

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.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

"*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.*"—DEUTERONOMY viii. 2.

IT is just fifty years since, early on a May morning in the year 1840, I first took up my pen to address myself to the readers of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE. It was then published at ninepence, in a dark, unsightly cover; but, although familiar with its appearance, as almost the only periodical that made its way to the home of my childhood, I am not aware of ever having read a page of its contents. In fact, in the early part of my practical acquaintance with the work, I often thought that, had I been better acquainted with it, I should never have ventured upon so grave an effort as even an attempt at conducting it.

This may easily be accounted for when the reader is informed that, with the exception of the short period of five months, my immediate predecessor was of patriarchal age, and that he had conducted the work for well-nigh four-and-forty years—an extent of time scarcely, if ever, known with respect to the editing of periodical literature. Moreover, the venerable WALTER ROW was a man of sound judgment, shrewd observation, and deep practical experience of men and things. He was personally acquainted with men that, without doubt, were of great service to him in his editorial capacity, and in the aiding him in his insight into the varied aspect, profession, and practices of the so-called religious world of his day and generation.

The reader can, therefore, readily imagine the immense disparity between the capacities of such a man, with so deep and ripened a knowledge and experience of divine things, and a mere stripling, who had but the most slender acquaintance with matters of doctrine and points in dispute which then principally occupied these pages. It was not until after I had become personally connected with the

Magazine that I was aware of this. Hence, the discovery of its controversial character caused me to feel that I should not have undertaken the work, had I possessed this knowledge beforehand, for full well I knew that I was not constituted, either by ability or inclination, to conduct a Magazine of a disputant or controversial kind. In fact, in my negotiations in regard to the work with the then Editor, I had no intention of attempting to occupy his position. My first idea of doing so was at the earnest suggestion of my brother-in-law, the late GEORGE DAVID DOUDNEY. It was in reply to my remark, "I have purchased the GOSPEL MAGAZINE; who shall I get to edit it?" that he said, "Edit it yourself!" As far as memory serves, it was this remark of my most devoted friend and companion that suggested the idea, and led me, early on the May morning before referred to, in my chamber at Bath Cottage, Hornsey Road (since removed), to write the first leading article, in which occurs this sentence—"In a simple dependence upon Him, we take this our first step in a pathway, the difficulties of which He only knows." Yes; He, and He only, knew them. Blessed be His great and ever-adorable name for the wisdom, the love, the mercy, that prompted Him to retain that knowledge—to withhold it from the poor frail creature who ventured upon such a momentous undertaking. Had he foreseen what afterwards he was called to encounter, that foresight (without much additional grace and strength) must have utterly overwhelmed, even in the mere foreview and anticipation. Blessed be His name, the self-same mercy has repeatedly been vouchsafed since that day and under those circumstances, for, in regard to many an undertaking, I should have been crushed in the mere prospect of the after-befallings, had not the Lord mercifully withheld the foreview, and little by little brought me to know and richly to experience the precious and the so timely fulfilment of His own gracious covenant promise, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be." Yes, yes, adored be His name, it has been so, and that to the very letter. If I did not of all men declare the fact, the very stones in the street might well cry out against me. Ah! who hath more ample reason and abundant cause than I to acknowledge the truth of Moses' testimony in regard to Israel, "For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing" (Deut. ii. 7.) Let the simple facts verify the statement. Here, amid all the changing circumstances, varied experiences, personal sufferings and sicknesses, heart-crushing and desolating bereavements, have I been allowed and enabled to continue on my homeward way. Not for forty years merely, but for fifty, have I been strengthened from on high to pursue my course. Only in one solitary instance, during that half-century, have I omitted writing the opening article in this

Magazine. To God, and God alone, be all the glory! Not the veriest shadow of a shade of credit or praise belongeth unto me. No, in no wise. In all honesty and the utmost possible sincerity, I reject the every iota of self-praise or satisfaction. I too well know my own heart, in its inward baseness, defilement, and iniquity, to encourage or entertain aught that concedes to the creature that which belongs to the Lord, and to the Lord alone. I have too vivid a recollection of the untowardness and rebellion which took possession of me when trial, affliction, bereavement, loss and cross, set in upon me, immediately upon my becoming connected with this work, ever to take credit to myself in regard to it. I was ready to curse the day that I ever undertook it. Within a few months of my connection with it, I did my utmost to sever myself from it. I intensely wished to wash my hands of the work. Hence, how adapted to my case is the language of Jeremiah—"Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord: remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me" (Lam. iii. 17—20). In the retracings of the entire past, and the more especially in regard to my editorial career, I don't think there is a passage in the sacred Word more upon my heart than the first verse of the 115th Psalm—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

By way of summing up, dear reader, this brief review of the past, especially as far as this work is concerned, what *shall* I say? Yea, what *can* I say? Well, beloved, this, then, is the uppermost thought with me—"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets" (Dan. ix. 9, 10).

Nevertheless, in spite of all my shortcomings, and notwithstanding my manifold sins and transgressions, in thought, word, and deed, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, I will venture to exclaim, with one of my long-glorified predecessors (the immortal TOPLADY)—

"Kind Author and Ground of my hope,
Thee, Thee for my God I avow;
My glad Ebenezer set up,
And own Thou hast helped me till now.

"I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my Defence Thou hast proved;
Nor wilt Thou abandon at last
A sinner so signally loved."

AN OLD MAN'S TESTIMONY. ✓

"Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord."—ISAIAH xliiii. 10.

(Continued from page 201.)

THE more I consider those things upon which I briefly touched in my last, the more convinced I am, dear readers, of their truth. I refer to the fact of those who have the least means (humanly speaking) upon which to rely, being led, when under divine instruction, the more closely to watch and to testify of the good and gracious guidance, care, and keeping of the Lord their God. As I before remarked, certain I am that this leads to a closer intimacy, a sweeter familiarity, and a more child-like dependence upon the Lord. I am persuaded that the testimony of such of the dear children of God as have been raised from comparative obscurity and limited means to a less anxious and more independent position, speaking after the manner of men, have with that change of circumstances, deeply felt and correspondingly lamented the absence of the spirituality and the child-like intercourse with the Lord which they, in their former condition, had been privileged to experience and enjoy. Such could, doubtless, understand the fears and the disquietude of dear old LUTHER, who, when entrusted with some little extra means than what he had been wont to possess, was afraid lest the Lord was going to put him off with some merely temporary benefits.

In keeping with what we said in our last, about the handbasket portion, depend upon it, dear reader, neither the Prophet nor the widow with whom he afterwards sojourned were ever more indulged, in a spiritual point of view, than when the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook; or "when the barrel of meal wasted not, nor did the cruse of oil fail." Ah! it was then that, without doubt, they experienced, in a way that they had never previously done, the fulness and the blessedness of that precious portion—"He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks. His bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure."

Well do I remember calling upon a gentleman, in the suburbs of London, some thirty years ago. As we walked together round his lovely grounds, he referred most touchingly to his little City office, where, doubtless, he had aforesaid enjoyed much of the presence and smiles of his God. Now, by contrast, in speaking of his present position, as if very fleeting and most uncertain, he remarked that "riches take to themselves wings and fly away." In his case, however, the riches did not fly from him, but he from them, for very soon after he was called away. I never saw him again; but I hope to see him some day, where these changing scenes are neither felt nor feared.

"I am afraid to ask for it to be removed," said a gentleman to me one day, who for years had suffered intensely from sleeplessness, "lest I should lose what I now feel, and a worse thing should befall me." He alluded to the communion with God that he was permitted to experience, and was afraid of lapsing into a state of worldliness and carnal-mindedness.

In calling upon a friend one day, whose large office-tables were covered with various sets of papers, all appertaining to different causes and distinct interests, I could not help remarking that such a state of things would completely muddle me, if it did not turn my brain; and yet, of a sudden, there came vividly to my remembrance, old business scenes and trade turmoil, so that I could not help adding, "Ah! but I remember some of my former writing was done in the midst of such scenes, when the tears would pour down my cheeks as I wrote; but I have no such seasons now."

Thus, dear reader, we prove, personally and experimentally, the divine all-sufficiency, and then we see that the Lord knows how to deal with us and what to lay upon us. The paschal lamb must be eaten with bitter herbs; and if we would eat of Christ, the Bread of Life, and drink of Christ, the Water of Life, we must learn to be satisfied with those tonics (or trials) with which He produces a divine relish or appetite. It is to the hungry soul the bitter things are made sweet. If we are to be made the partakers of heavenly joys, we must be content to encounter those trials and temptations which, under God, are made instrumental in leading thereto; for it is a well-known and long-tried axiom, that—

"Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low and keep me there.

"Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisements by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
That I should prove a castaway?"

In my last I spoke of the opening year, and of what I felt in the watches of the night. The first Scripture-word the Lord spoke on that occasion was indeed a memorable one, nor can I conceive of a passage more suitable or timely for the commencement of a new and altogether untrodden year. It was, moreover, so clearly *the Lord's* choice, not *mine*. It is one thing to select a passage, as we think suitable and appropriate, and take it to the Lord and ask Him to make it ours, but it is quite another thing for the Lord Himself to be the Chooser and the Applier. The word, then, to which I refer, as the first Scripture brought to the mind, in the opening of the year, was the Apostle's statement to the Church at Philippi, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus."

Oh, dear reader, it was very rich, very appropriate, very precious! What could be more so, under the circumstances? What did it contain, or rather, what did it not embrace, as needful for all the changing scenes and varied trials and afflictions which should mark the course of the opening year, even as had been the case in regard to all the years that had preceded it? Why should the year 1890 be an exception to the universal rule, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," and "It is through much tribulation ye must enter the kingdom"? But here was a promise—and a most comprehensive one, too—to meet the case, whatever the requirements or however varied the necessities might be,

"My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus."

Now, first, dear reader, consider the *Claim* here expressed—"My God." Oh, how blessed that! What need had the Apostle to fear, or why should any who, like him, can adopt such a claim, doubt, or be in the least wise dismayed, as to the future, when the God of the whole earth is theirs? Is He second to any? Has *He* to ask at the hands of another for aught He intends to do, or purposes to accomplish? As the Creator and the Maintainer of all things both in heaven and on earth, is He not able to "work all things after the counsel of His own will"? Does He not "reign in heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth"? Can any "stay His hand, or say, What doest thou?" He weigheth "the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." He "taketh up the isles as a very little thing, and before Him the inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers." He "meteth out heaven with the span; He holdeth the winds in His fists, and measureth the waters in the hollow of His hand." And, dear child of God,

"This awful God is *ours*,
Our *Father* and our *Love*;
He will send down His heavenly powers,
To carry us above."

"My God! my God!" Oh, how full, how comprehensive, how unspeakably blessed the claim! "My God! my God!"

I am quite sure, dear reader, that we sadly fail in this respect, as well as in numberless other things, to estimate the great, the high, the exalted privilege of possessing the sacred right and the most distinguishing favour of being able to claim the Almighty as a *Father*—yea, to be able, on Scripture grounds, to exclaim, "*My God!*" Doubtless, many who read what I now write, will at least mentally exclaim, "Ah! would that I could do so; it is the one wish and desire of my heart." In return, we may remark, that were not the Lord in very deed your God, you could have no such wish or desire. It is purely supernatural. It is a God-bestowed gift. It is a Spirit-instilled emotion. It is a divinely-awakened prompting. It comes from God, and it returns to God, in secret, sacred, heart-lifting, soul-aspiring sighs, cries, importunities, and entreaties. "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me, *even me!*" Oh that Thou wouldest look upon such a poor, worthless worm! Oh that Thou wouldest whisper to my guilty, sin-steeped soul, 'I am thy salvation'! Oh that Thou wouldest say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'! Oh that Thou wouldest declare, 'I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine'! Oh, tell me, tell me, *even me*, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.'"

Ah! reader, these are the sweet outbursts—though it may be only in thought and feeling and desire—of divine life inwrought by the Holy Ghost in the previously dark, dead soul. Men in general—men unrenewed and non-quickened by the Holy Ghost—are as destitute of these sacred and most supernatural enkindlings as the dead that are mouldering in their graves.

And then mark, dear reader, the claim of "My God," upon Scripture grounds, is a permanent, a lasting—yea, an eternal—claim.

“Did Jesus once upon me shine?
Then Jesus is for ever mine.”

Every divinely-quickened soul may exult in the fact, that “this God is our God; and He will be our Guide unto death.”

Then the mere quibbler, formalist, or worldling will say—“If such be the case, men may live as they please; they have no need to fear. They can never sin so as to be lost or condemned.” Such arguments betray an utter ignorance of “the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him”; for the sacred privilege of the claiming God as “My God,” or “My Father,” involves in it an utter abhorrence of sin and a corresponding love of and thirst after holiness. The Divine image is stamped upon the renewed and savingly-quickened soul, and, from the moment this spiritual life is implanted, a new creatureship thenceforth exists, in distinct opposition to the promptings, inclinations, and desires of the old carnal nature. And the Almighty Bestower, Implanter, and Maintainer has always resources at hand by which both to restrain and constrain—to restrain, subdue, and control the flesh or fallen nature on the one hand, and to constrain, incline, and prompt the operations of the new and distinctly-spiritual nature on the other. Hence, in this state and condition of ceaseless and absolute need, there is not the vestige of room for fleshly boast, human dependence, or creature confidence.

These are all secrets inseparably attached to the new or spiritual life and heaven-born and heaven-bound nature of the believer, who has indeed “meat to eat which the world knows not of.”

And, in the midst of the bewildering and contradictory teaching of the present day, with the assumption of so-called religion, in its numberless forms and pretensions, how consolatory to the real seeker after Jesus is His own language—“I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” I believe that the state of things prevailing, at the present time, in the professing Church or so-called religious world, only tend to endear the precious portion just quoted. However confusing or distracting, in the view of the creature, the general aspect of the times may be, the Lord can make no mistakes. Naught has arisen, nor can arise, to confute Him, or frustrate the fulfilment of His own divine plans and purposes. Blessed be His name, His Word stands good, and shall to the end: “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Now, the very wording of this precious passage may well answer and put to silence the objections of those to whom we just now referred as stating that, if the believer were so safe, he might never fear to sin, but “live,” as the saying is, “as he lists or desires.” We repeat, in such remark there is the betrayal of an utter ignorance of the nature and divine operation of the spiritual life in the souls of the redeemed and Spirit-quickened. We have often asserted in these pages, that, if the sins of a believer do not bring his soul into hell, they will bring a hell into his soul, and he will never need a worse hell than that. Ah! the dear child of God well knows

the momentous distinction between walking in the light and bright shining of his Father's countenance, and the hidings of His face, when "clouds and darkness are around" and about him. Oh, well does he know and deeply feel, too, the difference between the declaration—

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

and the heart-stirring appeal—

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-reviving view
Of Jesus and His Word?"

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed;
How sweet their memory still;
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill."

I rarely read or think of this precious portion, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus," without the mind reverting to a dear, and now aged sister in the Lord, to whom these words were instantly applied, upon the death of her loved father, who had been both her solace and her support. It had at once a cheering and soul-establishing effect. It was a call—a precious exhortation—to look both upward and onward—upward to Him who is "mighty to save, and able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think," and onward to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Some forty years and more have since passed away, but, blessed be His name! His promise still holds good; it has never failed, nor shall it till the privileged sister to whom the words were spoken—no, nor till the whole family of the redeemed—are safely housed in the kingdom of their God and Father above, and then shall the whole election of grace, without a solitary missing one,

"Sing more sweet, more loud,
And Christ shall be their song."

St. Luke's, Bedminster.

THE EDITOR.

(To be continued.)

A TESTIMONY.

AFTER a day of special trouble and anxieties, I can generally look back upon it with more real pleasure than I can on a day that has gone smoothly. It is a mercy to feel that the world has not the attractions it once had. Although my own heart appears to me to be worse than ever, I cannot do the things that I would.—*Extract from a Letter.*

It is vain to reason on the origin of evil, which we cannot comprehend. Suffice it to say, that both natural and moral evil do exist—yea, more, that they have overspread the earth.

Wayside Notes.

THE LORD'S POOR MAN; HIS HEART'S CRY AND HOME CONFLICT.

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."—PSALM xxxiv. 6—8.

I GO into the cottage home of a poor man. He works hard and earns but little. The furniture of his home is mean indeed. There is one bright thing on the walls. It is a gaily-painted lithograph, said to be a Christmas gift from the only grocer in the village. His meal is frugal, and the most prominent thing visible is a well-browned tobacco pipe. Now, it does not follow that this poor man is the Lord's "poor man." On the contrary, we find him hardened in sin, and as ignorant of divine things as the cart-horse that is grazing in the field hard by. Poverty in itself, it is evident, does not make a man the Lord's poor man.

I go to another poor man's home. Here are signs of a Bible and a hymn-book, and periodicals of the revival sort of appearance. Here at least I have hope of a little spiritual converse. Alas! I find the man puffed up in creature righteousness; ready to talk jauntily of the hundreds of conversions he has seen; and we trace his character strongly marked in the Angel's address to the Church of Laodicea—"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Such, surely, are not "the Lord's poor men."

I change my wanderings. I go into the drawing-room of a said to be well-to-do Christian man of business. We draw up together to the fire. He unbosoms himself to me, telling me of trials and difficulties in his business life—of his doubts as to his really belonging to the family of God. He has little assurance, yet recounts the meltings of heart under the gracious dealings of God with him. He describes his total unworthiness of such mercy, and his heart-felt nothingness before Him. I come out of that abode, feeling, "This man, although prosperous to an extent in worldly matters, manifests that poverty of spirit which marks him as the Lord's poor man." I grant that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them," and it is a rare thing to find a child of God in the palace or mansion of the great of this world; but it is not any condition in this life that makes a man poor in spirit; this is the work of divine grace; and "blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is but another proof from the many that might be adduced, that all that pertains to Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and all a matter of divine grace and mercy.

