beseech Thee! Put forth in me the mighty grace which will make my daily life a proof that Thou art working Thine own will in me, and giving me to know, at least in some measure, what is "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe."

"*The Queen's Resolve, and Her 'Doubly Royal' Reign.*" By the REV. CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D., Editor of *Home Words*, &c. London: *Home Words Office*.

VERY attractive and interesting. No pains have been spared to give a striking account of our noble Queen and her remarkable reign. It is well illustrated; and although originally published at half-a-crown, if purchased in quantities of not less than twenty-five, it can now be had for the small price of tenpence each. It is a capital volume for our Sunday and Day Schools, and it may deeply impress the rising generation, if circulated largely amongst them, with a sense of loyalty and patriotism.

It is an old saying of the Reformers, and has a great deal of divinity in it: "God's biddings are enablings."—*Romaine*.