

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 TIM. 3. 16, 17).

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SCRIPTURE TRUTH

“Sing.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

ARE we sufficiently alive to the fact that the first business of the Christian is to sing, and that if praise be silent we do not glorify God, no matter how zealous we may be in other matters? Do we not need to be reminded that “whoso offereth praise glorifieth God;” and to be lifted, perhaps, out of the gloom and despondency of the earthly outlook—and no year within our memory has opened with prospect so cheerless as this—into the triumphant gladness of the ransomed company, that songs of praise may more constantly engage our hearts and lips. We believe we do; and so feel constrained to say at the opening of this year, “Brethren, let us sing.”

Do we belong to the ransomed company? Then let us not forget that there lie behind us foes, broken and defeated; death’s power, confronted and annulled; the judgment of God, borne and exhausted; and that there shines before us the glory of our God, our heavenly destiny; and as we keep these things in mind, let us sing.

In the days of our spiritual youth we sang, when we went after our Lord in the wilderness—and He has not forgotten the sweetness of those first feeble notes—but now we dwell, we fear, so little in the glory above that we are easily overcome by the circumstances beneath, and so the chords of our souls become mute, or, if they speak at all, it is with the discordant sound of discontent. We are often like pilgrims, footsore and weary, with hearts disconsolate, and harps unstrung; who have lost the joy of redemption, and who have forgotten that their resources in God are inexhaustible, and who do not consider that their song is immortal because the cause of it can neither know dishonour nor decay: who do not consider the imperishable character of

the glory of “JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever.” If this is so, how much we need reviving, and may the Holy Ghost revive us by the ministry of Christ. Let us during the opening moments of this year stir up our minds to consider Him, our Lord and Saviour—His love, His grace, His glory, who is infinitely better than the best that can be said of Him, and as surely as we do it we shall sing, for as our hearts indite this good matter they will bubble up—they will be as the pen of the ready writer.

It is well known that the first mention of singing in the Bible is in Exodus 15. With an outstretched arm Jehovah had redeemed His people from a long and cruel slavery. He had overwhelmed their foes in the waters of death; He had set them free. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.” Israel’s deliverance from the ruthless oppressor is a figure of our deliverance from a greater tyrant and a harder bondage, and it is the heart that is in the sense of deliverance that breaks into song. If we know the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and the deliverance that He has gained for us by His death and resurrection, we shall not be silent, and sweet to Him our song shall be.

“Sing” is the first word of Isaiah 54. Nor would any other word have been in place there. There is that appropriateness, that divine perfection about it that does not surprise the reverent reader of the Word. How could the heart and lip but sing that had read and understood Isaiah 53: that had believed that “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace

was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed . . . when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

Here in the story of His unspeakable love and signal triumph we find our food for song. Let others sing their anthems in praise of the country of their birth, and raise their pæans in honour of war; God has given to us a nobler theme:

"Of Christ and His love will we sing,
None other our lips shall employ."

A famous bard has written mournfully of the harp that hangs voiceless upon the silent walls of an ancient fortress, or which, if it speaks, has but one chord that breaks the night to tell its tale of ruin. Why are those harp-strings still? Because the glory of the former days is vanished; the royal line is extinct, and the castle a broken heap. Good cause indeed for a silent harp!

But we have no such cause for silence, for the glory of God, which is our joy because we are His children, can never pass away. It was maintained to the full in the life of Jesus here below; it was established on an impregnable basis by His death upon the cross; and it shines to-day, like a glorious sun which shall never set or be eclipsed, in His blessed face, a Man upon the throne of God. The world does not see it yet, though it shall in the day of His appearing, but we see it; and as we behold the glory of the Lord our hearts vibrate with praise. He cannot fail; and He is the Firstborn of a new race, to every man of which He gives eternal life; and that which He builds shall never be overthrown.

Of old the exiles from Jerusalem sat down in sorrow beside the waters of Babylon, and hanged their harps upon the willow trees. The fame of their sweet melodies had reached that heathen city before them, and their captors demanded a song from them. But they could not sing, for God's centre for His

people was a silent ruin, and they, driven far from it, were strangers in a strange land. But we have no such cause for silent sadness, for Christ is now God's Centre for His saints, and He can never fail, and from Him and His love no power can separate them. And as we think of Him as the glorious and never-failing Centre for His saints we learn what Christian singing is in its truest and highest character.

"The ransomed of the Lord [can] come . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." They can "break forth into joy and sing together," "with the voice together [can] they sing;" and the stones of the street might well find tongue and cry their shame if they were silent in the presence of the unmingled grace of God, and the glory of Christ. But there is something more wonderful than the praise of saints, and this we are apt to overlook. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself has said: "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (Ps. 22. 22). "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Hebrews 2. 12). This we must not pass by as though it were a matter of small importance, for in it lies the inner and the deeper joys. Here we reach, not the courtyard of the tabernacle where the brazen altar stands, but the Holiest of all, the very sanctuary of God, where He delights in the unveiled perfections of His beloved Son, and where the Son of God delights in the Father's love, well-known, and His eternal purposes secured.

To understand it, we must trace the road that led up to it, and discern the purpose that led the Lord to take that road. We may trace the road in Psalm 22. How dark, how terrible, it was! We are allowed to stand by and listen to the cries that broke the darkness from the lips of the One in whose heart every sorrow found its centre; and knowing Him to be the Lord of the universe, and the Only-begotten and well-beloved of the Father we might well ask, Why did He tread that road? Was it to save us from the lake of fire? It was, but more. Was it to deliver us

from Satan's power and make us happy and free? It was, but more. Was it that, justified from all things, we might be glorified in heaven with Him. It was, but more than this also.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1. 18); and He has declared Him as the One who seeks true worshippers, who shall worship Him, the Father, in spirit and in truth (John 4. 23). But those whom the Father sought were dead in trespasses and sins, they lay under the judgment of God, and in the power of the devil, and from thence they had to be extricated and righteously set free; and Jesus died for this. He laid down His life that He might take it again, and that, as the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies, and so brings forth much fruit, He might bring those for whom He died into association with Himself in His resurrection life, and declare unto them, as His brethren, the Father's name, that name of ineffable love, that they might share with Him the joy of this, to them, new relationship, and know the love peculiar to it.

Let us consider this greatest of all the thoughts of God to us-ward, and may we by the Holy Spirit's power enter into it in a larger measure. When here on earth the Lord declared the Father's name to His disciples, but they were dull of hearing and slow of heart; they believed that He came from God, but they did not understand this revelation of the Father, and so there were none with whom the Lord could share His thoughts, or who could have fellowship with Him in the Father's love. But in resurrection all is changed. He can, now that is a fact, stand triumphant in the midst of His brethren—the assembly, and there declare to ears that can hearken and to hearts that can appreciate what He knows of the Father.

Those of us whose privilege it is to sometimes speak of Jesus and His love that surpasses all human thought have known what it is to have our souls glow

and thrill with the blessedness of that of which we speak until every chord within us broke out in song.

We speak with reverence, for we tread here on holy ground, but it seems to us that thus it is in an infinitely blessed way with our risen Lord as He declares to His brethren the Father's name. He has found a company at last, redeemed from the kingdom of darkness, sanctified and made one with Him, indwelt by His Spirit, and His brethren for ever, in the midst of which He may tell out the secrets of the Father's love, and the joy of it makes Him sing. For surely this is the connection: “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee” (Hebrews 2. 12). He is the Singer there. He it is that makes sweet music in the Father's ear. He sings praise unto God. But do not we sing also? Yes, it is our high privilege so to do, for we are one with Him in that favoured spot, His brethren. His Father is our Father and His God is our God, and all that He has received of His Father He makes known to us. But whether we take up our privilege in this respect or not depends upon our spiritual state. If we are in His presence, absorbed with Him, with ears attent to His words, then shall our voices be attuned to His and we shall render unto the Father sweeter praise than angel voice can sing.

How wonderful is this perfect love of Jesus. When the question of judgment arose He stood alone. “Let these go their way” expressed His tender thought for them, but now having drunk the dreadful cup, and passed through all the darkness, He calls His own to share His joy and sing with Him the triumph song.

Brethren, let us sing—“speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord,” for our song is immortal since the subject of it can know neither dishonour nor decay—**“JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTER-DAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER.”**

Christ our Hope.

(H. P. BARKER).

IN speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Hope we may be sure that God would not have us overlook for a moment all that He is to His people *now*, in connection with our journeyings through this wilderness. We have His precious sympathy, His true and tender love, His effectual intercession, His mighty support, His guardian care, His continual mercy, His daily, hourly guidance. All these things are great, present realities.

The Christian who forgets them is an immense loser. To be exclusively occupied with the future and to miss that which is the Lord's mind for His loved ones *to-day* is to rob oneself of profound joy. It is as much our privilege now as it ever will be to enter into His love and enjoy its warmth and tenderness, and to explore by the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit the breadth, length, depth, and height of those vast eternal purposes that have Him for their centre and object, and in which, through infinite grace, we have part.

But while all this is true, and most important, it must none the less be maintained that the Christian's outlook is towards what is yet to come. The fruition of our hopes is still future; the manifestation of the sons of God is not yet. What, in a word, then, is the Christian's hope? the answer is at once forthcoming: CHRIST. We read in 1 Timothy 1. 1: "Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope."

He is the Hope of Israel, too. None but He can bring to pass that which the prophetic page teaches her to look for. And He, too, is the Hope of the Gentiles, "the desire of all nations" (Hag. 2. 7). But in a very special way we Christians can speak of Him as "*our* Hope."

We do not fix our gaze upon events, though events, full of His glory, are to happen; not on the crown which He

will give us, nor on the throne on which we shall sit with Him, but upon *Himself*. *He* is our hope.

This is what gives such paramount importance to the moment when we shall see His face and hear Him call us to be with Him for ever.

It has been insinuated that the Christian whose mind and heart are set upon the "rapture" of the church, according to 1 Thessalonians 4., rather than the "appearing" of Christ in His glory to establish His Kingdom, is selfish, and thinks more of his own release from trial and infirmity than of Christ's glory. It is a base and unworthy suggestion. We delight to know that He who has been disallowed of men, despised and set at nought, will be honoured and exalted "in that day." But we believe that His church, His bride, is more to *Him* than His throne and kingdom, and we, with uplifted eye and worshipping heart can say, "Lord, the day when we shall see *Thee* and be with *Thee* is more to us than the crowning day that will follow."

When the Lord comes for His people, according to 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, He will give a *shout*, a shout of gladness. The day for Him to claim His loved ones will have come at last. The voice of the archangel will be heard, for angels have learned wonderful lessons from the display in the church of God's manifold wisdom (Eph. 3. 10), and when she reaches the place to which the eternal purpose of God has destined her, it will be a great moment for the angels. There has been joy among them, many a time, over the return of the repentant sinner. Who shall portray the joy that will be theirs, voiced by their leader, in the day when the church is brought home by Him who has won her? There will also be the "trump of God." God shall Himself rejoice, for that which will come to pass at that hour will be the result of His own eternal counsel and grace. The king-

dom will not be that. It will come in as a necessity, that every enemy may be subdued. But when that is accomplished, the kingdom will be delivered up, and nothing remain but the fruit of everlasting purpose.

So Christ Himself is our hope; not His official glories, though our delighted eyes will view them with infinite con-

tent; not His administration in the day of His power, though He will share it all with us—Himself alone is our hope.

“How will our eyes to see His face delight,
Whose love has cheered us through the
darksome night!
How will our ears drink in His well-known
voice,
Whose faintest whispers make our souls
rejoice!”

“I Have Finished the Work.”

“OUR best finishing is but coarse and blundering work after all. We may smooth, and soften, and sharpen till we are sick at heart, but take a good magnifying glass to our miracle of skill, and the visible edge is a jagged saw, and the silky thread a rugged cable, and the soft surface a granite desert. Let all the ingenuity and all the art of the human race be brought to bear upon the attainment of the utmost possible finish, and they could not do what is done in the foot of a fly or the film of a bubble. *God alone can finish*, and the more intelligent the human mind becomes, the more the infiniteness of the interval is felt between human and divine work in this respect.”

That is true in creation, and of work done in material things, but there is another realm other than this, and another work of surpassing greatness in which God has been revealed, not in the perfection of the work of His hands, but in the moral perfection of His attributes, and in the infinite love and grace and blessedness of His nature. And while the material creation shall pass away, for it must “wax old as doth a garment” and “perish,” this revelation of what He is in Himself shall abide for ever and yield unending delight to multitudes who shall have ceased from their own crude and unsatisfying labours to rest in the absolute perfection of the work that is finished, and its results.

All the glory of that work abides in Him who finished it, and the radiance of

the revelation of God that He has made here below shines in His face who made it. And God has become infinitely attractive to the believer who by the Spirit knows what Christ has done, nor can he withhold his loving adoration from the One who has done it.

In olden days the work begun by Moses was carried on by Joshua, and he died without bringing it to a finish (Hebrews 4.); and the work of David was carried on by Solomon and was broken to pieces in his hands; and Elisha succeeded Elijah, and the prophets followed one after the other: men of sorrow and travail and tears were they all, as their unfinished work dropped from nerveless and dying fingers. But Jesus came not to begin where others left off, but to start anew, and not to hand on His work for others to complete, but to finish it Himself. And down to the last word and stroke of it it was done for the Father’s glory. “I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” Every thought in the eternal counsels was brought to light in Him; every feeling in the infinite heart of God found expression in His life; every word of prophetic Scriptures was fulfilled by Him, even to that cry upon the cross, “I thirst.” It is thus that we know the true God, the Father, and Jesus Christ His sent One, and have eternal life; and the knowledge of these things yields satisfaction and fullness of joy, because there is no flaw, and so no disappointment in them. (Ed.)

Christ, the Theme of all Scripture.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

IT is remarkable that Christ and the Scriptures should have the same title given to them—"THE WORD OF GOD." Christ—the living Word—is the *one* Person, and the Scriptures—the written Word—the *one* Book that men can, and do attack, for Christ gives body and substance to the Book, and the Book presents Christ in type and shadow, in actual life down here, and as the Revealer of the Father, and the Giver of the Holy Ghost, and fallen man hates Christ because he hates God.

Christ, the great Theme of Scripture, can be traced in the Word of God in several ways, in connection with its several parts.

1. The *figures* of Christ are seen in the Pentateuch.
2. The *feelings* of Christ are portrayed in the Psalms.
3. The *foretellings* concerning Christ are given us in the Prophets.
4. The *facts* concerning Christ—His life, death, resurrection and ascension—are narrated in the Gospels.
5. The *fruits* of Christ, of His work and His teaching, are unfolded in the Epistles.
6. The *fear* of Christ, "*the terror of the Lord*," in all its detail, ending with the great white throne, solemnizes us in the Revelation.

When the believer sees Christ portrayed in one form or another from Genesis to Revelation he finds the Bible, though composed of sixty-six books—sixty-six units—one harmonious majestic unity.

1. The **FIGURES** of Christ are seen in the Pentateuch.

Adam "is the figure of Him [*Christ*] that was to come" (Rom. 5. 14).

Adam falling into a deep sleep and Eve builded of his rib is a figure of the death of Christ, and the result of it—His church, His bride: "We are members

of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5. 30, 32).

The triumph of Christ over Satan is contained in germ in the words addressed by the Lord God to the serpent, when he had wrought the destruction of the fall: "It [the woman's seed] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *His* [that is, the woman's seed, Christ] heel" (Gen. 3. 15).

Abel's offering typified Christ: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Heb. 11. 4). We know that righteousness can alone come through Christ, so that it is plain what Abel's offering typified.

Noah's ark and the waters of the flood typified baptism, as 1 Peter 3. 20, 21, plainly shows, and we know from Romans 6. 3 we are baptized to Jesus Christ, unto His death. Christ gives substance and colour to everything connected with man's blessing.

Melchisedec was a type of Christ as plainly set forth in Hebrews.

Isaac was a type of Christ when he was offered up in intention, if not in fact, on Mount Moriah. No wonder Abraham lifted up his eyes of faith, and looking down the centuries, with prophetic intuition, called the place, "Jehovah-jireh, *i.e.* the Lord will provide," and that Christ, the *blessed* Provision of God, could say to the scoffing scribes and pharisees, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8. 56).

Joseph was a type of Christ. He was hated by his brethren. So was Christ. He was loved by his father. So was Christ. He was sold for twenty pieces of silver. Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver. He went typically into death and resurrection, that is, prison and promotion, and became the one

whom Pharaoh called Zaphnath-paaneah, that is, *the Saviour of the World*. This is what Christ will be in the day of His power and manifestation.

In Exodus we read of the passover. So we read, "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7).

As to Leviticus, the book of Hebrews sustains the thought in a very precious way how Christ is intended to be ministered in all the typical persons and rites therein brought before us.

Moses was the Apostle of God. Aaron was the High Priest. Hebrews bids us "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (chap. 3. 1). As has been said the Apostle brings God to men. The High Priest brings man to God. The Apostle brings out the calling of God at its height. The High Priest seeks to maintain the believer at the height of his calling.

And yet the Substance must ever be beyond the shadow. No shadow can fully portray the Substance.

So Moses was a *servant over* God's house. Christ is a *Son over* His own house.

Aaron and his successors "were not suffered to continue by reason of death." "But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7. 24).

So with the offerings—the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, the peace-offering, etc. etc., all portray Christ in His atoning work in different aspects, whilst the meat-offering sets forth His devoted life. So with the tabernacle in the wilderness, the ark, the mercy-seat, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the brazen altar, the curtains of the tabernacle, etc. etc., all set forth Christ in His work and character in a very blessed way.

We can re-echo the inspired words: "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail to tell" of the thousand ways in which the Scriptures tell of Christ. We can only in the barest

way skim the surface of this wondrous theme.

2. *The FEELINGS of Christ are portrayed in the Psalms.*

It is not a little interesting that Peter tells us the prophets of old were inspired "by the Spirit of Christ which was in them when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1. 11).

How touching it is to trace all the inspired prophecies throughout the Old Testament as those of the Spirit of Christ. As if Christ's Spirit—the Holy Spirit's—mind were filled with the apprehension of that great event to which eternity and time moved on with solemn step, which was the theme of conversation on the Holy Mount, and shall be the song of the redeemed for eternal ages.

See it bursting forth in the very opening of Psalm 22. There is no preface, no explanation. From the heart of the Spirit, if we may so speak, the bitter cry, written down by David, to be heard in reality from the lips of great David's greater Son on the cross of Calvary, is placed on record: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me" (ver. 1). Oh! the strength of this apprehension when these words are penned fully one thousand years—ten slow, stately centuries—a millennium—before they were actually uttered in all the fathomless depths of their meaning. So throughout the Psalms again and again the feelings of Christ can be seen in all their delicate tracery. Again, time would fail me to prolong the theme.

3. *The FORETELLINGS* concerning Christ are given us in the Prophets.*

Does not Isaiah, the royal Prophet, the evangelical prophet, come instantly to our mind? Take chapter 7. 14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Immanuel." How Matthew, the royal Evangelist, strikes the corresponding note in Matthew 1. 22, when he says: "Now all this was done, that it might

* Of course, we do not mean exclusively, but this is characteristic of the prophets.

be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." And who but Christ could answer the majestic names to be given to the child born, the son given—"Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father (*lit.* the Father of Eternity), the Prince of Peace." What but prophetic inspiration could dare to ascribe such names to a child. Yet when we bow before the inscrutable mystery of the person of Him, who is God and man, yet one Person, as brought before us in the Gospels, we can understand the absolute fitness of the names. Then chapter 53. What need to dilate upon that loved and well-known chapter, which portrays so touchingly the way in which Christ would be treated by man, who hated God, for He revealed God; and by God who loved man, and sought his blessing, even through the atoning death of His well-beloved Son? No wonder when the Ethiopian eunuch read that passage, and asked Philip, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet thus? of himself, or of some other man?" that "Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him JESUS" (Acts 8. 35). No wonder!

Time would fail us to speak of Jeremiah, who could ask in plaintive prophecy, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lam. 1. 12); or of Ezekiel, who could write, "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David" (Ezek. 34. 23), clearly referring to Christ, for David, the King of Israel, had been dead over four centuries when Ezekiel wrote these words; or of Daniel, who served God from his teens to very old age, who could write, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself" (Dan. 9. 26), or in glowing prophetic language could outline the coming power and glory of Christ in this

world, when he told Nebuchadnezzar, "Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the King what shall come to pass hereafter" (chap. 2. 45); or of Hosea's tender prophecy concerning Christ and Israel: "It shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi [*my Husband*]; and shalt call Me no more Baali [*my Lord*]" (Hosea 2. 16); or of Micah, who could write: "But thou, Bethel Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (chap. 5. 2), thus indicating seven centuries before the birth of Christ where His birthplace would be, and yet affirming His present existence, which the prophet wrote as beginning from everlasting, even His deity; or of Zechariah, who could write: "And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (chap. 11. 13), fulfilled as we see Judas casting the thirty pieces of silver, awful price of his treachery, at the feet of the chief priests and elders in the temple, and their taking counsel, and buying with the price of blood the potter's field. (*See Matt. 27. 3-8.*)

Time fails for anything further than, as it were, to pick a pebble here and a pebble there upon the shingly strand as it stretches illimitably before our vision.

4. *The FACTS concerning Christ are narrated in the Gospels.*

What need to say a word here? What need to bring a candle to help to illuminate the light of the midday sun? The lovely life, the wondrous death, the resurrection, the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ—all crowd before our minds in ten thousand precious and lovely details.

What can we do, when even the beloved John, closing, as it is supposed, the canon of Scripture,* dipped his pen

* It is generally accepted that the Gospel of John was the *last* book of Scripture to be written.

into the ink for the last time, and wrote : " And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written " (John 21. 25).

But even were the whole world an inadequate library to contain the record of the life of Christ, what wealth of detail, what exquisite touches, what fathomless depths, what unmeasured heights, are compressed within John's twenty-one chapters alone.

5. *The FRUITS of Christ, of His work and His teaching, are unfolded in the Epistles.*

Is the believer baptized to the death of Christ as in Romans 6. 3? it is that " like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even we should also walk in newness of life " (ver. 4).

Are we " dead with Christ? we believe that we shall also live with Him " (ver. 8).

Have we " become dead to the law by the body of Christ " ? it is that we " should be married to another [*lit.* be for another], even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God " (chap. 7. 4).

Are we to seek to please our neighbours unto edification? it is because " even Christ pleased not Himself " (chap. 15. 3).

6. *The FEAR of Christ, " THE TERROR OF THE LORD," solemnizes us in the Revelation.*

At this juncture in the world's history, when Christendom has become so largely apostate, soon, alas! to be *absolutely* so; when the Jews are flocking back to their own land in unbelief; when the political happenings on the Continent seem to adumbrate in the near future the revival of the Roman Empire, the attention of Christians is directed to this book in a very remarkable way. Here we see judgment after judgment rolling over this world in

prophetic vision—seals, trumpets, vials, the judgment of Babylon, etc., and through it all we see Christ.

No wonder John, who had sweetly pillowed his weary head on His breast in the days of His gracious sojourn upon earth, should fall at His feet as dead when He beheld Him walking in judgment amid the seven golden candlesticks.

Later, when judgment on the *world*, on Israel and the Gentiles, is to be carried out, who is sufficient? How majestic it sounds : " Behold, the lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo . . . a Lamb as it had been slain " (Rev. 5. 5, 6). Christ alone is sufficient. He will later judge the nations. He will reign through the glorious millennium. At his voice the heavens and the earth shall flee away. Before His throne—the " great white throne "—the last session of judgment shall be carried out.

How sweet when all this solemn sequence of judgment passes before us, with its thunderings and lightnings, its earthquakes and convulsions, to come to the marriage of the Lamb, and at the end of the book hear the presentations of Himself : " I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star " (chap. 22. 16); and then the exquisite finish : " He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus " (ver. 20).

Till that blissful moment, so near now, as we truly believe, " the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen " (ver. 21).

How true it is that Christ is the great Theme of the Scriptures. He cannot be hid from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. May He become increasingly and adoringly precious to our hearts. Christ is ALL and in ALL.

Christ the Beloved.

(HENRY J. VINE).

A GREAT military leader returns from his campaigns on the battlefield to receive the well-earned rewards of victory. Many rejoice at his triumph, but all do not know him in the same way. The soldiers who fought under him speak of him as *the general*. The servants at his residence, who await his arrival, speak of him as *the master*. A young man affectionately greets him as *father*. A lady lovingly welcomes him home as *husband*. The Government of his country honour him as their brave and noble *representative*.

All these designations centre in one person, in one individual with a personal name of his own. Those who stand related to him, do so according to the designation in which he stands related to them; and they are affected correspondingly. Their well-being and happiness, however, greatly depend upon his personal character. It is just so with ourselves and our Lord Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son. His glorious titles and offices are multitudinous. His personal name is Jesus.

Any relationship in which we stand to Him is the result of the rich mercy of God; for since all had sinned none could *claim* any relationship to Him at all. But God intervened for our blessing in the Person of His beloved Son; and through the atoning work of the cross He has forgiven, justified, and saved those who believe on Christ. He has secured their present and eternal well-being and happiness, so that no doubt should be allowed to linger in the minds of any of His loved ones as to this. It is God's intention that we should be free from all self-thought, to be taken up with the glories of Christ, whom the Holy Ghost would bring livingly before our souls.

The Lord Jesus Christ returned as the mighty Victor from the battlefield at Calvary, where—not as the warrior of whom we have spoken, who had others

to fight under him—He fought the fight alone. We have a foreshadowing of this in *David*, whose name means "*Beloved*." Alone he slew the lion and the bear; and when all Israel trembled before the Philistines, headed by Goliath the giant, he stepped forth alone and overthrew him. None stood with the true David, the true Beloved, in the battle of battles. His heel was bruised in the conflict, as was foretold in Genesis 3.; but He bruised Satan's head, and annulled his power (Heb. 2.). In Christ, who resolved the whole question of good and evil raised by the fall of man, sin, death, and hades found a Conqueror. He is not alone, however, in the results of His victory. Israel shared in the spoils of David's victory, and the Beloved Son of God shares the results of redemption with us in resurrection life. He became poor for our sakes, that we might be enriched eternally. Blessed be His name! We may well give thanks also to God, "who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ," and lift up our songs of praise to the well-beloved Victor with grace and melody in our hearts. "Fear not," He said to John; "I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades." He is the risen One: victorious over every foe.

"His be the Victor's Name,
Who fought the fight alone;
Triumphant saints no honour claim,
His conquest was their own."

This glorious and victorious Person is everything to us. He is *our Deliverer*, He is also *our Life*, and He is *our Hope*. We confess Him as *our Lord*, and reap the benefits of His authority exercised on our behalf. As members of His body, the assembly, we are livingly united to Him in heaven, by the Holy Spirit; and we thus know Him as *the Head*, the Christ, the Son of the living God. As those whom "He is not

ashamed to call brethren," we know Him as *the First-born*. As the bride of Christ, the assembly, we rejoice in Him as *the Bridegroom*, the Beloved of our hearts. The blessedness and glory of these relationships are all secure because of what He has done, and because of what He is in Himself. They are understood and enjoyed increasingly, not by occupation with the relationships themselves merely, but as we grow in the knowledge of Him in whom they are established. This is of the last importance, and it is just here that many have gone astray, leading large numbers away from true joy in the Lord. In this, as in all else, Christ is *our Resource*. In Him the Fulness resides.

Time and space would fail to speak of Him as the Son of Man, the Son of David, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and many other of His glorious names and titles, with which the boundless reaches of the glory of God are connected. We may, however, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, seek to see something of what He is to the heart of the Father; to have the eyes of our hearts rejoiced, by beholding the exalted beauty of the Beloved of God our Father, to whom we sometimes sing:

*"Brought to know Thy Well-Beloved,
Drawn to Him in boundless grace;
Thy effulgence, love and glory
Shining in His blessed face."*

We have good cause to rejoice in Him as the joy and satisfaction of our own souls, the beloved of our own hearts, for "the glories that compose His Name all stand engaged to make us blest"; but the Father would have us to know something of the pleasure and preciousness He finds in Him for Himself also, as He has made this known to us by the Spirit in the Word of Truth.

He said to the Father, in the hearing of His own, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." He spake then of the far-away eternity, when as the eternal Son with the Father, He was the loved Object of His heart. Something of the ineffable beauty and

blessedness of this is conveyed to us by the Spirit in that precious expression, *The Son of the Father's love* (Col. 1. 13). As God the Son He was co-equal with the Father. When, however, He spoke to the Father of that love wherewith He loved Him before the world's foundation, He was here upon earth as Man; and He was surrounded by the men whom the Father had given to Him; by the men He was leading to know the Father's Name and the Father's love; that love which He Himself knew so well. That Man, the Son, was still the loved Object of the Father's heart. He did not leave that love behind Him when He came from heaven. Nay, His coming brought that love to the earth for the first time, for there never had been any object suitable to that love upon earth before. And, blessed be God, when He left the earth and returned to the Father, He did not take that love away with Him, for He had made the Father's Name known to others, bringing them to the knowledge and enjoyment of that same love. It is ours *now* and for ever.

Speaking as Man, the Son who was in Himself equal with the Father, said, "My Father is greater than I." What a sight it must have been for heaven, to see Him here in His lowly loveliness and obedience thus. A Man of grace and holiness, the supreme delight of the Father's heart, walking and working amongst those who had sinned against heaven and in God's sight; glorifying Him and making Him known amongst those who had dishonoured Him! Wonder of wonders! Divine dignity and grace shining in the presence of human degradation and pride!

Who was that unknown One who went along with the crowd of repentant sinners to the waters of John's baptism? Who was it to whom John referred when he said, "I indeed baptize you with water, but *the mightier than I* is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not fit to unloose"? It was Jesus, the beloved of the Father. As He came up out of the water God distinguished Him

from all the others! The heavens were opened to Him: the Holy Spirit descended as a dove upon Him: the voice of the Father was heard saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight.*" What a convincing expression of divine delight was that in the beloved One! What a vivid picture of divine complacency in Him was the dove-like descent of the Spirit upon Him! in contrast to the fact that no resting-place was found in the world's watery wastes for the sole of His foot, as foreshadowed by the dove that was sent out of the ark by Noah. Now a man, the Father's beloved Son, is the Object of divine delight, and the Centre of divine rest. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were there livingly and actively revealed in connection with that one blessed Man.

God gave yet another glorious expression of His delight in His beloved Son. Peter wrote of the surpassing radiance of it (2 Peter 1. 16). It was given in the Holy Mount. There in royal majesty the glory of their Lord shone before the disciples. The splendour of it outshone the sun at noonday. From the bright overshadowing, the excellent glory, there came a voice that gave Him honour and glory. It was the Father's voice. The Apostle tells us, it was "*such a voice,*" uttered from heaven. Its heavenliness had greatly impressed him, as it said, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight.*" It is striking that this is the one recorded instance where Peter speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as *the Son*, after Matthew 16. Who shall fathom or tell the feelings of the Father's heart as He gave expression to His joy in Him in those endearing words: "MY BELOVED SON!" No creature can, and yet we delight to linger over them. They mark out that Man of Majesty, shining in His Kingly glory with honour and power; they distinguish Him from every other one who has had, or ever will have, kingdom and dominion. They could not have been addressed to David, Solomon,

Nebuchadnezzar, or Alexander, though the latter attempted to exact divine honour from others. To Christ, the Beloved, they alone belong. The voice was heard on *the mount*: it was heard beside *the river*. It spake of the Man of majestic glory in *the mount*: it spake of the Man of lowly grace beside *the river*.

His majesty is eternal: so also is His grace. It is a joy to us to see Him singled out in His glory as God's beloved Son: it is none the less so to behold Him thus distinguished as the lowly, lovely, gracious, holy, and obedient Man beside the river. In *the wilderness* immediately after the Father's expression of delight in Him Satan endeavoured to spoil that delight by his temptations, but He remained dependent upon, and faithful to, the One whose beloved Son He knew Himself to be; He overcame the enemy by the Word of God, and glorified God amid desolate scenes, the very opposite to those in which the first man was set, when he failed and fell under Satan's power. What joy it must have given to the Father's heart, to behold Him thus victorious in His obedience and dependence!

He has glorified the Father upon the earth. He has finished the work He came to do. He is now as Man in the highest place in heaven. Nevertheless, although His atoning and redeeming work upon the Cross is done: although He is risen from the grave: although He has ascended to God's right hand: although all authority is given into His hands: still He is the same blessed Man, the beloved Son, the delight of the Father's heart. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands": He is where He should be, in the highest place: but He is still the same—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever." We are taken into favour in Him where He is before the Father's face; accepted "*in the Beloved*" (Eph. 1. 6). If we could tell how near and how dear that beloved Son is now to God the Father at this very moment, then should we know how near and dear we are to Him.

Such is the richness of divine grace. God has given us in righteousness the place of favour which belongs to the One who took our place under judgment upon the Cross; and this is unalterably true, and most blessed for us; but let us look above this even, as knowing we are thus blessed "*in the Beloved,*" and see the pre-eminence and preciousness of the beloved of the Father. He has glorified Him in His life and work upon the earth; and the pleasure of the Lord still prospers in His hands. He glorifies every divine attribute: He also satisfies the very nature of the blessed God. Words fail as we contemplate it, yet we can sing:—

*"The Father's full delight
Is centred in the Son,
And countless tongues in heaven unite
To tell what He hath done."*

John 5. 20 tells us that the Father "*dearly loves the Son*" (St.); and He tells us that the Father loves us, because we have loved Him (John 16. 27); also, "As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you" (15. 9); again, He said, "*I love the Father.*" It is a circle of life and love into which we are brought, where heavenly joys and holy intimacies are known, where we have communion with the Father about the Son of His love, where we rejoice together in the same Object.

And now, beloved brethren, What does he say to those who are thus favoured,—to all of us? "*Love one another.*" Shall we not hear and heed this "new commandment" given to all His own? Was there ever a moment when we needed to listen to it, and to answer to it, like the present? Servants of Christ! How do we speak and think of His loved ones in all their trials and weaknesses and dangers? Let us learn from that devoted servant so

often spoken of; who thus speaks of the saints: "My brethren, beloved and longed for;" "elect of God, holy and beloved." The cold language of the politician, the philosopher, or the theologian sounds strange to the flock of God, the assembly of Christ. The sheep love the good Shepherd's voice; the voice of Him who died for them and lives again. It encourages and edifies them. They know that voice and they rejoice to hear it. The voice of a stranger they will not follow. They know Christ, the Beloved, the Son of God: they have eternal life: the sensibilities which belong to this life are theirs. In our walk and ways and words among them we need to remember this. We shall then help one another on after the Son of God; and avoiding the little or large party folds, which ensnare and enslave so many, we shall be able practically to fulfil His blessed word,—

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER."

In conclusion: In the liberty of the Holy Spirit, let us rejoice in the Lord always, even as we are instructed to do; knowing that we are eternally

"ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED;" speaking of Him in the language of true affection, from hearts touched by His deep and eternal love, in the language of the bride, of the assembly,

"THIS IS MY BELOVED;" and learning more and more of His preciousness to the Father; of the pleasure He finds in Him whom He dearly loves; and of whom He speaks thus: "MY BELOVED, IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED."

Thus may we know what it is to have divine love dwelling in us, and the Son in us, until we see His face in the home of that love for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Answer to the Thief's Faith.

- "Verily, I say unto thee"—What certainty.
- "To-day"—What promptitude.
- "Shalt thou be with Me"—What company.
- "In Paradise"—What delight.

Christ our Pattern.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THE Christian is enjoined to follow the steps of Christ. He is not commanded to speak as He did of whom it was said: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7. 46); nor to do the works of Him who said: "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did" (15. 24), for, both in words and works, He held a place absolutely pre-eminent. He was the truth, and all He said was infallibly true. He "went about doing good, for God was with Him," and miracles of mercy followed where He went.

The Christian is not commanded to do miracles, like his Lord, but he is exhorted to "*follow His steps*" (1 Peter 2. 21). This he is bound to do. It is his duty and pleasure to trace out his Master's footsteps and to place his own feet in them. This is the truest form of discipleship.

Let it be very clearly understood, however, that no one can imitate the Lord Jesus Christ until he is consciously reconciled to God on the ground of redemption. The imitation of Christ on the part of one who has never been "born again," nor, therefore, a child of God, is impossible. The attempt must be a total failure; and the more honest that attempt the greater will be the disappointment. It were a thousand times easier to paint the rainbow on canvas than for man, as such, to exhibit in his life the moral features of Christ.

No, a man must have not only new desires, but a new nature and a new power, that of the Spirit of God, who alone can so minister Christ to the renewed heart that it seeks His image and also conformity to it.

It is by the Spirit of the Lord that such an one is "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3. 18). And may I say that no change is so complete and exquisite as this.

Think, for instance, of a Saul of

Tarsus—the chief sinner, changed into the image of the Lord Jesus!

Think of the same change being effected in any of us who have learned our natural loathsomeness—that we should bear that image—fully in the glory itself, but gradually and increasingly now while on our journey to it! What a wondrous power this supposes; but, just as surely as the Spirit of God dwells in the believer, so does this process of sanctification proceed, though assuredly not to the eye of the believer himself. Others can notice the progress of the Christian as he moves on "from glory to glory." He becomes more like his Pattern. Wonderful fact! Nor will the process cease until he shall be "conformed to the image of the Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren." They shall remember Him who shall be the Chief of all.

"Christ also suffered for us"—there He stood alone, for none but He could take our place under the judgment due, nor exhaust its awful sentence, when He was "made sin for us"; but beside making atonement in death, "He left us an example that we should follow His steps." Here He is not alone. Not one of His loved and blood-bought people but should follow His steps.

Some may follow them more faithfully and closely than others, but He tells us that His "sheep hear His voice, that He knows them, and that they follow Him." This is the one distinguishing mark of all His sheep. They follow Him.

It is remarkable that the word "example" here, is found nowhere else. It means a "copy or underwriting." It is not the same as that of the Apostle when he charged the saints at Philippi to be followers together of him and "to mark them which walk, so as ye have us for an

ensample"; nor again when he urged his son Timothy to be "an example of believers." In these cases it is a "type," but here it is a "copy." That is, our Lord Jesus Christ is the standard, and no lower one will do.

Can we, then, reach this standard here below? Certainly not; but still, "Every man that hath this hope in Him [the hope of being like Him when He shall appear] purifieth himself even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3). Again, we have the universality of the process. "Every man" addresses himself to reach that perfect Standard.

Needless to say that He holds a place far beyond the reach of man. He is "the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20); but here we are dealing with the standard of purification and the Pattern—the copy for our imitation. Men speak of high ideals; could any ideal exceed this?

And what are the steps we are to follow? They are to be traced from the time when, in the midst of the doctors, He said: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" to that when, that business perfectly completed, He cried: "It is finished," bowing His blessed head and giving up His Spirit to the hands of His Father.

What a study! What an example! Our passage in 1 Peter gives us a summary of the steps in four bold negative statements:—

1. "Who did no sin."
2. "Neither was guile found in His mouth."
3. "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again."
4. "When He suffered He threatened not."

Mark, in these He left us an example; and how we are rebuked as we view Him absolutely clear of the failures to which, alas, we are all so prone.

And then, in deepest confidence, "He committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously." If the other statements presented His life negatively this gives us the constant repose of His soul in a positive way. His vindication was of God. Are we in the habit of making this committal? We gain a victory when we do so; for there the battle ends. His whole life was submission, hearty and unquestioning, to the will of the Father. This was His yoke. It was easy. And when we, through grace, bow uncomplainingly to that will, we, too, prove the yoke to be easy and the burden light.

But there must be reality. The headline must be copied, and the example imitated. The most beautiful (only beautiful) steps have been imprinted on this more than desert waste, by the holy and sacred feet of the Son of God, leaving behind them the plainly visible signs of the one path that is pleasing to God, and that which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, each and every child of His should pursue.

*"The Lord is Himself gone before,
He has marked out the path that we tread.
It's as sure as the love we adore,
We have nothing to fear nor to dread.*

*"There is but that one in the waste
Which His footsteps have marked as His own,
And we follow in diligent haste
To the place where He's put on His crown."*

Yes, He has gone on high. We behold with unveiled face His glory there. Every ray of it is lovely; it wins the heart; it separates from earth; it changes him who beholds into "the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." The transformation is marvellous but divinely simple. The Potter fashions the vessel as it seems good to Him, and the skill of the Potter is seen in His work.

Beloved, may we set our hearts on acquiring a much greater likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Pattern as well as our most precious Saviour.

"He Became Poor."

IMAGINATIVE reverence tends to soften the sharp angles of truth and makes us forget that Jesus was poor. He had nothing that He could call His own, and when He died He left nothing behind Him but His seamless robe. He had said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," and He had obeyed His own precepts. There was no secret hoard hidden from the keen eye of Judas the treasurer. He was hungry, and He sought to feed Himself from a fig-tree by the way. He was tired, and He slept in the fishing-boat. He had nothing to pay His tribute with. And when He replied to the captious question of the Pharisee, He said, "Bring me a penny." He had nowhere to lay His head in life or in death. It was a borrowed grave in which He took His short sleep. Had He been as other men He would have been plied incessantly with the temptation to make Himself rich amidst all those treasures which a word from His lips could have unlocked. But He never did this.

In His poverty He did not cease to be God. The very examples of His poverty

which we have quoted have definite and strange marks of His Deity. He stilled the storm from the boat where He had been sleeping with a wooden pillow beneath His head. He burst the bonds of death and came out of the borrowed grave a conqueror over the last enemy. But provide for Himself He did not, and He would not. As a commander in a famine-stricken city refuses exemption from the lot of his fellow-soldiers, so our Leader and Commander refused to listen to the solicitudes of His need, and lived and died poor. He was tempted in all points as we are, sin apart. A great thinker, we are told, was especially pitiful to those who sinned from the pangs of poverty and hunger. Such sin might be excused if any sin could be. We could understand that, and the more easily in the case of one who had once been rich. Jesus was once rich—with an amplitude of wealth we cannot comprehend. He needed not ever to have been poor. Stones would have turned into bread at a word from Him. But for our sakes He became poor, and remained poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.

Rest.

The following lines were found under a dead soldier's pillow in a hospital near Fort Royal, South Carolina, during the American War.

I LAY me down to sleep
With little thought or care
Whether my waking find
Me here or there.

A bowing burdened head
That only asks to rest,
Unquestioning upon
A loving breast.

My good right hand forgets
Its cunning now;
To march the weary march
I know not how.

I am not eager, bold,
Nor strong,—all that is past;
I am ready not to do
At last, at last.

My half-day's work is done,
And this is all my part,
I give a patient God
My patient heart.

And grasp this banner still,
Though all its blue be dim,
These stripes no less than stars
Lead after Him.

Christ our Sanctification and Redemption.

(JAMES GREEN).

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”—(1 Cor. 1. 30).

THE object of the Holy Spirit is to take of the things of Christ, and display their beauty to the admiring gaze of those who love His name. Needless, perhaps, it is to say that naturally we have no eye for these perfections. It is recorded in Isaiah 53. 2, speaking of Israel after the flesh, and as such they were but a sample of all men, “when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” Neither Jew nor Gentile were capable of appreciating His moral glory. But the Christian has been born anew, he has a nature that is of God, he has eyes to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, he has ears attuned to the harmonies of heaven, and he has the Holy Spirit to unfold to him the position, titles, offices, and personal glories of the Son of God. Do we realize the high privilege, and the holiness of the place of nearness to which grace has given us access, that we may have such communications? We may well ask how it is possible for such as we to draw nigh and what is our suitability for such entry, and the answer is “Christ.” The same one whose perfections are to engage us is “of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” It was God’s good will and pleasure that when as poor, lost sinners we came to the end of our own resources we should find that the cross of Christ was wisdom indeed. Its all-sufficiency met our needs, and answered every claim of God’s throne; and triumphantly we can point to our risen, glorified Saviour and say He is from God made unto us “Wisdom.” For not only did He settle the great question of sin, but in so doing, He brought to us the knowledge of God. Of far greater value than all this world’s wisdom, or of the princes thereof, that come to naught. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,

and its price is far above rubies, for it cost the life-blood of the Son of God to break the power of darkness, that held us in bondage, so that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in His face might shine in our hearts. Next it follows that Christ is made unto us “righteousness,” He is our standing before God as well as our “wisdom.” His right to be there is ours, and before this can be questioned His title must be first disputed and His position assailed. What grace unbounded that from God He is made unto us “righteousness.” But besides this Christ is also our “sanctification.” In order to understand this, we must consider the place He has taken in heaven as man, and remember that “as He is, so are we, in this world.” In John 17. 11 the Lord puts His own, whom He was leaving in this world, in connection with the “Holy Father,” and prays that they might be sanctified through the word (ver. 17), and by the truth of the new place He was taking on high. “For their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be truly sanctified” (ver. 19). It is not of the moral quality of holiness He was here speaking, that was always true of Him, but of the position that would belong to Him, outside the world. The result of this would be that His own would not be of the world even as He was not of it (ver. 16). He has entered heaven as man entirely apart from the condition of the Adam race in flesh and blood; apart from the world and all its boasted advance, its plans, and its schemes, and as He is such are we in God’s sight, for He has made Him unto us “sanctification.” But more is involved in this, for Christ lives as man in the Father’s world, whose counsels, purposes, and affections, all centre in the Son of His love. He is our sanctification not only from the old creation but unto the new,

to be heavenly because He is heavenly, to be loved because He is loved. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." He abides in the blessed relationship of Son to the Father, He is the elect of God, holy and beloved, and this is true also of those whom the Father has given to Him. The practical effect of all this is, that the most powerful motive is provided for true separation from the course of this age, to apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus, and to purify ourselves even as He is pure. Lastly, to crown this edifice of grace, He is made unto us "redemption." Its deep foundations were laid in redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, the topstone of all is to the praise of the glory of the same. For Christ is the pattern of all that God has purposed for us. As He is now in all the blessed nearness belonging to

Him as the Beloved, risen, ascended, glorified heir of God's inheritance of glory, He waits until that moment when the co-heirs by grace shall have their bodies changed like unto His glorious body. Then shall the eternal purpose of God be fulfilled that will conform them to the image of His Son that He may be the firstborn amongst many brethren. How blessed meanwhile to be occupied with His beauty and with what He has been made from God to us. For God is the source of all these thoughts, it is of Him that we are in Christ Jesus. While we are running the race Christ has reached the goal, and there in heaven is God's ideal Man, the one that we shall be like when He shall appear, for we shall see Him as He is. Yes, see Him in a glory we cannot share, for it belonged to Him before the foundation of the world, who is God over all blessed for ever.

"Object supreme of all, by all adored."

The Bible and Other Books.

A certain preacher lost his sermon manuscript, and announced that he would do the next best thing—*read the Bible*. That candid declaration of his estimate of the relative value of his own thoughts and God's is typical of the age. The thoughts of men are looked upon as greater than the thoughts of God, and the Word of God is superseded by the books of men. This is a snare of which those who love the Lord and His truth must beware. The Bible must not be pushed into a secondary place in our lives; good books there no doubt are that edify and feed our souls, if they are kept in their place, but if they are allowed to take the place of the Word they will become our curse.

Not by the interpretation of learning, but by the appropriation of THE WORD are men saved, and the souls of the saints edified.

Hope.

Hope hath an eye that can see heaven in a cloudy day, and an anchor that can find firm land under a weight of waters to hold by; it can expect good out of evil.

The earth is not my hope, saith the true soul, and therefore not my haunt; my hope is in heaven, from whence I look for my Saviour, and therefore I set my affections there.

Live up to thy hopes, Christian; let there be a decorum kept between thy principles and thy practices—thy hope of heaven and walk on earth. There is a decorum, which if a Christian doth not observe in his walking, he betrays his high calling and hopes unto scorn. To look high and live low, how ridiculous it appears!

Hope is in one sense the very breath of the Christian's life, and it is the shroud in which he wraps himself if he lays his body down to sleep in the grave. "My flesh," saith David, "shall rest in hope" (Ps. 16. 9).

Large and Rough Billows.