Let us look, then, together a little, beloved, at that poverty of spirit and nothingness before the Lord that marks the true child of grace,

and at once makes him ready and hopeful to receive what the Lord, in His mercy, has promised to give. Let us in some measure picture and portray the character and condition of the Lord's poor man. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." How?

At the head of the Psalm from which the passage under consideration is taken, it is written, "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Ahimelech; who drove him away, and he departed." If this be so, we find him in a pretty mess—a fugitive, fleeing from before Saul, whose wrath was kindled against him, and who determined to take his life. In his extremity he seeks the wrong source of shelter. Rushing into the presence of Ahimelech, the priest at Nob, with falsehood on his lips, he pleads for some of the five loaves of bread in his hand, which the priest states is no common bread, but the hallowed bread of the sanctuary. The priesthood of the profligate sons of Eli, he may depend upon it, will do him no good, any more than a worldly priesthood will do the child of God any good in the present day. If he attempts such unholy alliance, he will smart for it as David did. A certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day—Doeg, an Edomite, and chief of the herdsmen of Saul. The knowledge of this increased David's temerity; but, worse still, he covets the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom he had slain in the valley of Elah, which was wrapped up in a cloth and placed behind the ephod. "Take it," said the priest, "for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me." Oh! David, David! is it possible that, after all, thy trust is in a carnal weapon? that the once stripling in himself, but strong in the strength of the God of his salvation, who had by simple sling and stone prevailed over the great Goliath of Gath, should now be found coveting his sword—great unwieldy thing—that could but be an encumbrance to him? "Poor foolish man!" methinks I hear one say; "I would not have done such a thing; he must have been a weak man." Stay, stay thy censure, friend, and look at home. I for one find my character and experience often written in the doings of those who have gone before, and whose folly and frailty is so graphically depicted in the Scriptures of truth. Well, as we have seen, he was in a pretty mess. What does he do? Why, he changed his behaviour before Ahimelech the priest and Doeg the herdsman, and positively "feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard."

The result was, they were glad to get rid of him. And "David departed thence, and escaped." And where did he go to? Ah! precious secret! He went to his own, to the "cave of Adullam." "And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them." Then it was he uttered the sweet language of our Psalm: "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble [plenty of whom now surrounded him in the cave of Adullam] shall hear thereof and be

glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles."

But, dear reader, do you say, "Stop here. What does David mean when he says, 'Saved me out of all my troubles'? and, in a previous verse, 'out of all his fears'? Surely the promise fails in my case, for I am not delivered from my troubles and fears, God knows." Friend, how old are you? Have you lived out all your days? Does God promise to deliver you out of all your fears and troubles at a certain date in your career? Nay; David meant, as we find, at the time of his song his sorrows had vanished. There were plenty more trials and troubles ahead of him, but, in spite of all, gracious times of calm in Christ, and the realization of His delivering grace and mercy. Plain, then, it is, that when fears arise and troubles assail, the Lord will prove Himself true to His promises of deliverance; but I very much doubt—nay, I am sure—troubles and fears will not cease this side of Jordan. If it could be otherwise, what would be the result? Only think of a Christian being delivered from all his troubles and sorrows half-way home. I will answer for it, that "this poor man" would then become "this proud man," and would be showing his fellows his own greatness, instead of the Lord's goodness.*

No, beloved, it must be that troubles and sorrows, foes and fears, mark the pathway of the child of God. It is well that it should be so. But though plenty of trials, yet they shall have a peace within, which this world cannot give, and a bright prospect of the beyond. "This poor man cried." Well, for one with such experience as we have described, I am obliged to say my whole life seems a crying unto the Lord. "Silly, weak man," would say the professor. Be it so. Perhaps I am, after all, learning the secret, "when I am weak, then am I strong." So the Lord keeps His people dependent upon Him, and, in their heart-felt poverty and nothingness, gives them grace and strength to prevail.†

How, during our Lord's earthly career, He had many a poor man, and poor woman too, crying unto Him, and that not in vain. And we have been struck with this thought, that in every case that He worked a miracle, or gave deliverance, He established some characteristic of His Person and power, so that not merely was the poor man or poor woman delivered and saved, but His own glory was manifested in that salvation. By way of illustration of this truth, let us go in thought together to the pool of Bethesda, meaning, as it does, "House of Mercy." Here, amidst the porches, "lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." There can be no doubt that here was a pointing to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, although

* Not a doubt about it, dear brother; and, therefore, the Lord, in great mercy, won't trust him.—ED.

† And thus secures to Himself all the glory.—ED.

very possibly these waters possessed a healing virtue, which gave relief to bodily pain and suffering, while the angel troubling them was a superstitious saying among the Jews. But be this as it may, "A certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years." When Jesus saw him, being Himself the Omniscient, He knew that he had been now a long time in that case, and "He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

By the way, this pushing and pressing into the pool savours highly of the profession of religion which seeks only natural springs. Here was a poor helpless man, who received the right aid, and, we have no doubt, obtained eternal life; for he was directly after found in the Temple, and recognizing the true Messiah, he told the Jews that it was Jesus that had made him whole.

But this is the point we want to come to. The Jews were highly offended that Jesus should have worked this miracle on the Sabbath day. Sticklers for the outward observance of the Sabbath, they were unmindful of the blessings which the poor man had gained, although they were so evident. But this was not the main offence with them; it was here—after Jesus had declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Here was their anger, and they "sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." And so He was; and by the miracle itself He manifested His co-equality with the Father, and this was the characteristic He displayed; recognized only, however, by the eye of faith, and not sense. He was the co-equal with the Father; brought up with Him from before the foundation of the world, and when it was laid, He was the Creator. For as Paul declares, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Look, again, here on the prophecy of Isaiah. He is called not merely the "Child born," foreshadowing His incarnation, but He is called "The everlasting Father," or, as it may be rendered, "The Father of eternity." So here, as also in the Revelation of John, He is called the Almighty, "the beginning and the ending," the "Alpha and Omega," the first and the last. And in connection with the healing of the poor helpless man at the pool of Bethesda, He gave a further fourfold proof of the same fact. He was the co-equal of the Father. The testimony of the Father asserts it. The testimony of John the Baptist affirmed it. His own works gave every proof of it, and the Scriptures of truth taught it. Oh! it is a glorious and all-important fact, a fundamental truth of our most holy faith—"The Godhead of the Father, the Godhead of the Son, and the Godhead of the Holy Ghost is all one. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal." Go to the pool of Bethesda,

God's House of Mercy, and in the restoration of that poor helpless man you will trace and behold that Jesus did it all by His co-equality and co-eternity with the Father, giving ample proof and testimony of this essential fact. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him;" much to the annoyance of the Jews, but to the rejoicing of the saved one.

On one occasion, two blind men followed Him, crying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" Did they cry in vain? Indeed not. Their cry reached the tender heart of Jesus, and after giving their testimony that they believed He could give them sight if He would, He said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Another poor man brought to Him "a dumb man possessed of a devil." Here was a double calamity; but "nothing is too hard for the Lord," and to the marvel of the multitude, He cast out the devil, and made the dumb man speak. Peter's cry in his sinking time, when all his zeal had vanished, and he was brought to perfect helplessness in the creature, "Lord, save, or I perish;" and the Lord outstretched His hand, and caught him, ere he sunk under the surging waves. And so we might multiply cases of that, when "this poor man" and the other cried unto Him, He saved, He delivered, in the time of extremity and need. But we have said, "And poor women too cried to Him not in vain." "Have mercy upon me, O Lord," said one, "for my daughter is grievously tormented with a devil." Oh, "send the troubler away," said His disciples, but not so with Jesus. He heard the three telling and touching words of her prayer, "Lord, save me!" and after fully testing her faith, He said, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that hour." The certain woman, too, who was a sinner, crept not behind His feet weeping in vain, but came away crowned with blessings. And no case surpassed that of Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils. And note with us the years of suffering that many of these crying ones endured. We think a few days or weeks a long time to be laid aside. Remember, for instance, the case of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, already referred to. He had an infirmity "thirty and eight years." Oh, what weary years they must have been to him! But how glorious and great the cure! Then, again, the man that was born blind. When our Lord so marvellously and mercifully gave him sight, as no one else could, the testimony of his parents was, that "he was of age." What a long deprivation, then, it must have been, and that too of that invaluable blessing, sight. And again, the woman who had an "issue of blood for twelve years," and had spent all her living in going from one physician to another to be healed of any. What a deal of patience she must have needed, and how thrilling the words of our Saviour to her wounded heart—"Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace"—her faith consisting in her coming to Jesus to be healed, and touching the hem of her Saviour's garment. Then, again, who can tell how many years Paul had to endure that "thorn in the flesh"? Well, we draw attention to such instances, that sufferers may be reminded of the years of trial and discomfort others have endured, beside themselves.

We have seen then, beloved, thus far, how "the Lord's poor man"

is brought to poverty of spirit and emptiness of soul by the Lord's grace and discipline, and how that when he cries unto the Lord, the Lord hears and delivers him out of all his troubles—not at once but as they arise, in His own mighty and gracious way, giving the poor man reason to praise Him and glorify His name. And feeling the personality of such experience, we too may well say—

“ Lord, I am sick, regard my cry,
And let my spirit free;
Say, canst Thou let a sinner die
Who longs to live to Thee?”

Never! never! for He has given us life eternal.

But further, our portion tells us how “the angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” This brings out the precious fact of *divine protection*. What a comfort to know and feel this, that the Lord is true to His Word, and has given His angels charge over us to keep us, and to keep at bay the enemy. I believe, if we could see into the invisible world, we should learn the secret of how, in a marvellous and merciful way, the Lord fights our battles for us. We are constantly delivered from fears within and foes without, but the Lord is all in such deliverances.

See, too, how the Lord is called our Hope and our Shield. The older shields were pieces of pear-shaped armour that covered every vulnerable part. Jesus, our mighty Shield, covers all. No weapon, therefore, that is formed or hurled against us can prosper. We are safe under such heavenly preservation, and that too to the end. And this is the more brought out by the forcible expression, “round about them”; the protection is therefore close home, all else is outside and beyond. And when we think the panoply is divine, how secure is the Lord's “poor man”! The Deity round about him. Ah! within, without, and all around, and upward too.

We have said, too, that “the Lord's poor man” has not merely his heart cries, *but his home confits*. It is often the sharpest here, and his fiercest enemies are those of his own house. A mercy for us if it be otherwise. But let a child of God be called by divine grace from amidst ungodly or even professing surroundings, and there will be a fiery furnace for him. Be it so. One will be in the midst with him, who will never fail him, and the conqueror's crown is kept in store for him. Few escape home conflict. There are few that are not crushed oftentimes with afflictive and contrary surroundings. Things painful where least expected. “For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that magnified himself against me; then I would have hid myself.” No, it was my own familiar friend, who has walked with me to the house of God, who has eaten bread with me, and whom I so fully trusted, and unfolded to him my inward thoughts; but, alas! he “hath lifted up his heel against me,” and knows me not now.

However, beloved, whatever unkindness and change we have experienced from any that we did once seem drawn to in fellowship and love, here is our mercy, “There is a Friend,” in the midst of all, “that sticketh closer than a brother.” He never turns to us the cold

shoulder. His love is never fitful and uncertain. He loveth at all times. Yes, in poverty and distress as much as in peace and prosperity. He loveth with an everlasting love. Oh to dwell more, think more, and trust more in the Saviour's love! It is that love that called us by divine grace, yea, and before this, watched over us from our very infancy. It is the same love manifested to us in all the discipline of our pilgrim days, in sorrow and sickness, affliction and trial; and it will be the same love that guides our onward and untrodden steps to the eternal home; and methinks the song of the redeemed must chiefly be concerning the everlasting and unchangeable love of the Redeemer. These are things that are well calculated to lift us up in the midst of heart and home conflict. Well may we say, then, with regard to the Lord's divine protection and preservation—

"Jesus my Shepherd, Lord, and Chief,
Will shelter me from ill,
And not a worm or shaking leaf
Can move but at His will."

Look, again, at the grace call of our portion, "O taste and see that the Lord is good . . . blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." If there be "tasting and seeing," there must be life. A dead man can neither taste nor see. Put bread into his mouth, and he cannot receive it; surround him with all that is bright and beautiful, and he will not see it. All is nothing to him. So, none will taste and see the goodness of the Lord but those who are alive to the things of God, through the quickening of the Holy Ghost. Are you, then, responding, "It is just what I want. My heart craves to learn more of Jesus, to gain the unfoldings of His preciousness. 'My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God'?" All this blessedly proves that there is a life divine, and that the grace call to taste and see is for you. See, then, to go to the beginning of things, how good God is to His natural creation. He created light and pronounced it good—the water and the seas, and declared them to be good. The grass, together with the trees yielding fruit, He pronounced to be good—the firmament of heaven, the fishes of the sea, fowl and all living creatures. Yes, seven times in that first book of Genesis it is written, "And God saw that it was good;" while, when it came to the masterpiece of creation, "Let Us make man," He pronounced it "very good." Look at that marvellous piece of mechanism, the frame of man; every part adapted for the purpose devised, every bone—ah! and little bone—in its proper place, and needful and necessary for the perfecting of the body. And does His goodness stay here? Indeed not; equally is He good in His spiritual creation, and His body, the Church, is complete in Christ, perfect in plan and purpose. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Nor is He one bit less so in His discipline—all ordered, and well ordered, by a covenant-keeping God.

And then our passage says, and says truly, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Yes, in the Lord who hath saved him, who has heard his cries in his heartfelt poverty and need—who has compassed him about with His divine protection, and who has proved Himself good in all His works and ways. Oh, may you and I, dear

reader, be among His blessed ones who trust in Him. We have every reason to do so, to trust and not be afraid to trust. Blessed are they that trust in Him. Oh, friend, trust on, He will never fail nor forsake you. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, that cannot be moved." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Things may be and are mysterious, the pathway may be thickly strewn with surrounding difficulties; so be it. It is all in the covenant, trust on.

One thought more. The expression, "O taste and see that the Lord is good," conveys to us the calling to *Divine teaching*, and God the Spirit gives the Lord's poor spiritual discernment to drink into His truth. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." Our blessed Lord, when at one time surrounded by scribes, Pharisees, and unbelieving Jews, refers to His own who are the gift of the Father, and states, "It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore [without exception] that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." It would be interesting just to see what the Prophets do say upon this important matter. We turn to the Prophet Isaiah's testimony; he describes them as "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." A description which oft accords with their feelings and experience. But he points them to gracious and glorious Gospel promises and blessings, securing them with the words, "And all thy [Zion] children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Yes, calm following the tossing; peace flowing like oil upon the troubled waters (Isaiah liv. 11-14). Then, if we turn to Jeremiah's testimony to the same point, he tells of Zion's sons and daughters being a covenant people, and that the Lord declares concerning them, that He will put His law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; that He will be their God and they shall be His people, and that they should "no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Him, from the least unto the greatest," and that He would forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more (Jeremiah xxxii. 31-34). Oh, this is gracious knowledge indeed! may we grasp it to the comfort of our souls. And then, if we turn to the Prophet Micah's testimony concerning the time that should come, when "the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains," and those whom the Lord shall cause to flow there-to shall be taught His ways and walk in His paths—a glorious anticipation, which shall be fulfilled in spite of much that casts down God's spiritual Israel now (Micah iv. 1, 2).

Here, then, is sufficient to show us the truth of our Lord's words when on earth, "It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." Oh for more of such teaching, more of that tasting that the Lord is good and gracious! And if we would gain such establishment, the precious Word of God will be our constant companion, and we will put aside all that is outside it, and drink daily and deeply into the truth as it is in Jesus. Lord, we earnestly pray for this, for ourselves, and our brethren and sisters in union and oneness in Christ.

But we must close. Ponder, beloved, over our spiritual points brought out from our precious portion. The Lord's poor man crying to Him, and not in vain. The Lord's divine protection and merciful deliverance: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them." The Lord's precious power and perfection in all His works and ways: "O taste and see that the Lord is good." And, lastly, the blessedness of that man who in the very thick of the battle and struggles of life trusteth Him. So shall our closing uplifting of heart unto Him be—

"Sure the Lord thus far hath brought me
By His watchful, tender care,
Sure 'tis He Himself hath taught me
How to seek His face by prayer;
After so much mercy past,
Will He give me up at last?"

No—indeed not.

"In my Saviour's intercession,
Therefore, I will still confide;
Lord, accept my free confession,
I have sinned, but Thou hast died.
This is all I have to plead,
This is all the plea I need."

May the Lord bless His own truth, that He in all may be glorified.
Burton-on-Trent.

G. C.

THE COUNTERFEIT.