An old Christian used to pray, "Send large and rough billows to dash us upon Thy promises; that we may learn to make use of them." His was a request that not many of us, perhaps, would care to make. Yet when the "large and rough billows" do come, let us see to it that they do roll us upon the word of God's grace and upon Himself, for if they do come we may be sure that He allows them with this end in view. And "tribula-

tion worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When we know this we can glory in tribulations, and so glorify Him. The devil's aim is to drive us by these same "large and rough billows" into the darkness of doubts and murmurings and repinings.

The Use of Dark Days.

If we are to behold the glory of the Lord we need to be withdrawn often from the glare of the world, and times of pressure, and trouble, and exercise, and sometimes sickness have this effect. A celebrated artist used to usher those who came to view his pictures into a dark room, where he kept them for fifteen minutes, explaining to them afterwards that they could not have appreciated the colouring of his picture

with the glare of the street in their eyes. It has often been pointed out that David's days of sorrow produced the most precious Psalms. While Solomon's experience in unbroken prosperity is recorded in Ecclesiastes. In the one the absolute blessedness and eternal faithfulness of God shine out, for the dark days had made these real to David; in the other utter emptiness of the best that vaunts itself beneath the sun.

God and Our Tears.

It is not *time* that heals the sorrows of the saints, or dries up their tears; it is God; God Himself; God alone. He reserves this for Himself, as if it were His special joy. The world's only refuge in grief is *time*, or pleasure; but the refuge of the saints is God. This is the true healing of the wound; and the assurance to us that tears

once wiped away by God cannot flow again.

What a precious word to those who believe is that: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It declares His tenderness of heart, and is a pledge to us that no tear shall ever wet the cheek of one of His children that is not needed and for their blessing.

The Cross, the Crux.

The attitude of the Christian towards all questions—political, social, or national—must be settled by the cross of Christ. Christ incarnate many followed, and would still, if there were nothing beyond that; it was Christ crucified that they could not endure. "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" they said. The cross and the crux are the same, and we reach the crux of Christianity when we touch the cross of Christ. There we flinch, and while the cross is our boast as to salvation, it becomes our stumbling-

block as to discipleship. Paul could say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." And the man who takes up that attitude, the only right one for the Christian, while he honours the King, and is subject to the powers that be in the land where he resides, will not glory in humanity, nor the flag of his land, nor in any party within the state, nor in any movement that originates in the will of man. He is outside all in which the world can boast.

Christ made unto us Wisdom.

(JAMES BOVD).

WISDOM is that quality in man which gives him ability to understand the true nature of things with which he may have to do, whether such things be material or moral; also to apprehend their right relation to one another, and how they will behave under certain conditions. Hence when circumstances of disorder arise he knows just at once and exactly what has taken place, what has been thrown out of its proper position, how far it has got out of its right relation to everything else, whether it is possible to reinstate it again in its true position, and how that may be brought about.

A quest after wisdom, and a perfect confidence in his own natural ability to inquire into mysteries, has been the undoing of the whole race of fallen Adam. Indeed, the ability to understand the moral question which was at the beginning, and, it seems to me, which was known by our first parents to be then in the universe, was the bait the devil used to lead them to destruction. Had they been really wise they would have understood that the state in which their beneficent Creator had set them was the only state proper to them, according to the order in which they were created, and that the abandonment of this state of innocence would mean disaster for them. But even apart from this, the commandment given to them, which forbade their meddling with this question of good and evil, a question which did not concern them, along with the declared consequence of their transgression, should have deterred them from interfering in a question too high for them.

But man, having to his own ruin sought after wisdom, and found himself a fool when he had acquired it, must go on from generation to generation in his profitless quest, gaining nothing in his life of disobedience that can satisfy his heart. With a life forfeited by transgression, a heart deceitful above all

things and incurably wicked, and a mind antagonistic to God, the poor deluded tool of the devil is driven onward in the hopeless attempt of solving the riddle of the universe, as he calls it; the elucidation of the question of good and evil. Wading through the darkness of an atheistical world, and a tangle of questions impossible of solution by any human being, he gropes about in the blind night of his ignorance of God for some friendly finger-post that will guide him to the goal where he will find this mystery unravelled, nor have centuries of defeat convinced him of the hopelessness of his quest.

But the wisdom of fallen man has ever been his folly, for it will not have the revelation God has given of Himself, but supposes itself capable of solving every question regarding the sorrowful condition in which the human race is found. The natural mind of man, being always infidel, carefully excludes God, and thus is he left in darkness, and in the hands of his powerful adversary the devil, whose every effort is directed toward the degradation of the creature made in the image and likeness of God.

The direction in which man's natural wisdom (which is really folly) leads him is in plain but terrible words set before us in the first chapter of Romans. There the course taken by the world after the deluge is portrayed in all its loathsome corruption and soul-sickening horror. The eternal power and Godhead of the Creator, as witnessed by creation, was the property of the immediate descendants of Noah. But instead of being thankful for this light, they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 20-23).

This is the value of human wisdom,

as it is found in fallen man, from the very outset of the present world. And the history of the world, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, shows that until the Gospel of the grace of God came to the Gentiles there was no change in it. It was the same world, idolatrous and corrupt, when Paul visited Athens, as it was when Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees as God's witness to the one true and Almighty God (Acts 17. 22-25; Gen. 12.). The Athenians had an altar in Athens erected "to the Unknown God," thus confessing that all their boasted wisdom had left them in ignorance of their Creator.

But nothing has so demonstrated the folly of such wisdom as the cross has done. In Jesus God was perfectly declared, presented before the eyes of men by works of power, mercy, and grace; but "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John 1. 10). He has to say, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee" (chap. 17. 25). Not only that, but judging Him to be a malefactor, they put Him to an ignominious death upon a gibbet. And it was the princes, or leaders, of the world that did it. It was the head, the brains, of the world; not the madding thoughtless crowd. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

Who would be foolish enough to trust man's wisdom after such an exhibition of it as that? The Creator in His own world, putting man's boasted wisdom to the test, and that wisdom giving its verdict against His title to anything but a malefactor's death. At the cross that wisdom displayed itself. The Maker of the world in the world He had made was the greatest test that ever was, or could be, applied to the intelligence of the creature, and there the full value of his wisdom was estimated, and proven to be the most utter folly. It is not merely that the testimony of created things to the power and Godhead of the Creator was refused, but the manifestation of that Creator, even in mercy and love to the creature, was equally refused.

Man had indeed sought out many inventions, and in his knowledge of material things his progress was undeniable; but as to the knowledge of God he was in a darkness that might be felt.

True, he was a worshipper; but the gods he worshipped were the works of his own hands, and these represented demons to his mind and heart (1 Cor. 10. 20). He could not drive the thought of God out of his conscience, and the devil taking hold of this thought represented God to him as hard, cruel, jealous, and malignant, thus diverting the worship due to God alone from its proper Object to a demon. But this is man's wisdom, exercising itself from a base out of which is carefully excluded all knowledge of the true and only God, and though in the sphere of the activities of his self-conceit, the footprints of his beneficent Creator are clearly traceable, his innate repugnance to the acknowledgment of God blinds his eyes to the evidence of the Divine Presence: "for He is not far from every one of us" (Acts 17. 27).

This unclean spirit of idolatry (Matt. 12. 43-45) had, at the time of our Lord's presence upon earth, gone out of the nation, and out of that nation he still remains; but in the near future he will return, and bring "seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they shall enter in and dwell there." Therefore the last state of that evil generation shall be worse than the first. The apostate nation of Israel will once again turn to idolatry, and in a worse form than ever it has been previously seen.

That nation had boasted itself in a knowledge of God, which it really did not possess. To that people God had declared His name, as the self-existing and unchanging One, and for centuries the Jew had been under Divine tuition and cultivation; but at the end he was manifested to be as really ignorant of God as was the Gentile. He no more recognized Jehovah in the lowly Jesus, than did the Gentile His Creator; and

had just as little appreciation of that gracious and marvellous revelation.

It might be advanced, in excuse for this, that it would have been impossible for man, whatever he might be, either good or bad, to have recognized in the lowly Nazarene the God that made the worlds. This, I do not doubt, is so; but two things of which man was guilty make the rejection of Jesus criminal on his part. The first is, that when men had the knowledge of God, in the light in which the things that are made bear witness to Him, they deliberately gave Him up, and placed themselves under the tyranny of demons. To this I have already made reference (Rom. 1.). And this was just as true of Israel as it was of the Gentile world. At Sinai they apostatized from Jehovah, and worshipped a golden calf; and all through the wilderness it was the same thing, as the Spirit of God says, "Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves" (Amos 5. 26). "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God" (Deut. 32. 17). The effect of this upon men was to pervert whatever natural wisdom they had (Isa. 6. 10; Rom. 1. 21). Therefore if men by their wickedness brought themselves into this moral condition, as blind to the glory of Jesus come into their midst in grace, they have only themselves to blame, and their lack of perception of that glory becomes all the more criminal.

The second is that to which also I have already made reference, his innate hatred of God will not allow him to admit that which cannot reasonably be denied; for it was true that the Jews both knew who Jesus was, and knew Him not. He says, "Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am"; and, "Ye neither know Me nor my Father" (John 7. 28; 8. 19). The works that He did bore witness to His eternal Sonship and Divine glory, and forced conviction so powerfully upon their consciences, that unable to deny the power that was at work amongst them,

they in their insane hatred of God attributed these works to the devil himself. This presentation of God in grace to this world has left man stark naked in his sin, and given us to estimate the wisdom of the world at its true value. The enemies of Jesus were thoroughly convinced in their consciences as to whom He was, but their hatred of Him was too great to allow them to acknowledge the truth, even to their own souls. Fallen man would have God neither as Lawgiver nor as Saviour.

But this only makes the wisdom of God more manifest, for the counsels of God, which were before the world, were all centred in the last Adam, and concerned a new order of man, which alone could be in blessing with God. The full rebellion, ruin, and incorrigible wickedness of the old order gave occasion to the cross of Christ, for there, as nowhere else, was brought to light the fallen creature's utter abhorrence of God; but there also the judgment of man, as after the flesh, and his removal from before God, in Him who was made sin for us; and in Christ risen from the dead and glorified we have the Man of God's counsels, in the place, relationship, and condition designed for man in the wisdom of God "before His works of old."

The cross of Christ is the witness of the utter folly of man's boasted wisdom, and though to the mind of man it may appear both weakness and foolishness on the part of God, it is really the demonstration of His power and wisdom. It is His power, for by it He has paralysed the forces of the devil, annulled death, glorified Himself in His attributes and nature, made salvation righteously possible for the human race, laid a firm foundation upon which can be, and shall be, built up a moral universe immune from the power of evil; and it is the place where, not only has His condemnation of sin been expressed in the sight of every intelligent creature, but where also has come to light the unspeakable love of His heart. And it is His wisdom, for where the creature would have sup-

posed everything to be lost, it was just there that everything was gained. It was the only way by which His eternal counsels could have been fulfilled, the only way by which our severance from the old order could have been effected, the only way by which we could have been placed "holy and without blame before Him in love," and on the ground of which we could "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Through the cross an opportunity has been given to God of bringing into view all that He had in His heart, when He laid the foundation of the earth, and when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment. Now that the cross has taken place He can bring to light that resurrection world, which at present shines so brightly before the vision of faith, filled with the light of His own perfect revelation, and where is learned the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world to our glory, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.

I have already spoken of wisdom as that quality in man by which he understands the true nature of things, and their relationship to one another. Now where a man has in power in his soul the consciousness that he is an intelligent creature of God, responsible to yield to Him implicit and unquestioning obedience, that God is holy and righteous, unable, because of these attributes, to forgo His claims upon His creature, that death lies upon Him as the righteous judgment of God, and that he has no hope of evading that judgment, or of being able to render to God an equivalent for his sinful life; then the fear of God enters his soul, and compels him to

hearken to God's terms of salvation. This is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9. 10).

The preaching of the cross becomes glad tidings to such a person. He learns of the intervention of God in his behalf. The judgment which lay upon him he beholds borne by Another. His sins and the nature that committed them have both come under the judgment executed in the cross of Christ. There in the sight of every intelligent being in the universe God has given expression to His utter abhorrence and refusal of sinful flesh, that old Adam nature, that always repelled every advance on God's part toward man, whether that advance was in law or grace. And in Christ risen from the dead, the last Adam in the presence of God, he finds his place. No longer does he take account of himself as in the flesh, at a distance from God, with every thought of God a terror to his guilty conscience; but seeing his sins gone in the death of Christ, and now brought into new relationships with God, and set before His face for ever, in a new world of life and light and glory and eternal love, established there by the power of the Spirit of God, the wisdom of God thus exhibited bursts upon his spiritual vision with a glory above the brightness of the sun, so that all his moral being breaks forth into everlasting song, and he is forced to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

When the Lord left His disciples in the world, He did not take care to leave them a quiet world to live in; in it they were to have tribulation, but He armed them against it. He bequeathed unto them His peace.

“Behold, I Stand at the Door.”

The following poem by the late T. B. Baines, of Leeds, has been sent to us. Those who knew the writer will be especially glad to have it, and all our readers will appreciate its spiritual and poetic beauty.

DRAWN from the wells of light that lie afar,
The dim cold dawning quells the lamps above,
Save where the lightnings of the morning star
Flash like the eyes of love.

As showers of pearls, beneath the morning beam,
The icy dewdrops glimmer on the grass—
Below the meadow slowly glides the stream,
A flood of liquid glass.

And ghastly in the face of coming day—
Where leaves and fruits around unheeded rot—
A wreck amidst that store-house of decay,
There stands a lonely cot.

Around the walls the earth-born ivy clings,
And clutches at the nails upon the door;
The portal seemeth to all outer things
Close shut for evermore.

For grossly wrapped around with earthly growth,
Buried in self, its breathing tenant lies—
A living sepulchre of vice and sloth,
Where manhood droops and dies.

And all the threshold is with weeds o’ergrown
Of rankest sort; the door with twofold locks
Is closely barred.—But mark, where all alone
A Stranger stands and knocks.

Alone, alone, in that keen frosty air,
Long at the door of that unsheltering cot
He stands, and gently craves admission there,
But answer comes there not.

See where He stands in kingly vesture clad,
With god-like love and pity in His face,
And eyes divinely calm, divinely sad,
All full of truth and grace.

The scarlet robe, which once in bitterest scorn
Enwound His limbs, is gemm’d with lustres now;
A crown of gold, wreathed in the crown of thorn,
Gleams king-like on His brow.

Oh, let Him in; on such a wintry night
 The vilest wretch might claim a boon like this;
 But He has come to bring thee life and light,
 And everlasting bliss.

The cross, the crown of thorns He bore for thee;
 The crown of glory thou with Him shalt wear;
 Oh, open now thy heart, and let Him be
 No more a stranger there.

“ Not yet, not yet—a little longer rest
 In sin, in sloth, in self—not yet, not yet;
 Unready is my heart for such a guest—
 Perchance He still will wait.”

Thy heart is dark, but He will give it light;
 Thy heart is vile, but He will cleanse its sin;
 For where He dwelleth, there, there is no night;
 Oh, haste to let Him in.

“ Not yet, not yet—my heart is dull and cold;
 It has no thirsting to be truly blest;
 It cannot love His goodness—’twere too bold
 To sup with such a guest.”

Oh, still He knocks; oh, still He gently pleads,
 “ Give Me thy heart; I gave My life for thee,
 And I will give thee all thy bosom needs;
 All fullness dwells in Me.”

“ Not yet, not yet ”—the years roll slowly by—
 “ To-morrow will I open; not to-day;
 Still in my slothful slumber let me lie;
 He will not go away.”

Oh, haste, oh, haste; the morrow is not thine;
 To-day, if thou wilt hear His voice, repent
 And open; listen to the voice divine—
 The voice in mercy sent.

The day creeps on with steady, stealthy pace;
 He knocks again as He has knocked before,
 The patient sorrow deepens in His face—
 Soon will He knock no more.

The night is dying, and thy nakedness
 Shall soon be open in the eye of day,
 And He who would have robed thee in His dress
 Will sadly turn away.

“ Not yet, not yet.”—Oh, open now thy heart,
 And bid Him enter as a welcome guest;
 Yea, open now, and, darkling as thou art,
 Ev’n now thou shalt be blest.

Christ our Resource.

(G. F. EDINGTON).

DESOLATE homes, breaking hearts, widows and orphans being made by the thousand: tyranny and oppression rampant, and the weak and helpless trodden under foot. This is what we see as we look over the face of the earth to-day. Does God care? Is *He* an unmoved spectator of the sorrows and miseries, the wants and woes in which humanity writhes and groans? Surely He knows, and He also cares. In spite of the clash and din of arms, the roar of cannon, the crash of shot and shell: across the shattered and death-strewn towns, and villages, and hamlets of Europe, where the terrors of war are raging: over the wave-lashed ocean, with its tens of thousands of hardy seamen: the "gospel of peace" is going forth. God's gospel, carrying a message of rest, forgiveness, and everlasting life, through simple faith in the Son of God; carrying blessings everlasting, and giving full satisfaction now to hearts to which this world offers no hope.

Could a Saviour God, who for thousands of years has patiently borne with men, His rebellious creatures, and who has never for a moment withdrawn His banner of love and mercy from the sin-laden children of men, and who is still stretching out hands of mercy to them, close His eyes, and ears, and heart to the widespread distress and desolation which has shaken the earth from centre to circumference, distress in which multitudes of His own blood-bought children are involved? Surely not. Nor is He unmindful of the countless prayers of His saints, which are ascending up to Heaven, from every corner of the earth in this day of sore trial.

But this is the day of salvation, the day in which God is saving men out of the world, and from the wrath to come, and He is not interfering in a public way with the plans and schemes and designs of unregenerate men. When

He does, woe to the world, for a *short* work He will make of it in judgment. Now He is manifesting His *longsuffering*. God is orderly in all His ways. In the midst of the ever-increasing confusion, He is carrying out His gracious purposes of blessing for those whom He has called out of the world. They are the special objects of His care. While the church awaits the coming again of Christ, "He is sanctifying and cleansing it with the washing of water by the word: to the end that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 26, 27).

Let us briefly consider the way that God has taken in order to effectuate the purposes of His love. Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. The Omniscient, All-wise, and Almighty Being, who is seen in divine activity from Genesis to Malachi, is no other than He whose holy footsteps we trace in the Gospels, as the lowly Nazarene: "who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil"; who came from heaven to do the will of God, and make Him known in a groaning creation, and to set forth, in the midst of a godless world, in a life of absolute self-surrender, the kind of man in whom God could find His supreme delight.

He could truly say: "I do always those things that please the Father" (John 8. 29). And the Father recognized this when He saluted Him from heaven at His baptism and His transfiguration. But in the callous heart of man there was no response to the grace and love of God, as expressed in the words, and works, and ways of the lowly Jesus. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1. 10, 11).

If, as some would have us believe, there is in every individual some latent

spark of good, which only requires culture and development to fan it into a flame, surely the spotless life of Jesus, God's blessed Son, who came into this world to declare the heart of a Saviour-God, whose every thought, and word, and act was in the fullest accord with heaven: surely such an one as He would have made the heart of man burn fervently with love to God and brought out into evidence anything in man that would be acceptable to God.

But the words of Jesus show how hopeless man in the flesh was: "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both SEEN AND HATED both Me and My Father" (John 15. 24).

And, later still, they proved their hatred by their terrible deed, when they extended the Saviour of the world on a Roman cross, between two malefactors. There the final choice was made, a murderer was preferred to the holy Son of God. "Not this man, but Barabbas." This was the expression of man's feelings towards God, and proved that he was utterly alienated from Him.

What was to be done? Stern justice might have swept the whole race of men away in everlasting wrath. But then God's purpose would have been brought to naught and He could not have had that delight in men that His love had purposed.

Instead of executing the judgment upon men that they deserved God said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." The ransom was His beloved Son, the One whom men hated and crucified. He became at that moment, when they numbered Him with the transgressors, the great manifestation of God's love to men. So that man's hatred and God's love met at the Cross of Jesus, and God's love triumphed. The power of the enemy was broken there also, for Satan held men in his grip and they were powerless

to extricate themselves therefrom; but Christ has triumphed over Satan and has opened the way of life and salvation for every sin-laden slave of Adam's race. Now in Him "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1. 7).

And now He is alive for evermore, and has been set by the Father "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1. 21). And from that glorious place He is the dispenser of all the favours of God. Just as Joseph of old was made lord of all Egypt, and no favour from Pharaoh could be secured by any person except through him, so now the Lord Jesus is the One in whom is centred all blessing. *Our whole resources are in Him.*

If any feel that the world offers no hope, that its broken cisterns have run dry, Christ is the one Resource. He is the fountain of living water, and every sinner who feels his sin and sues for mercy at His hands finds Him ready to pardon. He is a refuge in times of distress such as these are, and a very present help in trouble.

If God spared not His Son, but delivered Him up for us all, that we might find deliverance from the wrath to come and perfect acceptance for ever before Him in Him, is there anything that we need that shall be withheld from us in Him? Impossible. He is our full and unfailing Resource in the vicissitudes and trials of the homeward journey.

Storms may sweep over our path, afflictions and persecutions may beset and pursue us, but He sits above the clouds and the tempest—our glorious and triumphant Saviour. He sits there interceding for us, and neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor sword shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christ—The Prince of Peace.

(FRANK B. HOLE).

IT is hardly possible to imagine a greater spectacle of unrest and discord than that which the world presents at the present time. In every sphere the same phenomena are observable. Politically and industrially the whole civilized world has been shaken of late, nowhere more so than in Great Britain, where disorder of the gravest kind was only just averted by the outbreak of the colossal war of nations which is now engaging every one's attention. With religious strife and discord we have long been unhappily familiar.

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the drift of men's desires is in the direction of peace, and that the scriptural picture of a golden age of a thousand years' duration, when there shall be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth," and "quietness and assurance for ever," has caught the popular fancy, so that the "millennium" is often referred to by people who have little idea what it means, and very mistaken notions as to how it is to be brought to pass.

It is the object of this paper to point out how the age of peace is to be reached, and also how, during the present age of evil and unrest, peace amongst the saints of God may be promoted.

If reference be made to the passages from which the two brief quotations above were made it will be seen at once that millennial peace depends for its realization upon authority and power being vested in Christ, and consequently righteousness being established in the earth. Psalm 72. begins with "Give the King Thy judgments, O God . . . He shall judge Thy people with righteousness," and it is "in His days" that there shall be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (ver. 7). Isaiah 32. declares that "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (ver. 17).

What lies at the root of all the discord so painfully manifest? The perverse and wicked will of man, which manifests itself in a thousand ways. At the present time Europe resounds with the fearful clash of national will-power, millions of units bound by racial and national ties focussing their wills upon a common end, and giving expression to them by their representatives. This is, perhaps, the most powerful display of human will, but it is seen in ever-varying degree in every kind of society and sect in which men have banded themselves together, and in every individual, down to the little child who kicks and screams and destroys the peace of his nursery, because he cannot have his own way. Moreover, *self* is the centre around which every thought of our wills revolves; hence God is dethroned, and all that is right displaced. To-day it is man's will and unrighteousness instead of the rule of Christ and consequently righteousness.

The history of the world is one long and dismal story of human schemes and struggles to find a satisfactory solution of the present state of things. This is particularly the case since the coming of Christ, when by rejecting Him men refused the divinely given solution. They killed the Prince of Life, who is also the Prince of Peace. Things will never be right until He returns.

To the day of Christ's return and glory the Old Testament prophets make abundant reference, and again and again they connect the peace that will characterize the millennial age with the judgments that will precede its establishment, and the strong and righteous government that will mark its duration. A couple of passages may be cited as examples of this:—

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,

The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9. 6, 7).

"In the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee . . . for when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. . . . Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us" (Isa. 26. 8, 9, 12).

The times of the Gentiles started with the most absolute autocracy the world has ever witnessed, in the world-wide dominion of Nebuchadnezzar, and prophecy indicates that they will end with the autocratic power of the "beast," in spite of the fact that at present democracy is all the rage. This latter, which has been defined as "government of the people, by the people, for the people," is about as far as possible from the divine ideal, which, as indicated in the scriptures above quoted, is government of the people, by Christ, for God; and therefore for man's true blessing.

At the present time not a few are cherishing the false hope that this war will be the last: the idea being that the curse of militarism is largely bound up with the autocratic ideals cherished by the Kaiser, and that the overthrow of his power will pave the way for the spread of broader and more democratic ideas, under the influence of which war will become impossible. Democracy and peace are to the minds of such almost synonymous terms. How pitiful a delusion! Such a thought can only be held by ignoring the fact of the essential sinfulness of human nature, attested by thousands of years of human history. The idea is denied also by experience, for the only time in the past when pure democracy held sway blazes like a lurid beacon of warning upon the page of history: I refer to the great French Revolution, with its reign of Terror. Last, but not least, it is absolutely denied by Scripture.

I refer to these matters because they are by no means unimportant for the

Christian. Far too many of God's saints have never seriously reviewed the position in the light of the Word of God, and hence accept these great world movements, political or otherwise, at their face value without investigation, and get caught in the current of the world. As a result, they yoke themselves unequally with unbelievers, in plain disobedience to the Word of God, and they consecrate their energies to the laborious building up of systems which the coming of Christ will destroy—just as children labour in the erecting of sand castles, which the next tide will wash away. Would to God that each of His children were diligent and untiring in His work!—the work that is in keeping with His plan for this dispensation: viz. the bearing of witness to Christ unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1. 8), and the taking out of the nations, as a result, a people for His name (Acts 15. 14).

Peace upon earth, then, will be reached when by judgments God shall remove every peace-disturber, purging out of His kingdom all things that offend: it will be maintained throughout the millennial age by government exercised in the hand of Christ. The original peace of an innocent creation was broken when man forsook his allegiance to God, and by disobedience withdrew himself from His direction; it will only be regained when men come back with chastened spirits, and submit once more to the control of God. The divine purpose to "gather together [or, head up] in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," will then be fulfilled. The will of that great and glorious Head will prevail to the exclusion of every other will—"of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."

During the present age the church, which is the habitation of God by the Spirit, is left in this world of unrest as an abode of peace. Had it maintained this character with ranks unbroken what a testimony for Christ it

would have been! We cannot, however, read further than the sixth chapter of the Acts without discovering the first symptoms of that disease which has since developed into a raging and destructive epidemic. The murmuring that arose amongst the Jewish converts to Christianity because certain Greek-speaking widows were neglected, as compared with their Hebrew sisters, might have seemed a small thing, in reality it meant a great deal.

When we turn to the Epistles we find that in nearly all of them some allusion is made to the danger that threatened by reason of the inveterate tendency of the flesh toward dissension, bickerings, and fratricidal strife. In some cases, such as those to the Corinthians, to Timothy, James, and 3 John, the warnings and rebukes lie upon the surface, and occupy a substantial part of the Epistle. In other cases it is more a question of reading between the lines; comparatively minor allusions, showing us that the same danger threatened other churches in the apostolic age, amongst them the brightest and best. It will be sufficient to specify passages which may be referred to in verification: Romans 16. 17-20; Galatians 5. 15; Ephesians 4. 31-32; Philippians 2. 1-3, 4. 8, 9; Colossians 3. 13; 1 Thessalonians 4. 6, 5. 15; 2 Thessalonians 3. 11-16; Titus 3. 9; Hebrews 12. 12-15; 1 Peter 3. 8-9; 2 Peter 3. 14.

A very slight acquaintance with church history suffices to show how greatly the warnings contained in these scriptures have been needed, and how much the testimony of the Lord has been marred by dissension between His saints. There have been, of course, separations which have become a divinely sanctioned necessity in order to preserve God's truth from corruption. Of these we do not speak.

By and by all the saints will stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everything there may be brought into the light. Read Mark 9. 33 to 37 for a fore-shadowing of that day. When we

are safely housed, not in Capernaum but in heaven, will He not have good reason to say to us, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?—What is it that through all these centuries of My absence has caused so much contention and strife? And shall we not have to hold our peace as they did: 'for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest'?"

What, then, is the root of all the trouble? Self-importance, or, in other words, pride in one or other of its many forms, never more subtle and dangerous than when acting under the cloak of religion.

And what is the remedy? In one word, CHRIST. This is indicated in the passage above quoted; for the Lord's reply was to take up a child in His arms, saying, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me." By which He showed that the only importance any one of them had was that which belonged to them as representative of Himself. Nothing else counts. They were each nothing; He was everything.

All this finds strong confirmation in the Epistles. We will confine ourselves to the two passages cited above from the Philippians. Having exhorted these earnest, devoted disciples to "be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," and having warned them against strife and vain-glory, He sets before them that which will produce the lowliness of mind so much to be desired. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and there follow those verses of incomparable beauty, setting forth the mind of Christ in contrast with the mind which is in Adam and his fallen race. The first man attempted by robbery to lift himself on to an equality with God, and fell into ruin and degradation; the Second Man humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, and has been by God highly exalted. The rest of the chapter concerns three men,

Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus, each of whom had the mind of Christ, sinking their own interests and importance in whole-hearted devotion to Christ and His people.

If it be further inquired how this mind may be produced in us we may turn for answer to the verses in chapter 4. Think, says he, on things that may be characterized as true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, praiseworthy. We are not here told to meditate upon so many abstract qualities, but rather upon the things that bear that character; and there are, thank God! many such things to be found, in Scripture, in the work of the Lord, and in the saints. There is only One, however, in whom all these excellent qualities shine in equal lustre—CHRIST. Let us think, and think much, of Him. Then to your thinking add doing, practising such things as are sanctioned by the apostolic example, and the result will be this: "the God of peace shall be with you."

Peace will rule amongst the people of God when their thoughts are fixed much on Christ, and their ways are regulated by apostolic example. There is no other way.

Subjection to CHRIST, then, is the way of peace, whether presently in the millennium, or now amongst God's people.

One word more remains to be said. As Christians we must never adopt the policy of "peace at any price." To refuse to make a stand when the vital interests of Christ are at stake is an error of the first magnitude. On the other hand, let us beware of magnifying smaller matters, largely perhaps per-

sonal in character, until they become matters of grave contention. The former is the special danger of the indifferent, worldly-minded believer: the latter that of the earnest and devout.

Not long ago there was a great whirl of controversy in the Isle of Man. It concerned the sum of £1750 to be spent in advertising the island as a pleasure resort. A wise man of the world commented on it as follows: "Everybody appears to agree that this is a wise outlay. The only point is whether it should be laid out at once or divided into two parts; one for now, one for later on. No doubt a grave principle is involved! There always is in these peddling disputes. Men are past-masters in the art of justifying their littleness by reference to principle. Anyhow, the trivial difference of opinion has been sufficient to bring the Legislative Council and the House of Keys to mortal pompous opposition. It seems too silly to be true."

When I first read those words my mind instantly travelled into a different sphere, and applying them to that which has often transpired amongst believers, I felt inclined to hang my head in shame. It does seem too silly to be true, and yet, alas, how sadly true it has been. Let us accept the rebuke, even though it come from the lips of one of those children of this world who is "in his generation wiser than the children of light."

Oh for that gaze of faith fixed on Christ, that happy heart-occupation with Himself, which will lift us up above all such littleness, and cause a peace, heavenly in its origin, to dwell among the people of God.

The circumstances that are too strong for us ought to have no other effect upon us than to make us realize the presence of God. We see in Psalm 18. how God answers to the distress of His people. He rises, and all crumbles in His presence; the full accomplishment of this Psalm will manifest it. (J. N. D.)

Salvation's Song.

(JAMES BOYD).

THEE will I praise! Thou art my strength and song!
 No longer earthly songs shall foul my lips.
 Let potsherds praise the potsherds of the earth,
 My praise shall be of Thee.

The world shall hear Thy name,
 Thy peerless name, confessed with joyful lips,
 Saviour divine! Son of the living God!
 Lord of the vast and searchless universe!

Great Son of God, before Thy feet my soul
 Bows in the dust, and all her secret springs
 Well forth in worship. As I meditate
 Upon Thy majesty, omnipotence,
 Glory immortal, power, supremacy,
 Riches beyond all thought, ere ever Thou
 Didst take upon Thyself a servant's form;
 And as I follow Thee from form of God
 To form of man, and contemplate the wealth
 Of moral excellencies that adorn
 Thy sacred person, which tho' loathed by man
 Ravished the heart of God; and when I see
 Thee give Thyself, in love unspeakable,
 To die my death, to suffer in my stead
 The judgment of a sin-detesting God:
 When by the Holy Spirit this is brought
 Before my mental vision language fails,
 And speechless in this holiest of all
 I bow and worship.

O all-powerful love!
 Love that the many waters could not quench,
 Nor floods of wrath immeasurable drown,
 Evinced amid Golgotha's horrors, brought
 To light amid the darkness and the doom
 Of cross, and curse, and loneliness, and loss,
 And gloom, and gall, and God-abandonment,
 And rage, and ribald jest, and jeer, and gibe,
 And man's insanity, and hell let loose;
 Of such great love my song shall ever be.

Love vast, immortal, infinite, divine,
 Love that surpasses knowledge, yet well-known,
 And in the Spirit's power the joy, the boast,
 The life, the light, and comfort of my heart!
 The love of God, of Christ, the Father's love!
 My portion now! My portion when I meet
 My Saviour on the cloud, when He shall come
 To bring me to love's everlasting home.
 O for a tongue to tell it, for a voice
 Powerful enough to carry it with all
 Its precious, life-imparting sweetness to
 The utmost limits of the utmost world!

Love that Suffered the Sorrow and Shares the Song.

(J. T. MAWSON).

HOW wonderful is the love of Jesus, our Saviour and our Lord! In it there is no alloy, no mixture of selfishness, and no reserve. It passeth knowledge, we are told in the Holy Word, and how true that is, for no human thought can measure the bounds of it or gauge its strength. Yet we may know it, and, thank God, we do know it; we know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. We know it because it has been told to us, as He alone could tell it, told not in words only, that might be treasured for a while and then forgotten, but in deeds; told in the way it has taken to win us, and to make us eternally happy; told in what it has *suffered* for us, and in what it *shares* with us.

We shall do well to heed that first command, shall we call it, in John's Gospel: "Behold the Lamb of God;" to follow with eyes anointed that pathway of holiness and love to the cross; to follow it with adoration for that which we have already discerned by the Holy Spirit's teaching, and with expectation also, knowing that He will yet show us greater glories in it; but were our expectations enlarged a thousandfold we still should be surprised. The more deeply we know the love of Jesus the more unknowable we find it to be; the more we consider the way of it the more amazed we stand at its wisdom and its warmth. It is not a blind love, that may awaken to find flaws and faults in its objects that it knew not of, for it knew from the beginning with omniscient certainty all about the loved ones. It knew, also, with the unerring knowledge of God the whole way of sorrow that must needs be trodden in order to obtain its desire. It is a love that cannot be disappointed or alarmed, and when the great tests came it neither faltered nor fled. We need not fear that it will break down or change now; it has been fully proved.

"His love to the utmost was tried,
Yet firmly endured as a rock."

Consider that great crisis in the life of the Lord when Judas came with "a band of men and officers . . . with lanterns and torches and weapons" (John 18.). How hideous, how hellish did the treachery and hatred of the human heart appear in that torchlight glare! Yet that band was but an advance guard, a flying column sent out to reconnoitre; behind them lay the hosts of darkness, waiting to crush and overwhelm Him. They were but as the spray of a stormy ocean cast up upon the strand; behind them surged the seas of sorrow, frightful and unfathomed. But how did He meet the crisis? He met it by saying, "Let these go their way." He might have escaped what lay before, from one point of view, for two words of His were enough to paralyse their every power. But He would not use His divine might to save Himself, for had He done so He must have lost His loved ones. In their fervid devotion His disciples might well have put that band to flight, but He would not let them fight. Of what use would their feeble arms have been against all that lay behind that band of men who came to take Him with Judas as their leader? He saw what lay behind them—the awful sorrow, the malignity of Satan, the judgment of God, and He said, "Let these go their way." He saw the wolf preparing to devour the sheep. He saw the righteous sword, also, that had awakened against His people's sins, and He said, "Let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest me, I have lost none."

He would bear all the sorrow alone. Not one pang must they feel of all those pangs that He would endure for them; not one stroke of all that judgment that

He would bear must fall upon them. Not one drop of that bitter cup must gall their lips; He would drink it to the dregs and drink it alone for them. He would shield them from the suffering; stand between them and the threatening foe; become their substitute under the judgment, and sacrifice Himself for them. That was the only way, and His love led Him that way, with steadfastness and deliberation, that He might keep for ever for Himself those that the Father had given Him. And we were represented there in those of whom He said, "Let these go their way." And we can say, each for Himself, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

"Alone He bare the cross,
Alone its grief sustained."

He bore it all for me.

But that is not the only way in which we know His love. Behold its activities when He was brought again from the dead by the glory of the Father. As His last thought ere He entered the darkness and death was of "His own," so His first thought on rising again from those depths was of them. How graciously He sought them, how tenderly He revealed Himself to them; with what matchless tact He dealt with them, each according to his or her necessity, until they were prepared to see Him and to hear Him tell that which filled His heart. What Christian heart could muse upon the doings of that resurrection day without being profoundly moved thereby? He did not vindicate His character before those who had besmirched it; nor retaliate upon His foes; nor prove to Israel that He was their Maker and Messiah; all this He might have done, but He did not. He sought the company of His loved

ones, that they, in the precious peace that His presence gave them, might learn from His own lips the relationship and the joy into which He would bring them, a relationship and joy which up to that moment He alone had known. That was the moment for which He had longed; until it came He was straightened; but now at last He was free to share with them His greatest joy—His Father's love—and to make them one with Him in His most blissful place—the Father's bosom. He could do this, for they were now His brethren; His Father was their Father, and His God was their God.

This joy and place is ours also, for He says of us as of them, "I will declare Thy name unto MY BRETHREN, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto Thee."

Brethren! What a name is this for Him to call us, but nothing else would satisfy His love. Are we sufficiently alive to this? We shall be when He

"Shall share the bright to-morrow
With His loved ones, you and me."

But now, in this present time, are we seeking to gratify His great love, that can only satisfy itself by sharing its best with us, by entering into the realization of these things? Oh, may God deliver us from treating anything as greater than this. May the love of the world give place to the love of the Father, and even our service to Christ cease to cumber us, that we may have more time and thought for this. And may He grant to us His grace that we may not by indifference to this slight that love—

"That gives, not as the world,
But shares all it possesses
With its loved co-heirs."

"Bread for us."

NUMBERS 14. 9.

Every difficulty overcome by faith is "bread"—strength and nourishment—to the child of God. Such the Anakims might have proved to Israel; but Israel failed, as we too often fail, from want of faith. May we seek God's forgive-

ness for the way we so often dishonour Him, and starve ourselves by our unbelief, and may we seize the present opportunity of delighting victoriously in God's delight in us.

The Signs of the Times.

(H. P. BARKER).

An address given by request in answer to the question : "Are there any indications that the day of the Lord's coming is near?"

IN speaking of this subject we must bear in mind that it is one which necessarily has its limitations. There are times and seasons which we may know, but there are others "which the Father has put in His own power," and which are not for us to know. To seek to know them would be to pry into that which is not revealed, a dangerous and unseemly occupation.

On the other hand, there are things which we are distinctly invited to know and understand. "It is given unto you," said the Lord Jesus, "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." And then He proceeded to expound these mysteries in a series of charming parables that sketch the development and end of Christian profession. I am referring now to Matthew 13.

Another thing we must remember is that we are *Christians*, not Jews. The Jews attached an undue importance to signs. Certain of their number said to the Lord Jesus, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee" (Matt. 12. 38). The request caused the Lord to "sigh deeply in His spirit" (Mark 8. 12). The same propensity, so characteristic of the Jew, is noticed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1. 22, "The Jews require a sign."

PROPHECY AND CHRISTIANITY

But we are Christians and must beware of this snare. It is well that we should have some conception of what Christianity really is. It is utterly different from Judaism. Abraham and Moses were faithful, shining saints of God, but they were not Christians. Christianity depends upon the fact of the Saviour who died for our sins, having risen, and being seated at God's right hand; while the Holy Ghost is on earth dwelling in us, and uniting each one of us, as members of one body, to our glorious Head, and to all our fellow-members of that body.

This is really the "mystery" of which the epistles of Paul speak: Christ the Head of a body formed of all believers, whether Jew or Gentile. It is the very kernel of Christianity.

What is brought to light in Christianity is the fruit of God's eternal purpose, and it will abide for ever. It does not, properly speaking, come within the scope of prophecy at all. It belongs to a region with which times and seasons have nothing to do.

It is impossible to be intelligent as to the "word of prophecy" and to have "understanding of the times" unless we see the unique character of Christianity and the special position of the church, outside all dispensations, and not belonging to the course of this world at all.

The present period, during which God is active in His grace on the lines indicated in Acts 15. 14 (visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name), is really an *interval* in the course of His dealings with the world. Many a prophecy foretold "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," but prophecy is silent as to the interval between the two. It takes no account of the centuries during which this *new* thing, the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now revealed, is being developed.

Look, for instance, at the angel's wonderful prediction of the 69 weeks and the one week in Daniel 9. Weeks of years are intended, as all acquainted with the language and scope of prophecy would agree. At the close of the 69th week (69 weeks of years, or 483 years from the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem), Messiah was to be cut off, we are told. And this is what came to pass at the cross. The *final* week of the seventy is to be marked by the forming of a covenant, or league, between the

prince of the people that should destroy the city (the Romans) and the "many," or the mass of the Jewish nation. But does the 70th week follow hard upon the heels of the 69th? No; in between the 69th and 70th weeks of the prophecy *the whole of the present period intervenes*. When the church is taken to heaven at the coming of the Lord, the course of God's dealings with Israel will be resumed and the way cleared for the 70th week to begin.

To make this quite clear, let me borrow an illustration. A farmer possesses a considerable stock of a certain kind of seed, which he has stored in one of his barns. He is making no present use of it, but is reserving it for future use. The field in which he intends to sow it has another crop maturing, and it is this growing crop that engages the farmer's present attention. When it is reaped and removed from the field, he will bring out the seed which he is reserving, and sow it on the land. Israel is the seed in reserve. The church occupies the ground at present, but when she is removed to heaven, the chosen nation will again be the pivot and centre of God's resumed dealings, and again times and seasons, signs and events will have their place.

This being the case, the question naturally arises, Why should we Christians be gathered together this evening to consider the SIGNS OF THE TIMES?

AN ILLUSTRATION.

In doing so, are we not transgressing the bounds set for us? Are we not attempting to speak of things that do not come within our province? And of what help can they be to us?

Let me explain by means of an illustration. An elderly woman who has kept house for herself during the greater part of a long life finds that it is beyond her failing strength to do so any longer. A kind friend offers her a home in her own mansion, which the old lady gratefully accepts. She is told that any day the carriage may be sent to take her

to her new home, so that she must be prepared for the move at any time. She is further informed that her kind friend has bought the whole row of cottages adjoining that in which she has lived so long, and that they are to be pulled down, to make room for some purposed improvements to the property. The old lady is assured, however, that the work of destruction will not be commenced until she is safe in the house of her friend.

The days pass by, and the carriage does not come for the poor old soul. There is some good reason for the delay, she is sure. And so she waits, and watches, and works away as far as she is able, in view of the time when she will leave her present surroundings.

One morning she notices that three ladders have been laid on the ground near the end cottage. Further down there is a pile of planks, and half a dozen wheelbarrows. During the day a cart arrives with a score or more picks and spades. What is happening? It is evident that preparations are being made for the impending destruction of the cottages.

These preparations have nothing whatever to do with the old lady's removal to the promised home of refuge. That promise stands good, whether the cottages are cleared off the ground or not. But it appears that the workmen are just about to begin their work of clearance. The ladders, planks, barrows, picks and spades are *signs of the times*, though they have nothing to do with the old lady's removal. They show that what is to *follow* her removal is about to take place. She concludes, therefore, that the carriage which is to fetch her will not be long in coming now!

Do you catch the idea of my little parable? We Christians are to live in daily expectation of the great translation which is promised, the coming of our Lord to translate us to His Father's house. All sorts of things are to happen in the world after we are gone, but we have the assurance given us by the

Word of Truth itself, that they will not take place until the church is taken away. (See such passages as 2 Thess. 1. 7, Rev. 3. 10, and the fact that the church is seen in heaven in Rev. 5. before the seals are opened in Rev. 6.) But what if we can already see the preparations being made for the speedy coming to pass of those things? May we not regard such preparations as evidence that we are on the very verge of the church's translation to heaven?

Let the reader bear in mind, therefore, that what we shall refer to as "signs of the times" are really preparatory to the events of the last days, when the church is no longer on the earth.

We now proceed to enumerate four of these.

(1) THE FAST-DEVELOPING APOSTASY IN CHRISTENDOM.

We are told in 2 Thessalonians 2. 3 that before the day of Christ shall come there shall be a *falling away*, which will evidently prepare the way for, and culminate in, the coming of the "man of sin."

Let us clearly understand what is foretold here. It is not a state of general apathy, declension, and vice that is predicted, such as has come upon the church again and again. Take, for instance, the state of Christian profession in England, when Whitefield and Wesley began their labours. Dr. Ryle, in his *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*, tells us that the majority of the clergy of those days "were sunk in worldliness, and neither knew nor cared anything about their profession. They neither did good themselves, nor liked any one else to do it for them. They hunted, they shot, they farmed, they swore, they drank, they gambled. They seemed determined to know everything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When they assembled it was generally to toast *church and king*, and to build one another up in earthly-mindedness, prejudice, ignorance, and formality. . . . And when they did preach, their sermons were so unspeakably and indescribably

bad, that it is comforting to reflect they were generally preached to empty benches."

In dissenting circles much the same state of things prevailed. Dr. Watts declared that "there was a general decay of vital religion." The ease and freedom from persecution enjoyed at last by Nonconformists proved, from a spiritual point of view, to be their undoing. Cold morality, natural theology, or barren orthodoxy formed their staple teaching. Their sermons were miserable essays, utterly devoid of anything likely to awaken or save souls.

But such a sad, fearfully sad, condition is not *apostasy*. Apostasy is a deliberate abandonment of the Christian faith. We do not see that yet, except in the case of individuals here and there. But we see the beginnings of it, the rapidly increasing drift towards it in all directions. The *name* of "Christian" is not yet relinquished, but the very foundations of the faith are undermined in the souls of multitudes. The deity of Christ and His holy humanity, as born of a Virgin; the atoning efficacy of His blood; the divine origin of the Scriptures; the necessity for the new birth; personal salvation by faith in Christ—all these great fundamental verities are jettisoned by an increasing number of keen, scholarly men who, far from gambling and drinking as the parsons of a hundred and fifty years ago did, assail these and other evil practices with voice and pen. Such men are leaders in the present most pronounced drift toward the open "falling away" that is predicted.

The tendency is by no means a local one; it is well-nigh universal. It has invaded the mission fields and blighted many a promising work. One might lay one's hand on testimonies to this fact from all quarters of the world. Here is one, written by a missionary in Burmah: "We don't feel any lack of apostasy out here. The leaven has permeated the whole lump. The downward drag of surrounding heathenism

is heavy, but I sometimes feel more discouraged when I look about upon those who stand in positions of great responsibility, and deny Him in word and deed. I knew I would see it wherever I went, but I am shocked beyond all expectation. I have not the heart to write in detail of this feature of mission experience. . . . It is a most sobering state of affairs to all thoughtful Christians."

One sees the same drift in countries which were once strongly Romanist. More than 250,000 French lads tattooed their arms with the letters "A.D.," for Anti Dieu (Against God). In Portugal, the President of the Republic, in a speech, congratulated the nation in having got rid of king, church, and God. All this points strongly not to a *corruption of Christianity*, as, for instance, in Romanism; not to a fall on the part of professed Christians into apathy and vice, but to a deliberate scheme with worldwide ramifications, planned and engineered by him whose masterpiece will be the production of the "man of sin" (see 2 Thess. 2. 9), for the abandonment of the very name of Christian.

This open apostasy, this deliberate falling away, looms ahead of us with unmistakable clearness. It is fast ripening to its climax. But before the *falling away* definitely comes to pass, the *catching away* of the bride, the true church, will take place.

Then if the fast-developing apostasy is an indication of the nearness of Antichrist's coming how much more does it point to the fact of Christ's coming, and the rapture of the church being near? Surely it will not be long now before we hear the shout that will call us home!

(2) THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO THEIR LAND.

It is astonishing beyond measure that any Christians can be blind to the fact, so clearly stated in Scripture, that the Jews are to be gathered again from the countries where they have dwelt as strangers, and settled once more in the

land which has been given to them by God. The incredulity on this subject is such that, in calling attention to the present remarkable movement of the Jews to Palestine, it cannot be taken for granted that it will be generally recognized as a fulfilment of prophecy. It will be necessary to quote some scriptures which declare in the plainest terms that a national return of the Jews is to be expected. Among many passages which deal with the subject we select the following:

"The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11. 11, 12).

That this prophecy cannot refer to the recovery of a remnant in the days of Cyrus and their re-establishment in the land of promise is proved by the *universal* restoration predicted ("from the four corners of the earth") and by the fact of miraculous deeds being wrought in connection with it (see ver. 15).

"The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land" (Isa. 14. 1).

"It shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jer. 16. 14, 15).

"I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all

countries, and will bring you into your own land " (Ezek. 36. 24).

" Behold, I will save My people from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem " (Zech. 8. 7, 8).

In view of what is foretold in these and many other similar prophecies, is it not highly significant that within the last few years there has been an ever-increasing tide of Jewish immigration to the land of their fathers? More have returned in a single year than the whole number that returned with Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Zionism is but one of the forces that work in this direction. Whatever schemes may be in the minds of men, we cannot but recognize that God is making things work together for the accomplishment of His Word. How easily it might result from the present war that Turkey should lose possession of Palestine and that it should become once again a purely Jewish state! We learn that a great maritime power will send her representatives by the sea to help in bringing back to Zion " the nation meted out and trodden under foot " (see Isa. 18. 2, 7). Who can say whether this maritime power may be Britain? Be this as it may, none can gainsay the significance of what is happening under our very eyes: *the return of the Jews to their own land*. This return is not to be fully and finally brought to pass till the church is taken to heaven, and will *then* be accompanied by a spiritual revival in Israel, and a turning of heart on the part of many to God. The preliminaries of this national movement have already taken place; it is a most, if not *the* most portentous sign of the times and may surely lead us to look for the Lord's coming in the near future. If the Jewish restoration is to follow His coming, and that restoration is already beginning, is it not most evident that the hour of the church's rapture is close at hand?

(3) THE REVIVAL OF DEMONOLOGY.

The Apostle Paul records for us, in

1 Timothy 4. 1-3, an express utterance of the Holy Spirit to the effect that the apostasy from the faith *in the latter times* should be accompanied by a turning to seducing spirits and demon-doctrines. That there has been, within the last quarter of a century, a remarkable and widespread revival of activity on the part of seducing spirits and a determined propaganda of certain doctrines connected therewith, is only too manifest. Proofs of it are to be found on every hand. The Czar of Russia is said to make all important decisions of State under the guidance of a spiritualist medium. America is flooded with it. In out-of-the-way villages in Spain, once strongholds of Romanism, the writer has found more spiritualists than Catholics. The same is true in many parts of South America.

The esoteric doctrines promulgated by the spirits when once the confidence of their dupes is gained are precisely those mentioned in 1 Timothy 4. Particularly the divine institution of marriage is assailed, and a substitute for it advocated that, if adopted, would result in horrible and universal depravity.

What makes all this so significant is that the Holy Spirit expressly foretold that it would come to pass *in the latter times*. Does it not look as if *these* must be the " latter times " ?

No doubt the influence of the seducing spirits will spread. Probably it will be the means used by Satan to secure worldwide credence for " the lie " with which he will deceive those " who believed not the truth " (2 Thess. 2. 11, 12). And it would seem that spiritualistic activity will reach its height in the " signs and lying wonders " which will attend the coming of Antichrist. The full development of this evil power will not, therefore, be attained until after the Lord has come for His church. But already it has reached gigantic proportions. Does not the fact assure us, with clarion voice, that the hour, long waited for, is now at hand, when the Lord will call us to meet Him in the air ?

(4) THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY TO A PLACE OF GOVERNMENT AND POWER.

The vision of a great image, given to Nebuchadnezzar, set forth the course, climax, and final destruction of Gentile supremacy in the earth. Four world-wide empires were to succeed one another. Babylon, of course, was the first, for into her hand the sceptre passed when the rebellious sons of David were driven from the throne of their fathers. The next two empires are named in Daniel 8. The dual Government of Media and Persia (a kind of ancient Austria-Hungary) took the place of Babylon, and was in her turn superseded by Greece. Then came the terrible fourth monarchy, "strong as iron," breaking in pieces and bruising everything it came in contact with (Dan. 2. 40). This was the empire of Rome.

In the days of this empire's supremacy the Lord Jesus was born, fulfilled His ministry on earth, and was crucified. It was the Romans who crucified Him. We have already seen that the centuries following the terrible deed at Calvary have formed an *interval* in the ways of God. When the church is taken to heaven God will pick up the thread of His dealings with Jew and Gentile where He dropped them, and the Roman Empire will be in existence again and receive the full weight of God's judgment of the Gentile power for its iniquity.

The final form of the Roman sovereignty would seem to be indicated in the feet and toes of the image in Daniel 2., and it is highly significant that into the composition of this part of the image a material enters that is not metallic, like the head, breast and arms, belly and thighs, and legs. The feet and toes were part of iron and *part of clay*. That is, I take it, that side by side with the strong imperialistic, militarist element there shall exist in the place of government

and authority a very different element and that the two "shall not cleave one to another" (ver. 43). What element can this be but the democratic, which, during the last few decades especially, has been everywhere coming to the front? And it is not without significance that the "clay" has thus made its dominating influence felt in countries like England, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, etc., that formed part of the Roman dominions.

Now in the course of the vision, Nebuchadnezzar saw the great image smitten upon its feet, the "feet that were of iron and clay," and the stone that smote it "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." This is interpreted in verse 44 to be the kingdom which God will set up and which will break to pieces and supersede the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

Now I put it to my hearers: Can we not see the clay showing itself side by side with the iron, in the feet of the image to-day? If so, is it not clear that the final form of Gentile supremacy is getting ready for its manifestation after the Lord's coming for His church? And in this case, must not His coming be very, very near?

* * * *

We have now briefly considered some of the happenings in the world to-day that appear to indicate that the end of the age is not far off. Thank God, again and again, that *we*, Christians, are to be removed from the earth before the final terrible events of the age transpire. Let us then gird up our loins and be as men that watch for their Lord.

"*Knowing the time*" should have this effect upon us, that we shake off our sleepiness, and awake to serve and wait for our coming Lord (Rom. 13. 11). His cheering promise is "Surely I come quickly." Shall not our ready response be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"?

"Earnest Prayer."

ACTS 12. 5. (Marg.).

The word "earnest" means "to stretch out." . . . It implies a bow drawn to its full length and strength. So should our hearts be in prayer.

The Glories of the Saviour.

(By M.R.,
St. Leonards-on-Sea).

JESUS, the Babe of Bethlehem, the Strength
Of our salvation, Christ the sinner's Friend;
Of love divine the Height, Depth, Breadth and Length;
Of Mercy, the Beginning and the End.

The Living Word, by whom all things were made,
Whose advent brought goodwill and peace to earth;
The new-born King, to whom the wise men paid
Devotion's loyal tribute at His birth.

The Son of God, the Faithful and the True,
The Head of every man, the Lord from heaven,
The Second Man, who maketh all things new
For those whom He has quickened and forgiven.

The Good, Chief Shepherd of His own, He saith:
"I know My sheep and I am known of Mine,"
The Bread of Life: He saves our souls from death
Through living faith in Him, the Son divine.

The Son of man, the Saviour of the world,
An Ensign of the People, the true God;
Whose banner faithful ones will keep unfurled
And follow where His sacred feet have trod.

A Nail in a sure place, a Stone of grace,
Well tried and precious, Zion's Corner Stone,
Who will, as living stones, His jewels place
Within His priestly kingdom, near His throne.

The Bright and Morning Star, the great Amen,
The Brightness of the glory of the Lord,
The Wonderful, surpassing human ken,
His people's Sun, and Shield, and great Reward.

Our Counsellor, our Righteousness, our Tower,
Our Advocate on high, the world's True Light:
Our Wisdom, our Redemption, and the Power
Of God, whose Name alone is great in might.

The Mighty God, the Dayspring from on High,
The Shiloh, Source of everlasting peace;
The Captain of Salvation, ever nigh,
His saints from snares and perils to release.

The Father of Eternity, Creation's Lord,
First-born of all creation, ever blest;
The Lamb of God, who has by His own blood
Redeemed His bride, His church, to share His rest.

The Prince of Life, the First-born from the dead,
Our Hope, the Vanquisher of death and hell,
Our great High Priest, the Church's Risen Head,
The King of Nations, great Emmanuell

The Power of Christ.

M. BERTHELOT, famous for his chemical researches, conceived the possibility of tapping the central heat of the earth and making use of it as a perennial source of energy. To do that would be a mighty achievement, and if it were done there would be no lack of power for any purpose.

But God has revealed to us something greater than this; not the power of the earth but the power of heaven has become available for those who know the Lord, so that in conflict with evil powers they may "be strong in the Lord and the power of His might." When tempted

and tried by weakness within and evil without they may know the power that is perfected in weakness, and the grace that is always sufficient in all circumstances. Necessity is the mother of invention, and it has led to most of the discoveries and achievements of men. It is our necessity as Christians, realized in conflict with the foe or learnt in the presence of the Lord, that leads to most blessed discoveries of the limitless resources of our Lord. In Him we are put into contact with divine power and grace, so that we are more than conquerors through Him, and can do all things through Him who gives us strength.

The Light of Men—John 1.

THE object of the Holy Ghost is to assert the personal glory of Jesus; and hence it is that there is not perhaps a single chapter in the New Testament that presents our Lord in so many different aspects, yet all personal, as the opening chapter of John's Gospel. His divine glory is carefully guarded. He is said in the most distinct language to be God as to His nature, but withal a Man. He is God no less than the Father is, or the Holy Ghost; but He is the Word in a way in which the Father and the Holy Ghost were not. It was Jesus Christ the Son of God who alone was the Word of God. He only after a personal sort expressed God. The Father and the Holy Ghost remained in their own unseeable majesty. The Word had for His place to express God clearly; and this belonged to Him, it is evident, as a distinctive personal glory. It was not merely that He was the Word when He came into the world, but "in the beginning was the Word" when there was no creature. Before anything came into being that was made, the Word was in the beginning with God; not merely *in* God, as if merged or lost in God, but He had a distinct personal subsistence before a creature existed.

He was "in the beginning with God." This is of immense importance, and with these truths our Gospel opens.

Then we find His creation glory stated afterwards. "All things were made by Him." There is nothing which more stamps God to be God, than giving existence to that which had none, causing to exist by His own will and power. Now all things exist by the Word: and so emphatically true is this, that the Spirit has added, "And without Him was not anything made that was made."

But there was that which belonged to the Lord Jesus that was not made: "In Him was life." It was not only that He could cause a life to exist that had not before existed, but there was a life that belonged to Him from all eternity. "In Him was life."

Life that was not created, a life that was therefore divine in its nature. It was the reality and the manifestation of this life which were of prime importance to man. Everything else that had been since the beginning of the world was only a creature; but in Him was life. Man was destined to have the display of this life on earth. But it was

in Him before He came among men. The life was not called the light of angels, but of men. Nowhere do we find that eternal life is created. It is a wonderful fact of revelation, that we who believe have the eternal life that was in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and are therefore said to be partakers of the divine nature. This is in no way true of an angel. It is not that we for a moment cease to be creatures, but we have what is above the creature in Christ the Son of God.

And this "light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." It is striking to remark here the entire passing over of all the history of the world, of which we are apt to make so much, yea, even of the dispensational dealings of God with men. All is passed by very briefly indeed. "All things were made by Him." Scripture, and this chapter in particular, summarizes it with striking brevity, "All things were made by Him." The details of it

were left completely aside. What was good for us to know we are told in Genesis 1. All that man has thought, or said, or written, about a system of the world is not to be named with it for depth or certainty, as well as for simplicity, in the smallest compass.

But there is a reason why all such matters vanish after two or three words. It is because the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, is the Object that the Holy Ghost is dwelling on. The moment that He is brought out, creation just pays Him homage, owning Him to be the Creator, and is then forthwith dismissed. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." It is enough to say that He created all. He remains in His own grace. Now we learn what is the Spirit's object in this. It was not to give us details of the creation; it was to acquaint us with Jesus as the light of men.

(J. N. D.)

Christ our Passover.

EVERYWHERE in Scripture leaven is figurative of evil, and at the passover no leaven was to be found in any of the houses of the Israelites. In Deuteronomy 16. 3 they were reminded that they came out of Egypt in haste. God could not leave His redeemed people in the associations that had passed under His judgment—their separation from them must be immediate and final; nor did He permit them to carry out of Egypt any of Egypt's leaven. The redemption of Israel and God's ways with them are recorded for our instruction. The judgment that our sins deserved fell upon Christ the true Paschal Lamb, and by His sacrifice we have eternal redemption. It is by His blood alone that we have escaped the judgment that was our due, and it was because we belonged to an evil world and were sinners in the flesh He had to be sacrificed for us. Deliverance could only be effected in this way, and we acknowledge this as we put ourselves in faith under the

blood that was shed for us, and we enter into the meaning of it in the experience of our souls as we feed upon the Lamb roast with fire. Every divinely-exercised soul must feel the solemnity of this, and also realize the inconsistency of appropriating the death of Christ as the way of deliverance from the judgment which lies upon the world and the flesh, because of their evil character, and at the same time continuing to be governed by the principles and ways which called forth that judgment. If we understand the meaning of "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," we shall keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5. 7, 8).

The Cross of Christ is the condemnation of the world and the flesh, and those who glory in that cross as the means of their salvation will not be slow to condemn that which has been condemned by it.

The Kingdoms of this World, the Lord's Kingdom, and War.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

THERE seems to be considerable confusion of thought on the part of many as to the nations of this world and true Christianity. It is supposed that because the nations of Europe, for instance, profess Christianity they are Christian nations, and, being so, that it ought to be possible for them to exist on Christian principles, and to so adjust their relations one towards another as to eliminate for all time all recourse to the sword. Now the fact is that though Christianity is professed as the national religion of these countries, there is no such thing as a truly Christian nation, if we think of Christianity as it is presented to us in the Bible. That Book is our only instructor in these questions, and it nowhere recognizes nations as Christian. Matthew 28. 19, 20 may be quoted as against this statement, but the commission given to the disciples at the end of Matthew's Gospel has reference to "the gospel of the kingdom" "which shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matt. 24. 14). This will be undertaken by Jewish heralds, after the rapture of the church to heaven, and the result of it is seen in the description of the judgment of the living nations in Matthew 25. 31-46.

What is made very clear in the Word is that vital Christianity is individual and not national. The gospel goes forth to men everywhere to take those who are affected by it "*out of the nations*" to be a people for God (Acts 15. 14, N.T.). They are translated into another kingdom—"the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1. 13). But theirs is not a profession, merely, they are livingly affected—born again and indwelt by the Spirit of God, they own allegiance to Christ and belong henceforward to His kingdom. It should not be difficult to see the difference between a national profession—one in name only—and this which is veritable and vital, and

it is of the utmost importance that it should be understood, otherwise we shall not be able to see things with a clear vision, and much perplexity and doubt will result.

We do not wish to belittle the effects of a national profession of Christianity. Such a profession creates a conscience, and a certain standard of morals and equity; a restraining hand is laid by it, more or less, upon evil; and it gives ideals to rulers and law-makers that must be beneficial to all. Yet all this is very superficial, and it will be found, speaking generally, that political parties, governments, and rulers only go so far in the adoption of Christian precepts as appear to them to fit in with their self-interests; if they clash with these—well, then they are of less account than the now historical "scrap of paper." The history of nations and the Word of God alike prove that in spite of their profession the nations remain the kingdoms of this world; they are not the Lord's kingdom at all; if they were war would certainly cease and His people would pray no more "Thy kingdom come."

We were discussing these things with a friend before the outbreak of the war. He endeavoured to maintain that it was possible for a country like Great Britain to adopt a policy in regard to other nations that would be in entire accord with Christian principles and precepts. We said in reply, You will admit that the Christian is exhorted to "resist not evil," and, "if thine enemy smite thee on the one cheek turn the other also." Suppose, then, by way of illustration, that Germany deliberately, and without warning, struck the blow at Britain that she has been preparing for years. If she invaded South Africa, for instance, would you say, "Take India also, we shall not resist"? Or if she sunk a battleship would you say, "You

may sink another, we shall only return good for evil, and love for hatred" ? "Certainly not," he answered, "I should be for striking back swiftly and hard." And his own answer proved to him that his view of things had been entirely wrong. The United States is professedly Christian. Yet when the *Maine* was sunk by a Spanish mine off Havanah in 1898, "Remember the *Maine*" became the cry that roused the whole country to war with Spain.

If a nation acted upon Christian principles it could not strike back when stricken; it would possess neither battleships nor sword to strike back with, and it does not require a very keen intellect to discern what the result of such a policy would be in the world as it is. It is possible for the individual Christian to willingly and joyfully carry out these precepts, but for a nation it is impossible, for, as we have said, Christianity is an individual and not a national matter. In the present state of the world force is necessary for the maintenance of authority and of the measure of righteousness which is maintained, whether internationally or nationally. The policeman, magistrate, army and navy are indispensable, and these are permitted of God, and so far have His sanction, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for His people's sake. But these would not be necessary if the kingdoms of this world were the Lord's kingdoms.

When arraigned before Pilate the Lord said, "IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT" (John 18. 36). And that statement from the lips of Eternal Truth should be sufficient to show how great is the gulf that lies between the kingdoms of this world and His kingdom who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and who forbade the valiant Peter to draw the sword on His behalf. To the kingdoms of this world war is an unhappy necessity. They have been founded mainly by blood; they maintain their place in the sun, and hold what they possess mainly by the power of the

sword; and they will go down to an ignominious and terrible destruction together in one last, frenzied struggle for the mastery of the world, and thus shall it be that room shall be made for the kingdom of the Lord, which kingdom shall be established according to inflexible righteousness, and so shall universal peace prevail. Thus it is written in the sure word of prophecy, and for this the Christian waits.

The loveless doctrine of "the survival of the fittest" permeates the policy of every nation; it is modified somewhat, perhaps, in such countries as Britain and America, who, by the way, possess all the territory they desire; nevertheless it is there, and only awaits the translation of the church to heaven to show itself in all its naked horridness. The philosophy of Nietzsche will be the gospel of the Beast and Antichrist (Rev. 13); when they appear, the devil's supermen, in whom will be fully expressed all the evil intentions of the devil, might will then be right, and only that will be thought worthy of applause which is strong and ruthless. To this the nations of the world are moving both surely and swiftly.

But the devil is the prince of this world now (John 12. 31), and the whole world lieth in him (1 John 5. 19, N.T.), and though God restrains his machinations in measure, for the gospel's sake, yet it is not difficult to discern them in the policies of the nations of the world. The iron that God has put into the hills, to be won from them for the manufacture of ploughshares and pruning-hooks, is forged into guns and swords; and the latest discoveries of science and the cleverest brains, given for the benefit of man, are employed in the production of diabolical engines for the maiming and destruction of thousands; and money invested in armament firms yields the biggest dividends, a most important consideration. And all this not in far-off pagan lands, but in the great civilized and, so-called, "Christian nations." Righteousness and peace are not to spring from such as these, they

are the kingdoms of the world and not the kingdoms of the Lord.

Notice, further, who they are who occupy the greatest space in the histories of nations, not the martyrs of the Lord, nor they who were meek and lowly in heart—such have no record here—nor yet the philanthropists who have laboured for the good of men, but the great conquerors who have carried fire and sword into peaceful lands, and established kingdoms at the cost of much blood; and the more ruthless they were the more famous they are.

Now the bed-rock principle for the Lord's kingdom is SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE (Matt. 18.). Note well the record of the Lord's arrest in the garden in Matthew's Gospel, the Gospel of the King. Peter believed that the hour had come in which to strike a blow for the Lord, but he was rebuked for having thoughts so contrary to the spirit of his Master. Jesus said, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all who take the sword shall perish by the sword" (chap. 26. 52). That saying was not addressed to the world in general, nor did it refer to nations quarrelling one with another, it was addressed to the thought in the hearts of His disciples, that His kingdom was to be established by the sword. Others of the Lord's people have had the same thought since that memorable night, and have perished by the sword as the Lord said they would, Zwingle of Switzerland being an example.

The Lord might have called for His protection more than twelve legions of angels, for the whole power of heaven was at His command; but had He done so what had been written of Him would not have been accomplished. By the world He was a rejected and suffering King, but He did not assert His rights; He was willing to suffer and to give His life a ransom for all. It was by weakness that He was to be victorious. By yielding up His life in obedience to the will of God and in love to men He was to lay the foundation of a kingdom that should never be shaken for ever.

In Himself the principles and character of His kingdom found full and perfect expression. His kingdom is to be a transcript of Himself. It is established in the same world in which He suffered, and so it must suffer also. For it, this is the time of submission, tribulation, patience, and faith. It is hated by the world in which it is (John 15. 18-27); and it is by suffering that it succeeds. This comes out strikingly in Romans 8. 36, 37: "As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long (not killing, mark you, but killed); we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Those who are great in this suffering kingdom are not the arrogant and proud and independent and self-assertive, but those who are like the little child, gentle, meek, trustful, and dependent; but such a character as that can only be produced by conversion (Matt. 18.). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3.).

The difference between the kingdoms of this world and the Lord's kingdom are so radical that reconciliation between them is an impossibility. The former are material and worldly, the latter spiritual and heavenly; the former are under the control of Satan, and their goal is the absolute refusal of any interference from God; the latter is the sphere of complete and willing submission to the will of God. In principles, spirit, and character they are in perfect opposition. The former in their final phase will adopt *in toto* Nietzsche's doctrine that "Christianity is an immortal blot upon humanity," and that the passive virtues—meekness, patience, and gentleness, and those beautifully active ones—pity, forgiveness, and self-sacrificing love—impede the progress of mankind and so must be utterly suppressed. While in the Lord's kingdom, when it comes into full manifestation, every fierce passion of man will be quelled, and that which characterized the Lord when He was here will reign

supreme, for "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM" (Isa. 11. 6).

As the Lord's servants, disciples, and friends we need to weigh well these

things, and to learn deeply and truly the character of that kingdom to which we belong, so that we may order our ways in accordance with it and in subjection to Him until He comes. So shall we be His witnesses here, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for all.

"The Day."

WE are told that at their banquets German officers used to drink to "the day" with great enthusiasm; that speeches were made on these occasions the object of which was to keep "the day" constantly and vividly before their minds, and send them back to their labours, whether in the army or navy, with renewed determination to be ready when "the day" arrived. "The day" became their watchword as well as their hope, and gave to all their efforts determination, perseverance, and inspiration.

Christians need such a watchword and hope to nerve their endeavours and concentrate their energies, and to deliver them from the slackness and lethargy to which they are so prone, and God has given them one in His Word. We are told that "THE DAY" is approaching (Heb. 10. 25), the day of Christ's appearing; the day when His glory shall be manifested, and in which He will render to every man as his work shall be. That day is certain, and we know also with certainty of what sort that day will be. If we are ignorant of its character let us go to the Word, it will enlighten us.

In view of "the day" we read, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for He is faithful that promised)." We must hold aloft our glorious standard, and not desert the colours, for our great Captain lives who once was dead for us, and not one word of His promise shall fail. He will surely lead us to the signal and everlasting triumph that the day shall reveal. And "let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." Every unit in the great army

of faith has his own work, "his own bit," to use a popular phrase, to do, and his own place to hold in the fight of faith; and this will be done best by all as each endeavours to cheer and encourage his fellows to love and to good works. Mark those two things, they describe the life of the Lord below, we, His followers, are to be like Him.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see THE DAY approaching." Some may be called upon to hold some lone outposts in witness for the Lord and seldom or never have the pleasure and privilege of Christian intercourse; and such the Lord can sustain, but for the majority it is necessary, and the will of the Lord also, that they should be often together for mutual help and edification in view of "the day." What a solemn day it will be, for in it "every man's work shall be made manifest, for THE DAY shall declare it" (1 Cor. 3. 13). It will be the day also in which the crown of righteousness shall be given to all who love the Lord's appearing (2 Tim. 4. 8). Above all, it will be the day when He shall assume His universal rights, and shall be glorified in the eyes of every living thing.

THE DAY is approaching, brethren, and short is the sight of those that cannot see it, "therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5.). "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58).—(Ed.)

Things that Cannot be Moved.

(JAMES BOYD)

MAN'S OUTLOOK.

THE fact that death lies upon all that are born into this world, and that sooner or later every individual must by that means pass from here, is enough to prove that the Creator does not intend to go on for ever with things as they at present are upon earth. From the moment of birth until the last breath has been drawn, men wage a grim battle with the king of terrors, but the issue of the conflict is not difficult to forecast. It may be as an infant of days, or it may be as a centenarian, but the end has to come; to that monarch all must bow.

And from that bourn no traveller returns. Once the frontier has been crossed there is no way of retreat. Whatever may lie in that land has to be encountered; let it be darkness or light, let it be sorrow or joy, let it be weal or woe. When the step has been taken, return is for ever out of the question: "As the tree falls, so it lies."

Nor is there any voice from those impenetrable shadows, to warn or to encourage those who feel themselves forced by an invisible power ever nearer to that mysterious and uncertain land. Every man must cross the boundary *alone*. None of those who have gone before are permitted to come to this side, and to be a guide to his tottering footsteps across the frontier, and to introduce him to his new and unknown circumstances. That journey must be taken without a single companion.

And it has its terrors. No one desires to take the journey. The wrinkled brow, the white and hoary hairs, and the decay of bodily vigour, which mark the approach toward the confines of that invisible land, bring no joy to the pilgrim's soul. Death does not appear to him to be a mark of the Creator's approval of his life. It comes to him rather as an indication of his Maker's displeasure regarding the way in which he has spent his time down here. He

may have been told that it is only the debt of nature, but he would prefer that such a debt did not exist, or that nature would not exact payment in his case. It seems to be forced upon him that the earth is naturally his abiding place, and that it is on account of his misdeeds he has to leave it.

And he cannot hope to be any better beyond; for conscience, if he has any left, will tell him that death is only the first instalment of the judgment that lies upon him on account of his sins. He has not answered the purpose for which he was made, and he must now meet the consequences of his unprofitableness. He cannot hide from himself the fact that anyone who makes an instrument or vessel makes it to answer some purpose, and if it does not do this it is useless, and is cast away from the presence of its maker. Nor can he quite keep himself from feeling that this is what has been true between himself and his Maker. If God makes a creature, or if He makes anything, He makes that creature or thing to serve His purpose, and if it does not do so it must come to an end in its relationship with Him. But if that creature be set in intelligent relationship with Him, responsible to do His will, and if it has done nothing but its own will, it must come under His righteous judgment.

WHAT MEN KNOW.

Every man knows very well he has done nothing but his own will, and that he never has had any intention to do else than his own will. He does not like to come under the control of his fellow man, not to speak of subjection to God. He hates to be ordered about by anyone, but he would be delighted to have the power of ordering everyone else about. He would like to rule the world, and to subject everyone to himself, without his being subject to anyone. We have an illustration of this spirit in the person most prominent in this

present sorrowful and murderous war. A man desires to dominate Europe. But does anyone imagine that if he got the desire of his heart he would be content with dominating Europe? He would next desire to rule the world. And if he were successful in this would he be content, even outwardly, to acknowledge God? He certainly would not, and everybody knows he would not; and if he would take time to think, he would know himself that he would not. Man fell through an attempt to grasp equality with God, and that idea is at the bottom of the heart of every man on earth. And if a man does not know it, he does not know himself.

In saying all this I am making no reference to Scripture. I am speaking only of that which everyone knows who observes the state of men's minds in this world. And I have been speaking of that which men are by nature. I have been making no reference to the effect produced by the operations of the grace of God in the hearts of the subjects of it. I have only referred to that which men should know, and which they do know, who have never heard the gospel of the grace of God in their lives. They know that man is naturally a selfish, cruel, ambitious being; that his lust of power is infinite; that to gain his own ends he would make a stepping-stone of the crushed and writhing hearts of his fellows; that death is his portion here; that it is not an evidence of God's approval of the way he has conducted himself; that he is afraid of it; that it will one day have the victory over him; and that after that is the judgment, when he must give an account to God. And in addition to this, if he would only consider the state of this world with reference to the God to whom he must give account, he would learn that it also must be brought to a conclusion. To arrive at such an understanding, Scripture should not be really necessary.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

But it is just what Scripture says.

God will shake everything, and everything that can be shaken will be removed. He says, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain." His voice shook the earth at Sinai, when the law was given; and this might have warned the people that there was no stability in that dispensation, for by the law blessing could not be inherited. Nor, indeed, could they listen to the word of God's demand upon them. They said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exod. 20. 19). Not only were they not able to fulfil their obligations, but they could not listen to the terms of their obligations. This should have convinced them that to attempt to get blessing by the fulfilment of their obligations would be futile. But when was ever impaired the confidence man has in himself?

THE OBJECT OF PAST DISPENSATIONS.

One great object that God had in view in the various dispensations was to bring to light man's utterly lost condition. There was no expectation on the part of God that men in their natural condition would be inclined to avail themselves of the blessings attached to the dispensation, for He knew what was in man, and required no evidence for Himself, which might be furnished by his history as a sinner, that under every dispensation he would be a God-hating rebel.

But every dispensation had the earth in view. None of them promised heaven as the reward of righteousness. Moses told the people, when the law was given, that the man who did the things demanded would live (Lev. 18. 5). He does not say that such would get to heaven, but that they would be able to keep earth. But this dispensation was to the people a ministration of death

and condemnation. And it is this people that He reminds that when the law was given earth was shaken, but tells them that He would also shake heaven (Hag. 2. 6). And this, we are told, means the removal of both earth and heaven.

I need scarcely say that "heaven" here refers to the heaven which is set in direct relation to this earth. It has no connection with Paradise, or the third heaven (2 Cor. 12.). It is where Satan has his seat (Eph. 6. 10, 20; Rev. 12. 7, 9). This is no doubt what is referred to as yet to be shaken. The earth has already been shaken, the heaven shall be; for both have been defiled by sin. Peter tells us that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3. 10). "All these things," he tells us, "shall be dissolved." Then again, we are told, as to the heavens and the earth, they "shall perish" (Ps. 102. 20). It is not only that man is passing away, and the world, as a great system, is passing away (1 John 2. 17), but the earth and heaven shall pass away.

THE RESULT OF THE COMING OF THE SON OF GOD.

I wish to notice two things regarding the coming of the Son of God into the world. One is that it was used of God to bring to light the incorrigible God-hatingness of the human heart; and the other, the bringing of another world into the view of faith. There was power enough in the Son of God to reinstate man in the world, and bring in an eternal condition of things pleasing to God. In this way He was presented to the responsibility of men, but they refused to have Him. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses, but the rejection of Christ was the proof that man would not have God in any

way in which He might present Himself.

This gave occasion to God to retire upon the eternal counsel of His own heart. And the blessing and glory of these counsels shone through the ministry of the Lord, and as His rejection by the nation became more pronounced, the light and love of God came more into evidence. Not only were the promises made to the fathers fulfilled by His advent into the world, but glories that lay altogether outside that order of things were spoken of. In Him the Father came to light, and of this there was no promise made to the fathers that I am aware of. Eternal life in its heavenly character was brought to light for men, and not merely immunity from death in the place where death had reigned. The Father's house in heaven, and a place for the redeemed there, and the kingdom of heaven in mystery, which is its present form, all these were revealed, yet none of them had been included in the promises made to the fathers.

But having accomplished the work of redemption, or as we have it here (Heb. 1. 3), having made purification of sins, He set Himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high. On this work of redemption are built things that are unshakable, and to these things He calls men by His gospel. Those who embrace the glad tidings are said in chapter 3. to be "partakers of the heavenly calling." The question of earth is closed. We have our place either where Christ is, or the lake of fire will be our everlasting portion. And this is why we have the statement made in Romans 3. that all "come short of the glory of God." This never was the standard until Christ went there, but when He went there everything was measured by the requirements of that glory.

THE UNSHAKABLE THINGS.

The gospel which is preached to every creature is the voice of Him who speaks from heaven, and who calls all who

believe to the place from which He speaks. Whoever may be the preacher, the voice is the voice of the Son of God. The gospel first began to be spoken by Him, and it has been confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God bearing witness with them to this gospel, by signs and wonders and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God brought all things that Jesus said to the remembrance of the disciples, as well as adding to their testimony that which took place in heaven, when Jesus was received up out of their sight at Bethlehem.

The gospel is God speaking in the person of the Son and in the power of the Spirit. Wherever it goes in all the world it directs the attention of men to Christ, in whom God has established all blessing. Righteousness is in Him for the sinner, who has no righteousness of his own; salvation is in Him for the lost, who have no power to help themselves; life is in Him for those who feel that death lies upon them as the just judgment of God. And all these blessings are the possession of the believer. But more than that, his place is where Jesus is. He is our Fore-runner. He has secured the place for us, and He calls us to inherit it along with Himself, and this will we do at His coming again.

We are not come to the mount that might be touched. The things we are come to are invisible. But they are none the less real. They are presented to us in testimony, and we see them by faith's clear eye. Not like the saints of past dispensations, who saw the things relating to the kingdom afar off. We see them near at hand: "For He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37). And when He comes we shall enter into the possession of these things.

We are come to Mount Zion, the hill of pure grace; the heavenly Jerusalem, radiant with the glory of God; to myriads of angels, not one angel with a fiery law; to the church of the first-

born ones, who are written in heaven; to God, the Judge of all; to the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. These set forth the great principles of blessing in the world to come, and they are utterly unshakable. How blessed it will be, and how blessed it is, to have part in these things! And what a contrast there is between these things and the shifting, changing, uncertain, unstable things of earth.

Where are your hearts, dear friends? and on what are they centred? Do you still cleave to this world which you cannot retain? It is certain to vanish from your grasp one day. It has no moral foundations, and therefore it cannot continue. It must come to a conclusion in the devouring fire. In that day where will your feet be set? Certainly not on a stable foundation if you have turned away from Him who speaks from heaven. Be wise in time. The prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself, while the foolish pass on, and are punished.

It is the voice of Jesus, the pleadings of the Man of Sorrows, the testimony of the Son of God. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" The answer of the Spirit of God to the question is, "Much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from heaven."

To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

Inter-communion.

(EDWARD CROSS).

SCRIPTURE speaks much of communion. It is the highest privilege to which the Christian is introduced. It does not speak of inter-communion. There is no possible ground for its existence in divine things.

Men may have inter-communion among themselves, in barter or exchange, where, on the principle of "give and take," each may offer to the other a *quid pro quo*. But in divine things this is impossible.

Communion and inter-communion are frequently regarded as interchangeable terms; but in reality they are not so. The distinction between national and international, dependent and interdependent, and such-like words is plain enough; that between communion and inter-communion is equally explicit. The prefix, "inter-," introduces an individuality of the factors, a mutuality of relationship, and an equality of independent rights on the part of the communicants, that finds its near counterpart in the distinction between the terms denominationalism and interdenominationalism. It makes each of the contracting parties independent of the others; while making all recognize, as a preamble, this independence, as the basis of inter-communion.

Communion, or fellowship, which is the same word in the original—*κοινωνία* from *κοινός*, common—is simply having things in common, a commonalty. If there was anything not "in common," in that respect there would not be communion. One might have stores for which the other had no equivalent. Yet they might be thrown "in common." In such a case there would be communion; but, as the affairs of life are ordinarily conducted, not inter-communion. Inter-communion supposes a ground of separate and equal rights between the parties.

In Acts 4. 32 we read, "And the heart and soul of the multitude of those

that had believed were one, and not one said that anything of what he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them . . . and great grace was upon them all." It was the Spirit that made each hold his possessions for the common good. It was communion, and all were thereby raised in spirit to a higher level. It was not inter-communion on their own level, in a natural way.

Again, Romans 15. 7: "Receive ye one another according as the Christ has received you to the glory of God." This is communion in reception one of another, as all had been received; not in any wise the inter-communion of Jew and Gentile as such, each with equal rights on his own ground.

Many scriptures declare that Israel is destined to be God's missionary people to the world, through whom "His way will be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations" (*cf.* Pss. 67., 117., etc.; Isa. 66. 19; Matt. 24. 14). They will form the bridge of connection between Assyria and Egypt in the day when the North and the South will join with them in the service of God, when all nations will come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts (Isa. 19. 23-25; Zech. 14. 17). Herein there is the fullest communion, but not inter-communion. Israel does not descend to the level of the nations. They are raised to her level. She does not forfeit her own crown and meed, while she is the distributing centre of blessing and glory to the others.

And this is how Balaam depicts her, as "the Lord put the word into his mouth" . . . "lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23. 9). And again, in the blessing of Moses, Deuteronomy 33. 28, "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew."

And so again, Psalm 4. 3, which some would render as Deuteronomy 33. 28, "For Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety alone." But anyway, whether so rendered or not, by comparison with Leviticus 25. 18, 19 and Deuteronomy 12. 10, their safety seems bound up with their sanctification, apart.

Compare also the remarkable passage in Micah 7. 12, evidently connected with Isaiah 19. 23, etc., "In that day they shall *come even to thee* from Assyria and the cities of Middle Egypt, and from Middle Egypt even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain." The glory of that day is world-wide, with Israel as the centre, and the communion of it is complete; yet, in the midst of it all, the glory of Israel is unique. They "come to her"; not she to them. Her place is not lost in inter-communion with the nations.

When we come to the New Testament we read, 1 John 1. 3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have communion with us: and truly our communion is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ"; and again, 1 Corinthians 1. 9, "we are called into the communion of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord"; and again, 2 Corinthians 13. 14, "the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

It is plain that in none of these passages could the thought of inter-communion be allowed. We could not invite the Godhead into communion with us. We are called into communion as above. It is the Christian portion. But, *mark it well*, it is not the realized portion of every Christian. We are called to the communion of the apostles, "with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ"—wonderful, wonderful thought! and all the more wonderful because it is true. But who is there? To read it in print does not put us there. It is the province of the Spirit alone to do it, for those who submit to His control (1 John 3. 24; 4. 13; 5. 20).

We are "called to the communion of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." It is the Christian call to all. But who obeys it? "I of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ," is the flat refusal of it; and the last the worst of all, making Christ the head of a party, and excluding all the rest.

The Apostle desires "the communion of the Holy Spirit, for them all" (2 Cor. 13. 14), a truly Christian desire, then and now, for the whole church of God. But repeating it piously and unintelligently at the close of a Christian service will not effectuate it, in circumstances that are contrary to it, where the desire is rather that the Spirit should sanction by His communion the carnal state of the church, than that the church should rise to the communion of the Spirit.

All saints are called to the communion of Jesus Christ. Inter-communion between the various sections into which they were so soon divided, "I of Paul," etc., is not once thought of. Such divisions are only named to be condemned. Inter-communion among them would suppose that each section had a centre of attraction in itself equal to the rest. That is, that there is no divine centre for any; that God has no voice in the matter; that Christianity, as set forth in Scripture, is superseded to-day by a set of voluntary systems, where each acts independently of the rest, and having no direct guidance from God, does the best it can in the circumstances, and possibly credits the rest with doing the same. Here you have a clear ground for inter-communion, but with evident disregard for the fact that we are called to the communion of Jesus Christ our common Lord. In such a system there is no divine authority; the voice of God is drowned by the voice of man; the churches are all on one dead level of human appointment, "*pares inter paribus*"; and each has the same right to invite others to its communion—it cannot be said "call," for there is no authority—as the others have to invite it.

Such inter-communion is found in the "Evangelical Alliance," and similar institutions. But, notwithstanding their being promoted by very excellent intentions, which are hereby in no wise impugned, such systems have no place in Scripture. The union and inter-communion of believers after this sort is not "the unity of the Spirit," or the communion which He promotes, and they are not directive of faith, however much God in His mercy may have patience with the weakness and failure of His people.

The practical question then arises, where are we to look for the solution of existing difficulties? Scripture alone can help us here; and this help we find in the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians.

It may be remarked at once that the Epistle to the Ephesians does not deal directly with the matter in hand. It gives us what the church is according to the eternal purposes of God, all human failure apart; but in the Epistles to the Corinthians the Apostle deals directly with the *failure* in which the assembly historically is found. It is not viewed in 1 Corinthians as "a new creation in Christ," according to divine, inflexible purpose, Ephesians 1., 2., but as the assembly of God, His property on earth, saints by calling, in the place of privilege and responsibility, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called into His fellowship. But here we must not mistake the "Call" for the answer to it. Israel was called out of Egypt, but in their hearts they returned to it (Acts 7. 39; cf. Hos. 11. 1; 7. 11-16; 8. 13; 9. 36; Deut. 28. 68), and those who are now "partakers of the heavenly calling" are warned not to fall after the same example of unbelief (Heb. 3). We are "called by glory and virtue," but how feebly are the exhortations founded thereon obeyed (2 Peter 1. 5-10). "Many indeed are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 20. 16). And the same is true in respect of those who are "called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord." Were that call responded to, there would be an end at

once to all the sectarian parties into which the church is divided. It would neither be the amalgamation of them, nor inter-communion among them, nor the self-assertion of any of them, but it would be the communion of the Holy Spirit gathering in all fealty to the One and only name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the real solution of the difficulty, and if that does not solve it for you, NOTHING ELSE WILL. The fact that this has been so often stated, and so often professedly accepted, while effecting nothing in result, proves how little it is understood, and with what undying tenacity the narrow heart of man clings to its own particular form of sectarianism, often honestly and conscientiously, if ignorantly. While again we read, "Among the chief rulers also, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12. 42).

And, mark it, you may find yourself to-day with others, likeminded with yourself and walking in the faith of Christ; but your faith must not be in the faithfulness of that company, for it will fail, as every other company has ever failed. Your faith must be in "God, who is faithful, by whom we have been called to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." When all fails, His faithfulness abides, and this fellowship remains just what it ever is. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints," Psalm 89. 5, etc.; and it still remains true, "If we believe not, He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

But there are many true Christians groping for light, to whom these self-evident truths are not so evident as they are to others. We must seek to help such, not to hinder them. As we have learned our own attachment to Christ, and in this way "the unity of the Spirit," so we must seek to help them to the understanding of their attachment

to Him also. This is the bond of union by the Spirit, that He attaches all to Him. This detaches automatically from every other bond. It is true liberty.

Then in a day of difficulty such as this, we are told "of some have compassion, making a difference, others save with fear." We are not thrown on hard and fast rules to enforce an abstract legality. We must remember that Aaron was, from the first, associated with Moses in the safe conduct of the people from Egypt to the promised land. It was Moses' rod that brought them out of Egypt; but it was Aaron's rod that saved the situation in Numbers 17. 10, and met the cry of anguish of the people, "Behold, we die; we perish;

we all perish." He who in his dealings with men leaves out the mercy of God, leaves out with it the God of mercy, and shows that he has not properly learned the need of mercy for himself (James 2. 12, 13). We must hold to principles; but we must hold to them *with God*, for edification and not destruction, so that they are effectual for blessing by the vital power inherent in them. When we constitute ourselves the guardians of the truth we lose it. Let us rather seek to be guarded by it; like Timothy, to whom the Apostle wrote, "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4. 16).

New Creation and Christian Unity.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

"**ALL DEAD**" (2 Cor. 5. 14); such is the disaster in which all "in Adam" are involved. The truth of this is demonstrated by the death of Christ for all. This sentence of God on man, the wages of his sin, affords Him the occasion of gloriously displaying what He is in grace and power in a new creation in Christ "where sin, nor want, nor woe, nor death can come." Must this wonderful triumph of God over the miserable consequences of sin be enjoyed only in a future heaven? Scripture teaches far otherwise, and we shall find how it applies the truth of new creation to the correction of many errors which are rife amongst us to-day.

Let us begin with a short consideration of the subject as presented in 2 Corinthians 5., already referred to. The last verse of this chapter tells of the true foundation of what precedes, the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which His perfect purity, "He knew no sin," and the reality of His Godhead, gave infinite efficacy. On this basis any whose hearts are "purified by faith" can be reconciled to God. Moreover, in Christ raised from the dead, a new

creation begins for all who are His, and for all such a new motive is found in the constraining power of the love of Christ. The Apostle had just written "if we are sober it is for your cause," and in the two following verses he gives us his resulting judgment of the whole position as the Spirit brings it before him; "for the love of Christ constrains us, having this judgment: that if one died for all, then indeed all were dead; and (having this judgment also) that they who live should not any longer live to themselves, but to Him who for their sakes died and rose again." Clearly a work of grace is supposed here; among the general mass of souls spiritually dead God has wrought in power to separate to Himself a new class marked by the possession of life. This constitutes a new beginning called here new creation, and predicated of all in Christ.

In chapter 12. we learn how this may be regarded by any individual so privileged. Paul says: "I know" (consciously) "a man in Christ," and because this is an entirely new work of God and brings no credit to him, he can glory in "such a one." Moreover, he

learns to distinguish "such a one" from himself as he knew himself a man on earth, "of myself I will not glory unless in my infirmities," things which made him appear weak before men (chap. 10. 10).

"That which exalted him on earth, he would put aside. That which took him up to heaven—that which gave him a portion there—that which he was 'in Christ'—was his glory, the joy of his heart, the portion in which he would readily glory" (J.N.D.). If we have thus been taught the individual application of this truth, we shall be better able to appreciate the use made of it by the Spirit in correcting the errors into which the assemblies fell in those early days and apply the instruction to our own times. Among the many grievous failures in the Corinthian assembly the subject of parties ranged under their favourite leaders occupies the first place, the reason of this priority being that while man in any form is before the soul God is displaced and His voice not heard (see Matt. 15. and Mark 7.). This subject, therefore, prepares the way for further teaching. It is of interest and importance to notice that in both these chapters, and also in 1 Corinthians 1., reference is made to Isaiah 29. The Lord gives the character of the evil and His servant the consequences of it, so humbling to the mind of these cultivated Greeks: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (ver. 19).

The teaching of the cross is introduced in both chapters 1. and 2. as a witness of the folly of the wise men of this age. In the end of chapter 1., however, we come to another kind of man altogether, one who is of God as to his origin and in Christ Jesus as to his status. Under which of the various leaders mentioned in verse 12 can he be placed? If it be said "under Christ," it is not Christ as the leader of a party, which was the subtle evil found among the Corinthians, robbing Him of His proper glory as the true Leader of all His saints (*cf.* Joshua 5. 14). It is in correction of this error

that Paul asks "is Christ divided?" Happy would it be if we all understood that to make Him leader of a party is, as far as we are concerned, to lose Him as the centre of His assembly and its Head. On the other hand, if in faith and affection His rightful place in the assembly is accorded Him we shall find Him in it. These considerations will help us to understand the teaching of this part of the Epistle; the cross is the setting aside of the natural man; then God brings in "the man in Christ," to whom the precious endowment of the Spirit is given according to chapter 2., while chapter 3. adds the building of saints together as God's temple; let none venture to corrupt that, for it is holy. If this line of truth be received in faith, there will be a true response to the exhortation in chapter 1. 10, "that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no parties among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." This is a verse which is generally regarded as so impossible that its removal from the inspired page would be little noticed. Let us take it more to heart.