CONVERSION, with many preachers, consists in nothing but a reformation of manners, external conformity, and a decent deportment. A natural assent to what such preachers say, is called faith; conscience hushed to sleep by a few dead works, goes for the peace of God; and to be enamoured and enraptured with the uncertain sound of such a trumpet, passes for pious zeal, lively frames, and the joy of the Lord. A demure or a smiling countenance under the Word is called grace in the very face; tickling the fancy and arousing the passions goes current for the operations of the Holy Spirit, and for a precious opportunity; whilst the honest rebukes and secret lashes of conscience are called the buffetings of Satan, the workings of the old man, and the trial of faith; and when conscience gets browbeaten, borne down, and silenced by the false evidences of the preacher, this is called being blessed, and set at liberty under the Word; and such precious souls are called seals to the preacher's ministry, which strengthen his hands, and serve to encourage him to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord," as this is called.—*Huntington.*

DOVES.—David speaks of a dove whose wings were covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. He refers to a kind found at Damascus, whose feathers, all except the wings, are literally as yellow as gold. They are very small.

Pilgrim Papers.

THE PORTION OF THE BELIEVER.

THE world thinks highly of an earthly portion in a noble or wealthy family, but smiles with contempt or incredulity at the portion of a true Christian, thinking, doubtless, that if there is one at all, it must be a very sad one. Yet the religion of Jesus is not a gloomy and unsatisfactory one. The believer is not always in the valley of tears, for he has more sunshine than cloudy weather. Thus we read, "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Paul, who had a large share of trouble, describes himself as "always rejoicing," and declares that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

In the third chapter of the Lamentations and at the twenty-fourth verse, we read, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him." Jeremiah, the author of these Lamentations, was placed in peculiarly sorrowful times. He was raised up by God to rebuke the nation of the Jews for their wicked departure from Jehovah, and to warn them of the fearful punishments awaiting them. We know how they hated and persecuted him, and by their continual rebellion brought down upon them the righteous judgments of God. The first two chapters are sad cries of the prophet, on account of the woes that had befallen his nation and himself. In the third chapter he bursts out, in remembrance of God's faithfulness, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."

Let us first notice the portion here spoken of. "The Lord is my portion." The expression is a family one. Each member has a share or lot, the whole disposal of which is the Lord's. The entire human family has allotted to each one circumstances over which they have little or no control. We see this every day. Even in the same family, one will have talents above the rest—some will be more favoured in appearance, in temper, in will, than the others.

What a strange fact it is, that while men constantly carp at the doctrine of election, yet the temporal election to superior gifts, advantages, and fortunes, these men tacitly submit to! There is nothing to be found in the whole world that savours of equality. Diversity appears to be the most remarkable thing in the universe. To complain of the doctrine of eternal election is more inconsistent than to murmur and charge God with favouritism, for making some persons so able and wise that they must of necessity rise to the summit of earthly success and grandeur. Yet the man who did this would be rightly laughed at and despised. We know there are persons to whom the eternal Father seems to bestow great worldly gifts. They appear to have their heart's desire. Everything they attempt they succeed in. Others appear to be quite differently circumstanced—difficulties beset their path, they have to fight their way through the whole of their life. And dreadful

is it to either, if these are their portion. These can never satisfy the human soul. Why, you might as well expect a philosopher to be satisfied with marbles, as the soul to be at rest without God for his portion.

“From pole to pole let others roam,
And search in vain for bliss;
My soul is satisfied at home,
The Lord my portion is.”

And while the Lord is said to be the portion of His people, they are said to be His portion. Hence it is written, “The Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” This shows the oneness of the believer and the Lord of Hosts. Marvellous truth! expressing the everlasting love of Christ to His Church; and they, being drawn by that love, become united in an indissoluble bond.

“Let me but Thyself possess,
Total sum of happiness!
Real bliss I then shall prove,
Heaven below and heaven above.”

This portion is an everlasting one. Earthly portions are finite and temporal. All mankind have their portions. Some have riches; and we know how uncertain they are, while, even at the best, we must leave them to others very shortly; for, as we brought nothing into this world, we can carry nothing out. Thus the monarch and the pauper go out of this world equally stripped of rags and gorgeous apparel. Job might truly say, “Naked came I into this world, and naked shall I depart.”

But the believer’s portion is most precious when “heart and flesh fail,” for then God “is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever.” How puny and insignificant are all other portions compared to this! Well may the poet write—

“When I can say, ‘This God is mine,’
When I can feel His glories shine,
I tread the earth beneath my feet,
And all the world calls good and great.”

This portion is also an unchangeable one. Earthly portions change, and they become sometimes of less value. Persons who fancied they were well off have found to their cost that their property is not what it once was. Take, for instance, railway shares, and other property of a similar nature; why, the holders of some of these have been beggared by the vicissitudes of the money market. But not so the believer’s portion. It will never lose its value—never be at a discount—but will increase in worth, so that eventually it will become more and more precious. “For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” Christ will be always the same—always lovely—His love the same, His fulness the same, and His faithfulness immutable.

This present life is full of changes. Even the conduct of believers to each other is often marred by fickleness and unkindness. Yet as dear BERRIDGE writes—

“There is a Friend that sticketh fast,
 And is the same unto the last,
 And Jesus is His name :
 An earthly brother drops his hold,
 Is sometimes hot and sometimes cold,
 But Jesus is the same.”

The believer's portion is a satisfying one. What discontented creatures we naturally are! Where can we find a satisfied person? Are we not constantly longing for what we have not? And this discontent is not merely the result of poverty and privation. We know but little of the human heart if we suppose so—for, as a rule, the more we have of this world's goods, the more we want. “Weighed in the balance and found wanting,” may be seen written over the enjoyments of time and sense. Dreadful is this feeling to a worldly man when everything human is dissolving, and when an utter sense of emptiness and disappointment pervades his soul.

How different this to the condition of the soul sitting at the feet of Christ. There is contentment. The soul reposes on its Saviour, and says, “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” “Lift upon me the light of Thy countenance, and that shall put more joy into my heart than when the corn and wine and oil increase.”

“If Thou these blessings give,
 And wilt my portion be,
 Cheerful the world's poor toys I leave
 To them that know not Thee.”

This portion is also a heavenly one. All human portions come to an end; for short is the life of the oldest. We are continually reminded that we are dust and ashes. Besides which, thorns are mixed with all earthly roses—sin and disappointment are to be found in all human allotments. What disciple cannot say with NEWTON—

“I pity those who seek no more
 Than such a world can give;
 Wretched they are, and blind, and poor,
 And dying while they live”?

But the believer's portion is from above, and therefore heavenly. It draws us upwards. It makes us lay up our treasure in heaven. It leads us to seek the society of the Church of the first-born. We thus look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen. “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” This portion makes us look at heaven as our eternal home, where we shall be for ever with the Lord.

It is also a free portion. “Without money and without price,” are the heavenly conditions. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” All of God's free, rich, and sovereign grace. Were this otherwise, we should all come short of this divine portion.

It is also a portion which has no sin mixed with it. “Ye now have sorrow,” said our blessed Lord, “but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you.” This is one of the most delightful thoughts connected with this portion. In our

present life, sin is mixed with all we do. Our holiest exercises are intruded upon by its polluting presence. We carry about with us a body of sin and death, and when we would do good, evil is present with us. But then, when we shall be in full possession of our portion, we shall be as sinless as Jesus.

"There shall we see His face,
And never, never sin,
But from the fountain of His grace
Drink endless pleasures in."

This is also a purchased portion—so dearly purchased that the Apostle Peter says, "We were redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without spot." How humbling this should be to believers! Oh, the terrible nature of sin! How deep that stain which could only be erased by the blood of the Just One, "who died for the unjust to bring us to God."

Let us now consider the blessedness of being able to lay claim to it. "The Lord is *my* portion, saith *my* soul." An unapplied Christ is no Christ. We can derive no comfort by knowing that this portion is enjoyed by others. We must be able to say, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul." How happy the world is when it can lay claim to a large portion of worldly goods! But that is nothing to this; as WATTS writes—

"Were I possessor of the earth,
And called the stars mine own,
Without Thy mercy and Thy grace,
I were a wretch undone."

We may be sure that the Lord is our portion, if Jesus is precious to us. Oh, what blessedness to be able to say to a heart-searching God, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee"! If so, "The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are born of God"—that we have become children of the heavenly family, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Then we can sing—

"I would not change my blest estate
For all the world calls good and great;
And while my faith can keep its hold,
I envy not the miser's gold."

We now notice the resolve of the Prophet—"Therefore will I hope in Him." All men have some hope, even the hypocrite and the wicked; but, alas! their hope will expire just when they need it most. It is like the laughter of fools, which Solomon compares to the crackling of thorns under a pot. It is a will-o'-the-wisp, which will lead you to sorrow and destruction. But the man who has the Lord for his portion, has "a good hope through grace," for it rests upon the Best of all beings. In fact, there is none good, save One, that is God. Christ and God are one. So when Jesus was upon the earth, He went about doing good. He was the only perfect One.

It is also a sure hope. We are not sure of anything in this life. Uncertainty has set its stamp upon everything. But with Him who is our hope, there "is no variableness or shadow of turning." "Heaven and earth may pass away, but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever.

And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."
 "Blessed is that man whose hope the Lord is."

This hope is an eternal hope. It is fixed upon eternal things. While men of the world lay up their treasure on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal, the believer has his hopes fixed above.

"While men lie grovelling here below,
 His hopes are fixed beyond the sky."

Earthly hopes, even when fulfilled, are so evanescent and temporal, that they are sure to be unsatisfactory. The mind wants something better to satisfy it than the things of earth. But never will the soul of a believer be disappointed. He says, "I will hope continually." "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Oh, that we may all be able to say, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore I will hope in Him"! E. W.

"THE BREATH OF LIFE."

(GENESIS ii. 7).

How marvellous are all the works of God! Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." And to man also has He given power to accomplish great things; but man cannot give *life*, that is the Divine prerogative. We observe in the first chapter of Genesis that God commanded the *water* and the *earth* to bring forth other creatures; but of man He saith, "Let Us make," setting forth the Trinity; so the Three Divine Persons took counsel together in making so excellent a work above all the rest of the creation.

The image of God in man includes the resemblance of his soul in respect of spiritual substance and understanding, the happiness of his state, and his dominion over other creatures. As we read, "God created man in His own image," we feel constrained to say, "Alas! how that glorious image has become marred!" "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin." How hateful, then, ought sin to be to us, in whatever form it may appear. We read in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians that "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," He can and does renew, or perfect man into the image in which he was first created. Moreover, that man should come up to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "Growing up," as it were, in Him, "who is the Head even Christ." Oh, what a grand subject is this! I quail as with pen in hand I feel that I dare scarcely peep into it. Believers are told to "put off the old man, which is corrupt" (corrupted through sin in our nature by Adam and Eve's transgressing God's command); and man has ever since been prone to sin. Even after the heart has been renewed by grace, there clings to him so much that is evil, and as the Apostle Paul says, in Romans viii., "When I would do good, evil is present with me." Thus are we led to ask ourselves, "How then am I to attain unto that perfection?"

The same Apostle, in writing to the Church at Ephesus, brings before us a precious truth, which is a great relief and comfort, by telling us *that it is by our blessed Lord Jesus Christ's death! His righteousness being imputed to us by faith.* As again we read, "Whosoever believeth in Him is justified" (made clear of all guilt). Now, this great change which is wrought in us has been by God the Spirit breathing into us "the breath of life." Before this we are dead in sin, although we often do not know it. St. Paul also says in the same Epistle, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." A dead man cannot see the evil of sin. How necessary is it, then, that we should examine ourselves by God's Word. He has plainly revealed in that Word that there are two classes in the world—the dead in our Adam nature, and those whom God has quickened or "breathed into them the breath of life," thereby making them living souls. Ezekiel, in his vision of the dry bones, 37th chapter writes, "The Spirit of the Lord set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones;" and he adds, "Lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?" He wisely answered, "O Lord God, Thou knowest." Then in the fifth verse, "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live," &c. And so it is now with all mankind. By nature cold, dead, insensible! And how long we continue quite at ease in that carnal, lifeless state!

Now this should stir us to say, "Draw me, O Lord, and we will run after Thee." How is it that the love of Christ does not draw us? Why, because we want the "breath of life." The Lord said to Jeremiah, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." St. James says, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." And certain it is that the closer we are enabled to walk with God, will depend our peace and happiness. And as God sets before us "death eternal," and "life everlasting," it behoves us to be in earnest, and not to put off the important duty to "Prepare to meet our God." And how can we prepare if there is no *life* in us? The wise man said, "The dead know not anything."

O Lord God, grant that all who have been quickened, breathed into by the Holy Spirit, may walk as children of light, praying for more light, life, and grace to walk in the narrow way; and as our God is a *living* God, must we all be made alive before we can serve Him acceptably.

And as years roll so rapidly on, and death and eternity are seen to be *realities*, may we take heed to St. Paul's words to the Romans, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

None will join the people of God in heaven but those who trust in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, the sad separation

that will take place at the judgment day, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, between husbands and wives! May the Holy Spirit bless our meditation, and breathe "the breath of life" into each dear reader, is my earnest prayer.

I will conclude with one of dear JOHN NEWTON'S hymns, written more than a hundred years ago—

"While with ceaseless course the sun
Hasted through the passing year,
Many souls their race have run,
Never more to meet us here.

"Fixed in an eternal state,
They have done with all below;
We a little longer wait,
But how little none can know.

Cockfield.

"Swiftly thus our fleeting days
Bear us down life's rapid stream;
Upwards, Lord, our spirits raise,
All below is but a dream.

"Bless Thy Word to young and old,
Fill us with a Saviour's love;
And when life's short tale is told,
May we dwell with Thee above!"

C. B.

FAMILY SECRETS.

(Continued from page 211.)

THE next providential secret which suggests itself, is the *Lord's protection and direction of His children*. Ah! what a field for thought offers itself here, dear reader! One scarcely knows which case to turn to in proof of the matter; there are so many instances in the Word of God. Well, suppose a glance is taken at Jacob's history. Whose history is more eventful, or more sweetly illustrative of the truth of the language, "For Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield"? (Psa. v. 12.) Assisted by his fond mother, Jacob resolves upon deceiving his aged father, and obtaining the blessing, which, according to birthright, belonged to his brother Esau. The plot is laid, and works successfully. Deception and lying are the order of the day, but neither Jacob nor his mother seem to hesitate in the matter. Urged on by the devil, they carry forward their design without the least regard to anything, except the obtaining of the coveted blessing. But though this was the case, who dare say that God's providential hand had nought to do with controlling and overruling the whole affair from first to last? He had no hand in the sin, He gave no incitement to that which was evil, either to Jacob or his mother, and yet His sovereign purpose was accomplished by it, for before the children were born, it was said by the Lord, "The elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. xxv. 23). His providential purpose was as surely performed in this matter as it was in the death of Christ, concerning which Peter said, "H'm, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23). The Jews crucified Christ just as willingly and designedly as if God had had no secret purpose in the matter, and their sin was just as heinous, although His sovereign and inscrutable purpose was accomplished thereby. Equally so was it in respect of the conduct of Jacob and his mother. But I pass on. Shortly after obtaining the stolen blessing, he had to quit his father's house, owing to the threats of Esau his

brother. Padan-aram is his destination. On his way thither, "he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob awakes, and is afraid, and says, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. . . . And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God" (Gen. xxviii. 11—21).

Jacob goes on his way, and in due time arrives at his uncle Laban's house. Proposals are made with respect to his staying there, which he readily consents to, for he has fallen in love with his cousin Rachael. And truly his affection for her must have been very strong, for we are told that the seven years he served for her seemed to him but as so many days. But see, his uncle deceives him. Instead of giving him his loved Rachael to wife, he gives the tender-eyed Leah. Jacob naturally complains at the cheat, but is told that it is the custom of the country to give the elder in marriage before the younger, and that if he would have Rachael, he must serve his uncle seven years more. Laban must have been lacking in straightforwardness, not to have told Jacob at the outset that he could not give him Rachael before Leah. Indeed, Laban's after-conduct proves to a demonstration that he was, to say the least, very exacting and avaricious. But God was with Jacob, to protect and direct him. The second term of service is rendered, and Jacob receives his loved Rachael to wife. After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go unto my own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee. And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thy eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?" (Gen. xxx. 25—30.) A bargain as to future service is made, which turns out greatly to Jacob's advantage, with the Lord's blessing. Laban's sons

complain at Jacob becoming richer, and Laban's countenance is not toward Jacob as it was before time. At this juncture, Jacob's God appears to him, and says, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Gen. xxxi. 3). Jacob at once tells his wives of this gracious command which he had received from the Lord. Hence, we read, "And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, and said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me" (Gen. xxxi. 4-7). How blessedly the Lord's protection and direction of His servants, as seen in the circumstances named above, confirms the truth of these two Scriptures, "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise;" and, "The Lord bringeth the counsel [or purpose] of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect" (Job v. 12; Psa. xxxiii. 10). Methinks Jacob must have had many sweet seasons of felt confidence in the Lord's protection while in Laban's service, notwithstanding what that service entailed upon him in the way of suffering, both physically and mentally. Suffering in these directions he must have had to meet with, for he says, when chiding with Laban for pursuing him, "This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Gen. xxxi. 38-40). How trying to poor Jacob's flesh! his was no easy pathway. But how precious in the midst of such flesh-and-blood irritating circumstances would be the realization of the protection of his God, the feeling that all was in exact accordance with His orderings.

Ah! I trust I know something by painful, and yet by blessed and profitable experience, what such feelings are. At the moment of writing, the mind is carried back to a time when a foreign bill for something over two hundred pounds was brought into my warehouse by my banker's porter, dishonoured. Such a calmness took possession of the mind—a feeling akin to that expressed in these words—

"But death and hell can do no more
Than what my Father please"—

that I actually, there and then, took my pen, and jotted down my feelings in a few verses of rhyme, which I would transcribe, but for extending my remarks unduly. At the time this occurred, I was in debt to my bankers, so I will leave the reader to judge what my feelings were, when, like Abraham of old, I returned to my own place, or, to put it in other words, when the sweet feeling of calmness subsided.