The difficulty with the Galatians we find stated in Acts 15., as well as in the Epistle itself. All recognized that salvation was in the line of Abraham, but the Judaizing opponents of Paul maintained that this must be reached by "circumcision after the manner of Moses" or they could not be saved. The first three chapters of the Epistle are occupied in fully answering this error, and in chapter 3. 28 we are brought again to the truth of new creation, "ye are all one in Christ Jesus." This connects us with Christ, the true Seed of Abraham (ver. 16), and the difficulty is therein solved, for "if ye be Christ's then ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Thus the difference and enmity between Jew and Gentile is met by the judgment of both in the cross (2. 20—3. 1) and by the introduction of the new man in Christ. This might appear to be sufficient, but alas! among these Gentile believers

occasions of strife had arisen and practical unity was fatally compromised. Like all legal Christians they were quarrelsome and were found biting and devouring one another, so that, as in the case of their descendants in our own time, there seemed a danger of extinction (chap. 5. 15). The cure of this lamentable state is also found in new creation, "as many as walk according to *this* rule peace be on them" (chap. 6. 16). How many saints find their church relations to be a sorrow and distress for want of so walking!

The subject is not fully taken up in

either 1 Corinthians or Galatians, and we must look to Colossians 3. 12-14 for further development. There we find the saints called by the titles of Christ, "elect of God, holy and beloved," as an incentive to exhibit His character towards one another. Blessed result of Christ being "all and in all." It would seem simple to yield ourselves to the present ministry from the Head in heaven so that we might become vessels of His love and grace towards His own in this world, for love is the *uniting* bond (*σύνδεσμος*) of perfectness as the unity of the Spirit must be kept in the *uniting* bond of peace.

Water and Blood.

(JAMES GREEN).

What is the meaning of the blood and water which came from the pierced side of our Lord?

THE only escape from the divine sentence, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," was by the divine provision, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." The blood shed in sacrifice and type, looked on to the great antitype, our Lord Jesus Christ. The laying down of His life has accomplished that which the blood of bulls and of goats could never effect, the purging of sins. His all-sufficient sacrifice, priceless and precious beyond all estimation, brings forgiveness, cleansing, and peace to every one who draws near to God, by faith in that finished work. The blood that flowed from His side when His death was accomplished, is the abiding witness to the believer that his sins are put away for ever, that he has been brought into the light as God is in the light, and that with a conscience purged from dead works, it is now his unspeakable privilege to serve the living God. But in order that he may carry out this service in happy freedom, it is absolutely necessary that the import of the water should be understood.

Water is used in Scripture to set forth death and cleansing, in the

aspect of the entire removal of that which before existed. The waters of the flood removed from God's sight the race of sinners, whose corruption and violence had grieved Him at His heart. Death was the closing of their history, they were gone from sight, and Noah and those with him in the ark had passed from the world that then was.

In like manner, the waters of the Red Sea covered the enemies of Israel, they sank as lead in the mighty waters, there remained not one of them. Even the carcasses cast up upon the shore bore mute but eloquent witness that the host of Pharaoh with all their vaunted strength existed no more, and the bondage in which they had held the people of God was ended for ever. Again the Israel that passed through the wilderness was marked by murmurings and wanderings, but they passed the Jordan, and leaving themselves in figure, buried with the twelve stones beneath its waters, as a new Israel they enter upon the possession of the land which God had purposed for them. John's baptism follows the same line. It was as though those multitudes from Judea and Jerusalem

were saying to God as they entered the water, the only place we deserve is to be put out of sight altogether, but our hope is in the One who is coming. He will be life to us, our life is ended.

Now let us apply this to the water which flowed from the pierced side of our Lord after death. We must remember that there was another question to be settled, besides the expiation of sins committed. There was the fact of the nature—the flesh—which produced those sins. A nature so irreclaimably bad, that no good thing could be produced by it. The flesh, the believer finds to his sorrow, to be still within himself. Great is his disappointment as he discovers that when he would do good evil is present with him. Struggle against it he does, earnestly he searches for some way of overcoming its power, until he is forced at last to confess that in him, that is in his flesh, good does not dwell. Then in the hopelessness of despair at his own efforts of self-improvement, he cries, "Oh, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7. 24). Then it is that he learns God's deliverance, and that Christ not only shed His blood in order that his SINS might be forgiven, but that at the same time as He did this, He was made SIN (2 Cor. 5. 21). He, the sinless One, was then viewed as identified with the very root principle

of sin itself, and God dealt out to Him in that solemn moment the judgment that the sin we find in our flesh deserved.

Christ died unto sin once, and in His death sin in its root and nature passed away from God's sight, as a thing judged, to which He had no more to say. True, its actual existence still continues, but the believer is at liberty to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord. He is delivered from the condemnation of the old nature of sin, and in consequence from the world in which sin found its life, and from the bondage of Satan its god and prince. He stands now in God's inheritance; the old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. Of this great deliverance the water is the witness.

The Christian lives in a life that belongs to Christ risen; he has a new nature which is of God, and a new power, the Holy Spirit, to sustain him in victory over the old nature, and to lead him into the things of the Father and the Son. Thus the Spirit adds His witness to the two given when Christ died. "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three agree in one." And their testimony is this, that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5. 8).

Peace and Gladness.

David went merry to bed, when he had nothing for supper but the gladness that God put into his heart, and promised himself a better night's rest than any of them all that had feasted with the world's cheer. He said, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep" (Ps. 4. 7, 8). This peace which God gave him, and which yielded such gladness, yielded comfort and rest to his body, as he said, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." This refreshing gladness, and peace, and rest were not enjoyed by David as he lay upon a down bed in his stately palace at Jerusalem, but when he fled for his life from his unnatural son Absalom, and possibly was forced to lie in the open field under the canopy of heaven.

A New Song.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos, No. XV.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

(Rev. 14. 1-3).

LIKE an oasis in the desert, this chapter is parenthetically introduced, between the blasphemies of the beasts and the vials of wrath, a song in the midst of sorrow. The song of chapter 15. 1-4 should be included in the parenthesis, beginning with the song of chapter 14. Both are voiced by those of the tribe of Judah. Part had been slain, the rest preserved. They had passed through unparalleled tribulation, for they had been guilty of unparalleled sins. “His blood be on us and on our children,” was the cry of the people—the Jews—when they crucified Christ, their Messiah. Under the reign of antichrist that prayer will be fearfully answered. But in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy. To those who in their sorrow realize that Jesus was their true Messiah; and own the awful guilt of the nation in the language of Isaiah 53. 4, 5, 6, and turn to God in true repentance, He will, in pitying love, give the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Part of them will be preserved in life. Like the three Hebrew children who refused to do homage to Nebuchadnezzar’s image, so also these, who refuse worship to the beast and his image, will be miraculously preserved, and form the nucleus of Christ’s earthly kingdom. They are the firstfruits of the great millennial harvest. They are a guileless company, who have walked in holy separation from every form of satanic worship, and by refusing to defile themselves with the idolatry rampant under the beast, preserved in virgin purity their testimony to God as the object alone of worship.

Mount Zion is yet to be the joy of the whole earth; and the place of God’s

habitation, the hill of grace, where mercy rejoiced against judgment (1. Chron. 22. 21). On this hill the Lamb will stand in association with 144,000, having “His name, and the name of His Father,” inscribed on their foreheads. These are they who will refuse allegiance to the beast; neither forehead nor hand will be soiled by his number, name, or mark; here they have imprinted on them an outward and visible token of their fidelity to God and the Lamb. Although they form no part of the church, nor participate in heavenly blessing, they have bestowed upon them a place of special nearness to the Lamb. They follow Him whithersoever He goeth, in the palmy days of the kingdom, as they did in the day of His rejection. They are the “purified, made white and tried,” of Daniel 12. 10, who are preserved for blessing at the end of 1335 days, and among the “third part brought through the fire” whom the Lord will own as “My people” (Zech. 13. 9).

THE MARTYRED SINGERS.

In chapter 15. 2 we behold their brethren, who had paid the death penalty and passed by a martyr’s pathway to heaven. Standing on a “sea of glass mingled with fire.” This sea indicates the fiery trial they had passed through in gaining the victory over the beast. Their sorrows ended they now sing the “song of Moses” and the “song of the Lamb.” Both the songs of Moses celebrate deliverance from oppression, and judgment on the oppressor. Exodus 15. is retrospective. It recounts the overthrow of Pharaoh and his pursuing host. Deuteronomy 32. 41 is prospective.

It looks onward to the day of which this song speaks, when the Lord will whet His glittering sword, take vengeance on His enemies, and deliver His suffering people in the darkest hour of their chequered history. The Lamb who died is here celebrated as their Deliverer.

Theirs is a warrior song. It justifies the governmental ways of the Lord God Almighty; celebrates His wonderful works, and contemplates the time when the whole world shall bow in fear and homage at the feet of the King of Nations—not "saints." How will this be accomplished? Through judgment. That which grace failed to bring about the rod of iron will produce. (Isa. 26. 9).

The martyred company in heaven strike the note, like the onrush of waters over a cataract; and the deep bass of rolling thunder, the volume of song travels from heaven to earth. Their brethren on earth take up the refrain, learn the song, and join in the loud chorus. It is "a new song." It is suited to a special class of sufferers who are "bought from the earth." No others could learn that song, for no others ever have been, or will be, in like circumstances. The "new song" in chapter 5. celebrates redemption by blood, the burden of the "new song" here is deliverance by power.

How varied will be the doxologies of that glorious millennial morn! Psalm 148. commences with heaven bursting forth in praise, and then widening out in ever-expanding circles until everything that hath breath will praise the Lord. Creation delivered from the bondage of corruption; white-robed Gentiles, gathered Israel, kings and princes, young men and maidens, old men and children will swell the loud chorus on earth; whilst the glorified church, angelic hosts, and living creatures above will unite in one loud, harmonious burst of praise to God and the Lamb. The notes in heaven and on earth, though varied, will all be in perfect accord, and combined produce melody such as this world has never

known (Ps. 150.). This chapter is anticipatory and parenthetical. It is a summary of events which are detailed elsewhere.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

After the song we read of the "Everlasting Gospel." We understand this expression to mean that good news which creation continuously proclaims of the power, glory, and goodness of God toward His creatures. Rain and fruitful seasons speak of His goodness (Acts 14. 17). The heavens declare His glory (Ps. 19. 1, 2). All creation His deity (Rom. 1. 20). Day and night this "everlasting witness" proclaims the good news of an invisible God, made manifest in a visible creation; filling men's "hearts with food and gladness."

Other gospels have intervened, but their good news have not been continuous. Even the gospel now preached of grace and glory will cease, but to earth's remotest bound, this ever goes on, "day unto day uttereth speech" (Ps. 19. 2). Here a messenger in mid-heaven, voicing the language of creation, calls upon all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to fear, worship, and give glory to the *Maker* of heaven, earth, sea, and fountains of water. Not willing that any should perish, this universal call goes forth from a faithful Creator. It is the closing message to men universally in view of coming wrath. A proclamation that the happiness and blessing of the creature is only found in subjection and obedience to His maker. It enjoins holy reverence, coupled with that fear of evil, which is not only the beginning of wisdom, but is "clean, enduring for ever"; and acknowledges that "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19. 9).

Jonah announced the doom of Nineveh. Kings, nobles, and people, covered with sackcloth, turned from their evil way, and experienced God's gracious deliverance from impending judgment—their "much cattle" were also thought of by their Creator (Jonah 4. 11). Revelation 11. 18 and 19. 5 seem

to intimate that as a result of this testimony many will "fear God" and join in the praises of the millennial day.

The gospel of the kingdom is another form of this gospel. It seeks the restoration of the creature to allegiance to the Creator under the Son of Man—who will have dominion over the works of God's hands according to Psalm 8. His kingdom glories will be preached by His "brethren" after the flesh on the mountains of Israel, and among the Gentiles, before and after the Lord is on Mount Zion (Isa. 52. 7, 66. 19).

THE BLESSING OF THE FAITHFUL.

The fall of Babylon follows, but its details are given later. After that is the solemn warning of God to all who receive the mark of the beast, or who bow in worship to his image. Unmixed wrath should be their portion, torment for ever and ever, without rest day or night, in the presence of the holy angels, who should thus witness God's detestation of all false worship. In view of this the suffering saints are called upon to exercise faith, and patiently endure their terrible sufferings at the hand of the beast. Even should they be slain, they should in no wise lose blessing, for instead of an earthly portion they are immediately blessed in a heavenly way—"from henceforth." Their labours and sorrows over, their works follow *with* them, from that moment blessing is theirs. It is ever true that immediate blessing is the portion of those who die in the Lord. But even they have not entered into all that God has purposed. They wait for their glorified bodies, when they will be fully conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8.). Here it is a special promise to those looking for kingdom blessing on the earth, and the well done of the Master they had sought to serve. Many of these will be slain. This is a gracious assurance that they will not lose by this, but will find thrones in heaven awaiting them (Rev. 20. 4). They will participate in the first resurrection, and their works follow with them.

THE WRATH OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

Next we read of the harvest and the vintage. The harvest is a discriminating judgment, severing the tares from the wheat. The Son of Man, seated on a white cloud, a golden crown on His head, sickle in hand reaps the harvest and garners the grain. Then, from that altar which men had despised and trodden under foot, fire is taken, and another angel is bidden to thrust in his sickle and reap the vine of the earth and cast it into the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. This judgment, beginning at the City, extends for 1600 furlongs—reaching from Dan to Beersheba. The whole land will experience the terrible judgment inflicted on the beast and his armies.

The harvest and vintage connected in Joel 3. 13 have separate features in Matthew 13. 36, 42, but whilst the harvest shows companies, part of which are swept away in judgment, whilst others are preserved, the vintage knows no such distinction. A vine represents a corporate system. Israel was a wholly right seed, but had degenerated into a strange vine. Here the "vine of the earth" stands for the system of false religion propagated by the two beasts. It represents the sum total of those who worshipped his image. These are dealt with in unsparing judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat, cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God, trodden down by those Feet of burning brass. The land stained with the blood of the Lamb, will be stained with a torrent of blood flowing from His enemies, reaching to the bridles of the horses, so vast is the carnage.

Would that Israel had known the time of her visitation, when those weary feet carried the message of salvation, even to Samaria's daughter at Sychar's well, or the Gentiles later, when "beautiful feet" carried the gospel of salvation to them. Only those who had heard and obeyed will be preserved in the day the Lord will tread the winepress alone, and trample in fury all who have refused to obey the call to "fear God and give glory to Him."

Studies in the Psalms—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 78. 79.

THE writer of Psalm 78. is referred to in Matthew 13. 35 as "the prophet," and verse 2 there cited affords an indication that we should look for a parabolic and mystic interpretation of the long history given in the verses which follow. A cursory reading would not suggest this, as we find only a plain account of God's ways with His people and their ways with Him, from their slavery in Egypt to the reign of David. Underlying the history, however, a distinct line of the Spirit's testimony may be traced which is of all importance to present, hence the call to hear in verse 1, and the emphasis laid on the need of continuity in this ministry, "that the generation to come might know" (ver. 6), in order that "their hope might be in God," and that they should not be as their fathers, "a stubborn and rebellious generation," but receiving the record of His praise, power and wonderful works, they might honour Him (ver. 4).

The solution of "the dark saying" begins to unfold in verse 9, "the children of Ephraim, armed bowmen, turned back in the day of battle." Now Ephraim was the tribe which possessed the valued privilege of the birthright, see 1 Chronicles 5. 1, 2 and Genesis 48. 19, but as Reuben had lost his place through sin, so if Ephraim were placed under responsibility to maintain it by their own excellence the same loss might be entailed, and this is what the Psalm describes, until finally in verse 67 we read: "He abhorred the tent of Joseph and chose not the tribe of Ephraim." This tribe may then be taken to represent man in privilege with his trial and failure, the result showing how impossible it is for the legal system to secure lasting blessing for the fallen creature; the old verdict remains true: "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually" (Gen. 6. 5).

This is amply witnessed in the succeeding history, which is given in detail and also in summary in verses 34-39. With all the power of God available on behalf of His people, this breakdown only becomes more complete until choosing idolatry in His place we read in verse 59: "He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel." His anger is spoken of previously in verse 21 as moved, because of the people's doubt of His ability to maintain them in the wilderness after having brought them there by so striking an exhibition of divine power. So grievous is this character of unbelief in His eyes and yet how little is it considered as sin in ours!

Another point of some practical importance may here be noticed; as we have just seen, the occasion of God's turning from the place and tribe first selected, as given to us in the Psalm, was their idolatry. In the history in 1 Samuel the connection is with the presumptuous sin of the introduction of the ark of the covenant into the camp, under the care of the sons of Eli, who were the ringleaders in the sin of the people. This was to attach the name of the Holy One of Israel to the people in their sin without the smallest sign of repentance. Would His power be exercised on their behalf in their then state? The answer is not uncertain. The tent, the ark, the people and the priests are at once allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy. Had Israel been victorious Jehovah's holy name would have been identified with the people's sin, and we should note how it is written "He delivered" and "He gave," so that it was no power of the Philistine army, but God's own deliberate act, showing how He disowned His connection with the people in their sin, until a repentance, like that so touchingly expressed in Hosea 6, should be brought to pass

In the meantime He knows how to maintain testimony to Himself while the ark is in the Philistines' land. By the fall of their fish-god and their own affliction, "He put them to a perpetual reproach."

So far we have only seen the failure of man placed under responsibility to secure his own blessing, but this is only half of the parable of our prophet. In verse 65, the scene suddenly changes, and divine power not only deals with the Philistines, but grace is active towards His saints, and He chooses Judah, Mount Zion and David. Apart from this electing grace, it is clear all would have been lost, for no dealings of God had awakened any response to His just claims. Now if blessing was to come to any, it must depend on the grace of an Almighty Giver, not on the deeds of a failing and ruined creature. Even as to David himself—so far as he was under responsibility he failed, and the books of Jeremiah, Lamentations and of Ezekiel tell of the defection and removal of his descendants, so that we must look to Another of his line to whom the Spirit directs us: "Behold My Servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth"; so Paul tells us it is in Christ risen that the sure mercies of David are established, Acts 13. 34, just as it is in Him that the Christian finds his place in the line of grace and purpose, "if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise."

This completes the parable of Asaph the prophet, which, after teaching us the all-important lesson of the failure of the "man of dust," leads us to place our "hope in God," verse 7, as the One who has a Man in reserve fully competent to bring to pass all His counsels, first in laying the foundation

by sacrifice, and then by means of almighty power. The last verse beautifully indicates how that power is exercised now: "So He fed them according to the integrity of His heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of His hands."

Psalm 79 reminds us of Psalm 74, where the power of the same foe was employed in the destruction of the temple; here the distress of the writer is expressed because of the slaughter of the people of God. Its place in the Psalter is determined by the contrast presented to Psalm 78, where we have traced the disastrous consequences of connecting the Holy Name of God with the people in their sin. He refuses such association and gives them up to their enemies. Their impiety, and, above all, their impenitence, precluded the display of His power on their behalf. Psalm 79 is the converse of this, and teaches us how, in the fear of God and the confession of sin (ver. 8), faith can rightly claim the help of God under the plea of the glory of His name, and seek pardon for His name's sake (ver. 9, cf. Isaiah 43. 25), because He is good and has been revealed to them as "the God of our salvation."

The immense value and importance of learning prayer in this character should be evident; in spite of being brought very low (ver. 8), faith reaches God and brings Him into the scene of conflict, and abstaining from all fleshly activity the believer is taught to leave Him room to work for His own glory and name's sake. A further reason for divine intervention is given in verse 11, "the sighing of the prisoner"; the Spirit thus reminds the suppliant of the first dealing of Jehovah with the nation in Egypt, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people and have heard their cry" (Exodus 3. 7).

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

Answers to Correspondents.

The Holy Spirit before Pentecost.

M. J. H. asks: Will you explain the following passages relative to the truth that the Holy Spirit did not dwell in God's people until Pentecost? "He dwelleth with you" (John 14. 17); "The Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify" (1 Peter 14. 17).

Every operation of God from the beginning whether in creation or in men was done by the Holy Ghost. This operation was especially notable in the prophets who foretold the sufferings and glory of Christ; this must be evident, for none but God could have foretold these things. The Spirit wrought in these holy men; He set them apart for Himself, brought them under His own influence and put His words into their minds and empowered them to write them. It was in this sense that He was *in them*, and He might be said to be *with them* also, for God was with them, He preserved them from the abounding corruption and made them bold in their testimony for Him. In the case of the disciples whom the Lord addressed in John 14. this was more particularly so, for Christ Himself was with them and in Him the power and character of the Holy Spirit was fully manifest—like a dove He had come upon the Lord, so that not only had they the company of the Son

of God, but of the Holy Spirit through Him, and, indeed, of the Father also. But from Pentecost onward things were greatly different; the people of God were to be no longer under His influence, merely, and moved by Him to certain works, as in the Old Testament days; *nor was He to be with them only*, but He was to dwell definitely *in them*, so that now the bodies of those who believe are the temple of God—God's dwelling-place (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20). It is a personal dwelling—God the Spirit dwells in the saints below, just as truly as the Lord Jesus sits in His Father's throne; He has identified Himself completely with them, so that they cannot be separated from Him nor He from them. He is in them, but they are also in Him, and He is life within them (Rom. 8.). And thus dwelling in all believers He forms them into one body (1 Cor. 12. 13) and makes them the habitation of God (Eph. 2. 22). These things were not true of the Old Testament saints.

The Plagues in Egypt.

A. F. asks, Why Israel was exempted from the nine plagues in Egypt, but were involved in the tenth, from which they were only saved by the precious blood of the Lamb?

The first nine plagues fell upon the Egyptians because of their defiance of God; for this defiance every natural element became a plague to them, and the things that they looked to for nourishment and support, which were God's mercies really, yielded death and disease and terror. God sought in this way in mercy to them to bring them to acknowledge His power, and the justice of His claim, which they refused to do. Israel was not involved in this defiance. But the tenth plague went further. The

defiance of the Egyptians arose from their sinful state, from what they were in themselves, and the tenth plague—that of death—came upon them because of this, and when this question was raised Israel had to learn the solemn truth that "there is no difference"; and that if they were to be saved from the judgment that fell in all its severity upon Egypt, it could only be through redemption by the blood of a spotless victim—a striking type of our redemption through the blood of Christ.

The "Together-ness" of God's Family.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves TOGETHER, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—(Heb. 10. 25).

"For where two or three are gathered TOGETHER in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—(Matt. 18. 20).

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell TOGETHER in unity!" (Ps. 133. 1).

"With one mind striving TOGETHER for the faith of the gospel."—(Phil. 1. 27).

WE may, perhaps, not have realized that, just as a register of the children's attendance is kept at a public school, so God keeps a register in heaven in which He records the gatherings together of His children on earth, and who they are who so gather to speak of Him and to think on His name. That remarkable passage, Malachi 3. 16, certainly teaches us this: "*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.*" And it is evidently a cause of delight to Him also to see His own gather together, else why should He add, "*And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*" How profoundly it should affect us to know that every time His children meet together to speak of Him, it delights His heart; that He counts it as a service to Himself that only a son can render to a father, and that a register of attendance is kept in a book that is written before Him. We ought, surely, to be very ambitious to please Him in this respect and to have full attendance marks in His book of remembrance.

But that which pleases Him is a joy also to His children, for they are above all things gregarious in their desires and habits; that is, if they are in vigorous spiritual health and are not backsliders. They do not love a solitary path, they must have the companionship of others who are also of God's family. It is one of the chief characteristics of their nature, and in this way God's will for

His people and their desires are in perfect accord.

This love of the companionship of the brethren is shown strikingly in the life of Paul, in whom every thought of God for a saint and servant on earth was delineated. In all his missionary journeys in the Acts he was accompanied by one or more fellow-helpers, and when the brethren sent him to Athens to escape the persecutions of the Jews he sent a command to Silas and Timotheus to come to him with *all speed*; he did not wish to be alone (Acts 17.). On another occasion he wrote, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee" (2 Tim. 4.). And when he was forsaken by all for one brief hour, as he stood in the very jaws of the lion, he records the fact as though it cost him poignant grief, though he was able also to bear witness to the Lord's sustaining presence and delivering power.

It is when the divine life begins to decline and the love of the world displaces love to the brethren that saints lose their taste for each other's company. A shepherd knows that something is wrong with the sheep that isolate themselves from the flock. It was because this decline was showing itself amongst the Hebrew saints that the Holy Ghost exhorted them not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but to exhort one another, and so much the more as they saw the day approaching (Hebrews 10. 25).

It is not the will of God that His children should walk alone; He has set them in His family, and His will for them is that they should know the

blessedness of family life. If we hold fast to our assembling together, because we know that it pleases Him to have us do so, we shall soon discover what joy and help it yields, and we shall count it a positive deprivation when we are hindered from so doing.

There are those, invalids, aged people, and mothers of large families and others,

who cannot, or who are able only rarely to, gather together with those that fear the Lord, and He can and will make up to such what they lose, for He "despiseeth not His prisoners" (Ps. 69.), but for the rest Hebrews 10. 25 is imperative; and may we so assemble that Psalm 133. may be true of us: "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*"—(Ed.)

The Lord's Supper and the Traitor.

THE question has often been asked as to whether Judas was at the table on the institution of the Supper—this is open to discussion and we do not pronounce upon it here—but what is of greater importance to us is the fact that the traitor is still here. It is notable that both in Luke 22. and 1 Cor. 11., in which passages alone the perpetuation of the supper is enjoined, the traitor is mentioned. "But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table" (Luke 22. 21), and "The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread" (1 Cor. 11. 23). This linking up of the Supper with the betrayal is of the utmost importance. It brings into striking contrast the untrustworthiness and absolute evil of the flesh and the changeless, unconquerable love of the Lord, which was tested and proved by His death, of which the Supper is a constant reminder. So long as the Lord's Supper is eaten for a remembrance of Him by His saints upon earth, so long will the traitor be here, for it is the presence of the traitor—the evil flesh which is still within every one of us—that in one sense makes the perpetuation of the Supper a necessity.

It was the man of the flesh-nature that spat in the face of the Lord; it was the

man of the same genus, though one who walked in ostensible communion with the Lord, who sold Him for the price of a slave, even before Satan entered him in order to energize him for the last terrible traitor-kiss. Let us not suppose that the flesh in Judas was worse than the flesh in others. That which is born of the flesh is flesh—and in him we do but see it fully developed in evil, and become the ready tool of the devil. We once had our part with that man of treachery and shame; we belonged to the same order, for we were "in the flesh," and were "the servants of sin," but by the death of Jesus we have been set free, so that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit;—we are in Christ, for if any man be in Christ there is a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17). But the flesh remains in us, the traitor is still there, capable of producing the same works as were seen in Judas if allowed to work without restraint; and we, seeing its evil character, must refuse to yield to it. We are to place no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice in Christ Jesus whose love led Him into death for us, and will never decay. The Supper brings freshly and constantly to our minds that love of Christ, so strong and true and worthy of trust. (Ed.)

"Let us therefore come boldly" (Heb. 4. 16). The throne of grace is open; the scope for petitions unlimited, save by our want of faith; and the promises are sure.

God's Chief Desire.

(H. P. BARKER).

Talks on the Tabernacle.—No. 1.

EXODUS XXV.

IN order to understand the typical significance of the tabernacle, its hangings, its furniture and the services connected with it, we must let our minds travel forward into the glorious future, and dwell a little upon the wonderful purposes of God.

It has been His gracious desire to dwell among men. Though surrounded by thousands of sinless and mighty angels His heart has gone out to His rebellious creature, man, and He formed the design of dwelling among them (Ps. 68. 17, 18).

It must, however, be quite clear to every thoughtful mind that God could find no joy in surrounding Himself with men who were still rebels. And since the very mind of man is enmity against God (Rom. 8. 7), we can understand the succeeding statement (in ver. 8) that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." He can find no pleasure in men, alienated as they are from Him in their minds, and dominated by the power of evil.

How could He, when men are "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing . . . that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1. 29-32). Certainly in men to whom such a terrible description applies God can have no delight. Nor could He tolerate them in His holy presence.

Yet, in spite of this, He has not abandoned His gracious design to dwell

among men, and to surround Himself with things that are agreeable to Him, things of spiritual excellence, produced by His own work in those very men.

How God's Desire will be Realized.

The first great step taken by God for the accomplishment of His purpose was to introduce into the world a different kind of Man—One in whom He could find unmingled joy. This Man, His own beloved Son, was here as the object of God's profound delight. All that God looked for in man was found to perfection in Him. Every spiritual excellence was there. *All the qualities that will fill the wide universe of glory were seen in Christ on earth.*

The next great step was that by His death upon the cross, a judicial end was brought upon the kind of man that had become obnoxious to God on account of sin. Man after that order came under God's unsparing judgment.

Next, Christ was raised from among the dead, and now *that same Jesus* who was everything that God wanted man to be on earth, is in glory, and all the excellence that was seen in Him *here*, is in Him *there*.

Following upon Christ's resurrection, the Holy Spirit has come down, not only that by His power men should be born again, but that He might work to produce in them those excellent things that characterized Christ when on earth; in other words, *to form Christ in them* (Gal. 4. 19).

Christ, thus produced in the saints by the work of the Spirit, is the material out of which the new universe will be formed and which will make the whole scene suited to be the dwelling-place of God. What will surround Him in that eternal day will be really Christ,

Christ displayed in His saints. Not one little bit of Christ that has ever been produced in any saint, however feeble and ignorant he may be, will be lost. Treasured up against "that day," it will be found in display, for Christ's glory and the delight of God Himself. And in a universe thus characterized and filled with *Christ*, God will rest eternally, and find His unspeakable joy.

The Materials.

Such thoughts as these come before us as we read the opening verses of Exodus 25., a chapter which has been spoken of as "the most important chapter in the books of Moses." In verse 8 we have the desire of God plainly stated. His people, redeemed from Egypt, and established in relationship with Himself upon that basis, were to make Him a sanctuary that He might dwell among them.

The materials out of which the "sanctuary" was to be made were to be the voluntary offerings of the children of Israel, given willingly with the heart. In like manner all that will form the material of God's eternal dwelling-place, "the vast universe of bliss," as a well-known hymn describes it, is contributed by His people, that which has been wrought in their hearts and produced in their lives by the Holy Spirit. Let us consider these various materials in order (Exod. 25. 3-7).

GOLD. This is an emblem of God's divine and unsullied *righteousness*; not so much His righteousness in meeting and dealing with His creature's sin, but that which is intrinsically and essentially His. True, He clothes us with it, and makes us, in Christ, the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5. 21). And this is the first great element in the scene of bliss and glory where God will dwell.

"God's righteousness, with glory bright,
Which with its radiance fills that sphere."

SILVER is connected in Scripture with the thought of *redemption*, and serves to remind us that what will forever minister to the joy of God will be the fruit, not of a mere act of creatorial power, but of the work of redemption accomplished by Christ. All will be established on that foundation, the results of the atoning work of the cross.

BRASS sets forth the righteousness of God, not in its intrinsic character, but in connection with sin, and God's way of dealing with it, whether in *judgment* (compare Rev. 1. 15) or in such a way as to bring *blessing* to man as the result (compare Num. 21. 9).

BLUE is the heavenly colour. The Lord Jesus was here as the heavenly Man (1 Cor. 15. 47), and those associated with Him no longer belong to the earth, for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (ver. 48). And in the day of glory, everything will be governed and coloured by the heavenlies.

PURPLE is the colour of Gentile, or imperial, sovereignty; and **SCARLET** that of Jewish royalty, and perhaps of human glory. Both belong to Christ.

FINE LINEN is of exceptional interest, being interpreted in Revelation 19. 8 as the righteousness of saints. (It is better to read it "righteousnesses of saints," for the word is in the plural.) In contrast with the gold, which stands for divine righteousness, the fine linen is used as a symbol of that which is produced by the work of God in the saints. It is all of Himself, for He works in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure (Phil. 2. 13).

We find the two things mentioned in the description of the bride's dress in Psalm 45.: "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought **GOLD**" (ver. 13). Then, "She shall be brought unto the king in *raiment of needlework*" (ver. 14). This answers to the "fine linen." The gold is that which is essential and proper to the place. One could not

conceive of the place of God's presence as lacking in that which the gold represents. It would be impossible. The fine linen, on the other hand, is connected with the presence there of the saints: Christ's bride. It is, as it were, her wedding-dress. But it is hers for Eternity, the precious fruit of Christ's grace and the Holy Spirit's work.

GOATS' HAIR is not so easy to interpret, but it has, with a measure of probability, been taken as signifying the perfect purity of Christ, that holy separation from evil that ever marked Him.

RAMS' SKINS DYED RED. The ram was the animal chosen for the consecration offering, at the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for the priestly office. It is called "the ram of the consecration" (Exod. 29. 27). The significance, therefore, would be entire consecration, devotedness even unto death; this latter being emphasized by the fact of the skins being *dyled red*. The precious devotedness of Jesus, seen so perfectly in His pathway of obedience, and in His death, will ever be before the eye and heart of God. In measure it has been seen also in many of His saints, whom His grace has enabled to pursue the path of devotedness and consecration to the will of God, even though that path has led them to the Inquisition dungeon, the rack, and the fiery stake.

BADGERS' SKINS. We judge from the place assigned to this material in connection with the tabernacle, that it has been rightly interpreted as signifying the holy vigilance of Christ, which made Him absolutely impenetrable to evil of any kind. The glorious rest of God, His eternal dwelling-place, will likewise be protected from all possibility of defilement.

SHITTIM WOOD, the incorruptible wood that grew in the desert, is an apt symbol of the holy humanity of the Lord Jesus, seen here in a wilderness world, but wholly untainted by it. Though born of a woman, He was unique in His manhood. Through the mighty

operation of the Holy Ghost He was brought into the world. Of none other but He could it be said that he "*became* flesh." In Him all that God desired to see in man was perfectly set forth; that complete dependence on and confidence in Him that are the glory of a man were what marked His beloved Son in His pathway here, every step of the way.

OIL FOR THE LIGHT would symbolize the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit; THE ANOINTING OIL, and THE SWEET INCENSE for which spices were to be offered, speak of that enduement with the Holy Spirit that will enable every participator in the glory of the new heavens and the new earth to enter intelligently and appreciatively into the mind of God with regard to it all, and particularly with regard to Christ.

The ONYX STONES, and other precious stones for use in the high priest's ephod and breastplate, set forth the priestly service of Christ. Just as He is the Upholder of all things in the present physical universe (Heb. 1. 3), so throughout eternity He will be the One who shall sustain "all things" in everlasting harmony with the nature and purpose of God. His priesthood is not merely to meet us in our need, to succour and save His way-worn saints, but to maintain them according to the thought of God, and thus provide an adequate response on the part of man to God's love and counsels of blessing. In eternity His priesthood will have a wider range, for "*all things*"—things in heaven and things on earth—will be maintained by Him in relation to God in such a way as to glorify God infinitely.

It will be a *Man* who shall effect this, the blessed Son of God. He who knows so well all the counsels of the Father's heart, and has disclosed them as no other could, is Himself, as Man, the infinitely perfect response to those counsels, and in this He associates with Himself not only those who stand in closest relationship to Himself, but the whole universe of bliss,

Christ, the Builder of the Assembly.

(G. J. STEWART).

OUR subject is, Christ, the Builder of God's House; a subject of the utmost importance to every Christian. The great truth that God desired to have a house—a dwelling-place with men, comes out very early in the history of men; the first mention of it is to be found in Genesis 28. 10-22. Let us consider its development from thence onward, until He came, who could build it upon an impregnable foundation. In that scripture we learn the most elementary idea of the house of God, and the first man that *proposed* to build it.

The Heir to the Promises said: "I will build."

What Jacob saw in his dream evidently conveyed to his mind the house of God, the place where heaven and earth would be in communication with each other. There was a ladder set up on earth whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended upon it. When Jacob awoke, we do not wonder that he said, "*How dreadful is this place!* this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." His very name means "crooked," and he was a fugitive from the land of the promises, because of his crooked ways at a place called Luz (that is, bent or crooked). Yet God stood at the head of the ladder, and unconditionally renewed and confirmed to him the promises which He had made to Abraham; suggesting also to him that the house of God should be built, and communication between earth and heaven known in it. This place was afterwards named "Bethel," which is—"the house of God."

But Jacob did not build the house of God; he could not. His whole thought was concerned with himself—his food, and raiment, and safety. If God would give him these, then should that spot be God's house, so he vowed, for he evidently felt that the heir to the

promises should prepare a habitation for his God who had made the promises. God brought him back to Bethel, and there he reared an altar and called it El-Bethel (God of the house of God), and there he set up a pillar of stone, and poured a drink offering thereon, and poured oil thereon; but he did not build the house. The first man who said, "I will build," failed to accomplish the thought of God, even though he was an heir to the promises and the object of God's constant care.

Redeemed Israel said: "I will build."

God delivered His people out of Egypt's bondage, and as they stood on the wilderness bank of the Red Sea they sang the magnificent song of Exodus 15. These were the descendants of Jacob, whose name had been changed to that of Israel (a prince with God), and as they realize the greatness of God's redemption they stand and say, "I will build." It was quite right for them to say it. They knew something more of God than Jacob did. They knew in figure what redemption was. Now, if it be necessary that man should build the house of God, and that man the heir to the promises, another necessity is that redemption should be accomplished. For man, being in a lost and fallen condition and in bondage to Satan, of whom Pharaoh was a figure, could not meet God in any house unless he were redeemed.

But another thought is in this chapter (v. 17). It is, God will build. His hands will establish His sanctuary. Man cannot build without God, and God the Redeemer will surely build His sanctuary, the place where He reveals Himself, according to His own designs. The upshot of Israel's desire to build was, that certain men inspired by God builded a tabernacle, but it was altogether a temporary thing, and eventually it waxed old and faded away. There

was no perpetuity in it. It was but a second failure; yet it was a parable of the house which should abide for ever.

The King said : " I will build."

David said in Psalm 132. : " I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." He also tells those about him how he wanted to build, but was not allowed. God said: "Thou shalt not build because thou hast been a man of war and hast shed blood " (1 Chron. 28. 3). He could not build, although he was king. Here then we have another feature. The builder of God's house must be a king. Now though God prohibited David from building, He said, " But Solomon shall build " (ver. 6) ; and Solomon did finally build the temple, which was also but temporary, and was afterwards destroyed because of the iniquity of the people.

But the king who built the temple was told that, king though he was, he could not build without God, for David warns Solomon that, " Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it " (Ps. 127. 1). God must build; though He does not set the builders entirely aside, but uses men also to carry on the building down here, as we shall see. The city is also mentioned in this Psalm, showing the connection between the house and the city.

The Priest-King : " He shall build."

The Builder is pointed out in another Old Testament scripture: " Behold the man whose name is *THE BRANCH* ; and He shall grow up out of His place and He shall build the temple of the Lord " (Zech. 6. 12). Joshua, to whom this announcement was made, was the priest, and the builder of the house of God must be priest as well as king. He must be the priest-king. " Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel

of peace shall be between them both " (Zech. 6. 13).

In these passages we learn all that the builder must be: He must be man heir to the promises, He must be God, the Redeemer, and the Priest-King, able to bear the glory and be the peace. But who is able to embody all these? We have gone far enough in the subject for every heart that knows the Lord to answer. It is He of whom Peter said: " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." All those who said they would build were unable to, but eventually the Father points out the Man who should build, Christ, the Son of the living God. In Matthew 16. we have the Man before us—Immanuel, God with us. Truly the greatest sign God ever gave. Yet the people rejected Him.

Christ, the Son of the Living God, said: " I will build " (Matt. 16. 18).

There was omnipotence in His word, " I will build." And He builds upon the impregnable Rock, the substance of Peter's confession. That is to say, He Himself is the Rock, as He Himself is the Builder. The Builder must be a man. JESUS IS MAN. The Builder must be God. JESUS IS GOD. The Builder must have accomplished redemption's work. JESUS IS REDEEMER. He died and rose again. He began to build after He was risen from the dead. The Builder must be King. JESUS IS KING; The Messiah of Israel. The Builder must be Priest. JESUS IS THE GREAT PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD. All that is required is found in this blessed Man, and over and above all that, He is the Son over God's house, to maintain the order of it and to be in it the Object of adoration and praise throughout eternity, jointly with the Father, and will anything prevail against His work? Nothing! When Christ went down into the grave, the gates of hades could not prevail against Him. All the power of the Roman Empire, and all the devil's power and the Jews' hatred and wickedness, could not

hold Him in the grave, nor could His people's sins; He burst the bands of death. He said: "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." He rose from the dead triumphant, and the angel came down and rolled away the stone to let His people see that He was out of the grave, proof that redemption's work was accomplished. Now, if the gates of hades could not prevail against Him, neither will they prevail against that which He builds; that is what He says here: "I will build My assembly, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it."

The Material with which Christ builds.

Another scripture shows us the material with which Christ builds. "To whom coming, a living Stone . . . ye also, as living stones, are being built up, a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2. 4, 5). The force of the word here is, *are being built up*. These stones do not put themselves into the building, Christ is the Builder by the Holy Spirit; it is a spiritual house, all of Christ and the Spirit. How do people become living

(To be continued.)

Unity and Peace.

THE unalterable truth of God is this: "There is *one* body and *one* Spirit, as ye have been called in *one* hope of your calling" (Eph. 4. 4). The unity of the Spirit *is*. We have not to make it. Indeed, we could not, for it is the unity of *the Spirit*. We are, however, to use diligence to keep it, in the divinely ordered way, in the uniting bond of *peace*. We are to diligently pursue *peace* with all, that the unity of the Spirit, constituted in that way which is permanently true, may be practically manifested as the truth. Holiness is necessarily to be pursued as well as peace; but *peace* is essentially the prominent thing in this connection. The opposite has been characteristic in Christendom, but not of the real in the midst of it,

stones? In the same way that Peter became a living stone, by the Father's revelation of Christ to the soul. The Lord said to Peter: "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (Petros, a stone), and upon this rock (Petra) I will build My church." Peter was the subject of divine grace, and he is here viewed as of Christ.

In 1 Peter 1. 23 we read: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." They are born of God, they have an incorruptible nature. They are living stones for this living house. Such are of the material of which the building is to be made. They taste the grace of the Lord and come to Him, the living stone, who is also the Builder of the house, and are built upon Him, the living Stone.

They are a spiritual house, and a holy Priesthood in the house to offer up spiritual (not material) sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Thanksgiving, adoration, praise! This is what God seeks. A kingly Priesthood also (2 Peter 2. 9), who show forth His excellencies who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

for in their very nature as the children of God they love peace, and they are "of the truth."

Nor has this peace to be disturbed by the fact that we are to contend earnestly for the faith *once* delivered to the saints (Jude 3.). This passage has been used to justify contention amongst and *against* saints of God. That is wrong. Jude is exhorting those who are "called" and "beloved" to earnestly contend *together* for and to hold the faith which God had given. And this affords a further cause of unity in the bond of peace, so that we have a double bond, the positive things within, which are our common portion, and the attacks of the enemy without, our common foe.

(H. J. VINE).

Moses and the Critics.

IN Exodus 1. we read, "And they (the Israelites) built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses . . . and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (vers. 11-14).

But this was one of the glaring "mistakes of Moses," according to the critics, for the Egyptians, so they assured us, never used mortar. Then, of course, Moses is not a trustworthy witness, and that wonderful Exodus in which our souls had revelled, because in it we thought we saw the blessedness of redemption portrayed, is discredited by the error of its opening chapter.

So *exeunt* Moses, Exodus, the Pass-over Lamb, and last of all the Lamb of God, for Moses wrote of Him in that same Exodus. And we may be sure that it was at Him, who alone could redeem men from his power, that the devil aimed when he set the critics on this scent and when they discovered that mortar was not used in Egypt.

But the prying spade of the excavator has reopened the case, and reopened it in such a way that Moses has been completely vindicated, and the critics made to appear worse than foolish.

In 1884 excavations were made not far from the famous Tel-el-Kebir by

Neville. He found there the ruins of the treasure-cities of Exodus 1. And massive places they must have been. The walls were about 650 feet square, 22 feet thick, and with partitions from 8 to 10 feet thick. He also discovered that while the religious name was Pithom the secular name was Succoth. So that when it is said that "they took their journey from Succoth," we learn that Israel departed from the very place where they had been working, and not from Goshen, which had been given them for a reserve. And this teaches us, incidentally, that when God redeems a man He brings him straight out of the house of bondage. He does not ask the slave to first loosen his own fetters or cast off part of his own burden, but He strikes off the chains of slavery at once, and by His own power, for He is God.

Neville found that these ruins were built with mortar—the *only ruins so found in Egypt*; and that the bricks were sun-baked; some had been made with straw, some stubble, and towards the top without any straw at all, thus proving the accuracy of the Bible record, not only in regard to the mortar, but also with regard to the material of which the bricks were made. "The people gathered stubble instead of straw," and Pharaoh declared that no straw would be given them (Exod. 5.).

"Thou art my God."

THERE are times in every life when everything seems tottering to its fall. Nothing is fixed, nothing sure; and every new thought brings only another possibility of ill. Times of national crisis, and of commercial panic; times of overwhelming grief. Hopes are all gone. . . . The sick, faint heart sees only desolation everywhere, past all avoidance, past all remedy. Then

blessed is the man who knows what it is to hide himself in God: to come out of the toss of the storm, and to rest in this: "Thou art; Thou art God; Thou art my God." For then can he say, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear . . . For in the time of trouble shall He hide me in His pavilion . . . therefore will I sing unto the Lord."

Our Battle Cry.

(J. T. MAWSON).

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”—(2 Tim. 2. 3.)

“**A** STRANGE languor seems to have come over us which ill becomes those who are called to be soldiers.” Thus wrote a friend to us recently, and we fear that he wrote the truth, not only of those with whom he is familiar, but also of the vast majority of the saints of God. The question is, Is there any remedy, any means by which this languor can be thrown off? In the first case, are we really soldiers? Undoubtedly all who are saved by grace have been called by our Lord so to be. And is the conflict real in which we are called to have part? It is tremendously real, for it is against Satan, the adversary; the powers of darkness, of which he is the leader, and all the wiles and subtleties of which they are the masters. And it is for “the testimony of the Lord;” and for His name and glory, to defeat and tarnish which Satan and the world will use every tactic and weapon that they can invent.

If the opposition were always violently in evidence we might be more on the alert, and less liable to this “strange languor” that so often comes over us, but it is part of Satan’s strategy to lure the warriors by love of the world, and to lull them to sleep. And often, also, the length of the conflict or the strength of the foe makes us weary and discouraged, and so the easy prey of this fatal lethargy of soul. Yes, discouragement is one of the chief causes of this languor.

We need arousing every one of us, we need a fresh call to arms. We need to have revived in the consciousness of our souls the greatness of our cause, and the absolute certainty of the success of it; for if we have any doubt as to this we are defeated and driven from the field e’er we have grasped the sword. We need a battle cry that will stir us to a holy and steadfast enthusiasm. It is in this way alone we believe that we shall

shake ourselves free of this paralysing languor, and as Holy Ghost-possessed men and women fight the good fight of faith.

Think of that band of disciples whose every hope was buried in the grave of their Lord; how disconsolate they were; how unable to do anything but mourn. How could such unnerved and fearful men as they were be brought to face the foe in stern conflict. It seemed an impossibility. But see them at Pentecost and after; what unconquerable courage, what convincing power they possessed. They were greater, these Galilean fishermen, than the great political and religious leaders of the land who were their first opponents. What was it that had produced so extraordinary a change in them, and that carried them, fearless and joyful, into the conflict? It was one tremendous fact that moved and enthused them, and made them the warriors they were, and that fact was **THE RESURRECTION OF THEIR LORD**, whom they feared had gone from them for ever. They knew that He had risen up from the grave with a might that was irresistible; they had looked into that grave, the battle-ground where the great foe had bitten the dust; they could say, the Lord is risen indeed; they had looked into His face, and on His hands and His side; and it was this that had transformed them and made them ready to face a hostile world with a glorious testimony. It was this great fact that made the change in them, and if it lays hold upon us rightly and powerfully in its deep significance it will make a change in us also.

We are not forgetting that the Holy Spirit of God had come to abide in them, or that by His power alone they could witness for Christ; this fact is of immense importance, but, mark it well, His power was with them, as the

triumph of Christ in resurrection was their theme, for He had come to bear witness to this through them.