Do you know anything, dear reader, of this family secret, the providential protection and direction of the Lord? But to return to Jacob's

history. Soon after Jacob and Laban parted, the account of which is given at the close of the thirty-first chapter of Genesis, we find Jacob face to face with another most formidable trouble, his avenging brother, Esau, coming to meet him, with four hundred men with him. How true the words—

“The Christian man is seldom long at ease;
When one fright’s gone, another doth him seize.”

Jacob, in spite of all his previous realization of divine protection and direction, and notwithstanding that he was acting in strict obedience to the Lord’s command, to “return unto the land of his fathers,” and the Lord’s gracious promise to be with him (see Gen. xxxi. 3), is now not merely afraid, but greatly so; for we read, “Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels, into two bands, and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, the other company which is left shall escape.” But whence came Jacob’s great fear and distress? Why need he give way to these feelings? The Lord’s promise isn’t going to fail, is it? Why so distrustful, Jacob? Surely you don’t doubt the Lord’s faithfulness, do you? Why, you’ve had such very signal proofs of His providential protection, and you are now returning to your own land at His bidding—what are you doubting about? If I had had such evidences of His goodness as you have had, I should not be “greatly afraid and distressed” like you are now. Cheer up, man!

“He who has helped thee hitherto
Will help thee all thy journey through.”

Thy God did not suffer Laban to hurt, and He can as easily restrain Esau from injuring thee. Be of good courage, all will yet be well.

Reader, have you sometimes felt and reasoned thus, concerning some dear brother or sister of the family when they have been in deep perplexity, “greatly afraid and distressed” at the prospect? Have you thought, “Oh, if I were in your stead, and could speak of such deliverances wrought for me in times of danger and anxiety as you can, I should not be as you now are in relation to your present situation”? If so, let me tell you that such thoughts and feelings arise from ignorance of self and the power of unbelief, which is the sin which doth so easily beset the family of God—at least, it is my besetting sin. The language of my poor soul is often this—

“Oh, could I but believe,
Then all would easy be;
I would, but cannot; Lord, relieve—
My help must come from Thee.”

But see, where does Jacob resort to in his distress? Ah! to that one resort to which the whole family taught of the blessed Spirit flee in their distresses—the mercy seat; yea, to the Lord Himself. Listen to his utterances, they are weighty indeed, and evidence most clearly that faith had a firm foothold though he was “greatly afraid and distressed.” “And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God

of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee." Oh, what a blessed reminder! Surely, Jacob, thou wilt come off victorious, painful though the ordeal be. "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant." What a sweet confession this. Oh, for more of that teaching which prompts to such confession and such feeling. How God-honouring! I would ten thousand times rather be the subject of such feelings than I would be of the feeling which prompted a great (?) London evangelist to say in our Coventry Corn Exchange upon one occasion, that he could not agree with Jacob saying that "he was not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and all the truth, which the Lord had shewed him," for he considered that he (Jacob) deserved all he was in possession of at the time he uttered the words. Poor fellow! how ignorant he was of the humbling teaching of the Holy Spirit!

(To be continued.)

THE DISLOCATED SHOULDER.

IN the course of my parochial visiting lately, I called to see one of the Lord's "poor and afflicted people," who, since a severe injury to his head, caused by a fall when engaged at his employment in a neighbouring tan-yard, has been subject to epileptic fits. What he told me is so remarkable that I record it for the strengthening and confirmation of the faith of the Lord's believing people.

Recently, when out walking, he was seized with giddiness, and fell in the street, and his shoulder was dislocated. He was not far from home, where he at once returned in great pain, saying to his wife that he feared he had broken his arm. They went together soon afterwards to his club doctor, who said, "Your shoulder is dislocated, you must go to the Hospital. You should have gone there at once. You will have to take chloroform." His wife procured a cab, and he was at once driven to the General Hospital; but on his way there he observed, "I shall not have to take chloroform. My Father will not forsake me now." He told me that he had been in prayer previously to making this remark, as he felt very much afraid of being put under the influence of chloroform on account of being subject to epilepsy, and he felt assured that the Lord would appear for him, and he would not have to take it.

Arrived at the hospital, the diagnosis of a dislocated shoulder was confirmed, and the doctor who received the case summoned two others, who made ready to administer the anæsthetic, and to reduce the dislocated shoulder. His upper garments were then removed and all was ready, when the patient exclaimed, "Hold hard! Wait a bit! My Father is going to do this for me." "Why, my man," said one of the surgeons, "you have not a father, have you?" "Oh!" said he, "My Heavenly Father." The doctors smiled. Just then, however, wonderful to relate, three "clicks" were heard, and the dislocated shoulder righted itself, and all the doctors had to do was to bandage it up. They were naturally much surprised, and one of them remarked,

"You have great faith, my man, and you have saved us a great deal of trouble."

The club doctor called the next day to ascertain how the poor man had stood the operation under chloroform, which he had supposed to be absolutely necessary, and was much surprised and pleased to find that it had not been required.

Now, I have no sympathy with the so-called "faith-healing" of the present day. The case described does not come under that category. But it is indeed an instance of God graciously honouring the simple faith of His child by a special manifestation of His power.

Did not the Lord Jesus say to His disciples, and were the words spoken *only* to them, "If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 21, 22.) Jehovah Himself asks, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. xviii. 14), and again, "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?" (Jer. xxxii. 27.)

As an illustration of the truth of these Scriptures, the above fact is worthy of being made widely known in these days of infidelity and unbelief.

March 20th, 1890. *

R. J. N.

COMMENTS. *

The foregoing facts, introduced by my friend and clerical helper, bring forcibly to my recollection a case connected with my early connection with this parish. One who regularly attended our Church had, many years before, met with such an accident abroad, that his case seemed hopeless in the extreme. In spite, however, of appearances, he expressed a full belief in his recovery, stating, in the hearing of the doctors, that such would be the case, and that he should most certainly return to Bedminster. Such was their astonishment that a patient, under so hopeless a condition, could be borne up with an unwavering belief of recovery, in the face of appearances, that the attention of other medical practitioners was called to the case as one so remarkable. The after-facts, however, proved, that the patient was correct in his conclusion, for he did survive. Both the surgical and medical skill brought to bear upon him was, under God, successful. His return to Bedminster, and his putting me in possession of the facts just named, confirmed his hopes and expectations, when apparently almost in the very article of death. "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?"

Scarcely, if any, less surprising is the case of the Old Sailor, whose interesting reminiscences have for some time past appeared month after month in the *Old Jonathan*. Falling from the masthead, in a Russian port, in the depth of the winter of 1854, he broke one leg in twenty-two places, fractured the other, as well as his jaw and two or three ribs. He was picked up in an insensible condition, and continued in that state for nearly a fortnight. Consciousness then gradually returned. Part of the deck of his ship had to be cut out, his broken bone having penetrated it as he fell. In the face of the greatest possible improbabilities, he survived all, and remains healthful and active to this day.

Surely such cases call for the recognition and acknowledgment of God's most merciful hand, the more especially as we consider by what simple means and the most casual accidents so many of our fellow-creatures are suddenly removed and called into the immediate presence of the Great Judge of quick and dead. Scarcely a day passes without records of such calamities presenting themselves. — THE EDITOR.

FRUITS OF A C.P.A. GRANT.

By the REV. D. A. DOUDNEY, D.D., Vicar of St. Luke's, Bedminster, Bristol.

APART from other considerations in which the great advantages presented by the Church Pastoral Aid Society are involved, I beg to call the attention of your readers to one special feature of the Society's work.

By means of the grant, I was enabled some twelve or fourteen years ago to give a title to my first clerical helper. He continued with me for three years, and then undertook other and very responsible spheres, in which he remained until his health gave way a few months since. At Christmas last, the eldest son of a family in my parish, each member of which had long taken a practical interest in your excellent Society, was ordained, and is now labouring under the auspices of the Society in a populous parish in the East-end of London. A brother of this most devoted young man, after pursuing a most successful course at Cambridge, was ordained last Sunday for a populous parish in Worcestershire. A third and younger brother, who likewise had taken a most active part in our Sunday Schools and at cottage lectures, has entered upon his second term at Cambridge, with the hope of following the examples of his brothers.

Now I do not hesitate to express my conviction that this happy state of things is, under God, attributable to the instrumentality of the Church Pastoral Aid Society. But for the Society's kind help I could not, in the first instance, have given a title, and, inasmuch as the three last-named young men were each engaged in business pursuits, I question if their attention had been drawn to the ministry but for the sacred pleasure they personally realized as lay-helpers in parochial work. Upon these grounds, therefore, not only do I feel indebted to the Church Pastoral Aid Society for their long-continued help in my poor and populous parish, but in connection with their instrumentality, I consider that, next to the conversion of immortal souls, the greatest favour has been conferred upon me, even that a third member in the same family is preparing for the sacred service of the ministry.

Just entering, as I am, upon my eightieth year, I feel it to be among my happiest and most satisfactory reminiscences to think that those whom I knew and dedicated to the Lord in their infancy, are now going forth in a service, the highest, the most sacred and privileged that can be conferred upon mortals. I am bound to testify, as a witness for God, that the longer I live the more highly do I esteem His service. At the same time, I feel it is equally due from me to express my indebtedness to the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and my conviction that it has the strongest claims for support upon the part of all those who have at heart the spiritual well-being of their poor fallen fellow-creatures.—*Church and People.*

MERCIES! DAILY MERCIES!

I OFTEN think, could we but consider the cases of others, how would it tend to divert us from our own little personal vexations and cares and anxieties, and possess us with a more becoming sense and acknowledgment of our manifold mercies. Having been the subject of deep depression for some little time, and wondering at the issue, I had reproached myself upon the very grounds of which I have spoken, namely, the cases of others. I felt, if I could think more of and pray more for them, it would lead me off from myself. Such were my thoughts when the post brought the annexed among other letters. The reader can easily imagine the rebuke that the letter conveyed, inasmuch as whatever other ailment I might have (for I had been depressed because of suffering from increased *deafness*), what was that, when contrasted with the entire loss of both hands? With the amount of writing that devolves upon me, what could I possibly do under such circumstances, the more especially as I cannot dictate, in order that others should write for me? But here is the letter:—

South Hill, Manningtree.

DEAR SIR,—I trust you will excuse me for taking the great liberty of writing to you. About ten years ago I lost both my hands on the South Eastern Railway at Tunbridge Wells, and I am thankful to say God has made my affliction a blessing to my soul. But I am not able to do any kind of work to occupy my mind and time, and I therefore spend a great deal of my time in reading; and knowing that you were a great writer, I have been so bold as to write and ask you if you have a book you could give me. I like books on the Scripture. I am connected with a Bible Class, and I like to study the lesson during the week, and I have not much help in the shape of books. I do not like to borrow books from other people, as I have to turn over the leaves with my mouth or hook, and I might damage them.

Dear sir, I am not writing to you pleading poverty, as I am thankful to say that, with the little shop that my wife keeps, and my small income, we are able to get the necessaries of life, although I do not have much to spare to buy books with. I should be very thankful if you could help me in this. I do not mind how old they are.

I trust you will be able to read this; it is written with my artificial hand.—Yours obediently,

SAMUEL SARGENT.

Shortly after receiving the foregoing, whilst visiting the parochial schools, the master brought me four sums and a short essay, written from dictation, by a boy* in the fourth standard. The latter contained some slight erasures, but the arithmetic was correct in each instance. How great was my surprise, however, to hear that *the poor boy had lost both his arms*, and that his writing and figuring were accomplished by the pen or pencil he held between his teeth! I at once went and witnessed how he did his work. A few months since, he had been playing by the water-side, and some heavy substances falling upon him had necessitated the removal of both his arms near the shoulders. As I looked at the poor boy, my heart was sad indeed, as I contemplated his future. What a life he had before him! And yet his cheerfulness was surprising. How rebuked I felt as I thought of my own want of a more becoming appreciation of the numberless momentary mercies of

* At the Annual Examination afterwards, he passed in all three subjects.—ED.

which I am day by day, month after month, and year after year the recipient. How do such considerations remind one of the truthfulness of the lines—

“Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!”

I returned home, after the visit just mentioned, when the mid-day post brought me a letter from a dear friend in London, in which he called my attention to several most touching facts. The one was the removal by death, as in a moment, of an old neighbour of my own. The last time the writer of the letter and he had met was at the grave of another of our mutual acquaintances, who was called away after a lingering illness. The same letter touched upon another case, of the sudden removal by death of a most active parochial minister, apparently, only a few days before, in sound health. Another case was mentioned in the same letter of one slowly dying of a dire malady, in the prime of life, whose surroundings were of the most flattering character. A little later in the day I had to call upon a blind widow, in her ninety-third year, to witness her signature by mark. There she sat, not only blind, but deaf, perfectly calm and self-possessed at that great age. But a short distance from her resides one who is most active, although he is some years above a hundred. On my way I met a messenger, who had gone to inquire after a brother minister, upon whom the Lord has laid His afflictive hand, and who for months past has been in a most precarious condition, the doctor stating that he might pass away at any moment.

Thus, reader, mark in one day the incidents which are presented. How numerous and varied, and how suggestive of the Lord's altogether unmerited goodness and mercy towards oneself! Oh, for a more grateful heart! Oh, for a more childlike faith and dependence! Oh, for more of that recognition of the Lord's goodness that prompts the recipient to exclaim—

“For mercies countless as the sands
Which daily I receive
From Jesus my Redeemer's hands,
My soul, what canst thou give?”

“STILL WITH THEE.”

(PSALM cxxxix. 18; lxxiii. 23.)

“Still with Thee,” my Master,
When the radiant light
Chases all the shadows
Of the darksome night.

“Still with Thee,” my Master,
Shaded by Thy hand,
When the noon-tide glory
Sweeps across the land.

“Still with Thee,” my Master,
Leaning on Thy breast,
When the gold and crimson
Beautify the west.

“Still with Thee,” my Master,
In the night-gloom deep,
Guarded by Thine angels
When I calmly sleep.

“Still with Thee,” my Master;
Jesus crucified;
In Thy blessed presence
Always I abide.

“Still with Thee,” my Master;
Nought shall ever part
Thine unworthy servant
From Thy loving heart.—ISA.

"THE COMING OF THE LORD."

"*Soon He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*"—HEBREWS x. 37.

I CANNOT but think that the signs of the times, in very many respects, indicate that the end of the present dispensation is very near at hand—perhaps much nearer than we imagine. I am, moreover, bound to testify that my own mind undergoes considerable relief, and is vastly cheered, when I am led to contemplate the return of our ever-gracious Lord, rather than dwelling upon a protracted illness, death, and the gloom of the grave. That there is much in the Word of God to justify such contemplations, there can be no question. What said Jesus among His last utterances to His disciples? "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Again, what emphasis the Apostle laid upon that precious testimony—"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Further, "Our citizenship is in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, whereby He shall subdue all things unto Himself." What a marvellous statement was that of the Apostle, where he says, "We shall not all sleep; but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

Now, beloved, whatever we may feel in regard to such a momentous change as that of which the Apostle testifies, surely there cannot be any ground of alarm as to what may happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." What can we know, in a way of dwelling upon or apprehending a transition that shall be so instantaneous and momentary? It will be the most sudden of surprises—the most astounding of changes—a state of things altogether inconceivable, not to say describable.

Personally, I have thought—and I am bound to say that much that is cheering has attended the thought—that, inasmuch as the first deliverance to my poor distressed and agonized soul was attended with such a sight of Christ coming in the clouds of heaven* (and the which I have never since realized, but can by no means forget), so I have thought it very possible that His second and so glorious manifestation will be when He comes at the close of the present dispensation. I think, therefore, in this respect it is probable that I shall never see death, but that Christ Himself will return to take me to Himself. I repeat, that this idea has been attended with a peace, a satisfaction, a hope that far exceeds the contemplation of sickness, death, and the grave, in the face of the fact that Jesus hath triumphed over the whole. D. A. D.

* At that unutterably-blessed sight, it seemed impossible that the Lord's return could be delayed more than a few days at most. Oh, what a rapturous glimpse of His own glorious Self that was! 2 Corinthians xii. 2, best expresses it.—Eh.

Sermons and Notes of Sermons.

NOTES OF A SERMON,

PREACHED BY THE REV. D. A. DOUDNEY, M.A., VICAR OF ORE, HASTINGS,
AT ST. LUKE'S, BEDMINSTER, ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 30TH, 1889.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—
PHILIPPIANS ii. 12, 13.

THESE words seem to contain or express a contradiction. They appear contradictory, but are not really so, for no part of God's Word contradicts the other. We have touched a difficult subject—one which we cannot fully understand or explain, but which no doubt God Himself will explain to us another day. Our subject is, "Man's responsibility in contrast with God's sovereignty."