Timothy was inclined to grow discouraged, so we judge from Paul's second letter to him; and Paul, who had fought the good fight so long, writes to spur him onward; he hands on to him the glorious standard, and raises afresh the old battle cry of the true witness and soldier: "REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST RAISED FROM THE DEAD according to my gospel." He did not say, "Remember that you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit"; this should never be forgotten, and it is a fact that at times needs special emphasis (see 1 Cor. 6.). But here, when it was a question of nerving a feeble arm, and reviving a fainting spirit, and giving a fresh impetus to a languid warrior, it was the resurrection of Jesus Christ that was brought before the soul.

Our Lord is a living Lord. He has said: "Fear not, I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and hell." That is the great outstanding fact of our testimony; that is the pledge that His standard, about which we gather if we are His soldiers, shall be carried to ultimate and everlasting triumph; that is it which gives courage to the breast of the fighter, and makes him joyfully endure hardness as a good soldier, for he knows that his living Lord is with him.

A chief of the Macgregor clan fell wounded in a battle. Seeing their leader down, the clan wavered, and gave the foe an advantage. The old chieftain raised himself up, while the blood streamed from his wounds, and cried:

"I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you to see you do your duty." This roused them to a new energy, and to a great victory. Our great Leader is looking on, not as weak and wounded, but as the mighty Victor over death, alive for evermore. And He not only looks on His beloved soldiers, but as the Captain of the host He is with them. "The Lord stood with me," said the aged warrior Paul, when all his comrades had deserted him—the Lord, risen, triumphant, omnipotent—surely none with whom He is shall ever know defeat. And the risen Lord who is with His soldiers is also the base of their supplies, which supplies can never fail or be intercepted by the foe; thence they are exhorted to "cleave to the Lord" and to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Let us consider it, "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED." Let this not be to us merely part of a creed to which we assent, but a mighty force in our souls. Let us seek to labour and to war in that same power by which He rose, confident that this power is available for us in Him by the Holy Ghost; and in the joy and the courage that knowing Him intimately and personally who is thus risen must give. Let us consider this in God's presence, so that the Holy Spirit may make increasing clear to our souls what it means for God and for us, and so that we, like those warriors of old, may be more truly vessels through whom He can bear witness in the world to this great fact. Let us with renewed energy raise afresh the flag—the testimony of our Lord, and shout afresh the battle cry that must inspire the fainting soldier, and rally the weakening ranks. "REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST RAISED FROM THE DEAD."

"I Will Come Again" (John 14. 3).

A word from the One to all our hearts the dearest,
 A parting word to make Him aye the nearest;
 Of all His precious words, the sweetest, brightest, clearest,
 Is the hope of the coming of the Lord.

Oneness.—No. 1.

(H. J. VINE).

“One in the Father and the Son” (John 17. 21).

IN the heart of every true believer on the Son of God, there is a desire for the manifest oneness of those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ; for the oneness of those who are the love gift of the Father to the Son. That desire will be fully satisfied, for the Son said to the Father, “The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17. 22).

To be without the desire for this oneness is to be without the desire of the divine nature; and to be without that nature is to be without the true knowledge of God; for He that loveth has been begotten of God, and knows God. He that loves not has not known God (1 John 4. 7).

There are those who have this desire, and yet they do not practically seek after it; but in them the word is illustrated, “the soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing.” The desire is right, but it needs to be stirred into sincere and fervent activity, and this the word will do if we give earnest heed to it. “*Beloved, let us love one another: because love is of God.*” If this love for the brethren, for all those who are His, be lacking, how can the assurance and comfort of that other word be ours: “*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren*”? and mark, all of them! not some of them (1 John 3. 14). This love is practical: not in word or in theory only, but “in deed and in truth.” This divine love will find its outlet, not on the low lines of the organizations, unions, or combinations of the world, such can only check and chill it, but according to that which is true, permanently and incorruptibly true.

“The True” and “the Truth.”

The true oneness of the saints must necessarily be according to God, for He

is “*the True.*” The Son, as Man, is “*the Truth,*” for He is the expression of that which is true. As God, He also is spoken of as “*the True*” (1 John 5. 20); as is the Father in John 17. 3; but as Man here below, He perfectly expressed what is true, and is therefore personally “*the Truth.*” The truth, then, is divine, it is entirely of God, the manifestation of Himself, and it must necessarily follow that oneness according to what is true can only be known by us in the power of the Spirit of God. It is by Him that we are set vitally in that which is true.

The Spirit is also spoken of as “*the Truth,*” for He maintains and manifests what is true here below. The Son did that when He was here, but He was rejected, and now the Spirit has come to maintain the truth that the Lord revealed and to bear witness to it; so we read, “the Spirit is the truth” (1 John 4. 6). The oneness, therefore, which is desired by the divine nature, is that which must be according to the Spirit, and according to the Son, that is, according to the truth, the revelation of God. The intercession of the Son with the Father as to our present oneness is—“That they may be ONE IN US” (John 17. 21).

Inclusive and Exclusive.

It is important, in relation to the oneness of the saints of God, to understand the truth of the *one* body; to grasp in faith the fact of it. “There is one body.” This is a fact whether we grasp it or not, but the Holy Spirit has given us the truth of it through Paul, in the scripture, that we might be always kept in the sense of the necessity of every member of the body of Christ, for all are included in the body. Oh! that we may learn deeply and truly this blessed *inclusiveness*. That teaching of *exclusiveness*, which says that certain members are excluded on the principle

of the one body, is not the truth of God. Indeed, it is very serious error. That teaching which maintains that wicked persons (those *characterized* by lawlessness in word or way) are to be excluded from Christian intercourse is according to the truth. The difference between the two is very great. To use the truth of the *one* body for the exclusion of members, is to act ignorantly, to misapply scripture, and to injure the saints. To exclude wickedness and those characterized by it as unsuited to the holiness of God's house, is to obey the Word and to preserve the saints, but for the latter other scriptures are needed.

As to the inclusiveness of the one body, we are told, no member can say to another, "*I have no need of thee*" (1 Cor. 12. 21). Every member is necessary. Exclusion is not to be thought of. "God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to the part that lacked." And the reason for this divine wisdom and care is, "*That there be no division in the body*" (25)! Inclusiveness is the truth here. The teaching of the "*one new man*," and of access to the Father by "*one Spirit*" in Ephesians 2. 15-18 has the same end in view; as also has the fact that we are "joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers" of God's promise in Christ Jesus. Indeed, the very gospel-preaching of Paul was "according to the revelation of the mystery" (Rom. 16. 25); and the right effect of that would bring all the saints "to be *likeminded* one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with *one* accord, with *one* mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore," continues the Apostle, "receive ye one another according as the Christ also has received you to the glory of God" (Rom. 15. 5-7). In this way the oneness becomes practical in the love and grace of the Truth.

For a Day of Failure.

The outward failure and breakdown as to this very truth amongst those who claim to be the church, or of

the church, could not be greater, but it was all foreseen and foretold in the scripture, and provision has been made in view of the failure in the ministry given through John. So that those who are really "of the truth" may be preserved and maintained in fullness of joy, and according to the oneness of which we speak, in spite of the outward breakdown. Whilst calling attention to this precious ministry of those things that abide, we must not allow ourselves to think that there is any lack of harmony with that given by the same Spirit through Paul. He may give prominence to what is forensic, whilst John gives prominence to what is vital; but this latter is found in the epistles of Paul also, though under different figures. It is found, too, in that which was said to Peter in Matthew 16. 18, to which he refers in 1 Peter 2. 5, where Christ's assembly is spoken of as a *spiritual* house, built up with *living* stones. It is a *vital* structure, built upon the Father's revelation of Jesus to the soul, as the Christ the Son of the *living* God. It may be said that this is not corporate as in the epistles of Paul, but simply collective as in John. That does not touch the question of which we speak; for all alike have oneness in view, even if from different aspects.

No outward divisions or separations are seen by John, among the living company of true believers on the Son of God, for whom he writes. His gospel is written that they may have *life* (John 20. 31): his first epistle that they may *know* they have eternal life (1 John 5. 13). He sees *one family*, all loved alike by one Father, indwelt by one Spirit. In the gospel he sees *one flock*, all having eternal life, and all safe in the hand of one Shepherd. The flock is identified with the assembly by Paul's words in Acts 20. 28. It is true that here, as well as in John 10., the Holy Spirit foretells trouble from those who should succeed the apostles. Grievous wolves are spoken of, and also those who would speak "perverted things"; but the one flock, the true assembly, remains.

John 10. tells of *the thief* coming to steal, to kill, and to destroy; but the Shepherd, the Son of God, holds all His own in the hand of omnipotence. Unlike the thief, the good Shepherd came that His sheep might have salvation, liberty, and life abundantly. The *wolf* worries and scatters the precious sheep of Christ, and the *hireling's* heart is on his wages; he cares not for the sheep, and flees when danger comes; but the good Shepherd knows each sheep by name, and He loves each one with so great a love that He laid down His life for the eternal welfare of every one of them. Notwithstanding all the trouble the thief, the hireling, and the wolf cause, the one flock is safe, because it is in His hand, and in the Father's hand; and He has said: "No one *shall* seize them out of My hand," and "No one *can* seize out of the hand of My Father. I and My Father are one." Every sheep is included in that grasp of love and omnipotence. He speaks of inclusive oneness.

Those who are excluded in John's epistle exclude themselves—they *go out*. They apostatize (1 John 2. 11). In the third epistle of John, Diotrephes "*cast out*" the brethren; this treatment was meted out to the best saints. He could only cast out of the assembly where he had usurped the pre-eminence which belongs to Christ; he could not cast them out of that of which we are speaking. But it should be a warning to us to see to it that we have more than mere talk about assembly, which is dangerous; for even in apostolic days the state in this connection could be such that an apostolic communication could be refused; and even apostles themselves: "I wrote something *to the assembly*; but Diotrephes, who loves to have the first place among them, *receives us not*" (3 John 9). Certainly it was the work of an individual whose fleshly pride had made him Satan's tool, and who took and loved the first place among them. It is a significant fact that the only mention of the assembly in John's writings is in connection with this evil

Diotrephesian conduct; doubtless this is to cast us back upon the living and inclusive oneness, to which prominence is given in his ministry by the Holy Spirit. The violent exclusiveness of Diotrephes was evil. It excluded the best. It is therefore said to Gaius: "Beloved, imitate not what is evil, but what is good. He that does good is of God" (11). That is the path which is surrounded by the abiding blessings of God.

"Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord,
And possess in sweet communion,
Joys which earth can ne'er afford."

Christ and Oneness.

Let us consider the way that the Lord takes to gather this well-loved *flock*, this favoured *family*, these sheep of God's pasture, the children of God. First His death was necessary, for only so could He "*gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad*" (John 11. 52). *He died* to bring about this oneness. *He prayed* also for it, when He said to the Father: "That they all may be ONE; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that *they* also may be ONE IN US" (John 17. 21). Terribly backslidden must be the state of any who are marked by cold indifference to this for which the Son of God both died and prayed!

If we love Him, we must love *all* who are His. "He that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen." "Every one that loves Him that has begotten loves also him that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5. 1). Christ loves the assembly, the whole assembly, and the heart which knows this will love that which He loves.

To the facts that Christ died and prayed for this oneness, we must add, *He lives* for it. Because He lives we live also; and John 17. gives us the character of His present living intercession that we may be one. Again, all the members of His body are ministered to from Him, the living Head, and united

together in consequence. Do not let our slackness and indifference to this be excused by the plea, "There can be no failure in regard to the body." For we are warned in Colossians 2. 19 against "not holding fast the Head." Laxity on our side as to this leads to utter failure.

Oneness is in view also in connection with *the Lord's coming again*. He said to the Father as to that longed-for day: "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one, as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one" (John 17. 22, 23). What surpassing greatness! What divine grace and glory shine here! But to what end? Think of the grace and glory of it! "THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE." May

such thoughts and purposes of love stir our hearts, in the deepest depths of their divinely begotten affections. The oneness here spoken of is as sure as Christ's glory is. Nothing can mar it, thank God. It is established in the same glory and in the same love that Christ knows. "Thou hast loved them," He says to the Father, "as Thou hast loved Me."

How can we be indifferent to that for which He went into death, and for which He interceded before the Father, and for which He lives at the right hand of God, and for which He will *come again* that it may be absolute and unbroken for ever for His joy and glory? May we respond to His great grace and love now by seeking after it even here with true purpose of heart.

Roots and Fruit.

ARE we satisfied, any of us, with knowing that the Lord has saved us, and that we are going to heaven presently? There are such Christians, the root of the matter is in them, but they are all root, and something else is wanted besides root. Our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT." Now there

can be no fruit without the root; but who would care to have a garden full of roots that brought forth neither flowers nor fruit! Let us beware, earnestly and continually, that we do not mar "God's husbandry" by being roots of that kind. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." So spake our Lord and Master. May His words affect our souls.

"The Word of the Lord is tried" (Psalm 18. 30.)

COMING from God and conscious of nothing but God's truth, this Bible of ours awaits the progress of all knowledge with calm security. It watches the antiquary ransacking among classic ruins, and rejoices in every medal he discovers, and in every inscription he deciphers; for from that rusty coin, or corroded marble, it expects nothing but confirmations of its own veracity. It is not light but darkness which the

Bible deprecates. It seeks above all things to be tested; for it can stand every test. The devout believer, however, needs not confirmation that the excavator's spade is constantly bringing to light as to the truth of the historical parts of the Word, he has tried and proved for himself the blessedness of that which it reveals, and he can say, "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise."

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Prov. 11. 22).

Christ—Our Refuge.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

THE writer of Hebrews reminds his fellow-Christians from among the Jews, in chapter 6., that they had found a "Refuge," and although deprived of an earthly portion, a bright and blessed hope was to animate them; Jesus in the glory of God! On Him there they were to fix the eye and gaze inside the veil. Their anchor was fixed where no storm could ever disturb its secure hold. He as the Forerunner became the pledge of security for all who were racing to the goal He had reached. The word "refuge" carries our thoughts to God's gracious provision for the man who unwittingly caused the death of his fellow. Paul becomes the anti-type of such a man. He tells us that his murderous course toward Christ and His people was in "ignorance and unbelief," that unwittingly he had been guilty of manslaughter, but had now fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him. And every believer in Jesus has fled to the same perfect refuge.

Security from Condemnation and Death.

The man-slayer remained out of his possession in Canaan until the death of the Priest, and thus forfeited meantime his earthly portion, but his lot was to find a company of Levites, servants of God, who had no inheritance of their own, but whose city was open to welcome every one who fled from the avenger of blood. The first thing that marked the one who had "fled for refuge" was *absolute security from death and condemnation*. Once inside, the avenger of blood was powerless to do him harm. Every charge against him was taken up and met by others, he had only to confide in those who had undertaken his cause. So with the feeblest believer to-day, having repented and turned to God, to all accusations he can reply: "Christ has

died; yea, rather is risen again, God has *justified* me, who then shall condemn?" I can confidently say there is no condemnation for me, for I am in Christ. My Saviour has borne my judgment, I am righteously free, graciously welcomed, eternally secure.

The Object of Priestly Care.

In the second place, the refugee became the *especial object of priestly care*. So with the believer to-day. Christ in His priestly office takes charge of each one, ever living to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, preserving us by ministering the mercy and grace we need, restoring us if we fail as our Advocate. He has not only borne the judgment due to us when He was on the cross, but we are daily and hourly under His care. He is a living Priest, entering into every trial, sorrow, and difficulty of the way, delighting to minister mercy, grace, and help during all this time of need, so that we may not be overcome by the trials and opposition we have to encounter.

Food, raiment, and the recurring daily needs were all provided for by the goodness of God in the city of refuge. These necessary things are peculiarly and especially assured to all who have found a refuge in that city over which Jesus presides. God is the preserver of all men, *specially of those that believe*. Even in providential mercies the believer can count upon "special" care. It is thus the ordinary things of everyday life, such as eating and drinking, become witnesses to God's gracious hand. That is why all food is to be received with thanksgiving; each meal thus forming a precious link with the gracious Provider for all our needs.

A Worshipper and Servant of God.

Then the man-slayer found himself in company with those who were especially

separated from all others, to be wholly occupied with the worship and service of God. He was in higher and holier associations than he could ever have known in the circle with which he was previously connected; where sin abounded grace did much more abound. So with the believer, he has been delivered from this present evil world, his associations are now with the saints of the living God; he is part of the assembly of which Christ is the Head.

Let us cultivate the society of our fellow-Christians, whole-heartedly, who have, like us, fled for refuge to our Lord Jesus Christ. We earnestly press upon

every young Christian, seek the company of God's people, identify yourself with Christ's interests, make that the great business of your life. Safety, security, happiness, care, goodness, preservation, are found alone in abiding under the sheltering care of the great Head of the church. The church cannot preserve us, she is preserved; but as we hold the Head we shall have joyful communion with all who are doing the same. It was not the city but the High Priest who was the real security of the man-slayer; but the moment he entered that city all his interests were there, outside there was death.

Approved Sentiment :

“Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me.”—(Matt. 26. 10).

HER value for the Person of Jesus, so infinitely precious to Mary, made her quick-sighted with respect to that which was passing in His mind. In her eyes Christ was invested with all the interest of His circumstances; and she lavished upon Him that which expressed her affection. Fruit of this sentiment, her action met the circumstances; and, although it was but the instinct of her heart, Jesus gives it all the value which His perfect intelligence could attribute to it, embracing at once the

sentiments of her heart and the coming events.

But this testimony of affection and devotedness to Christ brings out the selfishness, the want of heart, of the others. They blame the poor woman. Sad proof (to say nothing of Judas) how little the knowledge of that which concerns Jesus necessarily awakens suitable affection in our hearts! Judas's heart was the spring of this evil, but the other disciples, not occupied with Christ, fall into the snare. (*J.N.D.*, Syn., p. 180.)

“An Evil Unity.”

ONE of the most deplorable features of modern profession is the way in which the Word of God is refused. It is no longer the platform upon which all who claim to be Christians stand together, for multitudes have substituted for it “the good of humanity,” a platform broad enough to include the Unitarian and the Atheist, anyone, in fact, no matter what his thoughts of Christ may be, so long as he will work in the common cause—the glorification of man. This is a unity indeed, but

it is a unity of the world that crucified the Lord of glory, a fellowship behind which the devil is, and none who are subject to the Lord would be associated with it for the sixtieth part of an hour. “IF ANY MAN LOVE NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (1 Cor. 16. 22), is the solemn declaration at the close of the Epistle, which largely treats on Christian fellowship, and can any who do love Him work in harmony with those who are under God's anathema?

Light for a Dark Day.—No. 1.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy.—Introduction.

EVERY dispensation of God, *i.e.* every special dealing of God with men, ends in failure. Not that there is any failure in the dispensation itself, for the dispensation is of God, and in it lies boundless blessing for man, the creature, were he inclined to submit himself to the terms proposed in the goodness of God, his beneficent Creator. But apart from a work of sovereign grace wrought in the souls of men, they have never even desired to avail themselves of the blessings proposed by the dispensation. Hence, because of what man is, a rebel in mind and heart against his Maker, every dispensation closes in the judgment of those who have been in the privileged sphere, a remnant only being delivered from the wrath which falls upon the mass who refuse to avail themselves of the blessings of the particular dispensation in which they have lived.

The antediluvian world, to whom a way of blessing through sacrifice was intimated, and attested by the altar of Abel, sinned against the precious light, went in the way of Cain, and filled the earth with corruption and violence, until the wickedness of man was such a grief to the heart of God that He repented that He had made him (Gen. 6). A flood of water brought this world to a conclusion, Noah and his house only being saved through the universal deluge.

The Patriarchal dispensation fared no better. It ended in the heirs of promise being found bond-slaves in Egypt, under the tyrannical power of the oppressor Pharaoh. Afar from the land to which God had called Abram, and which He had given him for a possession, his heirs are found toiling in the brick kilns of Egypt.

The dispensation of law, which began at Sinai, comes to no better end than others. The protomartyr, Stephen,

sums up the iniquity of that people in these terrible words: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcized in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7). In the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, a portion of that judgment, which has yet to be poured out in full measure upon that privileged people, was executed.

The coming dispensation, the reign of Christ, though nothing will fail in His hands, will end like all the others. During that reign of righteousness the devil will be bound in the Abyss, and therefore unable to work mischief upon the earth. But at the close he will be loosed again, in order that the true state of those who have been for a thousand years outwardly submissive to Christ may be brought to light. And what shall be manifested then is this, that nothing but a daring leader was required to cause the great mass of humanity to rise up in rebellion against the throne of God at Jerusalem. This rebellion is brought to an end by devouring fire from heaven. Satan's army is destroyed, and he himself is cast into the lake of fire.

The present dispensation is no exception to the rule. It is a long time since the pure gold lost its brightness and became dim, a very long time since "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4. 32). The violent assaults of the devil, the malice of the world, the persecutions of those in authority upon earth, made no breaches in that "wall great and high" which marked their separation to a glorified Christ. "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they

were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire" (said of Zion, Lam. 4. 7). It is the friendliness of the world, not its open and unconcealed enmity, that has done the mischief. The church soon came under the corrupting influence of the world. In Revelation 2. and 3. we get a history of its downward course. "Thou hast left thy first love" is the first step in that steep descent to complete apostasy. At the last it is spued out of the mouth of Christ, and finally comes to its end in the destruction of Babylon (Rev. 17. and 18.).

To see that we are now come to the concluding days of the present dispensation may require a little spiritual discernment. I do not doubt some look upon the days in which our lot is cast as very bright days indeed. But such as do so view everything from the standpoint of nature. In their imagination man is the centre to which everything relates, and as his earthly circumstances seem to be bettered, he judges the world must be improving. But the truth is, God is the Centre of the universe, and everything must be judged by its relation to Him. Man's primal sin was the attempt on his part to lay hold of Divinity, and that has given character to his every thought and action, from that day to this. Hence man, in his natural state, has no right thought about any moral question.

He is both clever and inventive; but he is not *wise*, for there is no true wisdom apart from the knowledge of God. Could he only get a sight of things in their right relation to one another, he would understand how utterly wrong about everything his previous thoughts had been, and what a world of falsehood he had been wandering in. Where he had formerly seen good, nothing but evil would be apparent; discord and ruin would] confront him where he had assured himself there was nothing but harmony and prosperity. He would see how sadly he had mistaken sin for righteousness, falsehood for truth, folly

for wisdom. And this would be his salvation.

But things cannot be seen rightly apart from Christ, for He is the Truth. In Him is the light which dispels all the darkness in which we are by nature. In Him a new world opens up bright before the soul. There the Creator has His rightful place, and the creature his. There everything is perfectly adjusted, according to the thought of the beneficent and righteous Ruler of the worlds. All moves there in the most perfect harmony, without the slightest discord or jar.

There God the Centre is.
His presence fills that land,
And countless myriads owned as His,
Round Him adoring stand.

But what about the present comfort and prosperity of the land in which we live, where waves the banner of the British Nation? To what do we owe it? Do we owe it to the natural wisdom of those who rule and legislate in the land, or is there some secret power, some mighty influence, that guides and controls the thoughts and actions of leaders who may themselves be hostile to that very influence that controls them for their good? I have not the least hesitation in saying we owe it to the Bible. This Book has done a vast deal even for those who have never availed themselves of the blessings of the gospel. It may be, and it is, like the One of whom it bears witness, despised and rejected of men, but like Him it goes about doing good, even though it be rewarded evil for its good, and hatred for its love.

In those nations which still abide in heathen darkness, what sympathy is there evinced for human suffering? or what value is set upon the life of the creature unable to help himself? And even in countries which are nominally Christian, but where the Bible is hidden from the people, do not things there remain stubbornly in the rough? and is not legislation almost without regard for the tranquillity or safety of the

masses? There the strong ride mercilessly over the weak, and the weak have little or no redress. This is put down to a backward state of civilization, but the lack of civilization results from the lack of Bible light.

The church of Rome zealously guards the Bible from the people, because that church, like its founder, rules by darkness; and to that kingdom light is utterly destructive. Hence nations under the influence of the Romish system know little of the comforts and consolations resulting from legislation by those who have the Bible in their hands, however little it may be *savingly* believed. Wearied with the oppression of the hierarchy, the present tendency of priest-ridden nations is to throw off the Roman yoke and to plunge into infidelity; but that is only, as we say, out of the frying-pan into the fire, and means no more than adding a little contribution to the apostasy from the faith altogether.

The apostasy is sure to come. But it will not come as long as the kernel remains in the husk; that is, as long as the body of Christ is on earth. But when the true saints of God have been removed from this scene, as they shall be at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, then the apostasy will rapidly develop. Not only the truth of the gospel, but the very name of Christ will be cast off.

And in that direction the profession of Christianity in the world to-day is fast advancing. In theological chairs and in the pulpits are ministers of Satan posing as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 2. 17), tearing the Scriptures to pieces, and dazzling the multitude with flashes of spurious erudition. And as regards the subject they have chosen, on which to vent their miserable spleen, the ignorance of these theologasters is only equalled by their unparalleled conceit.

From the beginning this citadel of truth, the Assembly of the living God, has been the object of Satan's ceaseless hostility. We have been well warned of these days by the apostles of our Lord

and Saviour, Jesus Christ. And even before they departed from this world the mystery of iniquity was already at work (2 Thess. 2. 7). But if the evil has been clearly pointed out, and it most surely has, a plain path for our feet has been as clearly pointed out, and directions given for the very worst days the saint of God can find himself in. And this second epistle has been cited as in a special way the handbook for these last days.

Here we are confronted with a state of things analogous to that which was found in Israel in the days of Malachi, when they said, "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up: yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." This state of things brought to light them that feared the Lord; and they, we are told, "spoke often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. 3). Such may have to walk in comparative retirement, as those who were of very little account, and of no service to the mass of that proud and stiff-necked people, but they had the approval of the Lord, and that was all they really valued in that dark day of the nation's despal of God.

Would to God His people could be content to-day with His approbation! How much is our walk really in the sight of men, instead of being in the sight of God! How largely we are influenced by the opinion of the world! How we shrink from the pathway of Him who was despised and rejected of men! And if we flatter ourselves that we disregard the judgment which the world may pass upon us, perhaps our *brethren* come in

between us and the light of His face, and lest we should be cold-shouldered by them we take up a path of uncertainty before God. Oh, to have the courage of our convictions! Oh, to exercise ourselves "to have always a

conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men"! Pride of heart, confidence in self, the influence of the world, the fear of man; these are evils from which may God be pleased to deliver His beloved saints.

Studies in the Psalms—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN)

Psalms 80. 81.

PSALM 80. is an advance in revelation on 78., which instructed us as to the testing and breakdown of Ephraim, the tribe which took the place of the firstborn (see 1 Chron. 5.). The result is the same for any privileged company so tested, and all would be lost but for the sovereignty of God in mercy. Accordingly in Psalms 78., 68, 70 He chooses Judah, Mount Zion, and David. This subject is followed in Psalm 80. to the ruin of the house of David, for the branch of verse 15 has doubtless this reference. Another prophet sees the vine burned with fire (Ezek. 15.); here it is cut down, and those attached to it perish at the rebuke of God's countenance. The thrice-repeated prayer, verses 3, 7, 19, which divides the Psalm into three parts, is for the reversal of this discipline, along with the conversion of the suppliants. It should be remembered that an erring believer needs conversion as much as a sinner (James 5. 19, 20).

The whole Psalm may profitably be read as God's way for the moral restoration of a remnant in a day of ruin, and hence has the deepest importance for ourselves. Let us consider it in a little more detail. In the first section the appeal is to God as He had first made Himself known to the nation; He is addressed as the Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock in the wilderness, dwelling between the cherubim and preceding Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh in the march (Num. 2. 1-24). The common delusion that God has changed because we have is thus corrected, and

the appeal is to Him in the fullness of His power as revealed of old: "Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." According to the present revelation of grace in Christ, the face of God is always towards us in unchanging favour; it may be otherwise in His ways in government, and this is what is in question here in our Psalm. Nevertheless, His purpose is unchanged, and the one who is in the secret of the Lord will always pray according to "His purpose and grace," and the answer will come (see 1 John 5. 14, 15; Isa. 62. 6, 7).

The second section, verses 4-7, tells out the grief of heart occasioned by the state of the people. The anger of God seemed upon them in their very prayers; tears were both food and drink to them. Their neighbours vied with one another in assailing them (ver. 6, Perowne), and their enemies mocked them. But again the prayer ascends, and now with a deeper sense of the divine majesty evidenced in the address: "O God of hosts."

In the last section the suppliant recalls in prayer to God His own work of mercy in connection with the people. He likens them to a transplanted vine, a figure used later by Isaiah and Ezekiel. How conspicuously did their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage, and their subsequent firm establishment in the land of promise, point to a divine work! But now, from the point of view of the prophet, all this is changed, and the same vine witnesses just as plainly the power of the enemy. Can the Spirit of God or

the faith of the saints acquiesce in such a condition? Has Almighty God no other resource than in a stiff-necked and rebellious people? All glory to Him, far otherwise. The way of recovery is clearly pointed out in confession and prayer which lays hold of God and His purposes in the Man of His right hand. Indeed, it is most striking and of deep importance for us to notice how the Spirit, so to speak, complains, when in a day of ruin is found "none that calleth on Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee," when, as in the Psalm, the face of God is hidden from His erring people (Isa. 64. 7).

Before reaching the climax of the Psalm in verse 17, the touching appeal in verse 14 is worthy of remark. The word "return" applied to God is the same as that used in verses 3, 7, 19 in regard to the people (*cf.* Zech. 1. 3), as if saying, "If Thou turnest us to Thee, wilt not Thou turn to us?" In the next verse the branch or "son whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" is, as already noticed, a reference to the line of David in which the election of grace subsists, yet here seen suffering under God's chastening hand (see 2 Sam. 12. 16, where grace and government are both applied to the descendants of the King). Is the case therefore hopeless? No, even here faith rises to God in the assurance that for Him at any rate all cannot end in disaster. Psalm 8. had spoken of a Son of Man who should be heir to a headship over all things. Surely then God will recover all for Himself in that Man. Hence the prayer, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou hast made strong for Thyself." As we behold Jesus at the right hand of God we may confidently assure ourselves of His final triumph in *that Man*, although the Psalm and many other scriptures tell us of His apparent defeat, in the failure of His chosen witnesses; and this is equally true of the Church, as of Israel. Nevertheless He will in both ultimately show forth His glory (Isa. 46. 13; Rev. 21. 11), a glory whose

brightness is enhanced by reason of the dark cloud of man's sin which has so long obscured it.

One faithful Witness indeed there has been, "a light to the Gentiles, and Jehovah's salvation to the end of the earth," but even He had to say in relation to His service among men, "I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for naught and in vain." *We* know that in Him there is not only victory for God but overcoming grace for those who own Him as the centre of divine counsel, "so will not we go back from Thee." Finally the man of faith seeks to know the delivering power of resurrection, "quicken us and we will call upon Thy name," and once again the refrain breaks forth with the addition of the covenant name of Jehovah, the Eternal One, indicating growth in the faith appropriate to this time of trial.

The teaching of the Spirit in this Psalm forms a remarkable foundation on which the additional light of the Colossian and Ephesian letters should be built; we learn in the former that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the Man of verse 17, and in Ephesians that the church is His fullness, who fills all things in all. The prayer in chapter 3. seeks that this glorious Person should have a home in our hearts by faith. Let us remember that the blessed God Himself desires that we should thus know His Son.

PSALM 81. takes us a step further than the preceding one in the carrying out of God's purposes for Israel. The people are viewed as celebrating in praise to God their restoration to the land. Considerable difference of judgment has been expressed as to which of the feasts of Jehovah reference is made in verse 3, but as the only one beginning with the new moon was the feast of trumpets, the question seems settled. Opposing arguments do not carry conviction, moreover the feast referred to is typical of the recall of Israel to his inheritance. This view of the Psalm affords further illustration of the pro-

phetic gift of Asaph the seer. It divides into two parts; in the first the Spirit calls the people to the praise suitable to the occasion of their return to the promised land, and reminds them that such celebration was in obedience to the divine command at the beginning of their history as a nation, when God went forth against the land of Egypt (Ex. 11. 4).

The second division begins with the last sentence of verse 5: "I heard a language I understood not." Who is the speaker? Some have difficulty in hearing the voice of God in these words, but certainly it is He who continues to the end of the Psalm, and it seems right to read them in the light of Exodus 3. 8, where He represents Himself as coming down to deliver His oppressed people. All the circumstances of that moment were foreign to His declared purpose, "a language He understood not." The children of Shem were slaves to the descendants of Ham, speaking their tongue, not the language of Abraham, the friend of God.

In the remaining verses we listen to the God of grace rehearsing His ways

with His people up to the giving of the law; His power was ministering to their needs, and no penalty was imposed for their sin. They had but to open their mouth to Him, and the larger this capacity the more they would receive; He would have fed them with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock they would have been satisfied. How remarkably is the gospel of grace anticipated. It is as if He would say, "Let Me be everything to you and I will be entirely for you," for the only condition of blessing is the refusal of a strange God: "I am Jehovah thy God, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (vers. 9, 10). He had thus sought to make Himself known in their hearts, and touching it is to recognize the tone of sorrow: "But My people hearkened not to My voice and Israel would none of Me." Luther has remarked, "It is something dreadful and terrible that He says 'MY people.'" The Psalm shows it will not be always thus; the evil will be removed from their heart when it shall turn to the Lord (2 Cor. 3. 16). May the grace of this beautiful Psalm turn our heart more undividedly to Himself.

"If I . . . have not love, I am nothing" [1 Cor. 13. 2 (R.V.)].

THERE is a great difference between spiritual gifts and spiritual graces. . . . Among the Corinthians, for instance, there were very wonderful spiritual gifts. In the first Epistle, Paul says: "Ye are enriched . . . in all utterance, and in all knowledge. . . ." And in the second Epistle he says in effect: "You do not come behind in any gift; see that you have the gift of liberality also." He speaks, too, about the gifts of "prophecy," and of "faith," . . . and of "knowledge," and of "all mysteries" as things that they were ardently seeking for; but he tells them these will not profit them without they have *love*.

It is a very solemn thing for us to remember that a man may be an eloquent preacher, instructed in the letter of the truth, a faithful and successful worker in some particular sphere among the poor and needy, and yet that by the sharpness of his judgment, and the pride that comes into him, and by other things, he may give proof that while his spiritual gifts are wonderful, spiritual graces are too often absent, and in consequence he is not a help, but a hindrance to the saints of God, and a grief of heart to the Lord. His very gift increases his power for evil.

"Wanted, a Man."

(JAMES C. TRENCH).

"**J**UDGMENT (or right) is far from us, neither doth justice overtake us. We wait for light but behold obscurity, for brightness but we walk in darkness. We look for salvation, but it is far from us. Truth is fallen in the street . . . yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it and it was evil in His eyes (margin). And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."

So wrote Isaiah about seven hundred years before the Christian era, describing the condition of things amongst Israel, the chosen people of God, in his day. Let us sum it up. There was neither right nor justice, light nor brightness, salvation nor truth, and to make things worse, there was **NO MAN** to meet the emergency—no Intercessor to plead with God—"none to help," "none to behold" (Isa. 59. 9, 11, 14, 16; also chap. 63. 5).

Seventy years after this Jeremiah took up his parable, and portrayed how things were amongst the same favoured people of God, and wrote: "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see and know, and seek in the broad places thereof if ye can find **A MAN**, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it" (Jer. 5. 1).

The search for **A MAN** was still going on. Here was a challenge from God to the guilty Jerusalem which had turned from Him to other gods, and had profaned His name and truth—that if there was *one man* to be found within it that was even a *seeker* after truth, He would spare the city. Thirteen hundred years before—in the case of Sodom—there had been an Intercessor. Abraham pleaded earnestly with the Lord that if there were found ten righteous in it He would spare the place, and God said in answer that He would spare the city for the sake of ten men. But in the case of

Jerusalem He declares He will pardon it if there is even *one*. But not even one could be found. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

At a still later date Ezekiel, with the first captives in Babylon by the river Chebar, recorded the terrible state of the city of Jerusalem where the light of God had shone: "Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned My holy things . . . her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood . . . her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies. . . . The people have used oppression and exercised robbery" (chap. 22. 26-31).

What was to be done? Listen. "And I sought for a **MAN** among them that would make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land that I should not destroy it"—and what was the result of the search? "**AND I FOUND NONE**: therefore have I poured out My indignation upon them."

God had chosen David to be the King of Israel—a man after His own heart, but even he grievously failed. Solomon, his son, who built the glorious temple for Jehovah, degenerated so rapidly that before his forty years' reign had ended he had also "built in Jerusalem high places for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech, the abomination of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives which burnt incense and sacrificed unto other gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel" (1 Kings 11. 5-9). And therefore Rehoboam, his son, was only allowed to reign over two tribes, the other ten apostatizing to follow Jero-boam, which made Israel to sin by worshipping the golden calves.

A long succession of kings followed, the kingdom set up by the Lord in David lasting for about five hundred years, the course of things being downward throughout, relieved by occasional revivals as in Hezekiah's and Josiah's reigns, until the end was reached. Then the word of the Lord came through Ezekiel, who, addressing Zedekiah, the last sovereign on David's throne, said: "And thou, profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come. Thus saith the Lord God—Remove the diadem, and take off the crown—what is shall be no more (N.T.). Exalt him that is low, abase him that is high . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more UNTIL HE COME WHOSE RIGHT IT IS, AND I WILL GIVE IT TO HIM" (Ezek. 21. 25, 27).

God had not found THE MAN He sought for in all those kings, and now He deposes the last occupant of the throne He had set up on account of persistent wickedness; Zedekiah's eyes being put out by Nebuchadnezzar after they had first witnessed the murder of his sons, he was then carried off a captive to Babylon. Never since that day has any king sat on the throne of Israel. The crown belongs to the glorious One, THE MAN whose right it is. But not one of these kings was He, nor any other man, whether priest or prophet, who had appeared in the midst of that chosen people.

Six centuries passed away, and the New Testament opens with the question of the Eastern sages on their arrival in Jerusalem: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" They too sought THE MAN. "And lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was . . . they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house they saw the young Child with Mary His mother and fell down and worshipped Him."

"Fear not," said the angel to the shepherds on the Judean hills, "for,

behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2. 10, 11). "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David . . . and of His kingdom shall there be no end" (chap. 1. 32).

Thus is recorded the advent of the One of whom God had spoken, causing joy in heaven, and joy to the poor but godly remnant of Israel, and joy to the Gentiles from the uttermost parts of the earth.

He who was never less than God over all blessed for ever, deigned to enter this poor world by becoming a man, as heir to David's throne and God's Anointed King, to restore Israel, and to establish righteousness, peace, and truth throughout the earth. But with what result? The world, led by the Jews, after abundant experience of what it was to have God manifested in flesh, in all His wondrous holiness and love, and acts of touching mercy and grace combined with divine power to heal and bless and save, deliberately rejected Him and cast Him out of the earth, crying, "Away with *this Man*"—"We will not have *this Man* to reign over us"—"Not *this Man*, but Barabbas."

God had found the Man who could glorify Him and set man free from the power of the oppressor, and He presented Him to this world for its acceptance, but He was not wanted, but utterly refused.

In astounding grace, God has in His death laid the basis for extending His mercy to all. "There is one Mediator between God and man, *THE MAN Christ Jesus*, who gave Himself a ransom for all." And He, by His death, has made atonement for sin, and enabled God in righteousness, as well as in love, to offer pardon and salvation to all. This mercy and grace is offered to all, but only those who believe the gospel and yield to Christ Jesus as Lord are

blessed by it. The world at large has endorsed the murder of God's Son, and refuses to own Him now, and the awful spectacle that the world presents to-day is the consequence of the rejection of the Man of God's counsels and choice!

"*Wanted, a Man*" has been and is still the cry by a world that would not have Christ. Some personage who will by his strength of character and ability succeed in taking up the reins of government, and weld the democracies into one solid whole, and bring order out of chaos, and establish prosperity, wealth, and peace in the earth, and lead the human race to such a pitch of greatness and glory as will satisfy its pride and self-importance. And before long the world will succeed in finding the man who will seem to be able to do these things. This is plainly indicated in Scripture, where his character, aims, power, and achievements are fully set forth. For after the church has been removed to heaven (1 Thess. 4.), and, as a consequence, the presence of the Holy Ghost has been withdrawn from the earth (2 Thess. 2.), and Satan being cast out of heaven, his operations will be confined to the earth, and knowing that "he will have but a short time" (Rev. 12.), he will bring about the realization of human hopes in an incredibly short space of time—the unification and solidarity of man in both East and West; and so bewitched will "modern thought" be with Satan's selection that "the whole world will wonder after the *Beast*" (that is the divine designation for the last head of the satanically revived Roman Empire).

He will have his seat and empire in the old Roman earth. Having sought to dethrone the true God, he will claim divine honours himself. Religiously, intellectually, and commercially, he will be pronounced a decided success, and the world will revel in the deification of a man. Six thousand years ago the Serpent of Genesis 3. induced man to believe in his own blasphemous prophecy, "Ye shall be as God." The world, besotted and deceived, will

welcome with delight what will seem to it the fulfilment of the promise. Hardly has this supposed perfection been reached, and the world congratulated itself upon the "Peace and Safety" now firmly established, than "SUDDEN DESTRUCTION will come upon it," by the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, when the Beast and his coadjutor—the Antichrist, having his seat in Jerusalem as leader of the apostate Jews—will both be cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19.), and the great Roman Empire, in its last phase, will come to an abrupt and ignominious end under the judgment of Christ in person, the devil himself, its originator, being disposed of in the bottomless pit for the thousand years' reign of the King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. 20). "*Sic mundi gloria transit.*"

Then will the Lord send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13. 41-43). The church in heavenly glory, and the glorified saints of other ages—Israel in Canaan, and the nations of the world in blessing, all shall be in divine order under the then undisputed sway of the once crucified—now universally acknowledged—JESUS.

Then will be realized the glorious reign of righteousness and peace over a renewed earth, with Jerusalem as its metropolis, from whence shall flow out to the ends of the globe light and truth and wisdom, and to it shall return the grateful homage and praise of all nations. God shall be owned and worshipped universally in the person of "the Man of His right hand, the Son of Man whom He hath made strong for Himself" (Ps. 80. 17). "His name shall endure for ever, all nations shall call Him blessed, and the whole earth be filled with His glory" (Ps. 72. 17, 19).

These things being so, what shall be our attitude to-day with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely it should be to anticipate, so far as we individually are concerned, the day when all shall give Him His rightful place, by letting Him have our whole hearts now for the little while that still remains until we see Him and are with Him for ever, bearing in mind that one of the objects of His death was that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. 5. 15).

Nothing will be right with us until we yield ourselves unreservedly—spirit, soul, and body—to Him. Nothing good can come for Israel either until that nation accepts and owns the despised Nazarene as their Messiah and King. And assuredly the world at large will look in vain for satisfaction and rest and peace until He reigns from pole to pole.

Reader, if you have never accepted Him as your Saviour, do it now. "THIS MAN receiveth sinners" (Luke 15. 2), complained the Pharisees, but it is blessedly true. "Never man spake like THIS MAN" (John 7. 47), said the officers sent to arrest Him. "I find no fault in THIS MAN" (Luke 23. 14), said His judge. "THIS MAN hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23. 41), was the dying convict's declaration.

"Be it known unto you . . . that through THIS MAN is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13. 38, 39), proclaimed

the Apostle Paul in his first published sermon. "THIS MAN, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down for ever on the right hand of God . . . for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 12, 14), wrote the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "THIS MAN, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 24, 25).

And now, in closing these remarks, let me quote two more passages with regard to the future, and as showing *who* that glorious Man was before ever time began.

"Out of thee (Bethlehem) shall come forth He that shall be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from everlasting . . . and He shall stand and rule (margin) in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God . . . for now shall He be great to the ends of the earth, and THIS MAN SHALL BE THE PEACE" (Micah 5).

"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father (or The Father of Eternity), The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9. 6, 7).

Oneness in John 17.

ONENESS is spoken of in three aspects by our blessed Lord in John 17.

1. THE ONENESS OF APOSTOLIC WITNESS, continuing the *testimony* of Christ in the world (11).
2. THE ONENESS OF PRESENT COMMUNION, that the world may *believe* that the Father sent the Son (21).
3. THE ONENESS OF FUTURE GLORY, that the world may *know* that the Father sent the Son, and has loved us even as He loved the Son (24).

Armageddon.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16. 12-16).

THE vials poured out by the angels in the Revelation (chap. 16.) are preliminary judgments, the final appeal to men, e'er the wrath of the Lamb sweeps them out of time. The gathering together of the kings of the earth is connected with the sixth of these. The sixth angel dries up the Euphrates by pouring out his vial. This barrier, which formed the Eastern boundary of the grant of Palestine to Abraham, and the limit of Roman conquest, has ever been, geographically, the separating line between East and West. Its removal by miraculous power will facilitate the invasion of Palestine from the East. The Holy Land will be the objective. That land will then be under the protectorate of the Beast. Satan will marshal his hosts, aided by the beast and false prophet, who will send forth spirits of demons like frogs, to convene the kings of the earth and the whole world. These unclean spirits will obsess the minds of the various leaders, and, without knowing it, will fulfil the revealed purpose of God, by gathering their armies to certain destruction to "a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (ver. 16).

Its Hebrew name implies that the Jewish nation will be vitally concerned. The hill and vale of Megiddo, situated in the great plain of Esdraelom, is historic ground. The "hill of slaughter" (as its name implies) witnessed many sanguinary conflicts before and after it was fortified by Solomon. It is a place of importance strategically, as it commands the pass from the North. Its greatest battles were determined by the direct intervention of God, who

miraculously delivered his people from powerful and overwhelming foes.

Deborah's song has indelibly linked up Megiddo with the deliverance of Israel from the heel of the oppressor. Stars and storm-flooded river witnessed that this battle was fought from heaven. "Then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. They fought *from heaven*, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength" (Judges 5. 19-21). The battle was won, the enemy vanquished by Almighty power alone.

Gideon's three hundred were led to the same spot. The children of the East, together with Midian and Amalek, were gathered there—as they will be in a future day (Ps. 70.). Utterly helpless in themselves, they brake their pitchers, sounded their trumpets, crying, "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" (Judges 7. 22). Heaven again undertook for Israel. Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow; a complete rout followed, the oppressor was laid low, and deliverance wrought for the oppressed.

Later, a confederation of kings surrounded Jerusalem. With fasting and prayer Jehoshaphat turned to God, and was told to "stand still and see the salvation of God." Their night of sorrow was turned into a morning of deliverance. When day broke the valley about Megiddo was strewn with dead bodies. Spoil and riches in abundance

were theirs. Prayer was turned to praise, the hill of slaughter to a valley of blessing. Divine power had wrought a miraculous deliverance.

Sorrow as well as joy are connected with this spot. Here Josiah fell, the king on whom the hopes of the nation were set. This sorrow is touchingly expressed in the lamentations of Jeremiah. "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen" (Lam. 4. 20). This mourning in Hadadrimmon was not a mere passing emotion; year after year it continued. Zechariah links it with the sorrow of a coming day, when the house of David will learn that Jesus, whom they slew, is the true Josiah. Jerusalem will then mourn individually, with a great and bitter mourning for the "anointed of the Lord." They will use the language of Jeremiah's lamentation to express their sorrow at the crucifixion of Jesus. Armageddon is thus connected with the sorrow of the remnant on the one hand, and divine intervention for Israel on the other.

Nor is sorrow to be the portion of the godly only. The unbelieving nation will look for peace and safety under the Beast, but find bitter disappointment. From the Psalms and the prophets we learn that Israel's ancient enemies will reappear and fill her cup of sorrow to the full. It is the time of Jacob's sorrow (Jer. 30. 3-7).

From South and East (Dan. 11. 40) and West (Rev. 17.) armed hosts will invade the land of unrepentant Israel, butchering, pillaging, devastating, until the whole people cry, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lam. 1. 12). Thus overrun by various foes, dark indeed will be the outlook for the entire

Jewish nation, as well as the godly remnant who are looking for deliverance. At this dark hour a message from heaven says, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments" (ver. 15). The godly are thus encouraged to hope on, and are also warned against the pollutions around, by the promise that, suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief, the Lord would come upon those not watching.

All that we learn here is, that the wrath of God is expressed in *gathering* the Western armies under the Beast to Armageddon. The overruling hand of God makes the malice of men and the enmity of the dragon subservient to His purposes. The actual battle is detailed in chapter 19. and commences the "wrath of the Lamb." All judgment is committed to the Son, and will fall first on the living. Christ will reign as David, and extirpate all His enemies before setting up the peaceful reign of Solomon. This will take some time to accomplish, so that whilst the armies of the Beast are destroyed first, full blessing will not follow for some months (Dan. 12. 12). During that time the kings of the East, and of the North also, Edom, Moab, and Ammon, will be cast into the winepress of judgment.

Meantime the seventh and last vial is poured out on the "air," withering things as needful to life as air, as well as causing the break-up of everything which seemed solid and stable. Earth's great city is wrecked, the cities of the nations fall, convulsed by an earthquake great and terrible, such as this world has never felt. The ineradicable hatred of man's heart under law, grace, and judgment is evinced in the blasphemous answer given to these closing dealings of God. This seventh vial concludes the preliminary judgments, the secret ways of God are ended. "It is done" (verse 17) tells us this.

Have Present Events any Significance ?

(H. P. BARKER).

A RISING out of the paper "The Signs of the Times" (see Feb. issue), it is asked as to the significance of certain things happening around us to-day, whether they may be regarded as indications that the time of the end is near. For instance, I have received a note of inquiry in which I read: "*Please say if we may include among the 'signs of the times,' the fact that the gospel is now preached to all nations, as our Lord Himself said that the end should come when this was done.*"

The scripture referred to in this note is Matthew 24. 14. I am afraid I must answer the question with a direct negative, for two reasons.

First, it is not true that the gospel has been preached to all nations. Take Afghanistan, for instance. What preaching has there ever been there? Then there are large nations in the Sudan where no herald of the glad tidings has ever been. There is Wadai, as large as Italy; Bagirmi, as large as Ireland; Bornu, now part of the British Empire, a populous country as big as England; Gando, as big as Scotland and Ireland together. No attempt up to the present has been made to preach the gospel to any of these great nations. In South America, too, especially in the upper reaches of the Amazon and its mighty tributaries, there are Indian nations among whom no one has ever gone with the good news of God's salvation.* So that if we are to reckon the preaching of the gospel to all nations as a sign of the times, it must surely be a sign that we are a long, long way from the time of the end!

But, thank God, we need not draw this deduction. If we look at the verse we shall see that it speaks not of the gospel of the grace of God as we have it to-day, but of *the gospel of the kingdom*, a very

different thing. We learn from Scripture that after the church is taken to heaven God will touch the hearts of many among His ancient people Israel, and will use them as His heralds to the nations (Isa. 66. 19). North, south, east, and west they will go, announcing the coming kingdom. Their message will be very similar to that preached by John the Baptist, and by the Lord Himself during the early part of His ministry on earth: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is "the gospel of the kingdom," and it will be preached to all the nations, "for a witness," and then will come the end. The end of what? Not of the present day, the day of Christianity and of the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, but of "the times of the Gentiles," the age which runs on to its terminus at the appearing of Christ in glory with His holy angels.

Some have looked upon the terrible earthquakes that have happened in recent years as signs of the approaching end of the age. Certainly there has been a great succession of earthquakes. One has only to mention Messina, Kingston, San Francisco, Valparaiso, and the recent Italian calamity to be reminded of this. And the Lord Jesus, speaking of the time of the end, said, "There shall be earthquakes in divers places" (Mark 13. 8). With these, there should be the rising of nation against nation, "wars, and rumours of wars." We do not need to be told that there have been, of late years, constantly recurring wars of unprecedented severity. During the Russo-Japanese war bigger battles were fought and more men slain than in any previous war. Then came the Balkan wars, when five nations sprang to arms, with terrific slaughter and loss. And all these have been overtopped by the present titanic conflict.

* Dr. Alfred Wallace gives the number of distinct nations in the Amazon Valley as 300. A later writer doubles this figure. NONE of these nations has yet been reached with the gospel.

But the Lord's prediction has reference to the period that follows upon the church's translation. The wars *then* will make all wars that have previously happened appear insignificant in comparison. And even these should be but the *beginnings* of sorrows (Mark 13. 8). So that I do not think we must attach any prophetic significance to the present conflict of nations, though it may well be that it is a link in the chain of preparation for what is to follow.

Nothing can be further from the truth than the supposition that the present war will be the last, and that when it is ended men will finally beat their swords into ploughshares and learn mutual goodwill. False prophets there are who bid us believe that the era of universal peace is to follow the conclusion of this war. But those who take Scripture for their guide know that never is danger so threatening as when men rise up to assure their fellows of its non-existence. It is when men cry, "Peace and safety!" that sudden destruction comes (1 Thess. 5. 3). Let not the reader therefore lend

an ear to those who prophesy smooth things.

For us who believe, however, the outlook is a bright one indeed. Saved from the very hour of the great tribulation shortly to come upon all the world, by the coming of the Lord, the church's age-long pilgrimage will end in eternal glory. Let us keep this in view. We may mourn over the failure of the church, and her departure from the divine ideal. We may look back to the freshness of Pentecostal times and of various seasons of revival that God has been pleased to give, and we may sorrowfully compare the coldness of the present with the warmth of those by-gone days. But let us never forget that the brightest day of the church's history is yet to come. If some, looking over the past, cry "*Back to Pentecost!*" let us the rather shout "*On to glory!*" Let this be our watchword. Maranatha—the Lord cometh!

Oh, the joy of it, when we find ourselves, along with Him who has loved us, in the Father's house. At last! at last!!

The Golden Calf.

IT is remarkable that when Israel in the wilderness turned from Moses, their God-appointed leader, and figure of Christ as the Leader of the saints of God to-day, they fell into the snare of the golden calf. And when Jeroboam turned Israel from Zion, the God-appointed centre for them, and figure of Christ as God's gathering Centre for His saints to-day, he also fell into the same terrible evil, for he erected calves at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12.). In both instances they fell back into the ways and worship of the devil-ridden country out of which they had been redeemed.

These things are written for our learning and warning. Christ is our Leader, and the great Centre of gathering for every saint of God. If we lose sight of His all-sufficiency in these respects we

shall become in our worship and ways of the world worldly—of the present evil world of which Egypt is a type, and to redeem us out of which the Lord gave Himself. It must be so, for God has none but Christ to present to us, and the Holy Spirit will only accord His power to us as we are subject to the leadership of Christ, and will only gather to Him; and if we drift away from Christ in these two respects the adoption of worldly schemes becomes inevitable.

May the glorious fullness of Christ, and His incomparable attractiveness ever hold us from this terrible evil of the world's ways and worship. And may the servants of the Lord stir themselves up to persistently and in faith keep Christ before the saints in this twofold aspect.—(Ed.)

Jesus Only.

(JAMES BOYD).

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth . . . whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold,
AND NOT ANOTHER.” (Job 19. 25-27.)

- “**A**ND not another :” endless Lover, mine !
Who, when a captive I to sin was sold,
Compassionated me, and paid the fine—
Nor lands, nor silver, pearls, nor purest gold—
The ransom of my soul, Saviour Divine !
But Thy heart’s blood: I shall Thy face behold,
“And not another.”
- “And not another :” Thou who once didst draw
Thy sword on my behalf, when lost I lay
In dark transgression, curse of broken law,
Under the pitiless oppressor’s sway,
The stings of conscience, death’s terrific maw—
Thee shall I contemplate in cloudless day,
“And not another.”
- “And not another :” no, Thyself alone!
The First! The Last! The Ransom of my soul!
Eternal God, yet Man! Known, yet Unknown!
Loud let Thy praises like the thunders roll
Throughout the heavens, the earth, from pole to pole,
For Thou shalt have the kingdom and the throne,
“And not another.”
- “And not another :” yea, tho’ worms destroy
This body frail, yet, Saviour, when Thy feet
Shall stand on Olivet to the great joy
Of Thy companions, for that day made meet,
My privilege it shall be to employ
My powers to honour Thee with praises sweet,
“And not another.”
- “And not another :” for Thy voice of might
Shall have, ere that day dawns, Thy ransomed dead
Brought in a shining host to heaven’s height
From hades, from the grave, from ocean’s bed,
Clothed with a panoply of heavenly light,
To dwell with Thee their glorious living Head,
“And not another.”
- “And not another :” faithful Friend and True!
Chiefest among the many sons of light!
Centre and Head of the creation new!
The everlasting Father’s sole delight!
Son of the Morning! whom they long to view
Who vigil keep throughout the weary night,
“And not another.”
- “And not another :” neither friend nor foe,
Nor father, mother, brother, sister, son;
Nothing to rival thee in earth below;
In heaven above beside Thee there is none;
Let all the glory of creation go
That on my vision may remain but One,
“AND NOT ANOTHER.”

The Result of the Ministry.

(F. B. HOLE).

Why should so small a result be seen in true godliness and growth in grace from the ministry of the Word which is so abundant?

FIRST of all let it be sorrowfully yet frankly admitted that the result of all our ministry, whether by voice or pen, is very small. To face facts is always right, as it is also to inquire concerning the cause, and to attempt to apply the remedy.

It will hardly satisfy any truly exercised conscience to be reminded that we are living in days when the very utmost that could be said as to saints generally is that they have but "a little strength"; and to argue or at least infer therefrom that it is useless to expect anything beyond that which one sees at present. We should reply at once that these general statements made with prophetic insight as to the mass, are never rightly used if quoted to hinder the exercises of the individual, or his aspirations after that which is better. A "man of God" in the Scripture use of the term, is an individual who proves himself to be the exception to the rule by standing for God, and caring for His interests, when the mass is fallen into declension and indifference.

Let us then face the question, Why so small a result in godliness and growth in grace from all the ministry? Is it the fault of the ministry, the ministers, or the hearers?

In attempting an answer to this I can only speak according to my knowledge and experience, bounded by my circle of Christian acquaintance: a circle of necessity very small compared with the great circle of the church of God.

The Ministers.

Neither ministry, ministers, nor hearers can, I think, be absolved from blame. In attempting, however, to differentiate I should lay the greatest stress upon the *ministers*, inasmuch as

no ministry is likely to be of a higher character than the channel through whom it comes. The Apostle Paul's handling of the matter in the passage 2 Corinthians 5. 18 to 7. 3 is pretty clear proof of this. The ambassador of Christ could approach the somewhat worldly-minded Corinthians and urge upon them a thorough-going separation from the world with an enlarged heart and open mouth because his own life and deportment was such as gave immense weight and power to his words.

Too much stress cannot, I am sure, be laid upon this. Have we not learned by experience that only the man of solid Christian character is capable of speaking words of real weight, and that such words have impressed us far more deeply than words merely marked by eloquence, or originality, or intellectual power?

This applies, of course, to all who do the work of the Lord, no matter in what sphere their service may lie. By "minister" we mean, as undoubtedly Scripture means, not an official class, but all who serve the Lord.

The Ministry.

In the second place we do well to examine our *ministry*. We would all of us freely admit it has imperfections. But in what do they consist? Can we be at all definite as to this?

Within the small circle of my own observation I cannot but note the small stress laid on the purely practical side of truth as contrasted with the doctrinal. I can best, perhaps, illustrate what I mean by referring to the well-known chapter, Romans 6., and pointing out therein the three words, "know" (verses 3, 6, and 9), "reckon" (ver. 11), "yield" (verses 13, 19).

“KNOW” stands first, and plainly indicates the prime importance of doctrine. Nothing can be right if we are not rightly instructed in the great truths of Christianity. The believers at Rome either knew or should have known the meaning and spiritual bearing of baptism (ver. 3), the cross (ver. 6), and the resurrection of Christ (ver. 9).

Then “RECKON” which indicates the continuous action of faith which accepts the knowledge, and appropriates it in its bearing upon oneself, thus laying the basis for new and properly Christian experiences in the power of the Spirit of God; for the Spirit endorses the faith which accepts a divinely-given position by giving the experience suited to it.

Lastly “YIELD,” indicating that practical surrender of oneself to God, which involves the complete subjection of one’s own will, and of all that one possesses, to the will of God. Even though the position be accepted in faith, without this yielding, it will not be maintained.

Now there are Christians who lay great stress upon this last point in their ministry, calling continually for surrender or consecration, and yet fresh consecration, until sometimes, it is to be feared, the doctrines which lie at the foundation of all are obscured, or even very imperfectly held. When this is so a good deal of result may be procured, but result hardly of a kind to satisfy one who judges of things according to the word of God.

On the other hand, to dwell very largely upon doctrine, while omitting, or largely obscuring the definite call to surrender, is equally a distinct defect. The doctrine may be most clearly and scripturally expounded, and much helpful instruction may be added as to faith, and the experimental teaching of the Spirit of God, but without this yielding, the hearers will after all be left with many a link to the flesh and the world uncut, and what is worse, perhaps, without any exercise as to it. They will see things more clearly in their minds, that

is all. This, I venture to think, has been a great defect in our ministry.

That a considerable measure of grace and power is needed to exercise such a practical ministry is very certain. One knows full well how often, when one has essayed to say a few practical words of such a character, both tact and courage have failed, and one found oneself beating about the bush until all point was lost. Still such words are needed, for the great majority of saints but slowly perceive the force of truth in the abstract, whilst they cannot miss its practical bearing if it is presented in a concrete way. When Nathan set before David the evil principles that had marked his conduct, presenting them abstractly in parabolic form, David listened and yet understood not. The quiet words that followed “Thou art the man” gave the thing concrete shape in David’s mind, broke through his self-complacency, and humbled him in true repentance.

Is it not worthy of note that the Old Testament prophets exercised their ministry in the most personal manner? They not only set forth God’s mind for Israel, but dealt with the people as to their practical condition in the most searching and faithful way. Nor did the New Testament prophets do otherwise, as the Epistles bear witness. Should not our ministry be formed on the same model? We think so. Has it been? We fear not.

The Hearers.

Lastly, the hearers. They must bear some share of the blame, for the parable of the sower applies as much to the saint as to the sinner. Were the ministers beyond reproach, and their ministry all that it should be, we fear there would still be but little result with many who seem to be possessed of shallow minds and affections incapable of much exercise, or who are so immersed in the cares or riches of this life or lusts of other things that the word does not become fruitful in them.

There have always been these unfruitful hearers of the word, and it is not surprising that in the present day they are more common than ever. In this twentieth century life has become amazingly complex and exacting, and "the things that are in the world" have multiplied greatly, both in number and in attractiveness. "The things that are seen" are so many and so enticing that "the things that are not seen" easily fall into a back place, even with Christians.

With some of us too there is this added danger, that we have been brought

up from our spiritual infancy under much sound doctrinal instruction, and find ourselves linked up with others whose position is eminently scriptural, and as a result of this we fall into the mistake of the Jews of old and assume that nothing more than this is wanted. We inwardly count on our ancestry and position as they boasted in being children of Abraham. Nothing more effectually deadens conscience and exercise and fruitfulness than this.

May God look upon us all in mercy, and revive His work.

The Effect of the Truth.

IF the truth does not form and move us it shows that we are only taking it up in the letter. There is not much advantage in this, for a man who has the letter of the truth without its spirit is offensive to God. This is a solemn assertion but it is a true one. The Pharisee and the lawyer were more

repugnant to God than the publican and the sinner. The Pharisee and the lawyer are men up in the externals and shell of the truth, but entirely unaffected by its kernel and spirit. The divine effect of the truth is to mould and move men. (C.)

What Destroys Spiritual Power?

WHATEVER enfeebles the heart's attachment to Christ destroys spiritual power. It is not gross sin that does it, which of course will be met and judged; but it is the little things of everyday life, which are apt to be chosen before Christ. When the world creeps in, the salt has lost its savour, and we

show that a rejected Christ has little power in our eyes. The Lord keep us in the path with Christ, where all is bright and blessed. If the film of this world has been drawn over our spiritual vision, hiding Christ from us, He alone can remove it. (J.N.D.)

Thanksgiving.

"First, I thank my God; . . . making request" (Rom. 1, 8, 10).

BEFORE the Apostle asks for new mercies he thankfully recalls the old. He begins with a prelude of praise. And if we only knew it, this is the order of a healthy spiritual life. For . . . there is nothing like gratitude for making us porous to grace. Ingratitude is wintry in its influence, and seals up the avenues by which the bounties of God are received. Gratitude is expansive,

and enables the soul to receive additional benefits at the hands of a gracious God. And, in the second place, gratitude prepares the vision for acceptable prayer. It removes from the eyes many scales that would blur and blind our sight, and it enables us to see more clearly the petitions we ought to present to God. The souls who are greatest in praise are always greatest in prayer.

The Glories of Christ.

(H. P. BARKER).

Talks on the Tabernacle.—No. 2. The Ark of the Covenant.

EXODUS XXV. 10-22.

<u>The King :</u> Matthew's Gospel. Crown of Gold round about the Ark. "Behold thy King" (Zech. 9. 9).	<u>The Servant :</u> Mark's Gospel. Testimony placed in the Ark. "Behold My Ser- vant" (Isa. 42. 1).	<u>The True Man:</u> Luke's Gospel. The Ark made of Shittim Wood. "Behold the Man" (Zech. 6. 12).	<u>True God :</u> John's Gospel. The Wood of the Ark overlaid with Gold. "Behold your God" (Isa. 40. 9).
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THE principal piece of furniture in the tabernacle, that which gave character to the whole structure and all the ordinances connected with it, was the Ark. We come to this conclusion, not merely because the details concerning it are given before those of the other pieces of furniture, and not merely because it was the throne of Jehovah in the midst of Israel, the pledge of His presence with His people, but because it was so exclusively and comprehensively a type of Christ. There is, in the Ark, a setting forth of Christ personally, as well as Christ in what we may call His official glories that we do not find in equal measure in the other articles that were to be placed in the tabernacle.

As we inquire into the significance of the details given, we shall find cause for wonder and worship.

The Lord's Manhood.

The Ark was to be made of Shittim wood, which, as we saw in a former paper, symbolizes the spotless *humanity* of the Lord Jesus. We need to be reminded that, though born of a woman and thus a true man, yet even in His manhood He was unique. He was not born as others, but by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost, and by the overshadowing power of the Highest. He was thus the Son of God, not only by right of eternal Sonship, but because

of the nature of His birth. If He passed as the son of Joseph, it was a mere *supposition* (Luke 3. 23). In reality He had no human father.

The genealogy in Luke's gospel, in contrast with that in Matthew, takes us right back to Adam, the progenitor of the human race. At first sight the reason is not apparent. A pedigree traced from Abraham, showing that Jesus is the true Heir of promise, is manifestly in place, and the necessity of a genealogy traced from David is easily understood, proving Him to be in the direct line of descent from the royal house of Judah. But what can be the object of carrying back the pedigree to Adam, since every other man, if only he could put his finger upon the intervening links, could assuredly trace his pedigree to the same source?

Here is the wonder of it! For the first time in the world's history there was One, among the sons of men, who needed a genealogy to prove that He was truly a Man! You and I need no such proof. It is evident that we are men. But in the case of the Lord Jesus, being Himself so infinitely more than man, the proof was necessary. So Luke's gospel, which presents Him from the side of His manhood, gives His line of descent from Adam to show that He is indeed a true Man.

His Divine Glory.

But the Shittim wood of the Ark was to be covered, within and without, with pure gold. This speaks of what is essentially divine. And let us never forget that though the Lord Jesus was truly a Man, yet He did not cease to be what He always was, God over all, the mighty God, "the Father of Eternity" (Isa. 9. 6, N.T.). John's gospel brings Him before us in this way. He is introduced in its opening sentences as the Word, self-existent from the beginning, distinct in personality ("the Word was *with God*"), but divine in person ("the Word was God"). He is spoken of as the only begotten Son, whose dwelling-place is the Father's bosom, and who is one with the Father. Towards the end of the gospel we find Thomas, with all his unbelief cast out, owning Him to be what in reality He was: his Lord and his God. This is brought before us in the overlaying gold of the Ark.

The True King.

Besides this, Moses was instructed to "make upon it a crown of gold round about" (ver. 11). This would rather remind us of what the Lord Jesus is as presented in Matthew, in His kingly glory, as the One to whom the Crown and Sceptre belong. Chapter 1. shows him to be the true son of David, lineal heir to the throne of Israel. Chapter 2. narrates His birth: He was "born King of the Jews." Chapters 3. and 4. give us the announcement of the Kingdom, first by John and then by the Lord Himself. Chapters 5. to 7., commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, are really the King's manifesto, setting forth the principles upon which His kingdom would be governed. Chapters 8. and 9. give us the *powers* of the kingdom, put forth in blessing for needy man, oppressed as he was by various ills. Chapter 10. records the formal proclamation of the kingdom by the duly accredited heralds of the King. Chapters 11. and 12. show the *rejection* of the King both by the people and by

their religious leaders. In chapter 13. the Lord takes up a new position, and in seven lovely parables unfolds the form that His Kingdom would assume, consequent upon His rejection and absence.

We need not trace the thought further; Matthew's gospel is essentially that of the king and the kingdom, of which we get a prophetic glimpse in the crown of gold that was to surmount the Ark.

The Servant-Prophet.

Another aspect of the life and service of the Lord Jesus is brought before us in the fact of *the testimony*, given by God to Moses, being placed within the Ark. We are at once reminded of how that blessed One enshrined God's law within His heart and made it glorious. He lived by the Word of God (Luke 4. 4) and found His meat in doing His will. In Him God's testimony found a perfectly adequate vessel: He revealed God in all the blessedness of His nature, and declared the Father's name.

Naturally we turn to the pages of Mark's gospel for the service rendered by the Lord Jesus as having God's testimony in His heart to proclaim to men. And in that gospel He is indeed set forth as the great Servant-Prophet. See how, in chapter 1., His service is characterized by its directness and comprehensiveness.

First, its DIRECTNESS: ten times over in chapter 1. alone we have that word variously translated, "immediately," "forthwith," "straightway," which testifies to the zeal with which He pursued the path, and secured the ends, of His service.

- Ver. 10, "straightway coming up out of the water."
 ,, 12, "immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness."
 ,, 18, "straightway they forsook their nets and followed Him."
 ,, 20, "straightway He called them,"

- Ver. 21, "*straightway* on the Sabbath day He entered into the Synagogue."
 „ 28, "*immediately* His fame spread abroad."
 „ 29, "*forthwith* . . . they entered into the house."
 „ 31, "*immediately* the fever left her."
 „ 42, "*immediately* the leprosy departed from him."
 „ 43, "*forthwith* sent him away."

Then, we notice the COMPREHENSIVENESS of the Lord's service among men. Again confining our survey to chapter 1. of Mark's gospel we find the wide range of His ministry revealed in the constant use of the word "all." In connection with John's mission, preparatory to that of the Lord, we read:

- Ver. 5, "there went unto Him *all* the land of Judea."
 „ 5, "were *all* baptized of him in Jordan."

Then, in connection with the Lord Himself:

- Ver. 27, "they were *all* amazed."
 „ 28, "His fame spread abroad throughout *all* the region."
 „ 32, "they brought unto Him *all* that were diseased."
 „ 33 "all the city was gathered."
 „ 37, "they said unto Him, *All* men seek for Thee."
 „ 39, "He preached . . . throughout *all* Galilee."
 „ 45, "they came to Him from *every* quarter."

Thus we perceive, at the very outset of the gospel which portrays the Lord in His service here, as the antitype of the Ark containing God's testimony, some of the features of that blessed and wonderful service.

How marvellously Scripture hangs together, each part bearing witness to the other parts, and forming an integral portion of the whole. Here in the details connected with the Ark, we have the foreshadowing of Christ in the various ways He is presented in the

gospels. In the prophets, too, we have that same glorious Person brought before us in striking conformity with the fourfold picture of His life and ministry given in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Perhaps it may help the understanding and memory to put it in tabular form, as we have done at head of this paper.

We have not, however, exhausted the significance of this full and lovely type. Rings were to be attached to the corners of the Ark, through which staves were to be put. These were to enable it to be borne upon the shoulders of the Levites during the journeyings of the people of Israel through the wilderness.

This conveys a very precious lesson to us. For we too are in wilderness circumstances. By and by, when "travelling days are done," we shall find ourselves in the presence of Christ, to see Him and know Him as He is, and have the joy of His company for ever. But we are not kept waiting till we reach our home for this. He is with us in all our journeyings through this wilderness, suiting His grace to the circumstances of the way, and giving us all the support of His presence, the cheer of His love, the victory which His might alone can secure. Blessed be His name, *we have* all that is set forth typically in the Ark *with staves*.

One more thing must be noticed. Upon the Ark was to be placed *the mercy-seat*, where God would meet with man (ver. 22). The chief features of this mercy-seat were the cherubim. Cherubim are the mighty beings who sustain the righteousness of God's throne and chastise the offender (compare Gen. 3. 24). We learn, therefore, that God's mercy is not based upon indifference to sin. If He can meet man and bless him, it is not because He is weakly tolerant of man's disobedience and rebellion. His mercy depends on the fact that the claims of the throne have all been met.

Upon the mercy-seat, under the eyes of the cherubim, the blood of atone-

ment was to be sprinkled (Lev. 16. 14). This would set mercy free to act.

Thank God for this glorious truth. Christ is our mercy-seat, set forth by God as such (Rom. 3. 25, N.T.). Not merely has He made propitiation, but He *is* the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2. 2). Because of *Christ* God can address men in terms of forgiveness and mercy, and can meet with them and dwell among them.

And how is this? Because He has

shed His blood to make atonement for our sins. In virtue of His work, He is the Propitiation, the Mercy-seat.

We have not by any means said all that *can* be said as to the Ark of the Covenant. It has not been our object to treat the subject exhaustively. Our desire has rather been that our readers may be led to explore for themselves the wealth of typical teaching in these striking "shadows of good things to come."

Confident : though the Days be Dark.

(W. L. HARTLEY.)

O LORD of Hosts, Thou Everlasting Father!
O Saviour Christ, Redeemer, Lord and King!
Around Thy footstool do we lowly gather,
'Mid strife and conflict still Thy praise to sing.

"God is our Refuge and our Strength!" proclaim we,
With joyful hearts reclining in Thy love;
From faith's clear vision naught can ever hide Thee,
Not powers in earth beneath, nor Heaven above.

O King immortal, changeless and eternal,
Chain Thou our hearts to Thy dear self, we pray,
Then not mankind nor all the hosts infernal
Shall cause our footsteps from Thy paths to stray.

We cry to Thee amidst the great upheaval
Of nations, principalities and powers,
When tides of woe and mighty floods of evil
Burst with wild discord on our peaceful hours.

A day, a day of want and desolation!
A day of cruelties and lawless deeds!
A day of violence and agitation!
And, to the one who God's sure promise heeds,

A day of deep solemnity and wonder—
According to the old prophetic word—
As he, with heart's affections centred yonder,
Looks forward to the advent of his Lord.

Lord Jesus, come! Behold, Thy whole creation
Groans in distress till Thou shalt reappear;
And we, with them, cry out in supplication,
Pouring our hearts' deep longings in Thine ear.

Minor Fissures and Major Convulsions.

(T. OLIVER,
Galasbiels).

A CAREFUL examination reveals the fact that rocks which to the casual observer are perfectly solid and continuous are really intersected with innumerable minute fissures or cracks, into which it would be impossible to put the point of a penknife. Geologists tell us that these cracks were developed during the process of shrinkage in the rocks while they were cooling down from the initial high temperature of the sun, when matter was "without form and void."

The striking feature about the fissures, however, is not their existence, but the fact that as lines of weakness they always determine the path of rupture whenever they are subjected to blasting operations or other major convulsions.

Applying this illustration to the Christian fellowship, while there is no schism in the body, which is God's formation, the outward expression in man's hands has become lamentably divided. Moreover, there are "fissures" in that which is nominally united along which as lines of weakness division takes place if a major disturbance arises.

Convulsion after convulsion has rent the church; its failure is clearly seen in this, and the difficulties in the way of cementing the breaches formed are practically insuperable. The elimination of the minute fissures which predispose actual rupture, which are a serious menace to what harmony and fellowship does exist, is, however, a matter which should engage our best attention. Such fissures in the oneness of mind and heart were detected by Paul at Philippi and made him exhort Euodias and Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord—a small thing, we might say, just two Christian women with a difference, yet it threatened disaster in that happy company of saints. The question is, can these differences be overcome? There is one way in which it can be done.

Is there any way in which the cracks

in the rocks can be removed? Yes, there is one way, and only one. The temperature of the rocks must be raised again to white heat by contact with the sun. Similarly there is only one way in which the fissures which divide the people of God can be removed, viz. by their moral beings regaining white heat through contact with Christ. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is that which will set our hearts on fire with love to one another. The "first love to Christ" condition, which results from our souls being in the unclouded consciousness of His love to us, is the antidote for all the ills under which professing Christians have fallen. This alone can make them "love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1. 22).

There is nothing easier than getting into the habit of recognizing truth in an abstract way while ignoring its experimental application. It is easy to love Christians who live hundreds of miles away, and whom we see very seldom, but it is an entirely different thing to love those with whom we are in everyday association, and who may perhaps be very trying to us in many ways, as we also may be to them.

The learned societies, the social clubs, the business syndicates of the world are all organizations of men with kindred aspirations. But the wonderful thing about Christianity is that it empowers us to love those with whom we may have no natural affinity; those with whom we have incompatible temperaments; those whom we would not choose for companions; but who are bound to us in one common bond, and that is we belong to Christ. The love of Christ is not entered into and enjoyed by us, if it is not finding its expression through us towards those who bear His name on earth.

If we ponder over the thought of how the blessed Lord has forgiven us, and has

borne with all our shortcomings and waywardness, it will enable us to walk quietly and lovingly and in a forgiving spirit with those Christians with whom God in His grace has privileged us to be associated.

Hence the Apostle exhorted the Christians in Ephesus to put away all bitterness and malice, to be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another in the same way that God for Christ's sake had forgiven them (Eph. 4. 31, 32). To forgive in all the tenderness in which God forgives is a natural impossibility, but it is no less than the normal standard of Christianity.

The Colossian believers were exhorted to put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness." All these were to be crowned by "love" as the perfect bond, while the peace of Christ was to be the ruling president, and His Word to dwell richly and wisely in their hearts. (Col. 3. 12-16). It is as these things are developed within us that we shall help and edify one another and be welded together in one mind and heart.

Until that fast-approaching day when He shall call us up and all possibilities of the development of fissures be removed, may we be found gladdening the heart of Christ in this way.

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.

(T. OLIVER,
Galasbiels).

ONE might be tempted to think that these terms imply but trivial distinctions, did the Apostle not twice make specific use of them in identical order, viz. in Ephesians 5. 19 and in Colossians 3. 16. We may therefore be assured that in their usage the Spirit of God has some special truth to unfold and emphasize for our profit.

A psalm is not necessarily a psalm of David. The thought of God's mercy was the prominent impulse which inspired the Psalmist to pen his psalms. So, too, it is the deep sense of the mercy of God in our souls, as we have experienced it for ourselves, which will lead us to burst forth in a psalm to gladden the heart of the Lord. An example will illustrate:—

"Our Shepherd is the Lord,
The Living Lord who died;
With all His fullness can afford
We are supplied."

Hymns have reference to the objective side of praise. The greatness and majesty of our blessed Lord call forth our audible praise, e.g.

"Jesus, Thou alone art worthy
Ceaseless praises to receive."

This is not shutting out the fact that unless we are stirred in our souls we shall not be able to rightly give expression to a hymn. But that does not give essential character to the hymn. Everything sinks into insignificance in the presence of the greatness of the Lord.

Spiritual songs, on the other hand, refer more to the subjective side. The greatness of the work of the Spirit of God within us leads us not only to make melody in our hearts to the Lord but we break forth into singing. The gladness in our hearts is called up in response to the joy of His heart. Elihu could say, "God my Maker who giveth songs in the night" (Job 35. 10). What striking impulse within prompts such words as:—

"'Praise ye the Lord' again, again
The Spirit strikes the chord.
Nor toucheth He our hearts in vain;
We praise, we praise the Lord."

These three examples set forth the outpouring of the heart that has been put into tune by the grace of God, and that lives in the joy of the favour in which God has set it.

Liberty.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THERE can be no doubt that government is necessary and that the nations of the earth value one that is wise, equitable, and considerate. We feel the need of control and accept it freely. Order and rule are admittedly essential in every department of life, whether in the home, the business, or in the nation. Apart from this there would be disorder and confusion. It is only when control becomes unreasonable and despotic, causing annoyance and friction, that it is resented. Even then it is wonderful how patient man is, and how long he endures that state of friction.

A despotic government, whatever its form, whether that of an absolute monarchy, or one shaded down to the tastes of the day, is resented. Freedom is more or less curtailed; rights are invaded; the liberty of the subject is touched; and, as this extends, the yoke becomes heavier, until measures are taken to lighten it, or else to throw it off altogether. Then a state of anarchy ensues, when every one does that which is right in his own eyes, to the injury of others, and of the State itself.

What need of truly wise government in each separate department, and, may I say, primarily in the home! It is against a military despotism that the nations of the world have arisen, in the greatest confederacy of arms ever known, in order to make its domination over the earth impossible, and to maintain their own national liberty as they fondly hope. They conceive that that liberty is in danger, and are therefore straining every nerve, regardless of life or substance, in their frenzied effort to retain immunity from the dreaded incubus. They deem the stake worthy of the sacrifice, and are hazarding their all on the enterprise.

Lives the dearest, the noblest, the most cherished are laid on the altar. Sorrows the deepest are borne; tears the hottest flow; hearts the tenderest,

most devoted, are wellnigh crushed and broken, until the groan of six thousand years of earth's travail seems to be concentrated in one prolonged wail to-day. Yet the agony must continue in the weary struggle for liberty as its goal. That struggle is doubtless unprecedented in the history of the world; and yet it is only forming a precedent for a yet more dreadful cataclysm. The horrors of 1915, great though they are, will hardly bear a comparison with those of — (the year cannot be given), but when the rightly called "Beast" of Revelation 13. shall have "power given him, over all kindreds, tongues, and nations" for forty and two months, and who can only be described as "he that leadeth into captivity" and as "he that killeth with the sword," and whose awfully guilty coadjutor "causeth that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast or the number of his name," then the military despotism will be intolerable. Resistance to this despotism will be impossible. Humanity will be ground under the heel of this Despot.

Things have not, as yet, reached this crisis, but principles are in operation which will make the despotism of that day possible—a tyranny without relief.

Is to-day, then, free of all such domination; is there no form of despotism to cause discomfort? Is humanity in liberty?

It is not! A power dominates the race which is the productive source of every form of despotism, whether in the person, the family, or the State. The whole fabric is permeated by that power, and the revolution of its wheel is thrown out of gear thereby. Let him who attempts to deny it do so, whether scientifically or ignorantly; he will but prove his folly.

The disturbing and dislocating power is SIN—the will of man in opposition to that of God—that is the source of

all the mischief in the world. "By one man," we read, "sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5. 12).

Sin is the despot! It may be that his chains are not felt, nor his complete and universal mastery owned. He may steel the heart and blind the eye, but his control is none the less absolute. Thus, when the Jews of old made the boast that they never were in bondage to any man, the Lord Jesus, to whom they addressed themselves, did not charge them with being the subjects of Cæsar, as indeed they were, but quietly, and in divine power, He simply told them that "whoso committeth sin is the servant of sin"; and right well they knew, from the eldest to the youngest of them (John 8.), that each was guilty of some sin.

Nay, "all have sinned" (Rom. 3. 23), and therefore all are the servants of sin. He is our master, our tyrant and despot. Very humbling, no doubt, and hence the silly attempts that are made by the infidel to try and dissipate the existence of such a thing. But, just as the seeds of death are in the body from infancy onward, so the poison of sin is in the nature all through—ineradicably and incurably—and makes itself only too evident in ten thousand shapes and forms of conduct both Godward and manward.

To deny it is absolute folly. In the struggle for liberty it may be possible to overpower the despot. A vast confederacy, skilfully handled, may accomplish great things, but how is the tyranny of sin to be overthrown; how can true soul-liberty be won and enjoyed?

To the company of Jews, already referred to, and who knew not the awful despotism by which they were held, the Lord also said: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8. 36).

He proposes liberty "indeed" from the domination of the common despot; only He, the Son of God, must give it.

He alone can liberate, for He alone can save.

What were the forces He had to overcome?

They were sin, death, the grave, and Satan. Four powers far beyond the help of man; but mark:—

1. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us."
2. "Christ died."
3. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."
4. "He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil."

Every opposing power is overcome by the now risen and glorified Lord. He is victorious and so, through Him, are His people. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 57).

Oh, what ecstasy fills the soul as it stands by Christ's empty tomb and sees the despot, silenced, annulled, and crushed for ever! His resuscitation is, thank God, impossible. That Pharaoh, at any rate, is drowned in the depths of the sea. The foe and his hostile ranks are utterly discomfited. Faith rejoices in a divinely effected emancipation. Our day of liberty has dawned.

And therefore we may sit down, with our open Bibles, and learn, from Romans 6., how we are made free from sin; from Romans 7., free from the law; in Romans 8., from the law of sin and death; and, farther in the same golden chapter, we await "the liberty of glory," which we shall gladly share with a now fettered, groaning, travailing, pained creation, and it with us.

"The liberty of the glory of the children of God" (as the words should be read) thrill the soul. The liberty of grace is unspeakably sweet, now that we have the Spirit, and can cry: "Abba, Father" in all the holy delight of this precious relationship, but that of the glory! No tear, no sorrow, no death, no war, no bereavement, no penury—

but God the Father, Son, and Spirit, and our souls and bodies fitted for the glory.

How glorious is the prospect!

That will be sweeter and it will be eternal: "Ye have been called unto liberty" (Gal. 5. 13). What a calling! It is one of grace to-day and of glory to-morrow. It is a holy and spiritual liberty outside the range of material forces and the clash of arms. It has been secured for us, in view of the supremely despotic and superhuman powers of sin and death and Satan, by the atoning death and glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose grateful debtors we are, and whom now we love in return for the infinite love which He has first shown to us.

Sin, the despot, is vanquished by Him, on behalf of all His people. They are free! But may not their present

enjoyment of this liberty be marred? It may.

See how (in Galatians) the Spirit of God warns against legality whereby the cry of "Abba, Father" gives place to a sense of servitude. But the situation of a "hired servant" ill becomes the relationship of a son, once lost, but now found, kissed, clothed, and feasted. Or again see (in 1 Cor.) how liberty had been treated as licence; and grace turned into lasciviousness (as in Jude), and how such perversions incurred the sternest rebuke of the Holy Spirit of God, for God is not mocked. Hence the command to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5. 1). A firm, determined "stand" for this blood-bought liberty is the duty and privilege of every child of God.

The hearty acknowledgment of His government and of His will is truest liberty for all His people.

Light for a Dark Day.—No. 2.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy.—Introduction (continued).

IN the first chapter of this epistle the Apostle tells Timothy that all in Asia had turned away from him, and he could only speak of one man who had not been ashamed of his chain. In chapter 2. a darker picture is drawn. There were professors of Christianity who assailed the testimony of our Lord by their profane and vain babblings. The resurrection was said to have passed already, and by means such as these the faith of some was being overthrown. The profession is compared to a great house, in which are all kinds of vessels, some to honour and some to dishonour. From the latter Timothy is exhorted to separate himself, and to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

They that fear the Lord and that think upon His name come once more to light. The very departure of the mass

from the truth and power of Christianity brings the faithful into evidence, for they cannot go with those who wilfully turn aside from the Redeemer of their souls. They come together, and are found walking together in the truth, in spite of the general departure. And of them the blessed Lord takes account. He hears their sighing and their crying on account of the abominations that are practised by those who are called by His sacred name, and in the day in which He makes up His jewels they shall not be forgotten by Him.

In chapter 3. the character the profession would exhibit in these last days is pointed out. Bad as they were in apostolic days, a worse state of things was to appear. Every form of worldliness and of wickedness in Christendom was to develop under a form of godliness. A set of men would arise in the garb of

Christians, who by sleight of hand and worldly wisdom would counterfeit the power of God, which works through His servants for the deliverance of His people from this evil world. They had their type in Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses when sent by God for the emancipation of His people from the bondage of the Egyptians. The signs Moses wrought were by the power of God, and had for their object the leading of the people out of Egypt, that they might be brought into the land of promise. The object of the enemy was to hold them fast under the oppression of Pharaoh.

And the object of their antitype to-day is to keep the people of God in this evil world. God has called us to heaven. We are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3. 1). Our home is there (John 14. 2, 3), as is also our inheritance (Eph. 1. 3; 1 Peter 1. 4; Heb. 10. 34). We are strangers here in this world, for we are a heavenly race (1 Cor. 15. 48, 49); and we are pilgrims on our way to that heavenly land (1 Peter 2. 11). And just as the object of the enemy was with respect to Israel, either to prevent them getting out of the land of Egypt altogether or to so corrupt them that they would never enter into the land of promise, so his object to-day is to link us up body and soul with this Christless world. According to the leaders of Christendom, we are citizens of earth as long as we are upon earth. They will let us go to heaven when we die, but to maintain that our place, and our home, and our citizenship is there now at this present moment, and that as much as it ever shall be, they will not allow at all.

In chapter 4. we are told, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." And these days are upon us. Fables most assuredly are preferred by the mass of professing Christians. The

most monstrous absurdity, the most blasphemous attack upon the Scriptures, or upon the person of the Son of God, is hailed by the mass of people as a needful, wholesome, and happy change from the conscience-searching and annoying gospel of the grace of God.

Jude speaks of these as having gone in the way of Cain, run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. And while encouraging the saints to earnestly contend for the faith, he does not lead them to look for any improvement in the state of things, but to build themselves up in their most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghost, and in this way to keep themselves in the love of God, looking, not for things to improve, but for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, while seeking to be used of God to deliver others from the impending judgment.

It is not difficult to see that we have reached the days spoken of both in Jude and in 2 Timothy. Therefore all who know God will naturally be on the look out for the path which assuredly He has marked out for the feet of His faithful people to tread. We know Him too well to imagine for a moment that He has thrown His saints upon their own resources, and that without the necessary light from Himself when the day is present in which has come to pass the evils foretold in His blessed Word. He has not condemned us to run with the multitude on the downward path to destruction, nor has He left us to walk by the light of the sparks of our own kindling. No, He loves us too well for that. And indeed in this very epistle the Scriptures are brought forcibly before us, as able to perfect the man of God, and furnish him thoroughly unto all good works. By their light the faithful soul will find a path as plainly marked out as if everything was in the most perfect order, though for those who are not whole-hearted for Christ the path, however clearly it may be indicated, lies in obscurity; for none are so blind as those who refuse to see.

We cannot hide from our eyes the terrible condition in which the beloved people of God are found to-day, nor, if we could hide this sorrowful sight from our eyes, would it be well for us to do so. True believers are so completely mixed up with a profession that is on the very verge of apostasy, that none but the Lord knows them that are His. They can be found among Tories, Radicals, Socialists, Labourists: all politicians of earth, and all fighting for their rights, and every one expecting God to be on the side which has by him been espoused. Heaven, and the rights of God—the less said about such things the better; they will get to heaven when they die, and the rights of God can be left to the indefinite future. Thank God this is not so of all His people, but I fear it is true of the majority.

And what about those who are mere professors? Are they not making a very quick march down into the darkness of Paganism? Christianity, if we are to believe the leaders of thought, has been long ago played out. The Bible, to the majority, is but a relic of the dark ages! a compound of fact, fable, and fiction! As a revelation of, or from, God, it is perfectly valueless; that is, if there be a personal God at all, a doctrine by many greatly questioned. Sin against God is a misnomer! Atonement by blood is a heathenish superstition! Eternal punishment is a fictitious bugbear! The future is walled up in gloom impenetrable, and nothing is known of that which may lie beyond death, except the fact that it harbours no evil for the human race. The virgin birth of the Son of God is either flatly denied or queried. The resurrection of Christ—the less said about this also the better! These are a few samples of the light which at present illuminates the schools of theology, and which forms the thoughts of those who unhappily go there to get the knowledge of the will of God. There are, as I have indicated, some bright exceptions to this general corruption, but this miasma, which issues from the abyss of evil, leaves

scarcely a single soul in normal spiritual vigour.

But though I have said all these things, and though I feel that it is absolutely necessary that they should be said, it is not my intention merely to point out the evil, which is glaring enough to be seen by all who are not spiritually stone blind, but rather to ask you who love God, and who owe everything to His grace, and to the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, how you think He feels about all this apostasy about which I have been speaking. I feel certain you cannot suppose He has no judgment about it at all. You cannot suppose Him to be indifferent to the subtle way in which the enemy has laid successful siege to the citadel of His truth upon earth. It cannot be of no concern to Him that that which characterizes the profession of His holy name to-day is either utter indifference to His claims or barefaced blasphemy.

And in the midst of all this, what is it that occupies our attention? Is it the kingdoms of this world? or is it the kingdom of God? Is it the politics of earth, or the politics of heaven, that we go in for? Is it kinematographic representations, athletic sports, theatrical performances, or political meetings that swallow up our leisure hours, or is it the society of the people of God we seek, where His word is revered and read, and where prayer is wont to be made? Are we, like some who are described in this epistle, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God?

And with whom are our associations? Are they with those who know the Son of God as their personal Saviour, and who delight to speak of Him, and to hear Him spoken of? or are they with men of the world, who hate to hear His name mentioned? Remember, if we want to be miserable, we can go with the world, for we still have a nature within us that has no delight in the things of God, but the world cannot come with us, for it is by nature His implacable enemy.

Perhaps I may be told that we cannot go out of the world, that we have to go through it, do our business in it, be kind, courteous, and considerate to all, so as to give no offence to people generally or cause them to suppose that we consider ourselves better than they. True, but all that can be done without making ourselves associates of the mere worldling, and obliging him by talking about the things of the world, and not about the Christ of God, with whom our hearts are full. His conditions of companionship with him are, if we are to have him, we must have the world along with him, for his pleasures are all drawn from that source. Are we ready to accommodate him? or shall we not rather take the ground that, if he desires to keep company with us, he must not object to the presence of the Son of God also? Are we not very well aware that, if we made these conditions, the worldling would not have us?

But what about our associations in a religious way? Do we sit composedly and quietly, without the slightest protest, while a professed servant of Christ tears the Word of God to tatters, and preaches another gospel than that which was preached by the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour? Are we mixed up with all kinds of wickedness in our religious devotions? Have we not been told that if any one come to us, and bring not this doctrine, we are to have nothing to do with him? (2 John 10.). Has the Word of God lost all power over our hearts? Why not withdraw from such at His command? What shall we gain by disobedience? You may say, Where am I to go? Had Abraham asked that question, and refused to move until he got an answer, he would have died in Ur of the Chaldees. You are told to depart from iniquity. All you have to do is to take one step at a time. When you have taken the first step He will give you light for the second. There is always a way of escape from evil for every soul of man who is determined, by the grace of God, to do what is right.

And for your guidance the Holy

Scriptures are sufficient, though not many think so. The conduct and order of the house of God after it had fallen into decay, and not its order as set before us in the Word of God, seems to be that which has greatest acceptance in Christendom. Then they have the early fathers, and their writings, and these have greater weight with the hierarchy than has Scripture. If only some one can be found who has been in the company of an Apostle, or has even lived in Apostolic days, everything that man is reported as having said or done is sacred in the minds of these leaders of the people.

But here they seem to forget that Judas kept company with the Lord Himself; and not only that, but had part of the ministry committed to the other Apostles. Paul also warns the elders of Ephesus that *of their own selves* men would arise speaking perverted things, to draw away the disciples after them (Acts 20. 30). Demas also forsook him, having loved this present world (2 Tim. 4. 10). Hymenæus, Alexander, Philetus he mentions as corrupters of the saints, and all in Asia had turned away from him, of whom were Phygellus and Hermogenes. Nor of all those who took a prominent place as ministers of the truth had he one, when writing to the Philippians, that he could whole-heartedly commend, except Timothy; for, he says, "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2. 21).