Some speak of man as a mere machine, who is influenced by certain surroundings or circumstances, and has no will of his own. If so, man has no responsibility, and therefore no judgment could be passed on him, for how could it be just to punish him for what he could not control? No doubt man is, in some respects, like a machine, and is influenced by surroundings. Take, for example, a child born in a palace, cradled in luxury of every kind, and one born in a garret, in the midst of poverty and vice; or one carefully nurtured and lovingly trained in a Christian home, surrounded by tender, refining influences, and the child reared in the drunkard's home, accustomed to all the example of sin and the misery which results from it; or a man whose whole life is spent in struggling with poverty, and one who is surrounded by affluence. A man *must* be influenced to a certain extent, but *not* wholly. A man has a will of his own—he is responsible. He can, to a certain extent, choose between right and wrong; he can hate the evil, and choose the good. The Scriptures prove it, or else why are such warnings and exhortations given as, for instance, we find in Deuteronomy xxx. 15 and 19—"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"? Also Ezekiel xviii. 30, 31—"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Similarly, what must we understand by the dear Master's words, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not"? (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Now, it is in this view I would consider the words before us, and may God the Holy Spirit help us in our considerations. I believe we have set before us man's strength and man's weakness; God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Why, is not salvation Christ's work—a work so vast and wonderful that even the angels admire and wonder? Undoubtedly it is. And yet—do not misunder-

stand me, for human words are so capable of being misunderstood—yet salvation is *man's* work too, in its application, its realization, and proof of personal interest. Let me give an illustration. The manna was God's gift to the children of Israel; they did not have to work to obtain its being sent every morning, but they must go out and gather it, they must prepare it for use. Here was God's work and man's responsibility; God gave it, man must gather it. You have a garden, to which you devote much time and care, but with all your efforts, could you cause one flower to expand its blossoms, or make one tiny seed produce a plant? No; oh, no! God alone can cause the earth to bring forth fruit. And yet we know that if you did not cultivate the soil, and sow the seed, and carefully tend your garden, no flowers would delight your eye, no fruit or vegetables would be produced for your use. Brethren, have we not here the two sides—God's omnipotence, and man's responsibility?

And the words before us, "Work out your own salvation," were not given only for the Christians at Philippi. I desire for myself that they may be brought home to my own heart, and may God the Holy Spirit bring them home to your hearts, too! I think they mean that if you do not work, you will not have the assurance of a present salvation nor its future fruition. What a reproach to slights of the means of grace, to those who think little of prayer and the Word of God! Why, *faith* is a work. Have you not felt a little faith to-day, but after a time it needs a special effort to revive it? *Love*, too, is a work. Our love to God grows cold; we need to pray that it may be revived. And, believer in Christ, in regard to your fellow Christians, you have looked at their shortcomings till it is almost impossible to see their virtues. Oh, how we need to struggle to obey the command to "love one another," and think less of the shortcomings of others, and more of our own! We may say in many respects that salvation is a work. "Work out your own salvation." May we not say it is a *necessary* work? The very word "salvation" implies danger. Oh, "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" What a sad thing it is, that in this fair world so many think so little of their soul's safety! I pray you, neglect it not! If we do not know what this salvation is, who can tell how much time is left in which we may seek it? "*Now* is the accepted time."

A man was once lowered over a cliff, in order to obtain the eggs of sea-birds, which he knew could be found on certain ledges of the rock. Backwards and forwards he swung, ere he could reach a ledge on which to stand, and when at length he found a footing where he could obtain the eggs, what was his horror to find the rope had slipped from his grasp, and had rebounded sea-ward. Of course it came back again, but not sufficiently near for him to grasp it. He afterwards spoke of the intense agony he suffered as he stood on that ledge, fearing to reach too far forward to grasp the rope, lest he might lose his footing, and be precipitated to the rocks beneath. At last, as the rope again swung before him, he made a desperate effort, jumped from the ledge, grasped the rope, and was drawn up safely. Oh, may not some precious soul be in equal peril? God grant we may not delay in so all-important a matter!

Then, it is a *personal* matter. We want a personal salvation, because we must personally stand before God. The piety of my relatives will not avail for me, however intensely they may love me; I *must* have a *personal* interest in this great salvation. Then, it is a *continuous* work which we must pursue until the close of life. Seek it with "fear and trembling." How strange! We should have thought the Apostle would have said "with confidence." Not so, because God's people have to learn humility by a knowledge of their weakness. "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Rejoice before the Lord, but "rejoice with trembling."

Then there is a reason for the work, "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here we have the other side—"God's omnipotence." It is God alone who can give us the will, for, although man has a will of his own, that will is vitiated. You may have seen a mountain stream forsake its bed, and great trouble must be taken to prevent its doing considerable damage. So with the will of man; as our ninth Article says, "Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit." Yes, God must give us the will and then work in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure." Then all ability, after all, must come from God, for "without Him we can do nothing." Take another illustration—the man with the withered hand. His hand was dried up, withered, and Christ said, "Stretch forth thine hand." And he did it, because with the attempt to obey strength was given. So with "work out your own salvation," as you strive to obey strength will be given.

It is a struggle now, dear friends, you experience this for yourselves, but it will not be for ever; rest will come by-and-by. And for those who are advanced in the Christian life the words are very sweet, "Now is your salvation nearer than when ye [first] believed." And if by grace we obey, we shall, I believe, cast our crowns at the feet of our dear Lord, saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory."

"TAKE NO THOUGHT."

OH, take not a thought for the
morrow,

But learn of thy Lord to be wise;
Each day hath its measure of sorrow,
And let it, poor trembler, suffice.

A storm may be gathering o'er thee;
The road may be rough to thy feet;
But scan not the distance before thee,
For trouble thou never mayst meet.

The Lord hath thy portion appointed
Of evil and good for the day;
And Jesus, thy Shepherd anointed,
Shall guide thee through all the
dark way.

Scarcrough.

His hand is unceasingly moulding
Thy soul for its mansion above;
His dealings are daily unfolding
His faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Ere long will thy journey be ended;
Thy sorrows shall vanish away;
The night, with its shadows at-
tended,
Be lost in the blaze of the day.

Thy Jesus will never forsake thee,
Nor fail in His purpose of love;
But soon to His home He will take
thee,
To share in His glory above.

W. S. ROBINSON.

A LITTLE HELP.

AN incident, which happened many long years ago, has just recurred to my mind. I mention it in the hope that a little soul-profit may be found in the consideration of a single sentence which was spoken at the time, and which I never forgot.

I was then a young man, on a visit to my dear old mother, who resided near the village of Leeming, on the Great North Road, in the far-famed Vale of Mowbray.

In the adjoining village lived a poor old Irishman, of whom I remember little, except that he was much afflicted with rheumatism in his knees, and usually carried a disreputable-looking sack on his shoulder. Like most Irishmen, he kept a pig, which he made a great pet of.

One dark night, as I was returning home rather late, and when near my mother's house, I suddenly heard what I took to be "signals of distress," a short distance before me. Directly after, a white object brushed close past me at a furious pace, and disappeared in the darkness. I stood to listen, and heard the following exclamations just in front of me—"Oh, holy Virgin! What will I do? I'm done! I can run no farther! And I'll niver see him agen—the crathur!" I hastened forward, and there, kneeling in the middle of the road, I found my poor old Irishman, fairly knocked up with the "rheumatics," and calling upon the Virgin to help him. His tale was soon told. The pig had escaped; it was gone for ever; and he could run no longer. "Sit there and rest yourself," I said, "and I'll catch the night-rover."

On I went, and on went piggy. I was young and active then, and the race was well contested. At length I headed the little beast, and turned him back again. When about to pass my mother's, he suddenly bolted through the open gate, and into the farm-yard behind the house. Closing the gate, I said, "Now, my boy, I have you!" And, as the yard happened to be well filled with straw, I soon pinned him in a corner, captured the young squealer, and landed him safely in the arms of his delighted owner. The poor old man finished a volley of Irish blessings with the following benediction, which I never forgot, "*May the Heavens be your bed, sur! A little help is better than a great deal of pity!*"

While musing over these words this morning, my thoughts wandered away after One of whom it is written, "In His love and in His pity He redeemed them" (Isa. lxiii. 9). And again, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty" (Ps. lxxxix. 19). And again, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (Isa. lxiii. 1).

After referring to these passages, I said, "Yes, blessed for ever be His name, He knew right well that pity (alone) could do nothing for a ruined sinner; and He knew too that the poor sinner could find no help in himself. So He took the matter into His own hands; and His own right arm brought salvation; thus securing to Himself every atom of merit, and an eternal revenue of glory. And here we have it all in the above precious scriptures—love, pity, help, redemption, and salvation; all flowing, without money and without price, through Him who ever speaks and acts in righteousness, and is "mighty to save."

Will anyone tell me what a poor, bankrupt, helpless, self-condemned sinner can want more?

As I thus mused alone this morning, a sweet sense of His presence and love, such as I have not known for years, came softly stealing into my heart, until I found the salt water in my eyes. Then, looking up with something of a broken and a contrite spirit, I said, "Dear Lord! Precious Saviour! Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee! But oh, how I long to love Thee more!" And shall we ever be satisfied? Yes, when we awake with His likeness, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; not till then. I begin to doubt and tremble when I am not interested with Him. I regard it as an infinite mercy to have what dear Mrs. HOBLYN calls a constant "hankering" after Jesus. A man cannot live upon his hunger; but it is hunger that makes the feast so welcome. "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." The hunger and the thirst are the bubblings up of that living water which He who once sat by Jacob's well can alone give. And as sure as that divine thirst is implanted in the soul, so surely will it be eternally satisfied in His own blissful presence in glory.

You remember the time, poor doubting soul, don't you? when you had no such longing after Jesus. You thought it would be quite time enough for you to begin "to be religious" when you were getting old, and could no longer enjoy the darling lusts and pleasures of this poor life. But *something* came over you—it might be suddenly, or it might be gradually—which seemed to cast a blight over everything under the sun. You seemed to look upon the things of time and sense with quite another eyesight. The scales were fallen off. The bubble was burst, and you saw death and destruction written upon it all. For the first time in your life you had tremours and misgivings about the future. For the first time in your life you knew you were an accountable being; you felt the taint of sin in your nature; you felt its sting in your conscience, and in your heart. But above all, you felt that the eye of an infinitely holy God was ever upon you.

I need not attempt to follow out your convictions and conflicts. By-and-by, a ray of light shone into your soul, and a faint faith's view of Jesus kindled in your heart a burning thirst which never can be quenched here. And you are thirsting still.

How did all this come about? The corrupt tree of fallen nature never produced such fruit. Do you not think the following scriptures are a tolerably exact description of your case? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness [the Lord our Righteousness], for they shall be filled."

I may not have given a perfect outline of your character and condition; but if you can trace out some remote family likeness in my sketch, thank God for it, hope on, and look out for the perfect day.

May the Lord graciously pardon whatever of lightness is found in the beginning of this little narrative; and bless the ending thereof to the comforting of some poor mourner in Zion, for His name and mercy's sake.

Scarborough.

W. S. ROBINSON.

Correspondence.

BROTHERLY WORDS.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto thee, and a double portion of the Spirit be the Lord's birthday gift unto thee. I feel constrained to write you a few lines on your entering upon your eightieth year—quite an exception to the words applicable to most that reach the fourscore years, "Yet is their strength but labour and sorrow"; for, though it may, in a measure, be true of the body, yet not of the mind; for you continue with your usual savour and freshness to testify of the loving-kindness of a covenant God, and to utter your firm protest against all the errors and heresies that are coming in upon us like a flood.

Oh, what a mercy to be kept faithful among the faithless, when the allurements to turn aside from the old paths are so many and so strong. If the truth had not laid hold of you, you would never have laid hold of the truth; and if the truth had not kept hold of you, you would not have been found to-day abiding in the truth. What must our God be to bear with all our manners in the wilderness these many years, if He be not the God of revelation, who, knowing the end from the beginning, comes forth to a poor sinner, and, pointing back to the counsels of eternity, puts His finger of mercy on the poor sinner's heart, and says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love," and, as He points to the future, with, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," raises in the poor sinner's heart the song—

"The love divine that made me Thine
Shall keep me Thine for ever"?

Yours, beloved friend, is the God of Jacob, and, like him, you can testify, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of the life of my pilgrimage"; but, blessed be God, you can also add, "God, before whom my fathers did walk, the God that fed me all my life long, the Angel that redeemed me from all evil;" and, like him, when the time comes—but God grant it may not be yet—you shall gather up your feet into the bed, that, "absent from the body," you may be "present with the Lord," and join the "spirits of just men made perfect," to cast your crown before the throne, and to feel—

"Eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise."

The great enemy knows that he has but a short time, therefore think it not strange concerning any fiery trials that you may still have while in the wilderness. Darkness, depression, and doubt may rob you of the joy of salvation, but, blessed be God, they can never rob you of salvation itself. Our God is above all circumstances, and when He saith to His servant, "There shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you," though the tempest may rage and the billows swell, and the soldiers' counsel is to kill the prisoners when the ship

has split up through the violence of the waves, yet such are the resources of our God that the very fragments of the broken vessel shall, in His hands, be the means of conveying safe to land those who were unable to swim. "Great is our Lord, and great is His power: yea, and His wisdom is infinite."

And this God is thy God for ever and ever, and shall be thy Guide even unto death.

Your very unworthy, but sincere friend,
Ashford, March 7th, 1890.

WILLIAM LUSH.

GOSPEL BOOK MISSION TO THE ARMY AND NAVY.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR DR. DOUDNEY,—Grace, mercy and peace to you and to all your readers be multiplied exceedingly. I am thankful to say, that the appeal from a soldier serving in Cairo for some of "SPURGEON'S Sermons" has been answered, a kind lady friend sending a liberal supply. Also we have reason to praise Him for His loving mercies bestowed on the work for Him and on us during the past month. I am thankful to be able to send some more soul-stirring testimonies. Thanking all our helpers and friends for what they have done, and looking in faith to Him for future support. Would any of your readers send us some of your precious books for distribution?

FROM A SERJEANT IN WOOLWICH.

"I acknowledge gratefully the little parcel of Gospel tracts that I received this morning. They are very acceptable. I used to get some of Dr. DOUDNEY'S books when Mr. B—— was Scripture Reader in this garrison, of which I have some yet, which I preserve. I used to get the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, which was a good beacon light on the way, and which I would gladly accept from you at any time. I used to give it to a lady who has since gone to her rest. She was always on the look-out for it, and when she was ill, nothing suited her better than Dr. DOUDNEY'S writings read to her, and she used to give it to others afterwards. I have some tracts sent me sometimes, but none so much prized by the soldiers as yours—this is no flattery; and at any time you have a few books to spare I should be glad to receive some. Praying that all your tracts issued may be blessed to many souls."

FROM A SAILORS' HOME.

"I am indeed greatly indebted to you for your past kindness in supplying me with a monthly parcel, and beg to tender my sincere thanks. They have been a great help to me in my work here, and are very much appreciated on board ships—in fact, I scarcely know how I should have been able to carry on without it. I earnestly pray God may bless you abundantly in your labour of love in trying to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, by the circulation of literature of a truly Gospel character. With best wishes for the success of your noble work."

FROM A WORKER IN WORTHING.

"I thank you very much for your monthly contribution. When you have some 'The Beauties of the Bible,' will you kindly send me a few?"

FROM A WORKER IN ONE OF OUR SEAPORTS.

"I am very thankful for the supplies that have been furnished to me by the Mission, and shall be glad to have them continued. You will be pleased to hear, as I am glad to be able to say, that several have spoken to me of late about the blessing and comfort they have received from reading supplied by the Mission. I have often been comforted myself in reading them. The trouble of one the other day (who has since been removed to another sphere) was, 'How shall I get my book?' meaning the GOSPEL MAGAZINE."

FROM A SOLDIERS' HOME.

"I beg to acknowledge the receipt of the case containing tracts, &c., for distribution among our soldiers. Please accept my best thanks for your kindness, and I trust God's blessing may rest upon the scattered seed to the conversion of souls and the edification of saints. I should have written earlier but have only just returned from the country."

FROM A WORKER IN ONE OF OUR NORTHERN COUNTIES.

"I have received your valuable parcel again this month containing such Gospel truth. I cannot express my thanks for the monthly gifts of such truth. I do assure you that the sailors are very thankful for them; there is not a ship that comes into this port, but has the Gospel placed in the cabin or fore-castle. Although we may not see the fruits of our poor labour here, we shall know hereafter. Blessed be God, I find the captains, mates and sailors always ready to receive the truth. I do not know what I should do without your kindness; I pray that God will bless and reward you for your kindness to us."

FROM A MAN-OF-WAR CHAPLAIN.

"I hope you will send me some of your papers for gratuitous distribution on board this ship."

May the Lord richly bless you and preserve you for His work. Asking for an interest in your prayers and that of all your readers (Philemon 3-7), I am, dear Dr DOUDNEY,

Yours in His blessed service,
Old Gaol Mission Hall, Salisbury. ANN E. BRIDER.

HE that forsakes all relations for Christ, shall certainly find all relations in Christ.

"WILDERNESS" and "desert"—the heart of a natural man ever was such in God's sight, but it is mercy that makes it so in our own.

FELLOW-FEELING.