When I turn to the fathers, how do I know that I am not turning to some such men as these? This is a great deal too risky for me. When telling Timothy to continue in the things he had learned and been assured of, he says, "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (3. 14). I do not know these fathers, nor have I any confidence in them. But I have no need of these men, for I have the Holy Scriptures, and they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all

good works." Let us learn to keep more closely to the Word of God itself, for it cannot mislead us; and let us approach it with holy reverence, knowing whose Word it is; and let us earnestly seek to be instructed in its precious truths by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us for that very purpose. We are certain to be deceived more or less by the fathers, but we cannot be deceived by the Apostles of our Lord. They say, "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us" (1 John 4. 6).

We are come to days in which it is necessary that every true believer in Christ should be a man of God. Leaders cannot be depended upon; for the mind of man, which is always infidel and schismatic, has a large place in every religious community. Where the Scriptures are not read in dependence upon God, and their every sentence carefully pondered, eaten, and digested into the moral being, so that the Word becomes the living principle in the soul, no man will be able to thread his way, so as to please God, through the labyrinths of this sectarian and pleasure-loving profession of Christianity. It is a poverty-stricken land of darkness and error; a home of self-will, lust and pride; an arena of gladiatorial combats between mental athletes, who have no confidence in anything but the imaginations of their own unbelieving hearts; a hotbed of blasphemy; a dreary waste of fruitless speculation; and a rendezvous of hypocrites. If any one thinks this picture is drawn by a rash, careless, and unconscionable hand, let him read the short epistle of Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, or the Second Epistle of Peter, servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, and let him change his thoughts regarding the disposition of the mind of the writer of these notes.

But I may be told that I have overlooked the possibility of my misunderstanding the Scriptures; that I require some one to explain what they say and mean. No, I have not overlooked this, nor have I overlooked the purport of

such a reminder. A Roman priest tells me I am not to have the Bible at all; that it is not good for me to read it; nor do I need to read it, for he will tell me all I require to know about divine things. I listen to him, and find myself in the hands of the devil. A Protestant priest tells me the Bible is a very good book to have, and that I should read it daily, and prayerfully; but that I cannot understand it apart from his help. He must explain it to me. That it would not be as dangerous for me to listen to the latter person as to the former is not hard to see, but whoever gets me to listen to him has me in his power. But the Spirit of God, who dwells in every true believer, is the only teacher we really require. As to this the Word of God could not speak more plainly: "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2. 27). Thanks be unto God for such a faithful and infallible Guide! May we place ourselves unreservedly in His hands!

Of this only would I further remind the reader. The whole history of the professing Church, its fall, its corruption, its association with the world, its ruin, its apostasy, its rejection by Christ, and its final judgment, have all been foreseen by the Lord; and not only foreseen, but clearly marked out in the Scriptures, as also has provision been made for the faithful in its very darkest hour. Therefore let us not think that anything has been left to be filled up by the cleverness of our own natural minds. We may rest assured that every way we are to take in the midst of this ruin has been plainly marked out for our feet. Whatever we have not Scripture for doing we had better leave alone. Scripture points out the path we are to take, the company we are to keep, the dangers we have to avoid, and the work we have to do. And while we require "all Scripture" in order to be "thoroughly furnished to all good works," there is no passage more important for our consideration than the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy.

Mystery, Babylon the Great.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos. No. XVI.

"I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17. 3-6).

THE "golden city" on the Euphrates, with its impregnable walls, its fortress towers, its gorgeously decorated palaces and temples, its terraces and hanging gardens, once the wonder and admiration of the ancient world, has long been desolated by the hand of God. No shepherd folds his flock, no Arab pitches tent on its site. Satyrs, owls, dragons, and the cries of other doleful creatures alone break the silence of what was once "Great Babylon, the glory of the Nations."

Its history and acts illustrate mystical Babylon of which John speaks. Nimrod the man of violence, was its first king. Here men later sought a name and fame, by making this a great world-centre, uniting social and religious elements in a "Tower" and a "City." On this site Nebuchadnezzar reared a magnificent city, and as he surveyed from the royal terraces its strength, beauty, and extent, and thought of its wonderful treasures of art, its marble palaces and imposing temples, its magnificent paintings, and statuary, the monarch, inflated with pride, said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. 4. 30). Immediate judgment fell upon him.

It was in one of these royal palaces that his grandson made a feast for a thousand of his lords. Calling for the sacred vessels of gold and silver, carried from the temple at Jerusalem, he poured wine into them, and praised the gods of silver, wood, and stone.

Forgetting in whose hands his breath was; this sacrilegious act sealed his doom. The handwriting on his palace wall declared that he was weighed in the balances, and found wanting. That night Darius the Mede drained the river, invaded the city, and slew the impious monarch. From that moment it was a doomed city. Its ruins are a standing witness that there is a God, who not only can foretell by His prophets, but who can carry out every prediction He makes.

In its moral aspect it is not only the synonym for idolatry, pride, violence, and corruption, but for religious intolerance and persecution of God's people. By its riverside the Jewish captives hung up their harps on the willows and wept. In its furnace the three Hebrew children were cast, and there Daniel was cast into the lions' den for the crime of praying to God.

Mystic Babylon has reproduced all the evil features of ancient Babylon. Its licentious religion and abominable idolatries are seen in the scarlet harlot of chapter 17.; whilst its political, commercial, and social aspect is the theme of chapter 19. The one is the counterfeit of the true church; the substitute of a harlot for the bride, the chaste virgin espoused to Christ. The other is the embodiment of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The one is a satanic effort to substitute incense, images, music, and an imposing ceremonial appealing to the senses, for the spiritual worship that the Father is seeking. The other gratifies man's natural passions, and

panders to his sensual and sensuous instincts; his lust for power and greed of wealth.

The "fall" of Babylon is connected with the destruction of the papal system by the beast, whilst the *destruction* of Babylon is by the judgment of God under the last vial. The entire world system, inaugurated by Cain, continued in ancient Babylon, and perpetuated in highly civilized countries, will be judged. Luxury, pomp, pleasure, covetousness, self-aggrandizement, politics, arts, and science absorb the mind to the exclusion of God.

The "whore" meets her doom first; she is not only a harlot herself, but is the guilty mother of similar unholy alliances. Seated at Rome—the seven-hilled city—her malign influence extends world wide. The waters beside which she sits are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues (chap. 17. 15). Her awful depths of wickedness are witnessed by the golden cup in her hand full of the abominations of her fornication with the kings of the earth. The sensuous, not the spiritual, marks her worship, as witnessed by "dim religious lights," floating incense, stained-glass windows, pealing organs, chanting choristers, the imposing pageantry of Pope, cardinal, prelate, and priest, clothed in scarlet and purple array; bedecked with gold, precious stones, and pearls. These are all intended to deceive her votaries. In Westminster Cathedral, at a given signal, just as the priest is arrayed in full canonicals, a mysterious light shines upon him, bringing his gorgeous attire into prominence, whilst all around is in gloomy shade. This light was designed when the building was erected. By such appeals to the senses Rome seeks to embellish her worship, and delude her worshippers.

But what excited the wonder of John was, instead of the church being persecuted, she was the persecutor. The beast had martyred Peter, James, and Paul, and imprisoned John, but

here the church sheds the blood of saints and the martyrs of Jesus. Alas! how sadly this vision has been verified is witnessed by the dungeons of the Spanish inquisition, the cells of the Bastille in Paris, the fires of Smithfield, and the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew Day when 70,000 victims were slaughtered at the bidding of the Pope. Gregory XIII and his cardinals went in procession from church to church to give God thanks for the massacre, and a medal was struck bearing the legend "Piety has awakened Justice." Such was, such is, that awful system. "Turn or burn" is her language where she dare use it to any who oppose her.

The next prominent feature here is Rome's insatiable desire to dominate Kings and Courts. Whilst Protestantism allows the world to control the church, Rome aims at the church controlling the world. On every hand this is now in evidence. The new Pope is engaged in an active propaganda to regain Rome's lost place in royal circles. As a result every Western nation has recently sent an envoy to the papal court, except France. Thus the scarlet lady is again seeking to dominate the scarlet beast. That she will succeed in connection with the rise of the beast in its last ten-kingdom form is certain. Rome in John's day was governed by an autocrat. Domitian was the head of an absolute monarchy. This was the sixth form of government the Romans had known. Kings reigned at first. These were superseded by Consuls. They were replaced by Dictators; Decemvirs followed, and after them Military Tribunes. These five different forms of government—spoken of as kings—had run their course, and given place to Emperors, who continued until the break-up of the empire nearly five centuries later. Its future and final form will be under an imperial head in conjunction with ten confederate kings. None of these kings lived in John's day, but they will be present at the reappearance of the

empire. We also learn that the first head of this last phase of government will be superseded by another head, without altering the existing amalgamation of ten kings under an autocrat. He is *of the seven*, as to *form* of government, but he is *an eighth individually*.

Some consider the crowning of Napoleon at Rome was a fulfilment of the prophecy as to this seventh head, but we judge that this seventh head will appear when in the order of God's providence imperial Rome is on the scene again in its last ten-kingdom form, and that in the middle of Daniel's last week he will be superseded by a military despot, called the "little horn" in Daniel 7. 8. Suddenly and unexpectedly rising up, energized by satanic power, he will sweep three kings out of existence, grasp the reins of power, and become an eighth head, whilst retaining the confederated form of the empire. From the middle of the week, this monster out of the bottomless pit, will relentlessly set himself to blot Christianity, even in outward profession, from the entire Western world, as also in Palestine and the world generally.

Rome, with all her crimes, has ever claimed to be the custodian of the truth as to the Trinity. She parades herself as the only holy catholic church, outside which there is no salvation, and the Pope asserts he is the vicar of Christ on earth. Satan has used, and does use, her to corrupt the truth of Christianity, but the time will come when all that even in the parody of the truth bears the names of Divine persons must be swept away, to make room for the beast and his image to be exclusively worshipped. Satan having used Rome to further his designs as to the beast, now uses the ten kings to accomplish her downfall, and with her the whole religious

system she represents in all its parts. First they hate her; probably angered by her arrogant claims to dominate them. Next they strip her. Their cupidity excited by the enormous wealth she has accumulated, they enrich themselves at her expense. Then they do to her, as she has done to her victims, desolate and consume her root and branch.

England stripped the church to enrich the state in the time of Henry VIII; France at the Revolution hissed out its hatred to her. These are faint pictures of that final catastrophe, when the last trace of this vast religious system of ecclesiastical iniquity will be swept out of existence, by those nations whose envoys—after forty years' absence—now throng the Vatican palace.

Unwittingly, in desolating the harlot they are doing the behests of God, for He hath put into these kings' hearts to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, and thus they will fulfil His will. (See chap. 17. 17.)

The "fall" of Babylon is announced in Revelation 14. 8, whilst the means of its accomplishment are given in chapter 17. Her "fall," primarily, is connected with the destruction of every trace of outward profession in connection with that vile system "which has decked herself out in imperial raiment, has pandered by her corruptions to the kings of the world, has dazed the nations with her meretricious splendour, has darkened heaven with the smoke of her persecuting fires, and has set up idolatry side by side with the worship of God." All other affiliated systems of religion, the children begotten of her fornication, fall with her, the ecclesiastical system is judged in its full extent. Her utter destruction as a world system follows, as we shall see in chapter 18.

Keep yourselves in the love of God. How bright it is! How it casts its light on things which in nature are all darksome. Let us live on the light-beaming side of things.

The Sin Offering.

(J. T. MAWSON).

The question has been asked, "How was God glorified by the death of Christ?" This brief study of the sin offerings as typical of the death of Christ in one of its aspects may partly answer the question.

A SIN offering was required in Israel in the case of the sin of the priest, of the whole congregation, of a ruler, and of one of the common people (Lev. 4.). Four is the number in Scripture which symbolizes completeness, or universality as regards the earth, and in these four cases given we have portrayed for us, first, God's complete thought for man as created by Him and set in the earth for the carrying out of His will, and the universal failure to answer to this; and then the way in which God has vindicated Himself and recovered more than was lost by the fall. In not one respect did man fulfil God's purpose. The failure was complete. This will be readily grasped as here given.

The Purpose of God.

The Failure of Man.

(1) The Priest.

Man was created to have immediate access to God; to find his whole delight in Him, and to render to Him priestly service. He was to be a well-tuned instrument to give forth sweet praise to God, and so glorify Him, for "whoso offereth praise glorifieth God." This was the highest privilege put within the reach of man.

When God came down to walk in Eden Adam hid himself. Sin had separated him from God, and there was no response in his heart to the call of God, and instead of drawing near to God with gladness and worship he shrank away from Him, guilty and afraid. God had lost His creature, and the worship that was due to Him from him.

(2) The Whole Congregation.

The purpose of God in bringing man as a race into being was that He might find in him His good pleasure; and in anticipation of this, before ever man was created, the wisdom of God declared, "My delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8. 31). But this could only have been fulfilled as man found his delight in God.

But the whole world had become full of violence in Noah's day, and instead of God looking down upon men with pleasure, it is written, "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and God said to Noah, *The end of all flesh is come before Me*" (Gen. 6. 12, 13).

(3) The Ruler.

Man was set up in the goodness of God in His own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1. 26), as head of this lower creation. World-wide dominion was placed in his hands that he might represent God in government to all over which he was set. But this could only have been fulfilled as he maintained his fidelity to God.

To Noah, after the flood, was given the place of rule, as dominion had been given to Adam in innocence, but he could not even rule himself, for he planted a vineyard and became shamelessly drunk with the fruit of it. And power ever since in the hands of man has been prostituted to his own glory or gratification in defiance of God's will.

(4) One of the Common People.

Each man, as a distinct entity, was to have God as his sole object, and to be entirely subject to His will and altogether dependent upon Him in the fulfilment of the common duties of life. Every gift had to be held and every relationship fulfilled and duty performed in relation to God.

But the history of men from the beginning is summed up in the sweeping statement: "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53. 6). Independence of God, and disobedience and unthankfulness are inherent in the fallen nature of man. And in all he holds and does self is his centre.

It should be easily understood that the complete failure of man to fulfil the purpose of God in his creation was a serious matter to the Creator, and that if no remedy could be found it would remain an everlasting blot upon His name. Indeed, since the fall was accomplished by the subtlety of "that old serpent," God's arch enemy, the very supremacy of God was challenged in His universe. The man that God had made for His own pleasure had become the willing slave of the adversary, Satan; he had given ear to the lie, and grasped at the devil's promise instead of being satisfied with the truth and goodness of God. He was not merely as a splendid instrument of music put out of tune and destroyed, or as a priceless piece of ware, spoiled and broken; he was this, but worse also, for his will had risen up in rebellion against God; he would not be subject to Him; he had become lawless, for sin is lawlessness. By yielding to Satan he had played the traitor to his Maker, by whom he had been entrusted with this lower creation; by treating Satan as his friend he had cast a slur upon God's character and insulted His majesty. God had lost him, the choicest creature of His hand, made in His own image and likeness.

Eternal justice demanded that God should rise up and execute the full penalty upon guilty man, and the integrity of God's throne had to be maintained in the sight of the innumerable and mighty principalities that own His rule. He who had cast down angels because of rebellion against His authority could not wink at the sin of man, and Satan knew this, and doubtless his intention was to force God into the place of the Judge, so that He should be known *only* in that character to men. Now if the full penalty did fall upon the culprit and mankind was swept away in righteous wrath, God's purposes would be frustrated, His love's deep desires would be for ever unsatisfied, and what a triumph that would be for Satan. From every point of view disaster seemed to have overtaken God's activity in regard to men.

But God is the "Only wise," and in that hour of solemn crisis when all heaven waited to know how He would meet and answer that tremendous challenge to His glory, and Satan's guilty dupes feared and shrank from His presence in the garden, He announced His resource, and declared what He held in reserve—the woman's Seed should bruise the serpent's head. But not only had the ascendancy that Satan had gained over man to be broken, and his temporary triumph be turned to his everlasting defeat, but man's sin had to be dealt with in righteous judgment, and yet the sinner himself be recovered for God; and God's way of doing this was first indicated in the clothing of the guilty pair in coats of skins, and the sin offerings illustrate and typify this in greater detail.

An Offering without Blemish.

Our space will limit us to the consideration of the principal features of the sin offerings which were types of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not speculation

to say that they were types of Him, for the New Testament shows them to be this. In John 1. we are told to "Behold the Lamb of God." And He is no less a person than "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." The fact is that He alone was great enough to take up the question of sin and find a solution of it. He has done this by becoming the sin offering Himself, and in the doing of it He has brought into full revelation the boundless love of the heart of God. He has exposed the slanderous lies of the devil with regard to God which had found such deep root in the nature of mankind, for He has shown that no sacrifice was too great for God to make in order to recover man for Himself, and He has vindicated for ever the absolute justice of God by Himself bearing the penalty of sin.

Now the first feature of the sin offerings was that the victim had had no part in the sin for which it was offered—and it was without blemish. Herein is set forth the sinlessness of Jesus. He became a man that He might stand in the place of men, but He was different from all other men in that He had no part in the universal sin of man that had brought death upon all. As to His nature, as born of the Virgin, He was holy; "that Holy Thing" that was born of her was called the Son of God. This was absolutely essential, apart from it God's plan must have wholly failed, for only One not chargeable with the offence could bear the judgment due to it. Thank God we know that Jesus "knew no sin," but *was made sin for us*.

He came to restore to God all that had been lost through man's failure, but He had first to show that where all else had broken down He stood fast; to show that in Him not only was sin absent, but that there was present every feature of good that God looked for in man. And this was seen in the fourfold way of which the type speaks.

(1) As "A Priest."

He drew near to God, finding in Him alone His full delight and offering to Him at all times the praise that glorifies Him, and bringing to Him that worship that He looked for from man (Luke 4. 8). The Psalms in many places present the Lord to us in this way. Though He did not occupy the place of priest *officially* on earth.

(2) As "The Whole Congregation."

All that God had looked for in the way of pleasure in the whole family of men He has found in His beloved Son as man, for twice over from the heavens He declared His full delight in Him.

(3) As "A Ruler."

He sat upon no throne when He was here on earth, for all His rights were refused by men, but He showed that He was the one fitted for universal dominion by being absolutely subject to the will of God—by loving righteousness and hating iniquity in a life of obedience He showed that He was rightful Lord of all.

And yet in another sense He did rule; there were those who perceived who He was, and they called Him "Master and Lord," and He said, "Ye say well, for so I am." They were held under His control by the love He bore them and the attractive power of His person to all who were born of God. And He could say of them when speaking to His Father, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, save the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17. 12). He instructed, controlled, and kept that company of men for the Father.

(4) As "One of the Common People."

He set the Lord always before Him in every relationship of life. As a boy of twelve His relation to His reputed parents was regulated by His Father's business.

He overcame each temptation of Satan in the wilderness by maintaining the position that man ought to occupy in regard to God as He found it written in the Scriptures. And as the perfect Man, throughout His life below we find Him ever dependent upon God. In Luke's Gospel, which presents Him in this character, it is recorded that He prayed seven times. The number seven symbolizing perfection in Scripture.

It is not our intention to enlarge upon the life of our Lord here on earth, we merely indicate these things to show how entirely free He was from the terrible taint that had brought every other man under death as the judgment of God—He was without blemish. He in whom all these holy excellencies dwelt offered Himself to be a sacrifice for sin. The inward devotion of His life to God that made Him altogether pleasurable to God in life carried Him into death for the accomplishment of the will of God. He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God.

Burnt outside the Camp.

The sin offering was burnt outside the camp, typical of the fact that Jesus "suffered without the gate" and was forsaken of God when He was made "to be sin for us." Here we reach that which passes all human comprehension. The thick darkness that veiled the Holy Sufferer from the eyes of men brought into conspicuity the fact that none but God could understand the full meaning of that great transaction—the only man in whom the All-seeing eye of God beheld nothing but absolute perfection; the One whose every inward motion, as well as outward word and work, evidenced His full delight in God's will, not only bore sins but was made sin that in His own person He might bear sin's full penalty, vindicate God's holy judgment, and clear the way for God to recover man for Himself in perfect righteousness, and bring him into everlasting favour.

The Blood of the Offerings.

The blood of the offerings for the priests and the whole congregation was carried into the holiest and sprinkled there seven times before the Lord and put upon the golden altar that stood before Him. The victim consumed without the camp spoke of God's unsparing judgment upon the sin, the blood brought into the tabernacle to the Lord spoke of the value of that offering as meeting the claims of His holiness there, and as re-establishing those for whom the offering was made in His presence according to His thought.

We have pointed out that the great feature in THE PRIEST was that He should draw near to God with the sacrifice of praise, which is the outcome of delight in Him; and that the great feature of THE WHOLE CONGREGATION was that God should draw near to men and find His delight in them. This twofold place of privilege represents the highest thought of God for man, and in the failure of man in regard to it the fall is seen from its most deplorable side, for we here see what God lost when man turned his back upon Him; and terrible as the consequences of the fall have been to man, God's side must ever be the greater. But the blood—the precious blood of Jesus—has met God's glory in this matter, and because of it man can now draw near to God as a worshipper and God can delight in him.

Man Recovered for God.

But now we must go beyond the type. The sin offering was consumed without the camp until nothing remained of it but the ashes, it could not rise up from the spot where the judgment put it. In contrast to it Christ has come out of death, out of the place of judgment, having "by Himself purged our sins," and has "sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1. 3). Those ancient sacrifices could never take away sin. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10. 12). And "by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (ver. 14). The question of their sins is eternally settled for God, so that He says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (ver. 17). And all these have a title now to be in God's presence, in perfect peace, and for His delight. As the truth unfolds for us we learn that His presence has become their home, that man has been established in the very presence of God, but we must add "in Christ." But this is not according to the old earthly order, in which everything depended upon man's faithfulness to his obligations, but it is in a new and living way, and according to the good pleasure of God's will. We who believe are there in all the value of the blood of Christ, all the judgment that lay upon us having been borne by Him, but we are there also in all His acceptability who died and lives again.

In the case of the sin of A RULER, or of ONE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE, the blood was not carried into the presence of the Lord, instead an atonement was made for them by it at the brazen altar. Their sins, as we have seen, set forth man's failure as set in the world as God's representative and as dependent upon Him—failure that every intelligent creature could take account of. The brazen altar speaks of God's righteous claims against the sinner who had departed from God's way for him, and the blood poured at the bottom of that altar that fronted the four points of the compass announced the fact that GOD IS JUST. It was the witness to all that His judgment had been executed and that as a consequence He could forgive the sinner. It brings us to Romans 3., where we read of "being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth, a propitiation through faith in His blood to DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (verses 24-26).

The challenge can now go forth to the universe, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8. 33, 34).

But here again we pass out of the range of the type. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin, and so condemned sin in the flesh; but He has also raised Him from the dead, and all who are in Him are beyond the reach of condemnation; and not only so, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus now operates in them, releasing them from the law of sin and death, so that the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in them, who walk not after the flesh but the Spirit. So that in the very place where man's breakdown was complete, God has those who are no longer children of disobedience, but who, walking in the Spirit, show forth His praises.

So that now God has secured man for Himself in Christ, and though we still wait for the consummation of His thoughts and purposes, we can in the power of the Holy Spirit be agreeable to Him, as the following well-known scriptures prove.

A Priest.

Our approach to God.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12. 1.

"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."

Heb. 13. 15.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2. 5.

The Whole Congregation.

God's delight in us.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will: to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."—Eph. 1. 3-7.

A Ruler.

As God's representatives on earth.

The time for the believer to reign has not yet come, nevertheless he is called to be an administrator of God's grace and goodness to others.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."—1 Peter 2. 9.

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life."

Phil. 2. 15, 16.

One of the Common People.

In the common duties of life.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Rom. 8. 4.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

1 Cor. 10. 31.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Col. 3. 17.

During the Millennial reign of Christ over the earth Israel will answer to God's thought and show forth His praise in this fourfold way to the nations, as the Old Testament prophecies abundantly prove. Then, when at last all rule and authority shall have become subject to Christ, and when He shall have given up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; and former things shall have passed away; and the new heaven and the new earth in which [God shall be all in all shall have come into being, two things shall abide: men shall be brought near to God and shall render to Him priestly service for ever, and He shall dwell with men and find His eternal pleasure in them. This Revelation 21. 3 declares: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and He shall be their God." But whether in the assembly now, or in Israel in the millennium, or with men in the eternal state, everything for God is founded upon, and springs out of, the One offering of the Lamb of God upon the cross. But not until that eternal state of blessing which shall never be invaded by sin is introduced, will it be fully known how great is the glory that has been brought to God by the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Truth is never really ours, but as the affections are kept in order by it.

Service is having part in Christ's ministry of love.

How does the Christian Stand in Relation to the World?

A. J. POLLOCK.

ANCHORAGE that suffices for fine weather is often found insufficient in storm and tempest.

So truths relating to the heavenly calling of the believer, readily assented to and acted upon in times of peace and quiet, are often found insufficient to stand the test, say, of war, when the tide of patriotism runs high.

It is not the anchor that is faulty, but—the *holding ground*. It is not the truth that is at fault, but—the *hold*, or rather the *lack of hold*, the believer has upon it.

The difficulty is—the truth is not popular. It is far easier to go with the tide than against it, especially when it is running high. It takes far more courage to be a Christian than a patriot.

At this time many Christians are perplexed as to what their true relation is to circumstances, which are perfectly new and extraordinary in the history of the present generation, and which are arousing very strong feelings.

It is evident that it is of the utmost importance that the Christian should whole-heartedly and unreservedly accept the place God puts him in. To do otherwise is to court disaster as a Christian.

The Question of Nationality.

The question of nationality demands serious consideration.

How did nationality come about? Was it God's intention and plan?

It is evident that nationality did not exist before the Flood. After the Flood, when the population of the world had increased to large dimensions, we read, "*the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech*" (Gen. 11. 1). In their ambition the people decided to build one great centre—a city and a tower, "*whose top may reach to heaven,*"

they said—which would weld the rapidly increasing population into one vast imperialism.

God saw their intentions, which, if realized, would confer enormous powers on the people, bent on independence of God. So He stepped in, confounded their language, scattered the people abroad upon the face of the earth, and called their city—"Babel"—which means *confusion*. Now "*God is not the author of confusion*" (1 Cor. 14. 33), so that we learn clearly that nationality became a necessity as a result of man's folly and sin.

If we leap over the centuries, and look at the last view of man, given to us in Scripture, we hear the voice of the Spirit, saying in connection with the eternal state, when all shall be according to God's mind, "*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE*" (Rev. 21. 3). Nationality shall then be gone, distinction between Jew and Gentile, Briton and Teuton, will have perished—all the redeemed, with one heart, object, and occupation, shall be "*HIS people.*"

And even, spite of nationalities to-day, the oneness of mankind as evidenced in creation, and which cannot be destroyed by man's wickedness, is declared in Scripture: "*God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth*" (Acts 17. 26).

Why should mankind, sprung from one pair, "*made of one blood,*" have conflicting interests? The sad answer is that sin is the master.

The Calling of God.

After the narration of the tower of Babel incident the rest of Genesis 11. is taken up with the list of Shem's descendants. This is to bring before our

notice a very remarkable person, who is chosen to be the first exponent of *an entirely new departure in the ways of God*. Abram was the *first* person in the history of the world to receive a call from God to come out from his country, his kindred, his father's house, and be a stranger and a pilgrim in a land which God would show him, and which he would afterwards possess. "*The Lord . . . said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee : and I will make of thee a great nation*" (Gen. 12. 1, 2).

Abram's call was a call *out of* and a call *unto*. The call *out of* involved God's setting aside the nations as such as the sphere of God's purposes and activities. The line was drawn rigidly. Country, kindred, father's house—all was to be left, proof that God would bless entirely apart from the course of this world on principles all His own.

From henceforth **CALLING**—this *new* departure in God's ways with man, His sovereign choice—was to be the channel through which God's blessing would flow. Chosen and called, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the patriarchs followed in order, until the realization of God's promise to Abraham came true: "*I will make of thee a great nation.*" The children of Israel became a *called* nation as Abram had been a *called* person.

Was Israel, then, a nation among nations? Nay, we read that Israel "*shall not be reckoned among the nations*" (Num. 23. 9); and Moses said, "*Wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth*" (Exod. 33. 16).

There were to be no intermarriages or treaties or affinities in any way—no alliances, no *ententes cordiales* with the surrounding nations.

And this was the fountain head of Israel's strength with God, as of offence

among the surrounding peoples, that they refused to be numbered among the nations. Whereas it was their weakness and dishonour with God, as it was their debasing in the eyes of the nations, when they forgot Jehovah's exhortation.

The Heavenly Calling.

But for the last nearly two thousand years Israel has been set aside. Her awful guilt has been the rejection of her Messiah. Judicial blindness is hers now. But they will be yet blessed. "*The gifts and CALLING of God are without repentance*" (Rom. 11. 29); that is, without change of mind on God's part.

But the setting aside of Israel has brought in the most wonderful dispensation of all, unrecognized by prophecy, relating as that does to the earth. This most wonderful dispensation is that of the church. The church has a *heavenly calling*. Israel had an *earthly* calling. The Christian to-day has a *heavenly* calling.

At the famous Jerusalem conference, which was to set the infant church free of the set domination of Judaizing teachers, James began his memorable speech by saying, "*Men and brethren, hearken unto me : Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles TO TAKE OUT of them a people for His name ;*" and the very Greek word for church or assembly is "*ekklesia,*" which means *that which is called out*.

Here we have it. A people within a people. A people *called out* from the nations of the world, *called with* a heavenly calling, and *called to* a heavenly destiny.

The great effort of Satan is to destroy this idea and hinder its practice, and get believers to have the character of dwellers on the earth (see Rev. 3. 10).

Ever since God called the light day and the darkness night, the devil's favourite device, if he cannot procure pure darkness, is to mix darkness with

light, and produce a moral twilight. Ever since Jehovah decreed the ox and the ass must not plough together, Satan's effort has been to bring about the unequal yoke: in this present dispensation, an alliance of church and state, of believer and unbeliever.

The Testimony of Scripture.

Let the following scriptures come with all their solemnity and weight, and, may we add, blessedness, for all who have ears to hear:

"*They [believers] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*" (John 17. 16).

"*Our conversation (literally, citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Phil. 3. 20).

"*Wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*" (Heb. 3. 1).

"*Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (James 4. 4).

Let the Christian reader weigh these and kindred scriptures, and let him accept the truth, so plainly stated by the Lord Himself, that he is not of the world. If he is not of the world, *he is plainly NOT OF A NATION*, but is "*a stranger and pilgrim,*" wherever he may be, whether in the country in which he was born or otherwise.

* * * *

The Christian's relation to the Nation.

In what relation toward the nation does the Scripture put the believer? Trace the Scriptures—we mean the New Testament Scriptures, for they alone furnish the answer for *this* dispensation—and you will find the only place given is a place of *SUBJECTION*. "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers*" (Rom. 13. 1). The New

Testament tells us how to be subject, but not how to rule, either as king or magistrate. They tell us the ruler is "*a minister of God to thee for good*"; and as to the very tax-gatherer, he is "*God's minister.*" As to the supreme ruler, we are told to "*honour the king*" (1 Peter 2. 7).

The Christian will not fail in subjection, provided the laws of man do not call upon him to disobey God's laws, in which case he will seek grace to act on the Apostle Peter's declaration before the Sanhedrin, "*We ought to obey God rather than men,*" cost what it may.

Difficulties stated.

But some one may say, "The Christian cannot receive rightly the protection of army and navy, unless he joins in the protection of the country."

We answer that to carry out this argument to the full would involve the Christian taking as full a part in the government of the nation as the unbeliever, whether in times of peace or war, whether in the making of laws in parliaments or in filling the ranks of army and navy. Can such a position as that be maintained in the presence of the Lord's own words: "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*"?

What example has our Lord Jesus Christ—our great Exemplar—left on record? Did He by word or example encourage His followers to take part in the world's schemes or government as belonging to it? Did he not refuse to mix Himself up with the political and military necessities of the hour?

Did the apostles take part in the politics of their times, in the national life of their country, in the military needs of the moment? They did not. On the contrary, as we have seen, the only place they give Christians in this world is that of subjection, and describe them as "*strangers and pilgrims,*"

One reason why the believer can happily accept the blessing of good laws and the protection afforded by the police, the army and navy, is that "*the powers that be are ordained of God*" (Rom. 13. 1).

God is overruling and restraining the power of evil in relation to His people and the spread of the gospel. The world is unchanged since it crucified the Lord Jesus. It would not tolerate His people a single hour but for this restraint. How wonderful this is can be recognized when we reflect that Satan is the god of this world, and prince of the power of the air; no empty titles, and well seen as real in the temptation in the wilderness.

When King George V was crowned in the historic Westminster Abbey, the peers and peeresses stood, coronet in hand, waiting till the King should be crowned. When the crown was placed upon his head, then the right and proper moment arrived for them to place the coronets on their heads in proof of their loyalty to their King.

The Christian who seeks honour in this world and seeks to be great in it is putting the coronet on his brow before the Lord Jesus is publicly acknowledged in the place of supremacy, as did the Corinthians of old (1 Cor. 4.).

The fact is the Christian is a heavenly citizen. He owes his allegiance to Christ. God's laws are supreme. He is a patriot, but his country is heaven; he is a *heavenly* patriot; he is a loyalist, but his King is the Lord Jesus.

The Christian who is true to his calling will be neither Socialist, Conservative, nor Liberal. He is outside the world as a system, and all its politics. Nevertheless, the ruler of a country will not find more obedient, quiet, respectful subjects in his realm than the intelligent Christians.

Some practical reflections.

In 1 Timothy 2. 1-4 we read:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and

giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

First we are to pray "*for ALL men—for kings and for ALL that are in authority.*" And our prayers are to have in view the whole household of God upon earth, which is found in all lands, that "*we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*" And further that the gospel may go out through His people to all men of every nation, without let or hindrance, for the passage goes on to tell us that "*God our Saviour . . . will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim. 2. 4). Unless Christians pray on these lines they do not pray according to the will of God.

I can understand special pressure upon the Christians in the country in which they live leading to special prayer for the king and rulers of that country, but I cannot understand special prayer made for one ruler at the expense of another, nor for one set of Christians at the expense of another.

But if we pray for one ruler alone to the exclusion of others, we are sectarian at once, we have ceased to be intercessors for all according to God's will; and have departed from the place of extraordinary privilege which only belongs to God's household, who are called with a heavenly calling, and are "*strangers and pilgrims*" on earth.

We are told to "*honour the king,*" that is, the particular ruler whose jurisdiction we are under, by acting in subjection to his laws, provided obedience to them does not involve disobedience to God. But we are to pray "*for kings and for all that are in authority.*"

God will answer such prayer, and that answer will draw all Christians closer together, and draw men to Christ.

It takes more courage in days of national stress and need to take up the Christian position than the national position. It is far more difficult to be a heavenly patriot than an earthly patriot. The one is never popular, always goes against the tide; the other is popular, goes with the tide and helps to make it.

Courage—*divine* courage—is needed. Once our position is grasped as according to God and Scripture, our path is to tread it with unflinching, unyielding courage.

Another reflection that carries considerable weight is that Christians form "a little flock," and every one of them

is needed in *spiritual* service. The need is tremendous, whether in the church or in the world, whether in the soldiers' camps or at the battle-front. There are millions ready to grasp the sword, there are few ready to serve the Lord. Let us not forget that the souls of men need to be cared for and this is the Christian's work.

Then there is the Christian's duty to do good to all, especially those of the household of faith. In this we shall be kept right, if our motive is God's glory and not man's blessing. The more strongly the motive of God's glory rules in the Christian, the more will man be blessed, and that according to God.

Studies in the Psalms—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 82, 83.

THESE are the last of the Psalms of Asaph, and like Psalms 50. and 75. by the same author, have judgment for their subject. They deal respectively with the sins of Israel's judges, and with one of the last confederacies of hostile aliens plotting to destroy Israel as a nation (Ps. 83. 4). Our Lord's explanatory words in connection with His citation from Psalm 82. 7 (see John 10. 35) indicate in what sense the judges or magistrates in Israel are called gods, they were those to whom the word of God came and were thus His representatives to His people. As Bishop Perowne remarks, "they had been placed in the loftiest position to which any man could aspire. They were sons of the Highest, called by His Name, bearing His image, exercising His authority, charged to execute His will, and they ought to have been in their measure His living representatives, the very pattern and likeness of His righteousness and wisdom" (2 Chron. 19. 6). God taking His stand in His own assembly solemnly charges them, "How long will ye judge a judgment which is iniquity and accept the persons of the ungodly?" Alas!

they know not and they understand not. They wander in moral darkness and consequently the foundations on which earthly order is established become disorganized. When this state of things is present, what is the resource of the righteous? It is evident that those who are only corrupters of the earth cannot find divine support in the exercise of their office, they die like men who are but food for death (Ps. 49. 14).

If right judgment is to go, God must Himself intervene and be His own witness by the execution of it upon those who, while in a place of privileged nearness to Him, have really degraded His Majesty. Hence the last verse pleads for God to arise and take the judgment into His own hands so that all nations may come under His sway. This glorious consummation is yet future, but in the meantime God has been fully and perfectly displayed in His Son, who for us takes the place of the *elohim* of our Psalm and truly expresses God to us, at the same time representing us before the Father. Thus all that God is both in grace and

righteousness are fully maintained in a MAN in spite of the grievous defection witnessed in the Psalm.

A striking analogy may be traced between the judgment in this Psalm and that exercised by the Son of Man walking among the candlesticks in Revelation 2. and 3. In that scripture it is when the responsible witness is rejected as disgusting to Him that He Himself takes the character of the faithful and true witness. How far the *elohim* of the Psalm correspond to the angels of the assemblies I must leave my readers to consider.

Many attempts have been made to attach Psalm 83. to some historical event, but as we have seen in the case of Psalms 76. and 79., in which the same enemy is in view, the instruction is prophetic. The Spirit takes us to the last days when, national restoration of the Jews having taken place, they become the object of hatred and attack to their neighbours. The faith of the saints is as ever directed to God and this evil confederacy is brought before Him in prayer not as *our* enemies but *Thine*; so again identifying Him with the cause of His people, it is "Thy people" and "Thy hidden ones," and in verse 5 they are confederate "against Thee." Their names are then mentioned, Assyria last. The prayer is for their defeat, we cannot say

their destruction, in view of the desire that they might seek Jehovah's name, (ver. 16).

It is interesting to compare the petition of this Psalm with the prediction of the prophet Isaiah (chap. 10. 26; 11. 14), which assures the faithful that their prayer for the repetition of the victory of Gideon will be answered as far as the defeat of the hostile armies is concerned. On the other hand the ultimate blessing of Assyria is foretold in Isaiah 11. 16. For the children of Lot also blessing is promised in a remnant (Jer. 48. 47; 49. 6). Not so in the case of Edom. Thus both by mercy and by judgment the great purpose of God will be assuredly reached, and the name of Jehovah alone be Most High over all the earth. Such is the conclusion to which the prophet Asaph leads us, for this Psalm is the last of his compositions.

This glorious supremacy, we learn from Psalm 8., is realized in the Son of Man; into His kingdom as God's beloved Son we Christians are translated now. We may well prayerfully meditate the nature and privilege of such a relation and give thanks to the Father who has brought it to pass along with the higher blessing of fitting us for sharing the portion of the saints in light (Col. 1. 12-14).

"Rejoice and be Exceeding Glad."

WE had the pleasure, a few days ago, of calling to see an aged child of God, a farmer, living in an out-of-the-way and wild part of Northumberland. He was in a feeble state of health and confined to his bedroom, where we spent, to us, a very refreshing half-hour. He told us that he was born into this world in 1827 and born into God's family in 1857, so that for fifty-seven years he had known the Lord; time enough truly to test the faithfulness of the Lord as well as his own reality.

But what affected us most was a parting word that he gave us from his open bedroom window as we prepared to drive away from his house. It was, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.*"

We felt that no word from an aged pilgrim to young men seeking to serve the Lord could have been more appropriate. It turned us in our thoughts from the ups and downs of Christian conflict with their joys and sorrows,

from the fluctuations of success in service with their hopes and disappointments, and from the varying warmth and coldness of God's saints with their cheer and rebuffs, to Him in whom there is no shadow of changing, to the perennial spring of every lasting joy—the Lord Himself.

We record the simple incident because we wish to press upon our readers the need of definite exercise of soul as to this very definite exhortation, made first to the saints at Philippi (chaps. 3. and 4.). We do not rejoice sufficiently, you do not rejoice sufficiently. We felt that we needed those words from the lips of that old saint standing at his bedroom window; we feel that you need to have them pressed upon you. There are sorrows truly that we all must taste and share, and the more we walk in the fear of God the more we shall see in the world and the church to cause us grief; nevertheless with all, and under all, and over all, there should be with us this rejoicing.—“As sorrowful yet alway rejoicing,” said the Apostle. *And if we are not rejoicing we are not safe.* “To write the same things to you, to me indeed, is not grievous, *but for you it is safe*” (chap. 3. 1).

Weakness in testimony, fruitlessness in life, and failure in service is the one alternative to this joy in the Lord. We are a drag upon brethren, to ourselves a misery, to the devil a sport, and to the Lord a dishonour if we do not rejoice in Him. In short, the Christian who is not rejoicing, or who cannot rejoice in the Lord is a backslider living in sin.

It need not be said, for we know it, that we cannot rejoice in the Lord unless He attracts and charms us, excluding every idol from our hearts. It need not

be said, for we know it, that the love of the world and joy in the Lord cannot abide in the same heart, for they are utterly incompatible. We know also, or if we do not we may know, exactly where the leakage in our vessel is, what it is that robs us of this joy in the Lord, blights our testimony and makes us the ordinary ineffectual and sterile Christians that we so often are. Some evil secretly indulged, some unholy ambition, perhaps in spiritual things; some grudge hidden in heart against another, some sparing of a carnal growth in our lives, or winking at evil in our associations. We need all to say, “Search me, O Lord; take Thy candle, and go through every chamber in my life, and detect for me every lurking evil that hinders me from rejoicing in Thee, and give to me the grace I need to drag it out and cast it aside with true repentance for my unfaithfulness to Thee.”

Well, He presents Himself to us in the depth of His humiliation on earth and in the excellence of His glory in heaven, and as we consider Him here and there we know not which to admire most. In every place, and at all times, He is altogether lovely. His humiliation puts to shame all the proud pretensions of men and makes us loathe the strife and vainglory of the flesh, and the excellency of His glory puts into complete eclipse all worldly splendour and distinction. It is as we know Him, and as we know Him still more, that our joy in Him will be full and deep. And it is this that we should seek, not that which is loud and superficial and occasions a mere caricature of Christian joy which serves only to bring into prominence the one who affects it, but a constant and ever-deepening joy in the Lord which will give tone and power to everything we do and say.

God ever finds in evil the opportunity of displaying some grace more glorious than that which has been defaced by the evil. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

Consolation.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

WHAT child of God has not turned with holy rapture to the praise-giving truth of the tenth chapter of John, in order to find that, in view of the subtle working of the thief and the wolf and the hireling, each seeking his own selfish ends in the ruin of the sheep, he has the double security of the hand of the Son and the Father. He rests in eternal safety in the palms of these two almighty hands. None can pluck him thence; and in his preservation from every foe the Father and Son are equally engaged. "I and my Father are one," says our blessed Lord and Saviour, in the custody of every lamb and sheep that is enclosed in this "double grip." Herein lies our perfect confidence. They are "one," assuredly, in every divine purpose and operation, but not least in the safeguarding from every conceivable foe of those for whom, as the Good Shepherd, Jesus died, and in whom they trust.

If, in this precious chapter, we have the security of the hand of God the Son and of God the Father, we have also, in the eighth of Romans, our inseparability from the love of Christ and the love of God. This is, perhaps, even more blessed. The challenge is made: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And the answer is given, in the deep heart-persuasion of the Apostle, writing by the Spirit: "I am persuaded that"—and then in thought, sweeping through the wide range of all hostile powers from the highest heights to the lowest depths; from death with its sting to life and its snares; from the wiles of the serpent to the hidden and unseen energy of opposing principalities and powers; from the terrorizing influence of things seen to the unknown possibilities of things unseen; and, finally, summing up every imaginable adversary, he says: "nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus

our Lord." The love of God finds its anchorage, not in the feeble faith of His people, but "in Christ Jesus our Lord." No storm can drag the anchor thence. It is assured for ever more.

Separation from that love is impossible. We are held by its "double grip."

Oh! how strong is the love of Christ; how mighty the love of God in Him!

The strength of His hand and the love of His heart may banish every fear, and lift the oft-burdened head from a sense of disaster to one of rest. But it is not only security, not only the conviction of the favour of the Godhead that exhausts this glorious persuasion. There is the personal enjoyment of this wondrous love.

One would almost think that the last five verses of Romans 8. had been written for our day of sorrow. They certainly were intended for the comfort of troubled hearts at all times. "Tribulation" is written big on the face of the world to-day; hearts are torn; eyes are weeping; homes are desolated. And who should feel this tribulation more than the children of God, who, because of their divinely-given place as intercessors for others, have the privilege of dealing directly with God, and thus of feeling with Him the effects of the sin which lies at the bottom of it all. Persecution for Christ's sake may not be their portion; but there is the unquestionable activity of the devil, as, with malicious zeal, he raises nation against nation to the misery of all. This they should feel most keenly. It should be, and, no doubt, is the burden of their constant prayers. They may not know exactly what "to pray for as they ought," but they can prostrate themselves, together with the groan of creation, before God that He may exercise that mercy which He loves to show. This is their duty and high privilege.

But be their tribulation, their sorrow, their famine, their bereavement what it may—and they share it in common with humanity at large—they have the precious assurance that they possess one thing which, when all else may go from them, abides as their everlasting and inalienable portion. They are the objects of the love of Christ and of the love of God which is in Him.

What a rest for their troubled hearts !
 What a pillow for their weary heads !
 Look up, dear distracted, distressed,
 bewildered brother and sister in Christ.
 You may see no apparent issue; your
 hopes may have all been blighted and

the greatest tribulation may have befallen you. But think not that you are forsaken, nor forgotten of God. Whatever separation may have occurred there is no power on earth or in Hell able to separate you from the love of God.

Could a higher climax be reached than these closing words of Romans 8. ?
 Could a broken heart find greater comfort in the wide universe of God ?
 All else may fail but His eternal love.
 Worlds themselves may perish, but not so “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” and that love is set upon you for all eternity.

Our Prospect.

WHEN through God's boundless grace we reach the land
 Where tired feet, all journeying o'er, may rest,
 Then we shall clearly see and understand—
 With grateful hearts shall say, “God's way was best.”
 The hands that now the pilgrim's staff must hold
 Shall then exchange it for a harp of gold;
 The armour doffed, the wedding robe to wear,
 No sword or shield or helmet wanted there;
 The darkness changed to everlasting light,
 Hope to fruition full, and faith to sight.
 No serpent's venom or insidious snare;
 No aching heart, no wearied limbs are there.
 Our souls shall bask beneath those cloudless skies,
 And God's own hand shall wipe our tear-dimmed eyes.

The Love of Christ.

NATURALLY speaking, we have more reliance on a friend who has means than on one who has none; but the friend who has no means, if he has love, is the better friend. The Lord's means are limitless, yet if I know that He loves me personally, the more I study His love, the more I see not what He could *give* me, but what *He can be to me*.

It is a great day when I discover not

only that He is the object of my heart but that He has made me an object of His heart. We talk of our love to Him, but how far can we say that we are conscious of His to us, and that we so prize it that it is the greatest secret of our heart ? His love works to remove everything that would stand between it and our hearts; it works to have us wholly for itself; and it cannot fail in its great purpose.

“Awake, Arise.”

(H. NUNNERLEY).

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Ephesians 5. 14).