To the Editor of Zion's Witness.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I know not when I had felt more grateful for a testimony than when reading your opening article for the present month. I thanked God that you were not permitted to withhold from your readers the deep and painful exercises through which you had been called to pass. I am sure the Lord will make it the means of proving to others that they are not alone, as we are all too apt to imagine, in some of those dark and dreary paths in which it pleases Him to lead at least some of His redeemed ones. With respect to such the Apostle Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

I have long contended that in order to keep them in their right place—that is, following on after Him—the Lord sees fit to lead His people in dark and dreary paths as a preventative to their being drawn aside by some one or other of the many snares and entrapments which abound on every hand in this day of departure from the old beaten track to the kingdom. Whatever the pretensions to the contrary, on the part of those who vainly imagine they have made some new and important discoveries in regard to divine things, the old Scriptural declaration holds good, and will do so to the end: "It is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom," and "If ye are without chastisement, whereof *all* are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

It may, in a sense, seem *selfish* in me to be thankful for your so recent deep exercises, but they proved so helpful to me that I could not but rejoice in this renewed proof of the divine all-sufficiency, as well as the covenant faithfulness of our God. Just before reading your article, I had personally undergone one of the sharpest seasons, during the darkness and dreariness of the night, that it is possible to imagine, much less to describe. It was in a dream, when the Lord appeared to have completely forsaken me. I felt as if my hope were indeed put to shame. I cried mightily to the Lord. My wrestlings, pleadings, and importunities were perfectly indescribable. It seemed that I was the subject of the combined experiences of Job, Jeremiah, and Jonah. I ventured to tell the Lord, seeing I had long publicly avowed and declared that my only hope and trust and confidence were in Him, and not in the least wise in or upon self, that, did He, under the circumstances, suffer me to fail and perish, *He* would be blamed, as said both Moses and Joshua in their pleadings on behalf of poor, guilty Israel. I argued with—yea, even shouted to—the Lord, inasmuch that when I awoke, I was completely exhausted and prostrate both in mind and body. Hence, in the prospect of falling asleep again, I besought the Lord to spare me any more such painful and distressing dreams. And now, dear brother, think of His love, and tenderness, and compassion: instead of a renewal of the anguish I have just hinted at, but can by no means describe (for my state for the

time being appeared to be that of those who had neither God nor hope in the world), He whispered into my heart, as I slept, those precious words, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love." Oh, how unutterably sweet was the sentence! how fear-subduing! how soul-supporting! how Christ-endearing! how God-exalting! "*He brought me!*" Yes! it was *His* doing, and *His* alone. I came not, for I was too weak, too fearful, too utterly exhausted. Nevertheless, neither my frailty nor my fears were any barrier or hindrance to Him. "*He brought me*" in spite of all. It was not *leading* even; but He *brought* me, in my weakness, prostration, exhaustion. He *brought* me in His tender embraces. He enfolded me in His almighty arms. And then once in the banqueting house, "*His banner over me was love.*" I was thus marked and memorialised as an object of His pity, as a subject of His grace, as a trophy of His love. He seemed as it were to stand over me, in tender and gracious admiration and triumphant satisfaction of what His sovereign grace, unmerited mercy, and omnipotent power had accomplished. "*His banner over me was love.*" And oh, that love, dear brother! Well may the poet exclaim—

"Oh, for such love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all created human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

Truly, if amid all our varied exercises, trials, and temptations, we find it at times so sweet to testify of His goodness, and speak to His praise, what will it be when we shall be fully and finally freed from all sin and every vestige of corruption, and when we shall behold Him face to face where sin can never enter, nor Satan molest, nor the world intrude? One cannot help—at times at least—longing for the moment when we shall realise it in all the fulness and blessedness thereof. The greatness and the glory are depicted in the following lines—

"There shall we see His face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in."

When I took up my pencil to write to you, I purposed touching upon a fact which, I think, had to do with the dream to which I have referred. My throat having again been affected, we have come here for a month that I might once more seek the benefit of the short sea-trips, which last year did me so much good. I was returning from one of these the other day, when a friend came on board the steamer at C—. He said he had just attended a sale; the owner and long occupier of the house having a short time since died, leaving £143,000 to an elder brother, eighty-three years of age. My friend stated that he hesitated about entering the house, for it was so dilapidated that it had to be shored up, and it appeared, he said, to have had neither paint nor whitewash for fifty years. The first bidding for the house was ten pounds, and it was finally knocked down for fifty, with the condition that the whole was to be cleared away in three weeks. I

could not help thinking what a good clearance the owner was! What a miserable mortal this "poor rich man" must have been! He kept his two servants, but left not a shilling to either of them. As I mused upon this fact, and another case told to me immediately afterwards, I thought, "How little do the children of God realise the wisdom, the love, the Fatherly consideration of their God, in that He has withheld from them that which they are so apt to covet, and which they vainly imagine, if they had, they would so use to His glory and for the well-being of their more needy fellow-creatures! Whereas, in all probability, had they such means, their hearts would be closed rather than otherwise to the wants and necessities of others.

I am now, dear brother, within a week of entering upon my eightieth year; and I wish to testify to one fact, that I think I never felt as I have of late months, namely, the wisdom, the love, the mercy of my God, in that He hath through my life only supplied me with the hand-basket portion. He saw I was not to be trusted with money. He knew far better than I did how I should abuse such trust, and therefore He mercifully withheld it: at the same time He has (blessed be His great and holy name!) been most true to His own word, as expressed by His servant the Apostle Paul, "But my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Oh, how even His own dear children wrong their Father, in their vain supposition that they know better than He does, in regard to pounds-shillings-and-pence matters; and how do we, in this our frailty and our sin, overlook the blessedness that is involved in the Lord Christ's own testimony: "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things!" In connection with this His knowledge, how wondrous are the displays of His wisdom, His love, His tenderness, His faithfulness, His Fatherly kindness and consideration, in the bestowment of all-sufficient help, when and where He sees what is really needed!

Affectionately yours in the Beloved,

D. A. DOUDNEY. ~

Stanley Lodge, Burgoyne Road, Southsea, March 2nd, 1890.

EARLY CUT DOWN TO BE CARRIED TO THE HEAVENLY HOME.

To the "Wayside Notes" Writer.

DEAR MR. COWELL,—You may think this is from a stranger, but I do not feel like that, for I seem each month to sit down with you, and converse about those things that concern us both, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and talk of all He said and did and suffered for us below—of the path we have to tread, and what He is doing for us even now. I have written many letters to you, but they have always been committed to the fire, for I could not feel that they would prove of any interest to you at all. But your "Notes" for March in the GOSPEL MAGAZINE have called forth this, for I was called to part with a dear son a few years back, and the piece has brought the time so fresh to my mind.

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I have been a reader of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE for twenty years, and I look for it as earnestly as I should do for a monthly portion, but am now too poor to buy it. I borrowed it of a Christian friend, and I feel there is such a lack of power in the preached Word that I often feel my spiritual strength renewed in its pages, and do pray for its writers, and wish I could help in its work being sent forth. I gave to three married daughters each six bound volumes of it. But I did not intend thus to write, but your "Notes" in March. I lost a dear son in his twenty-third year. He had been eleven years in the City, in a brother's firm. He was a promising young man, never behind his time; and his master said he lost his right-hand when he lost him, for he was a good servant, and a good son and brother. He died with tumour on the brain. You will forgive me thus writing; but the last thing I read to him was one of yours, and he said, "Mother, dear, that was written on purpose for me. I do love that book."

Now, my dear sir, picture a young man in his twenty-fourth year, stretched on his dying bed, and a mother reading to him. But what a comfort to you to know your writings could be so blessed. But I am digressing. The last night his dear father sat up with him he said, "Father, read me the fourteenth of John." Now, sir, you will enter into my feelings, and know how your March "Notes" have revived the scene in my breast. He was attended by Dr. PHILPOT, son of the late PHILPOT, editor of the *Standard*, and after his death he extracted the tumour. But he never would hear a word about life, and always said, "I shall not live." I said to him, "My dear boy, you can do nothing to merit the favour of God or salvation. 'It is all of grace.'" He answered, "No, mother; but God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; and I have asked Him to give it me hundreds of times;" and—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

I felt so anxious lest he should be resting on any mortal or fleshly works; but I think he was weaned of all that. It was on a Sabbath morning, when his two sisters were sitting by him, and he said, putting up his forefinger, for he could hardly articulate, "Sing!" and they began to sing, "There is a land of pure delight," and whilst they sang he passed away. He often used to say, "I do not hear much good singing, but I shall hear it to perfection by-and-by." I felt so anxious after his death. Satan seemed to try me, and make me doubt about his safety, and I did pray the dear Lord to give me a word to ease my anxious mind; and the word came so sweetly and softly, "He that believeth hath the witness in Himself," and I felt he had the witness, and I said, "It is enough."

Dear sir, do forgive this scrawl. I have entered my sixty-ninth year, and, like the disciples of old, I say, "Lord, abide with me, for the day is far spent," and He that hath showed me great and sore troubles will not—I know He will not—leave me! You will perhaps be able to judge of the great comfort the March "Notes" have been to me. I often heard the late JOSEPH IRONS preach, and Dr. DOUDNEY many times.

The Lord bless you, prays a poor sinner,

I. W.

SOWING IN TEARS BEFORE REAPING IN JOY.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

MY DEAR DR. DOUDNEY,—Please accept my thanks for your kind acknowledgment of my simple letter of January 27th, which I had little expected to see in print; also for valuable reply, which proved a helpful and unctuous repast to my soul, endorsing, as it did, every sentence written.

You refer to that dear man of God, Mr. HUNTINGTON, whose writings have so often refreshed and fed my soul. I thank God that I am found among those who love and revere his memory, whatever his mistakes or failures may have been; knowing something of my own weakness and the treachery and deceit of the human heart. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I was struck with your remarks regarding the enhancement of our sin responsibility over that of the unregenerate. How often have I felt this, though do not remember to have heard or read much on the subject. Latterly especially, I have felt, and remarked to children of God, that if at any moment He were pleased to hurl me into the lowest hell, it would be but my just desert, for my faithlessness and constant grieving of His Holy Spirit, against so much light, knowledge of His will, and grace imparted. Truly there is no comparison between our guilt and that of the worldling, and yet, at times, we are foolish enough to waste our breath in judgment and condemnation of the unawakened. Surely one glance at ourselves should render us dumb. However much we may hate their sins, we must be silent as regards the sinners—poor creatures wallowing in their own mire, where we must have been, but for the free grace and mercy of God. Oh, how dumb it should leave us as regards everybody!

Your remarks in connection with your beloved sister, her late dear partner, and experimental preachers, are very savoury, and awakened a deep sympathetic chord and much unity of spirit. I trust, my dear brother, you were not under a misconception with regard to my few remarks as to your "doubts and fears," *i.e.*, that they may have given you the impression, perhaps, that I was a stranger to such—to a "sorrowful spirit" and the "days of mourning." Who has known a sorrowful spirit and I have not? Who was ever "shut up" (not able to come forth) in a dungeon of midnight darkness, and that for what certainly seemed would prove an everlasting period, if the writer has not? Was ever one enclosed in gates of brass and bars of iron, did ever one sit in "darkness and the shadow of death," did ever one hunger and thirst after God, as the hart panteth after the water brook, did ever one "wander in the wilderness in a solitary way," finding no place for the sole of the foot, or "city to dwell in"—yet did ever one realize the deliverances of the 107th Psalm, if the faithless creature in question has not? Was ever the path of a child of God shrouded—yea, perfectly enveloped—in a mystery so stupendous, yet so real, as to be almost felt? So has mine. But how comforting that Scripture you quote, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not," &c., "Who is blind but My servant?" &c. And how precious that 3rd verse of Isaiah xlv., "I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places."

Pearls are only found in the depths of the ocean, and gold has to be diligently sought after.

As regards "walking by faith" in lieu of sight, there are few persons that can more truly sympathize with you in that respect, my dear brother, than myself; few living, perhaps, who have been called to traverse that path in a fuller, deeper, truer sense than the writer (a bold statement), or knows more of the difficulties, "amazements," and suffering such a path entails; rendered specially painful from our ignorance of the fact that we are walking, or being taught to walk, by faith, or that there is any purpose or end in such a line of experience. We are generally, in such a case, conscious only of suffering and sorrow, contrariness, crookedness, cross-dealing, and perplexity, as you so ably set forth in the article referred to in my last, namely, "More Teaching from Joseph's History," in the November Number of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE. Ah! only those who have been led into certain of the intricacies and windings of such a path, can form any conception of what it means to be there.

The GOSPEL MAGAZINE is still doing its work, my brother, and leaving blessing along its track in this remote spot. Since writing you last, it has been placed in the hands of a (mentally) dear suffering child of God—a very remarkable case—a case that has defied all human aid or intervention (you will not misunderstand me here), even to be in any measure understood—except by the writer, who has travelled the same road—by Christian teachers and preachers with whom she has ever come in contact. It is not the case of a soul seeking salvation—that has been obtained—namely, the witness of the Holy Spirit. For five-and-a-half years I have tended, watched, and yearned over this dear soul, endeavouring to feed her with all I can lay hold of likely to assist or nourish her soul. She has, as a rule, enjoyed the *Gospel Standard*, but about three weeks ago I lent her the January Number of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, and I shall not soon forget, when I met her subsequently, the expression of her face, her tone, her whole demeanour, as she told me how she had enjoyed the matter contained therein. Never since I have known her have I seen her so deeply moved, remarking that she had at last found something she could read and have fellowship with. She was brought up in the Church of England, which still retains a warm place in her affections, I think, though at present in fellowship with the "Brethren." She sat under your ministry for some time in her unregenerate days, and intends taking up the GOSPEL MAGAZINE from January last.

Another, who has commenced to take it up, says that she never read, or heard anything from pulpit or desk, from which she has derived such blessing to her soul. Thus there has been an increase of four, if not five, in the circulation of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE up to the present, through our visit to the house of the dear old saint referred to in my first letter.

Ah! my brother, I visit among a strange mixture of the Lord's dear people; such extraordinary singular cases are some of them, that they would never be accredited by hearsay. The Lord is working in a wonderful manner for Himself in these last evil days. He has said He will never leave Himself without a witness; and He is certainly raising

up some powerful witnesses in His own secret way. Satan is doing his utmost, powerfully aided by the professing Church, but the Great Jehovah has ever taken care of His own name, interests, honour, and people.

Within the last few days I have received a parcel of precious matter from a brother in the Lord, who knew I valued the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, among which were four small booklets by yourself, entitled, "I Have No Money," "My Children," "Heart Appeals at the Mercy Seat," and "I'm Going Home"; also an address to your congregation on the Confessional. The latter I have not yet read, feeling that the past experience in that respect sufficeth, having heard and experienced enough on that subject whilst in the Church of Rome, out of which I was dragged as through hell-fire. The four little books I much enjoyed. "My Children" I consider invaluable to parents in the present day. I think I know of some dear Christian parents to whom I feel sure it will be much blessed. "Heart Appeals at the Mercy Seat" I also greatly enjoyed, especially pages 16, 17, 18, and 19, the sentiment or language in which is simply the expression of my own thoughts and feelings, often uttered.

I cannot help thinking, as I peruse the Magazine, how highly favoured are the contributors to, and readers of, this precious little work, and wonder whether they realize and value such a privilege. All seem to be allowed liberty to sit under, enjoy, and minister the truth unrestrainedly. What a privilege! For how many years has the writer been obliged, in the purposes of God, to be in daily contact with and sit under much that has made the soul to writhe, as it were, almost out of the body! I refer to free-will teaching. Yet there is a strong hope that deliverance is at hand even from that, among the rest that one has waited so long for.

I much enjoyed the encouraging letter from Peel Causeway that followed your reply to my own; it seemed quite significant.

In truest Christian love and sympathy, I remain,

Yours in an everlasting covenant,

Penarth, March, 1890.

A. ADAMS.

COMMENTS.

1. In proportion as we have an insight into our own hearts, and discover what they are capable of in regard to acts of foul transgression, we shall wonder rather than otherwise, that our poor, feeble fellow-sinners (having no fear of God before their eyes) do not go to greater lengths in iniquity than they do. It is to the Lord's *restraining* power the all-important limit is to be ascribed. To this, and this alone, as the sacred Word declares—"The wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." Moreover, as our correspondent intimates, the knowledge of *ourselves* which the Holy Ghost is pleased little by little to give, may well keep us from censuring and reproaching *others*. We have abundant cause for continually exclaiming, "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord."

2. But what a mercy, dear sister, and how great the privilege, with respect to the strange, mysterious, inexplicable paths, to meet one here and there that has traversed a similar course! Then we discover we

had not been the lone and destitute traveller we had imagined ourselves to be; and, whilst light has thus afterwards been thrown upon our previous pathway, how cementing the bond of union, and what a oneness of heart has been opened up, and what a combined upward drawing and mutual acknowledgment and admiration of the wisdom and the love and the mercy that has marked all the Lord's loving and gracious dealings! Oh, is not this "burning of heart," of which the disciples spoke, as realized in their "walks and talks with Jesus," a sweet foretaste of what shall be eternally realized in His more immediate presence, when time, with all its toils, temptations, and troubles shall be of the past, never again to be felt or feared! It will be in the light of that glorious day we shall realize, to our adoring wonder and amazement, what we now almost entirely fail to see—that is, the marvellous hair-breadth escapes we have had—the precipices upon which we have reeled—the fatal measures we had all but adopted—the destructive steps we were upon the very point of taking. Why, there are times and seasons even now when we get a momentary glimpse of these things, but what will the discovery be hereafter? Ah! what indeed? And all to redound "to the praise of the glory of His grace"!

3. The case you mention of the marked sufferer reminds us of two such that are now deeply laid upon the mind, and are the cause of no little measure of soul-travail and ardent appeals at the mercy-seat. The cases of which we speak are so beyond the reach of the creature. They lead, however, to an amount of occasional wrestling and importunity at the throne of grace that defies language to express. Words fail to tell what is felt. It is heart-work! It is soul-anguish! The cries, the entreaties, the beseechings are embodied in the utterance, "I am so troubled, that I cannot speak;" and the subject of this mental conflict rejoices in the fact, that there is such a Scripture as, "The Spirit itself [or Himself, N.V.] maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered;" and is thankful, moreover, for that other encouraging word, "He knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." Yes, blessed be His great and ever-adorable name, He does allow "the sighing of the [His] prisoner to come before Him;" and He does "bow down His ear" to listen to His poor and needy ones.

5. You speak of being dragged out of the Church of Rome, dear sister. Now the fact of your once being entangled in the meshes of that most awful system will readily account for the deep exercises and intense soul-conflict that your letter bespeaks. Well has Romanism been called "Satan's masterpiece," and yet how strange it is that, with the page of history before us—the avowed infallible character of the Papacy—and its ultimate doom as so plainly and emphatically declared in the sacred Word, still its progress in so long-privileged England is sad indeed to contemplate. A judicial blindness seems to have set in upon the people; a deadly infatuation has taken possession; and, notwithstanding the manifold and striking rebukes that characterize the times, as the voice of warning and admonition, England's career is downward! downward! so that the ultimate consequences the Lord alone can foresee! In spite, however, of all the zeal, and the vainly-imagined progress of the day, in regard to the things of God, to the observant of the Lord's family, His voice is clearly discernible—"Come,

my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain' (Isaiah xxvi. 20, 21).

6. We can but feel greatly interested in the case of the so-deeply tried one of whom you speak, and who, it appears, sat under our ministry for a time. We should be glad to know more particulars, and do indeed rejoice in that aught we have written has proved a "word in season" to such a troubled and anxious one. It is questionable if there were ever a day in which the words of the Apostle Peter were more appropriate than now, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Peter iv. 12). The *strangeness* of the trial, or the *peculiar* character of the temptation, is what constitutes its weight and intensity. At the same time, for a season at least, it seems so unlike others. There is apparently an utter dissimilarity. At any rate, such is supposed to be the case, until a word dropped, or a remark met with here or there, appears to indicate that others have traversed the path, or are at the same time exercised in a similar way. And yet, strange and unaccountable as it may seem, it is but the old beaten track. Surely he, for one, was familiar with it, who said—

"It is decreed that most should walk
The darkest paths alone."

Aye, and it is these very ones who, in spite of the darkness and the special character of their trials and temptations, are at least occasionally privileged to have a momentary or passing insight into the meaning of "the treasures of darkness," the "hidings of His power," and such like expressions. Since we sat down to this paper, an old and much-tried believer said to us, "Do you remember, many years ago, making the remark and suiting the action to the word, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms?' " Ah! beloved, but for that "underneath," where, alas! should we be? It may seem at times that we have no foothold; the foundation may appear to have been removed, and we sink in waters where there is no standing; but even then, although unseen and unfelt, blessed be God, there are still the everlasting arms underneath! underneath! Nor is there any sinking below the Omnipotent's "underneath." Oh, blessed be God, His own Word still holds good, "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee" (Psa. cxxxix. 5-12). Yes, bless His name!

“the darkness and the light are both alike to Him.” The sun still shines, though His brightness may be hidden by the passing cloud. Oh, how one’s heart yearns at this moment over the cases before referred to—the one too near the verge of despair even to see a friend: the other so pitiable as to harrow up the feelings too keenly to be encountered; and yet what are such cases in the hands of that Almighty One, who could, at a word, bring the devil-possessed one to “sit at His [blessed] feet, clothed and in his right mind”? Ah! it is but for the self-same Almighty and all-sufficient One to speak, and instantly—yea, in the twinkling of an eye—His servants shall be healed.

Oh, Thou dear, all-gracious and omnipotent Jehovah-Jesus, would that it would please Thee to look upon these crushed and all but overwhelmed ones! Speak, Lord, speak; whisper, “It is I; be not afraid.” Yea, in Thine own loving, merciful, gracious way, “say unto their souls, I am thy salvation.” Oh, bring them up out of their distresses—the horrible pit—“put a new song into their mouths, even praise unto our God.” Amen, and Amen. THE EDITOR.

CONGRATULATIONS.

To the Editor of the Gospel Magazine.

DEAR DR. DOUDNEY,—I have no doubt you will have many letters of congratulation upon reaching another milestone on your pilgrimage journey. It is usual at birthdays to wish “Many happy returns of the day,” but, at your advanced age, it seems an out-of-place remark; still, I trust that, if it is the will of God, your valuable life may yet be spared a few years longer. You will find my wishes for you expressed in Numbers vi. 24—26, and I trust the Lord may enable you to raise another Ebenezer, and say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.”

I have just been reading your “Retracings,” &c., and in looking back upon the way the Lord hath led you, am constrained to say, “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” You are indeed a wonder unto many, but no doubt a greater wonder unto yourself. Your life has been lengthened out to nearly the fourscore, and I trust it will be beyond. The Lord has owned and blessed your labours in many instances, and is still blessing them. Oh, what an honour to be of any service to the Lord’s dear people! Many years have passed away since you began to edit the GOSPEL MAGAZINE. As you stated, it was “faint, yet pursuing,” yet you have been held on to nearly fifty years. You have been upheld when others have been left to fall. What a mercy to be kept from sin and error! Many eyes are upon you—some for evil, and, blessed be God, many for good. Oh, how few there are who stand firm to the old-fashioned truths for which our forefathers contended. I feel we are living in solemn times. A great change has evidently come over the professing Church, both as it respects the Establishment and also the Nonconformists.

There seems to have been quite a stir through the appearance of Mr. DAVIS’S letter. Would to God there were more like the Vicar of Harborne, who has the courage to come forth boldly, and declare his views upon free and sovereign grace. He is a bold champion for truth.

May the Lord strengthen and uphold him. I have had extracts from the *English Churchman* sent me lately by a student in this University. There are not many, I fear, in this University who love the doctrines of free and sovereign grace; and yet what is there without it? Everything is a blank.

“Ah! but for free and sovereign grace
I still had lived estranged from God,
Till hell had proved the destined place
Of my deserved but dread abode.”

And since the Lord has

“Changed our heart, renewed our will,
And turned our feet to Zion’s hill,”

how many times have we been constrained to say with the poet—

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

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love,
Here’s my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above.”

And when we look at what we have been, and still are, we are constrained to say, “That to us belongeth shame and confusion of face; but to the Lord our God belongeth mercy, long-suffering, and forbearance.” We may, indeed, say with the Prophet Jeremiah, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.” Yes, He has said, “O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me;” “He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” His eye is ever upon His dear people in all the “ins” and “outs” of their pilgrimage; and however dark and mysterious that way may at times appear, yet it is the right way. The Lord leads His people as much by the right way now as in days that are past and gone; but, when passing through the trial, we find it hard work to believe that these things are working for our good and God’s glory; nay, we are too prone to feel, if not say, “All these things are against me.”

“Too blind to fathom Wisdom’s way,
Or think them sent in love.”

But “if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” What precious promises He has left upon record for the comfort and support of His dear people down to the end of time! But how we need the Holy Spirit’s power to apply these precious promises to our soul, for we often read, and read them, but there is no dew nor unction. As one says—

“The promise meets my eye,
But does not reach my case.”

But what a mercy to be enabled to look back to times and seasons when the Lord has made His Word life and power in your poor soul.

How you have proved the faithfulness of a Triune Jehovah, who has promised, "even to hoary hairs He will carry His people;" and though you will soon enter the fourscore, yet I have no doubt, in looking back, you are constrained to say with good old Jacob, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been;" yet, with David, you can say, "Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." We can say, not only is the Lord good to Israel, but He is, and has been, good to me—yes, unworthy me. Oh, how we feel, at times, that we are not worthy of the least of His mercies, and yet how we are favoured! As one has said—

"Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more."

Oh, for more gratitude to the Giver of all our mercies, both temporal and spiritual! I do trust that your last days may be your best days, that you may realize the fulfilment of those precious words, "They shall bring forth fruit in old age."

How the Lord is removing one and another from the Church militant to the Church triumphant! I was sorry to see the announcement of the death of dear Mr. NORTHOVER. Ah! he is to be envied. We have no cause for sorrow on his account. For him to die was gain; his dying day was his best day. Soon after I read the announcement, these lines came forcibly to my mind—

"What solemn tidings reach our ears!
How awful and how grand!
A brother landed safe from fears,
On Canaan's happy land.

"No clouds shall now obstruct his sun,
But all be life and peace;
With him 'tis ever, ever noon,
Nor can his joy decrease.

"He's gone in endless bliss to dwell,
And I am left below,
To struggle with the powers of hell,
Till Jesus bids me go."

He will indeed be missed. By his removal a gap is made that will not be easily filled. The Lord had blessed him with a very great gift in using his pen. Though dead, he yet speaks in the precious pieces that have been inserted from time to time in the pages of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE. Our friends keep dropping off one by one, but what a sweet thought—the Lord still remains the same. Oh, that we may be stirred up! These things have a voice in them, saying, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." When I wrote to Mr. NORTHOVER I had no idea that he was so near his end. It seems somewhat singular that I should have such a wish, for years, to write to him, yet not be able to muster sufficient courage to do so till the 8th of last month, and then for him just to see it, and not be able to reply. Oh, how I wish now that I had been able to write before! but he is gone.

“Yes, he is safely landed
 On yonder shores of bliss;
 There with his powers expanded,
 He dwells where Jesus is.”

Ah! dear friend, time is fast carrying us along to our end. As Dr. WATTS sings—

“Are we not tending upwards too,
 As fast as time can move?
 Nor should we wish the hours more slow
 To keep us from our Love.”

Oh, what a mercy to have the prospect of a home above the skies, when this short life is brought to a close. I often wonder how it will be with me when I come to die. I have so many fears about death, yet, strange as it may appear, I often can, and do, tell others they have no real cause for fear; yet I say, personally, I often feel full of fears.

But I am trespassing upon your time and patience, so will close; and may the blessing of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob rest upon you and yours. I hope you are well in body and prospering in soul. This is the sincere desire and prayer of

Yours very sincerely, for the truth's sake,

Cambridge, March 7th, 1890.

ELIJAH COE.

P.S.—At the risk of wearying you, I feel I must add a few more lines. I was about to ask if you will kindly send me one of your cards for the year 1890—I mean the card with the motto for the year. You have very kindly sent me one for several years past, and I have it on the chimney-piece in my room all through the year, and I much prize it. Sometimes, in looking at it, it has been the means of leading the mind into a line of meditation. I am sure you will pardon my liberty in thus asking for one, but I suppose, in the multiplicity of your labours and numerous correspondence, you have forgotten to send me one. I need not say how glad I shall be to receive a line from you; not that I feel myself in any way worthy of such a favour, but if you can spare a few minutes to write to one of the weakest, it will be greatly esteemed. May God bless you, and spare you a few years longer, if it is His sovereign will. I should be glad if your life was spared as long as one whom I have known for many years. He was buried at Cambridge this week, having reached the ripe age of ninety-three. Perhaps it is rather selfish of me to have such a wish, but I hope you understand my meaning.

COMMENTS.

1. As you intimate, dear brother, it is a mercy to be able to look back upon all the way the Lord has led, and to bear testimony to what His ceaseless watchfulness, His gracious care, His divine faithfulness, His marvellous forbearance and long-suffering have been. We are bound to acknowledge that there has not been the semblance of forgetfulness or failure upon His part, but what does a glance at the other side of the picture exhibit? What aspect does our conduct present but the basest ingratitude, continuous heart-backslidings, and intensest waywardness? Who that knows his own heart, even in some small measure, as to its conduct and capabilities, dares deny or dispute

the fact? And the longer he lives, and the more under divine teaching, the more thoroughly will he be rooted and grounded in his conviction of these so humbling verities.

2. As likewise you testify, dear brother, it is a mercy—and a distinguishing mercy too—that there are promises to meet the every state and stage of the believer's pilgrimage; aye, and they will be needed, too. As I sometimes pass—say the docks at Southampton—it may be upon a wintry day—I see in the shops hard by, a variety of light clothing, soft slippers, broad-brimmed hats, and lounging chairs of varied shape and size; and I'm almost ready to smile at the idea of such things being needed, especially at the then season. Were I, however, to take my place upon one of the outward-bound ships, I should, even within a few days, find how the change of climate had necessitated the precautionary measures an experienced traveller had taken in order to meet his requirements, although such a short time previously, there was not the semblance of appearance of such provision. Now so it is with the pilgrim's progress. It is an ever-varying course. Changes await him on every hand. Shade and sunshine; calms and storms; hill and dale; rough and smooth; day and night; summer and winter. For each such state and all such changes, special helps, renewed assurances, home-and-heart-spoken promises, pledges, and proofs, are needed, for the pilgrim traverses an untrodden path as far as he himself is concerned. Continually is he met with the intimation, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." The very state of things necessitates the looking up for fresh wisdom and strength, and the looking out for further aid and ceaseless care and guidance. What a key does literal Israel's wanderings furnish to that of spiritual Israel in every age.

"He led their feet far wandering round,
'Twas the right road to Canaan's ground."

Yes (blessed be His great and ever-adorable name), "He led them by THE right way, that they might go to a city of habitation;" and so, dear brother, in like manner He is leading us, although we may not see a handbreadth before us. Depend on it, it is a verity that dear HART expressed—

"That traveller walks the *safest* path
Who seldom sees his way."

Surely we have proved this, times without number, in our own experience. When the path has seemed plain and straight and smooth and easy, alas! alas! but for Divine guardianship and care, what would have been the issue of such apparently safe and satisfactory course? On the contrary, the dark and the dangerous, in prospect, has necessitated the cry for help and the total rejection of all creature confidence and fleshly strength. And how both the one and the other tend to the acknowledgment of His wisdom, His love, His guidance and care, and intensifies the admission—

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be."

3. I spoke just now of the provision which an experienced traveller makes for his projected voyage or far-distant journey—provision which

a novice would deem superfluous or unnecessary, such an one not being accustomed to the change of climate, or the ever-varying circumstances to which journeying would subject him. This brought to my recollection a remark I, in my ignorance, shortsightedness, and inexperience, made some sixty-three years ago. It was an observation bearing upon the conduct or the inconsistency of an aged man of God. In my self-sufficiency, I intimated that, if I met him, "I should inquire if he could ask the blessing of God upon what he did?" Scores—aye, hundreds—of times since have I upbraided and reproached myself for my consummate folly and utter want of self-knowledge, at the veriest thought of I—a mere stripling—making such inquiry of a veteran in years and experience; and coupled with the reflection, has been a corresponding deep sense of my ignorance of the wisdom, the grace, the strength I should personally need for the journey upon which I had just entered. I dare not give particulars; although they are as fresh upon my recollection as though the occurrence were but of yesterday. Suffice to state, that within a few months of my cherishing, as I had done, the thoughts of imprudence and inconsistency, I was brought into close contact with the very person upon whom I had thus sat in judgment, at a time and under circumstances, when I thought, "If *he* is the subject of such intense anguish of heart and bitter regret and sorrow, the evil to which *my* heart tends and to which, alas! it seems utterly impossible but what I shall become a prey, ought to beget in me, by comparison, tenfold anguish and the keenest of self-reproach and indignation." Moreover, I believe that the very contact of which I have spoken, in the personal witnessing of the anguish of soul and intensity of grief of which the aged one was the subject, was made a means of arresting me in the destructive career to which I had appeared doomed; and the rescue from which was one of the most marvellous deliverances I ever received at the Lord's hand. I was led mentally to make a vow; but, in the making of it, there was such a deep inwrought and most thorough sense of personal impotency and intense creature weakness and inability, that the resolution and mental promise and determination seemed to be the veriest farce imaginable. But oh (thanks—eternal thanks—to His ever-blessed and most-adorable name!), He *did* make His strength perfect in my weakness; that vow *was* kept; the snare *was* broken; and I (of the richest and most distinguishing mercy) escaped, although as but with the skin of my teeth. Of two things, moreover, it helped instrumentally to check—if not absolutely to cure—namely, the disposition to upbraid others, and to beware of depending upon creature-strength or fleshly resolutions.

4. The longer I remain in the wilderness, the more convinced I am, dear brother, that such will be our exercises, in some way or other, as to subject us to the need of this renewal of strength from on high. Faith will be tested; and, in that testing, creature confidence, fleshly dependences, and all human resources, will fail. So that there will be a ceaseless—yea, an ever-constant—need of our betaking ourselves to the Strong for strength. The "death will be upon the promise" to the end of the journey, so that the "great I" of the creature shall be dethroned, and the Lord—and He alone—looked unto and depended upon. Thus the "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name,

give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake," will be the lifelong lesson until faith is lost in sight, and then farewell all and everything of the creature for ever. And will it not be a blessed riddance and a glorious discharge? Yes, it will then, in very deed, be—

"Farewell, tempter, death, and sin;
My port's in view, I'll enter in."

5. With respect to your exercises in regard to death, dear brother, I believe they are nothing new or strange, but that they are among those calls for faith and simple, childlike trust and confidence for which I have just been contending. The Lord will not leave a particle of room for any fleshly dependence or creature-boast. All such will prove of no avail, and be destroyed with the hay, straw, and stubble, as so much worthless refuse. It is His own work, and that alone, which will stand the various tests to which He Him-elf will subject it.

With respect, however, to the article of death, it is worthy of note that it was not until its near approach the Lord Himself said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened [pained] until it is accomplished." Moreover, it was not until the very last night of His earthly sojourn, and upon the very eve of the last great crisis and the tremendous extremity of Calvary, He cried, and that in such intensity of anguish as to sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." If, then, such was *His* experience—such *His* conflicts—is it reasonable or likely that *we* shall altogether escape, or be in circumstances in which we shall no longer need to exclaim, "Lord, be Thou my Helper"?

THE EDITOR.

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

I DO feel to have been helped in my time of sickness; words that had been sweet of late seemed made over to me again; and though never receiving that full manifestation of grace that my soul thirsts after, cleaving grace seems given me, and some feeling in the things of God. The Word has not been closed to me, and I am at times enabled to plead it. I have been struck especially with two portions, 2 Cor. ii. 14. It is the savour of that knowledge I long for, and see such a beauty in—"to know Him." I do feel that any unfolding of the "knowledge of Christ" has a sweet savour, and causes my heart to pant to Him in earnest desire for more. Then 1 John v. 14, 15, has been good. Can it really be that I have the petitions I ask for? I do know my petitions are, that I may realize my interest in Christ, my complete union to Him, and I am helped to cling to the hope that is according to His will; but, oh, there are direful enemies within that would persuade me the promised blessing is not for me. This dreadful bar of unbelief, how it shoots its poisoned arrows into our hearts, and fights against the "spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." I have been thinking that the Word never turns me back, since I was first enabled to realize the reality of the humanity of Christ, and my eyes were drawn to Him as my only Refuge. The Bible, though often

a sealed book, has never told me to give up hope; indeed, indeed it gives continual encouragement, and while still asking the Lord to grant me more faith, that I may be enabled to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus, I would praise Him for the grace that makes me hunger and thirst after Him, and does not leave me without some precious Gospel droppings. Well I know, if left to my carnal nature, I should soon lose all appetite for the Bread of Life. What a strange mixture I am of hope and fear! You understand me, I know.—Yours affectionately,

ANNIE.

COMMENTS.

1. You speak of the repeatings, or “the word that had been sweet made over again.” This is a great privilege. You remember the Lord saying to Jacob, “I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowed a vow unto Me.” Now here was the renewing upon the ground of the Lord’s previous approval and acceptance; and this, mark, is a precious feature in all the Lord’s vowing and renewing. Although the Lord was the first to commune with the Patriarch, how little did he imagine how well pleasing was his response and reverence, as well as his resolves. Its recognition, upon the part of the Lord, was long delayed, but declared, nevertheless, in the most timely and gracious way. The Lord’s blessings are dealt out by degrees, and just as He sees when and where they are really needed.

2. You say you have “never had the full manifestation that your soul thirsts after”; but you admit, later down, that you “hunger and thirst after Him.” You acknowledge, at the same time, the grace that is given you for that very purpose; and assuredly you have reason for so doing. Did you always “hunger and thirst after Him”? If not, who made the difference, and why? And does not His own Word ratify and confirm the blessing, when He declared that such “should be filled”? Blessed in *fasting*, as the prelude to being blessed in *feasting*.

3. It has been said, that the work of the Holy Spirit in a poor sinner’s heart is comparable to the old military phrase, “*Right-about face*.” Before a divine arrest, the sinner’s back is turned upon Jesus, but when called by grace, his face is both Christward and heavenward. Hence the sigh and the cry, as well as the looking and longing after Jesus, proves at once the divine attraction. It is no longer, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?” but, “Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou dwellest?” Now, mark, this is the heaven-implanted, the Spirit-awakened language of every sigh, tear, groan, and glance Christward and heavenward; and it is a sure sign of Spirit-bestowed, imperishable, and everlasting life. It is part and parcel of that inestimable gift of which the Lord Himself spake, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any man [or devil] pluck them out of My hand.”

4. You speak of “cleaving grace.” We love the term, “cleaving grace.” Does the child ever cleave to the mother as it does in weakness, in want, in danger? And does not *cleaving* speak in the most telling and powerful way? How often has our own soul been instructed and refreshed, as we have glanced at the little weary and footsore child, clinging with outstretched hand and tight grasp to the

mother, whose one arm has been holding her infant, and the other her little purchases. Ah! the weary look, the tearful eye, the close clinging, upon the part of the child, needed none to say how the one and the other were related. "That's the mother!" were a needless utterance. In like manner, the clinging, the looking, the craving, the crying, betoken—and that most unmistakably—the relationship between Jesus and the poor sinner.

5. Again, with respect to assurance, or that "full manifestation of love" of which you speak, depend on it it is rarely, if ever, given in the way we expect or look for, and with respect to which we virtually (although unconsciously) dictate or prescribe to the Lord. *Our* way is, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." "I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine"! "I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." Now, although this may not be *the Lord's* way, yet *His* way is as real—as effective—as satisfactory to *faith*—as the course *we* had marked out for the Lord to follow. Nor is it any real reason or sound argument that the Lord should bring *us* into liberty in this way, because He *has* done so in the case of *others*. This is not only to *prescribe*, but to *limit* likewise. "His hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that it cannot hear," let Him take whatsoever course He may sovereignly choose to adopt, or use such means as may seem good in His sight. "Whatsoever" is His legal prerogative as well as "whosoever." Divine sovereignty crowns all; and the sooner, in sweet harmony with this glorious fact of Divine authority, we are able to exclaim, "It is the Lord; let Him do as seemeth Him good," the sooner we shall know what that peace is "which passeth understanding" and which "keeps the heart and mind by Christ Jesus."

6. If you had not a Gospel right to lay hold of the precious portion of 1 John v. 14, you would not have had the savour and sweetness of which you speak. Yours is neither the spirit nor the language of the excitement—the sensationalism—the lightness—the "taking things for granted"—that so haplessly and widely characterize the days in which we live. Your whole course bespeaks sobriety, earnestness, and a godly jealousy for truth, as well as a wholesome self-distrust, and intense creature loathing and abhorrence. Moreover, yours is no small mercy, in that the Word—the Word—does not condemn you. You resort to it; you wish to be honest; you would far, far rather than otherwise, it should cut and pierce to the very heart's core than cry, "Peace! peace!" where God has not spoken peace. Who is more ready to give heed than yourself to the solemn injunction, "To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"? And was there ever a day in which such injunction was more needful?

7. We may rest assured that there will always be a felt want—a certain pressing necessity—whilst we are *where* we are, and *as* we are. The moments will be very few, and the seasons extremely rare, in which it may be said of us, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." From some cause or other, either personally or relatively, or both, we shall scarcely have breathing time between the utterances, "I am poor and needy." And why? That we may know where our wisdom, strength, courage, all-sufficiency, are to

be found; that is in Him, and in Him, alone! Be it ours, then, to adopt the language of the Psalmist—"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalm xvii. 15).

8. We have lately been considering some of those agonizing exercises of which you were the subject, some six or seven years ago, and we sit in adoring wonder, as we contemplate the Lord's astounding goodness and mercy on your behalf. In the fulness of one's heart, we can but exclaim, "What hath God wrought! It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." We are persuaded, that, in proportion as you are enabled to review the Lord's leadings and dealings, your language will be, "By this I know that Thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me." You will see and acknowledge that it was the Lord, and the Lord alone, that could sustain and deliver; and this acknowledgment is due to Him. It is an acceptable service, for "whoso offereth praise, glorifieth Him."

Lastly, there is another distinguishing mercy which it behoves you not to overlook. It is where you say, "the Word never turns me back." Now, this is a favour and a privilege of no common order. It is a standard to which, in this day of great profession, but few comparatively, attain. Remember that there is a blessed harmony and a sacred conformity between the new man, or the new mind, and the precious Word of God. There is no clashing or contradiction between the one and the other, but a sweet consistency. Now, observe what the Apostle John says upon this momentous subject, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John iii. 18—21).

THE EDITOR.

THE LATE MR. WILLIAM MACK.

WITH this number of the GOSPEL MAGAZINE, our readers are presented with a Portrait of our late highly-respected friend, Mr. WILLIAM MACK. As stated in a previous number, he was one whom we held in the highest esteem and regard. He was a man of little display, but of sterling worth. He lived not for himself, but for others. The practical language of his every-day life was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and, as that knowledge was made known to him, so to the utmost of his power, he sought to carry out the Lord's will and purpose. His energy and activity were such, that he failed to give himself the rest of which the poor human frame stood in absolute need. After business hours, upon most days, a certain time was devoted to visiting the sick and the poor and needy. His Sunday engagements were of the most arduous and pressing character. Apart from walking a considerable distance, he so devoted himself to classes as to neglect his meals, and which doubtless contributed, in no small degree, to the lengthened and painful malady which at length closed his eventful and so laborious career.

We had hoped to have been in a position to present Mr. MACK'S Journal, as kept during his visit to the United States, a short time before his last and fatal illness assumed so formidable a character. Although delayed, we still hope to be in a position to publish it in this work.

For some months, Mr. MACK'S condition was prostration itself. He could take but little nourishment, and, for a time, was compelled to remain in a sitting posture. Hence his weariness must have been extreme.

In speaking of his revered father, Mr. MACK'S eldest son writes as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—I am just choosing a spare minute to note down a few reminiscences of my father.

I am not aware whether you know Mr. BODY or not; he is a very old friend of my father's, and well-known in the village churches round Bristol. About mid-day, on the day that my father died, my two brothers and a brother-in-law went to his house to tell him of what had happened. He met them at the gate, returning from a journey, and, as soon as he recognized them, he burst into tears and said, "I know what has happened; it is all over, my dear friend is gone. When I came down to breakfast this morning, I said to the lady of the house at which I was stopping, 'I am afraid my friend, Mr. MACK, is gone.' I felt, for the first time in my life, I could not *pray* for him; * directly I came into Bristol I looked in the paper to see whether there was not a notice of his death, and I was just going to a neighbour's to inquire whether they had heard any news."

Talking to one of his sons one day about a book the latter was praising, he said, "I never read a book on Christian evidences in my life. From the time of my conversion I never had any doubt on the matter, and I never felt the need of that class of book." All who heard him speak remember that he always spoke as if he had "seen and tasted and handled" the things whereof he spake. There were never any ifs, or doubts, or ambiguous phrases.

His love of the prayer-meeting and his faith in prayer were both remarkable. He believed in a prayer-meeting *before* the morning service, and in a prayer-meeting *after* the closing service on the Lord's Day, and was never absent from either. As far back as his children can remember they recollect being taken with him to the ten o'clock morning prayer-meeting; it did not matter whether anybody else was there, *he* was there. For some months he and an almost deaf old lady were the only two who attended this morning prayer-meeting, but apparently he saw in this no discouragement nor reason for giving it up. If he had been the only one there the meeting would have been held. Not being musical, he could never start a tune himself, save one, to the well-known and, to him, favourite hymn—

"Let us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind;
For His mercy shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure."

This was a very favourite hymn with him in his early days, and often had to do duty.

He was remarkably fond of hymns, and for some time had been collecting various hymn-books; his last illness found him preparing a lecture on hymns. He could quote hundreds, more especially those that were popular in his early days. Talking to one of his sons last summer, when he thought he was dying, he said his experience and hope could be summed up in two verses—

* And what a mercy to have got beyond where prayer was needed!—Ed.

“ A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall ;
Be thou my Strength and Righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.”

The other verse was—

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

And again, another favourite verse of his, which he took great delight in quoting, was—

“ Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress ;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

If my father was once convinced on any question of principle, he would never abate an atom ; once having made up his mind that a thing was *right*, no trouble or hardship would ever swerve him as to his duty. During his trip to America last spring, in great weakness of body, with a strong desire to hear some of the well-known preachers of New York and other towns, he would never ride on the Sabbath to hear them ; and contented himself with going to some neighbouring and perhaps unknown church, rather than break principle, despite the fact that both ministers and Church members by the thousand were using the tram-cars and other vehicles. His diary will show how often he spent the very few spare evenings he had over there in prayer-meetings.

He often said how much he had been blest by the example and teachings of GEORGE MÜLLER, of Bristol, and he, almost at the beginning of his Christian life, laid down a rigid rule for himself in the matter of giving. He determined to lay by on the first day of the week a fixed proportion of his income—“as God had prospered him” also. At first, probably, he gave a tenth ; but, “as God prospered him,” he set by a larger proportion, considering that a tenth was the minimum that a Christian should give, and not the maximum. Whatever profits he made in business, or whatever legacy or bequest reached him, the following Sunday found its proper proportion put in a separate purse, which he called “the Lord's purse.”

Another great principle which lay very, very near his heart, was the subject that St. James treats of in his Epistle. He believed in the house of God being absolutely free to everyone, and so far as he could have his way, he would have neither pew rents nor the appropriation of seats. He believed in its being the Father's house, and therefore open to the rich and the poor alike. He often said, “If a visitor comes to your house, you give him the best chair and the best place at the table, not the worst ; and so, if a stranger comes into a place of worship, it should be a privilege to you to give up to him, or to let him take, your seat. It is not your house, nor even any part of it yours.”

For the same reason, as well as for other reasons, he would never have a collection taken from pew to pew, except at the Lord's Supper, when only Christians were present. He even carried this principle further, and, instead of the plate being held at the door, he always strongly urged that there should be a box merely, so that no one might think that they were being pressed to give, or that they might be led to give through fear of man.

Stapleton Road Chapel, of which he was a deacon, was free ; anyone coming in could sit where he pleased, and would be certain that no one would ask him to contribute a penny. He very strongly believed in the text, “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

During the latter part of his protracted illness, when Mrs. MACK had been reading one of Dr. WATTS'S hymns to him, he said, "Why, my dear, you have left out the sweetest verse—

"There shall I see His face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in."

We scarcely remember to have met a man of a more even temperament than our late friend. Neither elated nor depressed. He gave one the idea of being among those privileged believers of whom it is said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace [peace, peace] whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." He had been of a sudden bitten by a dog, when visiting Westbury, some years since. Critical as is such an occurrence, upon calling on him, we found him in his usual calm state of mind. He was both resting and waiting. Notwithstanding, he was anything but stoical or indifferent. None could be more alive to the interest and well-being of others than our late friend. What he did on others' behalf will never be known upon earth.

After his removal from Westbury to Brislington, he had been laid aside for a time by illness. When we visited him in his sick chamber, he said how his mind had been refreshed by one of our new year's mottoes. It was that for the year 1885, "The cause that is too hard for thee, bring it unto Me, and I will hear it." Well we remember the sacred pleasure he realized whilst dwelling upon it.

As before intimated, considering the many years we had transacted business together as author and publisher, and through the whole period of which such a cordial feeling existed, we never remember to have felt more keenly the death of a friend than that of

DEAR MR. MACK.

Protestant Beacon.

A LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE; OR, ROME UNDERGROUND.

RECENTLY a very interesting and instructive lecture was delivered at Broadstairs by Mr. G. A. TREYER HILL. Its title was "A Light in a Dark Place; or, Rome Underground." The chair was filled by Mr. NEWLING, who said that there was great need of such lectures. No one who observed and read could be ignorant of the danger to which Protestant truth was exposed in these days. He was glad to see Churchmen in the audience; there ought to have been more. He and the lecturer were Churchmen, and he could not understand how men could be so stolidly indifferent to the present condition of things in the Church. The old forms and old truths dear to so many hearts were passing away, and others taking their places which utterly disgusted them with their gross error and childish folly. He thought that Dissenters should join Churchmen in protesting against the continuance in their midst of such teaching, and by any lawful means to put it down. With the proceedings at Cardiff fresh in their

memories, let them not think lightly of the matter. The struggle was now inevitable; it remained to be seen whether they kept what their forefathers had so nobly won.

Having read an extract from the *Sunday at Home* in confirmation of his statements as to the growth, &c., of Ritualism, Mr. NEWLING called upon Mr. TREYER HILL, who said that he thoroughly endorsed all that the Chairman had said, and he should be very glad if a branch of the Protestant Alliance could be formed at Broadstairs. After having explained the origin and uses of the Catacombs in a very lucid manner, the lecturer exhibited a large number of diagrams showing inscriptions, specimens of ancient art, &c., discovered therein, all of which bore testimony to the truths taught among the early Christians, and the faith and practice which obtained among them. They found pure faith in Christ; to Him they lived, for Him they died. The hope which inspired them as they laid their friends to rest, and rudely chiselled their inscriptions, was touching and beautiful. They grasped the fact that the age of ceremonies was over; the grand and imposing ritual of the Jewish Temple ceased when the veil was rent at the crucifixion. They felt there was no need of lamps because the sun had arisen, and they rejoiced in "the Light of the world." There was abundant evidence that these faithful ones had pastors, but no priests. They met around a common table to remember their Lord, but had no altar. They felt Christ's real presence in their hearts, and never once represented Him as corporeally present in the bread and wine of His supper. Thus it was seen that the further back they went, the nearer to the times of Christ and His Apostles, the simpler and purer was the faith. To this simplicity, purity, and truth it behoved them to return; discarding the priestly, the sacrificial, and the obsolete, let them cling to the great truths which consoled and sustained the persecuted Christians of the Catacombs. They ought to thank God for their discovery, because they threw a strong and clear light on those things which men surround in these days with so much haziness and mystery. Mr. TREYER HILL recommended the audience to procure and peruse Dr. MAITLAND'S "Church in the Catacombs," and asked the help and prayers of all "to defend the faith once delivered to the saints."

Reviews and Notices of Books.

A Sermon preached in Tyldesley Chapel, on Sunday Evening, March 9th, 1890, by the Rev. W. E. BOURNE, Minister. Tyldesley: M. Hunter.

THE subject of this sermon is a very solemn one, based upon Genesis vi. 6—"And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." The preacher has, in the most Scriptural manner, founded his arguments upon the pure Word of God, and displayed a becoming jealousy and a holy, reverential regard for the character of Jehovah. The sermon is worthy of a thoughtful, prayerful perusal.

Old Margaret. London: Morgan and Scott.
A TRULY eventful life, and a most remarkable character.



Ever yours in Christ,
James Omiston.