EPHESIANS 5. 14 has in view saints who are not enjoying the warm rays of Christ's love, they are asleep; a sleeping man has life but is insensible to outward objects. The call of the word to them is “AWAKE,” the object of the Holy Ghost is to arouse them to an appreciation of the love of Christ, to get them into the light and warmth of His blessed presence; but the call is not only to awake, He adds, “ARISE.” A natural man may be awake but keep the blind down, bar the shutter against the natural sun; even so a believer may be awake to the fact that he is not in the sunshine of the love of Christ, and yet remain where that love cannot be enjoyed. The word to all such is “arise!” “Arise from among the dead.”

“The dead” describes some worldly association, some deadening influence that has acted as an opiate on the spiritual senses. To be awake to our condition is not enough; we must “arise”; separate from evil, break the links that bind us; we must come where Christ can shine upon us without a barrier.

All our friendships with this world are just so many shutters to bar the love of God. “If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.” It does not say it is not TOWARD him. The Father's affection never alters; Christ's love never changes. He is ever ready, waiting, to illuminate the cold heart of a backslider if he will only “arise”; if he will only leave the thing that keeps him away from the precious enjoy-

ment he knew in the blush of “first love.”

If they had listened to the Apostle Paul, John never would have written of them in a later day, “Thou hast left thy first love.”

It has pleased God in revealing Himself to do so in the Son of His love, the One whom we know as the second Person of the Trinity; He is the brightness of glory and the exact expression of His substance. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

If any light illuminates our hearts, He is the Sun from whence the rays come; Love has been fully expressed in Him, and God in all the light and truth of His being has been declared. Thus God may be truly known in the way of revelation.

In order to the full blessedness of this being overjoyed, the Holy Spirit has been given to fill the believer, to surcharge his heart with the love of the Father and the Son, to produce overflowing worship, praise and thanksgiving.

The Father gave the Son. The Son from glory has given the Spirit. The Spirit produces sweeter music than harp or organ, for He fills the *heart* with melody to the Lord.

Spiritual songs and thanksgiving to the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the response in us to all that comes from God—in grace it returns by Christ through the Spirit back to the Father; this is true worship.

Unity, False and True.

POPISH unity attaches Christ to unity, and hence may and does legalize with His name every corruption and evil; Christian unity attaches unity

to Christ, and therefore gives it all the character of grace and truth that is in Him, gives it, in fact, all His excellence.

(J.N.D.)

Tarry, or Sleep?

(DR. NORTHCOTE DECK,
Aola, Solomon Islands),

Matthew 26. 38.

THE world rushes on. It urges on to fresh conquests, mightier achievements, vaster schemes. It rushes on to its triumphs; it rushes on to its doom, a doom foretold (2 Peter 3. 7), relentless, inexorable as Jehovah's throne. Money, the anodyne of the enemy, has numbed the craving of the multitude for Christ. Pleasure that pleases not, intoxicates the brain. To the worldling the faithful witness seems as one who mocks, his words as idle tales.

Yet the call to prayer, the summons to service, have sounded forth for those who care; have sounded forth in this the evening of the age.

Are you an onlooker? or do you obey that call? Come then first to the place of watching, the Garden of Tears, each remembering that "the Lord hath need of him."

GETHSEMANE! thy name bewrays thee. It means the oil press, where the life blood of the olive was squeezed out drop by drop. "And His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood." A place well named indeed. A footstool to the throne of grace well chosen.

Here then of set purpose the Son of God resorted. It was an Eastern night. In the distance through the clear air the lights of Jerusalem shone in the darkness, as, careless and callous, its people prepared for the great day of the feast. For the crowds in the city were all unconscious and unconcerned that their house was left unto them desolate, and that the Messiah's lament had begun indeed.

? Far away on the mountain side knelt the Son of God, the Lamb of God. Alone He knelt and prayed and prepared. Who watch with Him? A chosen few. They were not of the world's aristocracy. His Kingdom is founded on a Divine paradox. He wills it that the weak things of the world shall con-

found the things that are mighty. He ordains by perpetual decree that through the things that are not, He shall bring to naught the things that are.

Here then there is room for you and for me, for as they were called to watch in that solemn hour, so are you in this. It is for you, this watching. It is your most precious birthright if you will but take it.

It was a supreme moment—its like could never be seen again—when in anguish He bowed before the Father, as He faced the fact and fate of sin. And, being in an agony, whose company did He crave? Not cherubim or seraphim, but three rude fishermen; not twelve legions of angels, but Peter and James and John. The first about to deny Him, the rest to forsake Him. These He must have for retinue, this Prince of Peace. These were the lovers and friends whose sympathy He sought. These He would have watch with Him one hour. None else would do. Oh, priceless privilege! Oh, shameful sleep!

For they, whose presence was preferred to angels, preferred to sleep. Unable to deny themselves, they presently denied their Lord. They stand for all time examples of how opportunities let slip return no more. The Saviour in His hour of agony twice turned to them, twice woke and warned them. The third time was too late. That saddest sentence, "Sleep on now" must close their chance. He planned for them the highest privilege of watching and of prayer, the most exalted service. They slumbered on, unconscious of the crisis. Before they realized it, the chance was gone.

Yet so it is to-day. For those three sleepers do not stand alone. They were the first forerunners of a multitude of true believers, who, when called to work and watch, have missed the mark;

whose motto, instead of being "Saved to Serve" seems mainly "Saved to Sleep." Only in the Better Land will the true perspective come. There, looking back on opportunities let slip, we shall realize the poverty of slumber; the tremendous loss resulting from lives of "little done."

Watch for what? "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," echo the Master's words. Yet there is a deeper watching, a fuller fellowship, open to those who love Him, the reward for which transcends our thoughts. He died that we might live. But to us it is given not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake (Phil. 1. 29). This fellowship is for all His own. It is for you who bear His name. His Kingdom is impending, the "ecclesia" is being called, the lost ones found, the last ones gathered in before He comes.

But is it true that you have "neither part nor lot in this matter"? Is it true that you "speak no word of bringing back the King"? It is a thousand pities, a thousand shames.

So, often He has to reverse the natural order and proclaim the first shall be last, and the last first. I think of the first that I have known, first in brain, in knowledge, in intellect. Many of these, He says, are to be last. Even now they have abandoned the race. For them there is no prize impending. Their high calling calls them not. Their love would prompt them to His aid, but there is no time unoccupied. They are in fact preoccupied. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber . . . so shall thy poverty come." First, yet last!

"And the last first." I have seen many such in the precincts of the foreign mission field. Unlearned and ignorant men, with one business in life, the King's; one object in life, His glory; one occupation, the buying of gold tried in the fire. I see them waving farewell on the coral shore, as the ship sails out surrounded by their clustered converts. Often I have

plainly heard them declare in prayer that they seek a country, a better country, that is, a heavenly. Of some like these, God has said the world was never worthy. Yet they are last in the eyes of the world. Clothed in rags, living on roots, sleeping in huts, often outcast by their people, truly "destitute, afflicted, tormented." Yet their feet in spirit already sometimes tread the streets of the celestial city. They are content to wait and watch and work until He comes, to be first at the last.

To-day Christ's call to His saints is the same; He still cries "WATCH!" But there are many too busy to watch. For watching implies a heart at leisure from itself. Such hearts are rare and hard to find. Once there was no room for Him at the inn. Now He is exalted to the right hand of God, He is done with inns; **INSTEAD HE INHABITS HEARTS!** Yet there is little enough room for Him in the hearts of many who are His. For their lives are full, too full. Body and brain and time are absorbed in a round of duties, that seem imperative till seen from the celestial outlook, when they dwarf and shrivel and fade from view.

To such servants so busy that they cannot heed their Lord, His call seems different. The cry to them is: *Tarry! Tarry! It will not take you long. Tarry! and open your heart to me. I can transform it. I can give you pleasures that will not pall. I can give you treasures that will not pass away. Come, tarry awhile with me.*

He is "the same Lord." Yesterday for Peter, to-day for you, forever for all. Yet Peter's chance in large measure is yours. The Master still calls "Tarry!" Must you still sleep?

"Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Master cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.

"Lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping.

"And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

The Heavenly Calling and our Response to It.

(S. M. ANGLIN).

An Address on Luke 10. 17, 24.

THE Lord had sent out His disciples on a special mission and here we have the account of their return to Him. They testify that even the demons were subject to them through His name. They had gone forth in His name and had proved the power of it. Naturally they were full of this, and were much elated at their success, but He turned their thoughts from their service and its results, and said to them: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN."

The fact was that the kingdom, the powers of which they had seen manifested, was not then to be established on earth, for Jesus was refused and rejected, and this He knew, but there was another order of blessing to come to light. "Your names are written in heaven." This is very blessed, for we all come in here. We may feel that we have very little power, and can do very little for the Lord; it is not ours to boast in our successes and achievements, but here is something that should give us deeper joy—our names are written in heaven. As the disciples were connected with heaven, so now are we, for that is what this statement means. We have a place *there* in the Father's affections. We are the children of God. The Lord Jesus came into this world, not only to save us from the power of Satan, and to destroy all that power, but to give us a place—His own place—in the Father's affections. What a cause for rejoicing is this!

We come next to the rejoicing of the Lord. It is a remarkable thing that He should rejoice just here, because He was despised and rejected by men, and this comes into striking evidence in the early part of the chapter. He looked round, and there was nothing to give joy in things here. Yet at this time He

rejoiced. He looked on to all the blessing, all the joy, and all the glory He would bring in and into which He will bring His own; to the joy that the Father would have in His children who should know His love; to the time when they would be with Him in that bright home above where their names are written. The future glory opened up before the Lord, fruit of His suffering and death. The earthly kingdom was set aside for the time because He was rejected by His own people, but now the heavenly order of things, the heavenly prospect and the heavenly company are all before the Lord's mind, and He finds His joy in all that which, as the result of His death, will be brought about by the gathering out from this world of those whom He afterwards calls His brethren, and who shall share His own place and favour, and His own relationship to the Father. He rejoiced in spirit, and said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Then He adds: "All things are delivered to me of my Father." Everything was refused Him by the world. At this time he had not where to lay His head. He was cast out and despised and refused, yet He knows that all is given to Him by the Father, and when the Father's time comes, not only will He get His earthly kingdom and Israel gathered from amongst the nations, but there will be something infinitely higher than that. There is now the gathering out of the church—of the joint heirs. This wonderful work is going on, and every Christian here to-day is one of the joint heirs with Christ. We belong to Him, we are here because He has touched our hearts and drawn us from the world's attrac-

tions. We have found in Him our centre and our object. We have joined together in worship and thanksgiving to Him, and the Lord appreciates the praise and the adoration of His people. And we are expecting the moment when He will take us up to the place where He has written our names and where we shall give Him full praise for ever.

It is beautiful to see how, when the Lord is refused by the world, and everything here is denied Him, He knows that the Father in due time will bring it about that everything in Heaven and earth shall be for Him. He is the Son of the Father's love and there is a secret which lies between the Father and Him in connection with His name as SON. He knew all the love that was in the Father's heart, and He could reveal it. So He says to them: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." These disciples,—these poor despised followers of Jesus,—He turns to them and says, "You are a blessed people. Your names are written in heaven. That is the spring of your joy. You have a name and place and portion there according to the counsels of the Father's love." Outwardly they did not seem to be blessed. Peter says: "We have forsaken all and followed Thee." They had lost their occupation, they had lost their reputation in the religious world; they had lost all that. In a way they appeared to be making a very bad choice. But the Lord pronounces them "Blessed," for "many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them" (Matt. 13. 17). That refers to the Old Testament saints, Abraham, Isaac, David, Isaiah and such like. How they would have rejoiced to have seen one of these days! They spoke about them. They foretold of His coming. They prophesied of His glories and they longed for the time when they

would see them. They would have given much to have had the privilege these disciples had. It may be that you have thought that it would have been a great privilege to you, and a great favour if you had been allowed to live on earth when the Lord was here. You feel sure if you had been on earth then *you* would have followed Him. You feel sure *you* would have been one of His faithful disciples. Well, I do not think any one of us would, if the Lord in His sovereign grace had not wrought with us as He did with these disciples. "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," he declares. Whether any followed Him then, or follow Him now, it is all of grace. We were drawn to the feet of Jesus by God's gracious working, that Living and Blessed Saviour whose precious blood has put away all our sin, and who can lead us into the secret of peace and joy, and tell us of these heavenly glories and of the everlasting blessedness that He has gained for us.

But I do not think that we should have been better off if we had been with the Lord on earth. I think we are far in advance as regards privilege and position of these disciples. They were indeed a blessed people to be with the Lord when on earth. But the Lord said to them: "It is expedient for you that I go away." They would be better off when He went away. We are far better off than the disciples. They at that time did not understand anything about the death of Jesus. They had heard Him speak of it, He had testified to the necessity of His dying on the cross, but they did not understand it. They knew nothing indeed of the blessedness of sin being put away, redemption accomplished, nor of Jesus having gone up as man to the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost come down, as we know now, to bear witness to us of His glory above. Our Lord has gone into the very glory above, prepared a place for us there, and He is our Forerunner and Representative there, maintaining us there in all the unchanging righteousness and glory of His person before God. We

are in the Father's favour, accepted as He is. All *that* is our portion now, but the disciples knew nothing of it then. They were connected with the Lord Jesus here upon earth, and that was indeed a great privilege.

Now if you turn to the corresponding passage in Matthew 13. 10-17 you get a little more detail as to what distinguished them from other men. The disciples came to Him and said: "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" He answered and said to them: "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. *But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.* For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

The people round about had heard the wonderful ministry of Christ over and over again, but they had no appreciation of it. It fell upon deaf ears and dull minds that took nothing in. Therefore the Lord speaks to them in parables. It was a kind of judgment upon them, because when they had simple statements of truth, and the evident testimony as to who He was, and had witnessed His grace, goodness and mercy,

they cared not for it; they spurned and despised it really. But in secret He explains the parables to His disciples. He says: "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Now He unfolds to *them* all these things. He tells them they were blessed because their eyes had been opened to see, their ears to hear, their hearts to understand what the world could not. That is a great blessing in this world where Jesus has been cast out. And we have got this wonderful secret. We know who He is. We know God's thoughts about Him, and can share in the joy of those thoughts. This it is that makes the difference between the saints and the world. The world does not know the mind of heaven about Jesus. They care nothing about Him. He does not come into their calculations at all. But we often have to confess and feel as to ourselves, how sadly lacking we are in responding to all this and being in the good of it.

If you turn to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 8. 14-21, you will see this other sorrowful side of the truth. I will tell why I am referring to it. He has to speak to them about *their practical state*. What was it? "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And He said unto them: How is it that ye do not understand?" It is a very solemn passage, beloved friends, because here the disciples, when it comes to a practical test as to how far they had advanced in the knowledge of the mind of Christ and in the understanding of His ways, are sadly lacking. The Lord has to rebuke them. He speaks very solemnly to them, in words almost similar to those He had to use to the unconverted! That is a very serious

thing for *us* to be exercised about. That is what I want to put to myself and to you. I have been a long time in coming to it, but this was before me in speaking. Why is it, when God has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son so that we are a blessed people; and has given us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to understand—why is it when He has done all this and we come to the test, we are so deficient practically? The question arises, would not any one of us if we were honest to-day have to say we have come sadly short? We have been sadly lacking in entering into the mind of our Lord. We have not been apt scholars. In these serious words of the Lord we may perhaps learn the causes.

He warns them against *moral dangers*, things that would leaven and damage their *souls*, the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod; in other words, He is warning them against the snares of mere religiousness and worldliness. The Pharisees represent the religious man, who will take you up and make you as religious as ever he can apart from Christ or seek to add to what you have in Christ. The Lord says: "Beware of this leaven." On the other hand, the Herodians were those who represent the openly worldly and political order of things, who like the easy and *convenient* path. The Lord says, beware of the leavening influence on either side. He wants His disciples to be clear of the dangerous influences around them. Instead of understanding Him they thought it was because they had taken no bread. Merely present and temporal things filled their thoughts. The Lord had been manifesting His power in feeding the multitudes with a few loaves and fishes. But apparently they had not taken in the import of these wonderful miracles the Lord had wrought any more than had the multitude. These ought to have confirmed their faith in Him, and ought to have delivered them from all cares about loaves! Yet when He

speaks to them here, they mistake the whole point and tenor of His warnings to them, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

Then he says: "Having eyes, see ye not; having ears, hear ye not; and do not you remember?" How solemn! But how do *we* stand? When we think of how much the Lord has spoken to us, what ministry we have had from time to time; all the ministry we have had within one year, say, where are *we* to-day? What poor disciples we have been. How little our ears have been opened to hear, and how little we have spiritually understood the things the Lord has done and said.

If you turn for a moment to Hebrews 5., you will see how the same thing comes out there. We get both the glory and the grace of His person here. "Though He were Son"—the highest, most glorious person—above all angels; the only-begotten Son of the Father, the One who had a place of majesty and honour and relationship: "though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things He suffered, and being perfected" (in the path of sorrow and obedience down here); "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec." The glories of His person and the grace of His heart are there. The Apostle desired to speak about and tell these Hebrews of His glories, about the grace that led Him to take a path in which He made Himself acquainted with all human sorrow and suffering; that He might be the leader of salvation—your salvation and mine—that as we journey to that bright home where He has gone, He might be able to understand every difficulty and sustain us in every sorrow and trial. He passed through the pathway Himself that He might just be suited to us in the pathway we have got to tread as disciples down here. Oh, the love of the Lord to us! the wonderful Saviour He is! not only in dying for our sins, but in His gracious, constant

service at God's right hand for us now! But what is the response? See what the Apostle has to say: "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing, for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one should teach you again."

These Hebrew Christians were not growing. They were judging by human thoughts. Their spiritual faculties were not in exercise; they were occupied with the religious ceremonies of Judaism, *the leaven of the Pharisees* was their hindrance, deadening their souls, so that they were not free to enter into and understand the glorious character of Christianity.

How we need to beware of this snare. It hindered the Hebrew Christians, and it hindered the assembly at Galatia; it will also hinder us from understanding our heavenly calling if we are not watchful.

On the other hand we see in the case of the Corinthians what I understand to answer more to "the leaven of Herod." Boasting of their freedom from legal bonds or superstitious ideas, they were getting sadly damaged

spiritually by the leaven of worldly ways and associations, and were allowing—under the plea of liberty—a course of conduct that sadly conformed to the ungodly community around them. In the case of the Herodians (and of Herod himself) their religious profession was made subservient to what they considered would advance political or worldly ends or aims. The professed "godliness" of many to-day is, alas, dominated by politics and worldly advantages; and when true believers are leavened by these influences, there is no spiritual progress and the soul gets damaged and the conscience deadened. Let us remember that what savours of man is opposed to God and should be—indeed, *must be*—refused if we are to follow a rejected Christ who was hated by the leaders of both the religious and political parties; and who, on His side, refused to recognize or accredit the pretensions of either one or the other. Let us cherish the great truth that our part is with Him, *both here and in heaven*; our names are written *there*, our citizenship is *there*.

"His cross has severed ties that bound us here,
Himself our Treasure in a brighter sphere."

Dependence.

AS we learn to know the Lord better our dependence upon Him becomes more and more necessary to us, like the infant that cannot bear to leave its mother, not only because its *wants* are met, but because she is the source of its supply.

The sense so peculiar to real prayer is that the greater our need, and the more we need, the nearer we seek to get to the Lord, as if the only hope of relief were our being with Him.

Godliness and Contentment.

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. 16. 5, 6).

HE who has God as his portion and realizes that he is where God wants him to be, and that he has what God wants him to have, will be contented with his lot and his store, what-

ever they are; but he who fails to realize this truth would never be contented though he were the most favoured man in all the world.

Divine Guidance.

(W. H. SANSON)

A CHRISTIAN said to me recently, "Do you not think it strange that A——, whose labours have been so owned of God in S——, should have left for T——, where there seems to be no open door for the gospel?"

The question appeared difficult to answer, but was in reality not so difficult as it appeared. I knew all the circumstances, I knew that before A—— had moved, the matter had been put into the hand of God, and that for months unceasing prayer had been made to Him for guidance, and it was not until it was felt that it was His will that this step was taken.

He had exchanged a fruitful corner of the vineyard in S—— for a great city in North Africa, whose population consists of Mohammedans and Romanists, both fanatical, ignorant, and superstitious, and each alike opposed to the gospel of God's grace and the Christ proclaimed in that gospel.

But the object of divine guidance is not always immediately apparent, and the one who looks for signs and walks by sight will often be sorely disappointed. Faith is tested, and the servant proved, before God's purpose is realized, and the work to which He has called yields the divinely intended harvest.

When Israel crossed the Red Sea and entered the wilderness, they were immediately placed under the guidance of the Lord in a pillar of cloud, and they never thereafter took a journey apart from that guidance.

Was their path then evermore plain and pleasant? By no means. In Exodus 17. 1 they journeyed from the wilderness of Sin according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink; murmuring followed, the heart of the people was disclosed in all its unbelief and forgetfulness of past help; but the heart of God in sovereign grace was also disclosed, for He says to Moses, "Smite

the rock and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink."

Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Strange, was it not, that the Lord should lead His people into a place where there was no water, and where a deadly enemy lay in wait to attack them? It tested and brought out the unbelief that was in them.

But was it not His design also to show them that He was able to give them drink even from the flinty rock, and victory over their worst foe?

From Elim to Rephidim was a short journey, but what a change of circumstances was theirs. In the one place they enjoyed "rest and refreshment," in the other they encountered "thirst and peril," yet God led them to both these places; in the one He displayed His thoughtfulness and care, in the other His patience and power, that they might learn the nature and attribute of the God who had redeemed them.

I came across an interesting remark the other day; it was this: "It is a good thing for us sometimes to lie fallow."

Now when a farmer allows a piece of ground to lie fallow, his object is that it may rest, and during such rest store up energy and strength for future productiveness.

And so in the divine economy; God often allows a servant to lie fallow.

Think of Moses; he suddenly exchanges all the pomp and activities of Pharaoh's Court for a desert, where he who had been a leader amongst Egypt's multitudes for forty years leads a few sheep from pasture to pasture.

Wherefore? that God might fit him to be for forty other years the patient, gracious leader of His people through the wilderness.

Joseph became the man next in power to Pharaoh, and in a temporal way the saviour of the world, but he first lay fallow in an Egyptian dungeon,

and it was from thence God called him to his high vocation.

Yet neither Moses nor Joseph during their respective periods of seclusion and painful duress ever dreamed what God was doing with them, or what their destiny was to be.

Once, after the Lord had sent forth the twelve to preach, to heal the sick, and to cast out devils, and they had returned and told Him what they had done and what they had taught, He says to them: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (Mark 6. 7-13; 30-32).

They might have answered: "Lord, the country is filled with perishing souls." The Lord of the harvest said: "Come and rest." Did He not care for these perishing, needy creatures? Indeed

He did, but He also cared for His servants who needed rest, so He withdrew all His labourers from the field for a season.

Presently these same men came forth, strong, vigorous, divinely prepared, heralds of the gospel—this was the result of their fallow.

But where did the Lord call them to for this preparation? Was it to a place of umbrageous trees, of rippling rills, and verdant pastures? Nay, to a *desert*, it was here they rested, but *He* was there, they had *His* company, and in the realization of His manifested love, sufficiency, and glory, the desert became heaven to them.

And I think the desert is where the Lord gives His servants rest to-day, and where He prepares them for work greater than any they have done before.

Unity not Uniformity.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THERE are millions of believers on the earth all of whom are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and being indwelt by Him they are formed into one body: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." It is this that accounts for the fact that in the heart of every believer in whom the Spirit of God is ungrieved there is an earnest desire for fellowship with other Christians, and it is this that makes them chafe at the tyranny of sectarian bonds and barriers. The instincts of the Christian are true to the unity that the Holy Ghost has formed.

It is common to men to strive after uniformity; but uniformity is not unity. Unity is God's work; uniformity is man's. To satisfy his prejudices and to give expression to his narrow ideas man would force all into the same mould, and those that will not take the die are cast aside. Cliques, divisions, sects and parties, barrenness and death are the unfailing outcome of this wherever it intrudes into the church of God.

There is no uniformity in a body, but great diversity; all the members are diverse, no two fulfilling the same office,

but when subject to the brain, and filled with the life-fluids, each works unremittingly and harmoniously for the good of the whole. This is unity, and this is the figure used by the Spirit to illustrate God's thought for His saints on earth: they are actually one body, for "ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12. 27). It is upon the thwarting and destruction of the practical expression of this unity that the devil bends his energies. And nothing serves his purpose better than the rules and regulations that men make, for they reduce the beautiful variety which the wisdom of God produces to one doubly dead level.

This unity is not a beautiful theory merely, an ideal to be admired by us and then put aside as unpracticable and impossible; it is a fact that should govern us, and fill us with an earnest desire to maintain our separation from the evil things that mar it, and to follow after those great and positive realities which are the common portion of all saints, and to seek the blessing and prosperity of all, that it may have a practical expression through us as far as in us lies.

Oneness.—No. 2.

(H. J. VINE).

“That they also may be one in us” (John 17. 21).

THERE is one flock and one Shepherd; one assembly and one Head; one body and one Spirit; one family and one Father; one faith and one Lord; one circle of brethren who have passed out of death into life. As we remember these things our love will be kept in activity in a divine way, and so shall the oneness for which the Lord prayed be furthered. May we allow no subtle reasonings to rob us of these divine realities, for realities they are, but may we have grace to answer to them practically.

We need to take hold of these things firmly, lest we be lured by the devil into some by-way, for many who have learned something of them, through not seeing that all the members of Christ's body are necessary to each other, have taken the by-path of *in-dependency*; whilst others, realizing it may be a measure of gift from the exalted Head of the body, have allowed themselves to be pushed into the by-way of *clericalism*. As both these things lead further and further from the truth they can only result in miserable disappointment to those who are true believers.

The contrast to these is to be gathered to the Lord in right assembly order, where there is freedom for the exercise of diversity of gifts in the power of the one Spirit of God, whose great aim is the edification of every member of the body of Christ. The will of God in this connection is in no wise irksome to such when rightly understood; for it is “good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12. 2).

Legality and Lawlessness.

The Scriptures warn us of two main drifts which are contrary to the oneness that is of God. The last two books of the Bible depict them in vivid colours. The one is Pharisaic and the other Babylonish. The first is the fruit of legality, and the second is the outcome of lawlessness. Amongst the assemblies

the seeds of the first found soil in the Galatians, and the second among the Corinthians. The word *Pharisee* signifies *separatist*; and Jude says, “These separate themselves, *natural*, having not the Spirit” (19). They are contrasted with those who are “beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ.” The word *Babylon* signifies *confusion*.

The separatist may persuade himself that he is insisting on right order as he stands stiffly apart from others in his legal self-righteousness; but the confusionist also thinks that his all-embracing church system, which amalgamates all sorts of religious societies and orders, is the right and proper thing. The first is called “*natural*” (N.T.); the second is *devilish*. This will lead eventually to “the habitation of demons and the hold of every foul spirit” (Rev. 18. 2). The true assembly, however, is *spiritual*, and is built together in the Lord, for a habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2. 22).

The Babylonish confusionists mix religion and state together. This is clearly pictured for us in Revelation 17., where we see symbolized the unfaithful intimacy of the church with the state in the woman and the Beast. Lawlessness as systematized in Babylon brings about human debasement and bondage. In contrast to this, the liberty which is in Christ Jesus both elevates and gives freedom to true believers. All worldly religious systems have Babylon as their “*mother*” (Rev. 17. 5); her principles come from *beneath*. On the other hand, true believers have as their “*mother*,” Jerusalem which is *above* (Gal. 4. 26); and it is said of her, she is “*free*.” Her children partake of the same character. Freedom pervades the whole system of administration of which she is the metropolis. At the present time it is “God's administration which is *in faith*” (1 Tim. 1. 4), and we are to further that.

To lay down as a hard and fast principle, in the present state of things, that "*separation from evil*" is the one and only essential for unity, as some have done, is purely Pharisaic. There surely must be separation from evil to realize the divine oneness which is according to the truth; but that is not the way Scripture puts it. It is by what is positive that the soul is formed, and it is this that is before the mind of the Lord. His sheep FOLLOW HIM out of the fold. We are to go forth "*TO HIM*" without the camp. We call on THE LORD out of a pure heart, as we follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace together, having purified ourselves from what is contrary. In this positive position, the Lord Himself, and the fullness which is in Him, is to be our resource; and grace and peace in the knowledge of Him will be needed by us constantly from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be maintained for God's glory. No rigid rules or principles can take the place of that. We have to do with persons, not simply principles. Grace and wisdom are therefore necessary, as well as knowledge and understanding: forbearance as well as integrity: long-suffering as well as righteousness: lowliness and meekness as well as truth and uprightness: kindness, and love which never fails, as well as justice and holiness.

To the censorious Pharisees, who complained because the hungry disciples ate of the ears in the cornfields on the sabbath, our Lord Jesus Christ said, "If ye had known what this meaneth: *I will have mercy* and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matt. 12. 1-8). He reminded them of what David and his companions did when hungry; also of the fact that the service of the temple even involved the priests in *profaning the sabbath*, and yet they were blameless. Further, He Himself was greater than the temple; and He was also Lord of the sabbath; therefore even if His disciples were guilty (which they were not) He was

above the rules and principles for which they professed such zeal; and they were His followers, and He would deal with them. Mercy was not in all their thoughts; and the fruit of their legality and self-righteousness found them to be opponents of our Lord Jesus Christ and His own. It is the same to-day. There is a zeal for place and principle, which is pressed in a spirit the very opposite to that of Christ and to the character and nature of God. It is a drift which is contrary to the oneness of which the Son speaks to the Father, "*That they may be one in Us.*" It is not the spirit of the faithful and prudent servant, who uses diligence to the end that suitable and seasonable food should be given to all those who are the Lord's; but that of the evil and oppressive servant, whose unreality gains him a place with the hypocrites (Matt. 24. 45-51).

Lawlessness, on the other hand, leads to Babylon, as we have seen; to a system of organized confusion. To be caught by either the legal or the lawless current, is to be spoiled for faithful and fruitful service to the Lord.

The New Movement.

The *new* movement, which will end in the manifested oneness of all the saints, is the *true* movement. In another sense it is the *old* movement; but that only relates to time, for in the true sense it never can be old. It began with Christ in resurrection, after He had secured eternal redemption for us, and made peace by the blood of His cross. He is "the Beginning, First-born from among the dead" (Col. 1. 18). He is the Head of the body, the assembly. That movement which began then will go on until we are all gathered together to Him in glory. The Lord's prayer will be answered. We shall be perfected into one in glory, that the world may know that the Father sent the Son, and loves us as He loves Him (John 17. 23). The Holy Spirit will not turn aside from this movement for some other. May we have grace not to be turned aside either. It is abidingly true as we have said, there is one body

and one Spirit. Christ is the one Head of that body, even as He is the one Shepherd of the one flock. Parties, schools, orders, sects or organizations are therefore sinful.

Movements to amalgamate parties and sects together must likewise be wrong. On what ground can two parties approach each other, when their very existence is contrary to what is divinely true as to the assembly? For such to combine is confusion—Babylonish. It may be said, They never ought to have existed as parties. Very well; then let them cease to be so; and as saints, beloved of God, brethren in the Lord, let them call on Him together out of a pure heart. Let party positions and party histories be abandoned; and let Christ, the one Head of the assembly, be returned to. If some have no party position, but are simply holding to Christ as the Head of the whole body, then such will rejoice to find others doing the same, without making demands concerning the party positions and divisions in which they have been entangled, and which should never have been. This would not be carelessness, but zeal for what is good. In all that we do we must have the Lord and all that are His in view. The Spirit works thus. All His works are done in truth.

The *new* movement of the Spirit at the beginning is still going on; and it will go on, till every saint is gathered to Christ in glory. We cannot expect the support of God for any other movement. It is on the line of new creation and eternal life, and therefore the oneness of it is in the Father and the Son. It is constituted in what is true, and so expresses the truth. This could be said of no other movement; and no other movement, therefore, is worthy of our attention.

Those who seek this divine integration in Christ, and faithfully refuse that which makes for disintegration, ought to be together for God's glory, so that with one heart, and one mind, and one mouth they may glorify Him. The disintegrating forces, briefly stated, are false doctrines dishonouring to the Father and to the Son, the formation of sects, and the practice of wickedness. True integration finds its centre in Christ, the Son of the living God. All of us are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1. 9). Let it be once clearly understood that this is *the fellowship* into which GOD calls, then all sects and parties will be repudiated. Nor will any say, "*I of Christ*" (1 Cor. 1. 12), to the exclusion of other saints, for *all* are of Him; and the Christ is not divided.

Rendered Fruitless.

MANY who once served the Lord well have been spoiled for His service and rendered fruitless by being caught by one or other of those evil currents that are flowing so strongly in Christendom, legality and lawlessness. Let us beware of them. I was travelling by train one summer evening to a neighbouring town with the gospel, and as I sat reading, a small silky seed carrier floated in through the open window and lighted upon my book. God had constructed that tiny carrier so that it should bear upon the summer breeze the seed to which it was attached to suitable soil, that it might there become fruitful. The current of

the express train, however, had caught it, and there it lay upon my book useless for the purpose for which it was made. I stuck it to the inside of the cover of my book, and prayed that I might not be caught in any of the evil currents which are running so strongly in Christendom to-day and that are rendering useless so many. The little seed carrier is still where I put it years ago. Fruit, a hundredfold or a thousandfold, might have come from it by this time; but it is fruitless, and useless too, except as a warning to me and to you to keep clear of every evil current. All our salvation and preservation is in Christ Jesus.

(H. J. VINE).

Heaven's Joy over Babylon's Fall.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos, No. XVII.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." (Rev. 18. 1, 2).

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." (Ch. 19.)

"AFTER these things." Thus chapter 18. opens. This expression indicates that the fall of Babylon, ecclesiastically at the hands of the ten kings, precedes her utter destruction as a world system. Rome is Babylon in mystery, but Babylon is also the synonym for a world dominated by Satan. All the evil moral elements seen in embryo in Nimrod, the builders of Babel, and imperial Babylon reach their climax under the Beast. Pride, blasphemy, self-will, violence and corruption are on every hand. She is the hold of every foul spirit, the habitation of demons, the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Her last state is worse than her first.

"Queen of the Nations," when in the zenith of glory and the pride of her greatness, she glorified herself and lived deliciously, saying in her heart: "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." She surrounded herself with all that was luxurious and enchanting in art, science, statuary, paintings, palaces, musicians, craftsmen, gold, silver, precious stones, brass and iron, ointments and frankincense, horses and chariots. Added to this she was a sorceress deceiving the nations and a monster in whom was found the blood of prophets, saints, and all that were slain on earth.

At the stage reached in this chapter she has openly bowed in worship to the Beast and thrown off God. Apostasy in its worst form, and idolatry in all its grossness is the end of the culture, civilization, advancement, and unexampled discoveries of modern times.

No wonder that heaven bids any whom God calls "My people" to come out of her. A much needed cry at all times, but especially so in view of impending judgments. The tower of Babel did not reach unto heaven, but Babylon's sins will, and God will remember her iniquities.

Under the last vial (chap. 16.) the entire world system from centre to circumference is judged. Rome political is smitten, the cities of the nations fall, the earth is shaken, socially, politically, commercially; that which makes the world attractive to fallen man is blighted. It only remains for the martial element to be dealt with, by the personal advent of Christ, in order that a kingdom which cannot be shaken may take the place of Babylon, and a city holy and heavenly engage the thoughts of men, in contrast to that of Cain, Nimrod, the tower builders, and Nebuchadnezzar. How could a Babylonish world be in keeping with the reign of Christ? Impossible. Every trace of this demon-possessed people and devil-governed system must be swept away. The holy Jerusalem and the great city Babylon cannot exist together.

Travel back 2500 years. On the banks of the Euphrates stands the chamberlain Seraiah. Deputed by Jeremiah, he binds the roll of the prophet's denunciations to a stone and casts it into the waters, saying: "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Jer. 51. 64). The city's present condition proves the truth of this

prediction. Now travel onward to a vision yet future. John beholds a mighty angel cast a great millstone into the sea, and hears him cry, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (18. 21). Just as surely will the Babylonish world system be brought under the judgment of God, as the actual city has been.

Alleluia!

As we open chapter 19. happier sounds fall on our ear, and brighter visions are before us. We exchange the lament of kings, the wail of merchants, and the sorrow of shipmasters for the "*Alleluias*" of heaven. Babylon's music ceases, her harps are silent, her craftsmen are no more, her bridal joys are ended, but that over which earth laments heaven rejoices. She sings whilst earth weeps, worships whilst earth wails.

The harlot had arrogated Divine prerogatives, imposed penances and bartered for money salvation which is wholly of grace; and claimed to be the true bride. Her pretensions are now judged and the honours she claimed are ascribed where they are rightfully due. Much people in heaven anthem their praise to the Lord God to whom salvation, honour, glory, and power alone belong, praising Him with a loud "*Alleluia*" for having wreaked holy vengeance on the great whore, who had corrupted the earth, and remorselessly poured out innocent blood. Utterly desolated, her smoke rises up for ever and ever. Those heavenly courts ring once more with a loud "*Alleluia*" as every lip unites to praise the Lord. How their song reveals the intimate knowledge, and deep interest, heaven takes in these events on earth.

For the last time the elders and living creatures prostrate themselves in worship, and add their "Amen; *Alleluia*." Earth also is called upon to share in the triumphant note, and

celebrate the reign of the Lord God omnipotent. Servants, who know not the privilege of sonship as we do, and those who "fear" God, unite at the bidding of a voice out of the throne to add their "*Alleluia*."

As the volume of song ascends, comparable to the roar of rushing waters and the voice of many thunders, our thoughts turn to the beginning and end of the last five Psalms, where the sanctuary and firmament above unite in Alleluias with everything below that hath breath to praise the Lord. Harps and organs, psalteries and stringed instruments, add their glad notes to the holy music of the millennial reign.

This book differentiates celestial and terrestrial beings. It shows how varied the families are named of the Father in Ephesians 3. 14. Elders, living creatures and angels are seen in heaven, whilst Jew and Gentile have their place on earth in the course of these visions. Henceforward the elders disappear, and in their place we get the "Lamb's wife" and the "Called" to the marriage supper. The church, hitherto merged in the redeemed company represented by the elders, is now to stand out in her true relationship. Christ had given Himself for her, sanctified and cleansed her, presented her to Himself all-glorious. Now she is to be displayed before the universe, and gladness and rejoicing fills all hearts. They give *honour to Him*, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife hath made herself ready. The glory of it all is due to the Bridegroom, not to the bride.

During her pilgrim-journey she was despised, hidden, unknown by the world. Often persecuted, her true moral glory obscured by the meretricious glitter of the false bride, her righteousnesses seen only by the eye of her eternal Lover. All is now changed. Behold her! clad in garments white and lustrous as silver sheen. Her robe differs from that of the palm-bearing

company of chapter 7. It is a more glorious garment, shining, bright, resplendent. The judgment seat of Christ has taken place, works have been duly appraised at their right value. She appears clad in a vesture of "righteousness," the fruit of the Spirit separated from the actings of the flesh and invested with her Lord's estimate of it all.

Others are called to the marriage supper. They also are blessed, but in another way. Their joy is to hear the Bridegroom's voice, and joy in His joy over the realization of the nuptial day.

Need we add that the church—the bride—the Lamb's wife—began at Pentecost and will be complete when every Christian is caught up to meet the Lord? There were individual saints blessed from Adam to Moses. After that there was an elect nation betrothed to Jehovah, but proving unfaithful Israel has been divorced. No divorced

wife can be a virgin bride. Therefore the church alone is the bride, the Lamb's wife.

There will also be a company of martyred saints after the church is complete, as well as Jews and Gentiles on earth; but all these varied companies, whilst having their special and peculiar blessings, are never merged in the church. She stands alone, invested with garments suited to her royal and queenly state.

Gladness and rejoicing mark this event such as is found nowhere else. So wonderful was it that John bowed in homage at hearing these were the "true sayings of God." He learns that angels are fellow servants and is told to worship God, the angel adding that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

In what follows we learn that the rights refused to Christ when presented in grace will be enforced in judgment.

Studies in the Psalms—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 84. 85.

PSALM 84. is one of the most beautiful attributed to the sons of Korah (*cf.* Psalms 42-49). An appreciative writer has spoken of it as exhibiting "an exquisite delicacy and tenderness of thought." There are two main divisions; the first of these, verses 1-7, addresses Jehovah in words expressive of happy communion with His thoughts of grace; the last five verses are a prayer. This sequence is worthy of note, prayer arising out of communion, an instructive order for us in this day of a fuller revelation.

The first part of our Psalm sets before us a soul athirst for the living God, as He purposed to make Himself known, dwelling amongst His redeemed people. In Psalm 63. He is sought more in His essential nature, but the intensity of the terms employed is quite as deep in the present instance; the soul longs and faints, heart and flesh cry

aloud and we know that in the eternal day to which the saint is going, God will satisfy all such desires by giving to drink of the *fountain* of the water of life freely (Rev. 21. 6; Ps. 36. 9). The first part of verse 3 has been, I think rightly, put in parenthesis, and we must understand the meaning to be that as these two common and insignificant creatures have their own places of rest and shelter, so the believer finds rest of conscience and heart in the altars of Jehovah of Hosts; for at the brazen altar he finds his acceptance, and at the altar of incense provision for approach. Well may he exclaim: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles!"

In seeking an application of these holy aspirations to ourselves, it is easy to see how they will be answered in and with our Saviour, in glory, but it is helpful also to consider whether there is anything in Christianity which

corresponds to the "tabernacles" which awakened such longings in the pious Israelite. The repeated sacrifices, the material temple, and the earthly priesthood of Judaism are now superseded by the one sacrifice, the spiritual temple and the heavenly priesthood (Heb. 10. 12, 21). Moreover, taking the place of the synagogue we have the presence of the Lord in the midst of two or three gathered to His name. Should we have any less delight in the order of God for His own house, for the maintenance of which we have received the Holy Spirit to abide with us for ever, than the Jew had for his system, truly of divine appointment, yet administered only by angels?

John, reflecting for us the thoughts of heaven, says: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4.); and Paul writes to the Colossians of his joy beholding their "order." Unhappily those who have been delivered from certain of the errors of Rome have been too diligent in making their own churches and formulating their own rules, to which obedience is enforced by church authority, and to all this human order the name of the Lord is attached as sanction. The brief passage, Matthew 18. 15-20, supposes the Assembly in operation according to divine rule, and evidently affords no ground for such an application. To claim the Lord's presence when we are walking in disobedience is mere self-deception. We may thus learn from the sons of Korah to value increasingly the administration of the house of God, authorized by Scripture (1 Cor. 14. 37). It must be freely admitted that a spiritual state no less than the Spirit's guidance is needful to magnify the Lord in this matter. Where these conditions are fulfilled there will be an experience analogous to that which secures the blessing of the Psalmist: "Blessed are they who dwell in Thy house, they will constantly be praising Thee."

The next blessing is for those on the way, for the saints in this Psalm

are not yet in the possession of the privileges they desire, but following the leading of the Spirit they find their strength in Jehovah, as also its renewal till they reach their desired end (ver. 7). The application of these verses to the Christian life has been precious and invigorating to many a weary saint, and how many have proved their truth! The vale of weeping (Baca) has been realized as a place of spiritual springs, and heavenly ministry has covered it with blessings.

From verse 8 the Psalmist turns to prayer, and it is prayer in much assurance, but no personal advantage is sought; as to such things he knows that God will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly. As to spiritual blessings Jehovah gives grace and glory. The only definite petition is that God, the shield of His people, would behold and look upon the face of His Anointed. As the anointing is now for all saints, this prayer implies that all are viewed by God with that favour with which He regards the pre-eminent One. In this, every blessing is assured and we learn a true sanctuary lesson, so that the delight of God in His anointed is a source of unfeigned joy to our souls. The Psalm closes with a third blessing; the writer seems to have such a sense of Jehovah his God that he pronounces him blessed who trusts in Him.

PSALM 85. is an anticipation of the kingdom from another point of view; we have seen in Psalm 84. the pilgrim saints travelling, with their hearts in the ways, to God's earthly centre in Zion. In Psalm 85. the glory travels from heaven to dwell in the same place (see Ezek. 43.). Thus is salvation brought nigh them that fear Him, verse 9, for the final salvation of Israel is realized in the glory once more finding its home in the land (see Isa. 60.).

The Psalm falls naturally into three divisions, verses 1-3, 4-7, 8-13. The apparent opposition between the first and second of these has been a source of difficulty to commentators. The

common explanation that it is a post-captivity Psalm and that the first three verses present God's work in mercy in restoring the remnant to the land, while the next section describes the same people seeking escape from His governmental wrath, may be true; but it is often forgotten that there will be a repetition of the same circumstances in a day still future. According to Ezekiel 20. 33-38 there is to be another exodus (see Isa. 2. 2), and verses 42-44 tell of the ways with the people in the land, where, though mercifully restored, they are governmentally chastened till they remember their "evil ways" and "corrupt doings" and loathe themselves in their own sight. These are precisely the circumstances of our Psalm, which may be thus regarded as the prophetic instruction of the spared and repentant remnant of Israel, just as they are coming into their blessing in the land. The last verse seems to refer to the "righteousness" of these ways of Jehovah (*cf.* Micah 6. 5), going before Him as the ministry of the Baptist preceded the first coming, in both cases putting the feet of those who were exercised in the way of His steps. The primary and ultimate fulfilments of Isaiah 40. illustrate the same point.

It is instructive to notice how after presenting the petitions in verses 4-7 the soul takes the waiting attitude, and

light at once shines over the scene so that he views things intelligently. The attributes of God, mercy and truth, peace and righteousness, which seemed to be in hopeless opposition if the blessing of His people was to be secured, are seen to be entirely conciliated in their favour. A short extract from Mr. Bellett's book on the Psalms may be helpful, "Truth which required death (Gen. 2. 17) and mercy which can think of nothing but life and blessing are here together. Death is endured according to truth and the culprit given life and liberty according to mercy. Righteousness also kisses peace and peace kisses righteousness. Instead of being offended at each other's presence, they welcome each other. For righteousness is more than honoured by that which He who makes peace offers it on the cross; and peace is deeply satisfied when it sees that it can publish itself to sinners on so sure a title as honoured and accomplished righteousness." Truth springing out of the dearth is also beautifully illustrated whenever a prodigal turns to God in the confession of his sins, and in the best robe brought forth from the Father's house righteousness looks down from heaven to cover them. All this will be gloriously manifested in the kingdom presently, but faith anticipates now what will be displayed to sight then.

Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings.

IN connection with the order of the house of God, we are to remember before God all men; kings and all who are in dignity; for the well-being of His own, and the salvation of men—

We are to make (1) "supplications, (2) prayers, (3) intercessions, and (4) thanksgivings" (1 Tim. 2. 1).

The first is an earnest entreaty in the sense of need or indigence; it is once used of the Lord. (See Heb. 5. 7.)

The second is an address or request made with devotion to God; it is most generally used.

The third is a confiding converse or interview with privileged freedom and intimacy. It is only used once more, and there the N.T. translates it "freely addressing God" (1 Tim. 4. 5). The verb is used to describe the Lord's present intercession in heaven (Rom. 8. 23; Heb. 7. 45).

The fourth is a responsive expression of gratitude to God, and it is to mark us at all times, in all things:—

"BE YE THANKFUL."

(H.J.V.)

The King of Kings.

(ARNOLD THOMPSON).

NOT on the scroll of earth's illustrious fame
 Canst Thou be traced,
 Nor have its monuments or thrones Thy name
 Supremely graced,
 Except that Cross upon Golgotha's hill,
 Where Thou didst yield Thyself, to do God's will.

Yet by God's fiat, Lord, Thou shalt possess,
 In heaven and earth
 Thy rightful place; and every tongue confess
 Thy glorious worth;
 And Thou shalt reign, to God the Father's praise,
 Who, by His glory, Thee from death did raise.

The world that under Satan's power now lies,
 To do his will,
 The price of sin, in bitter human cries,
 Will pay, until
 Thou, King of kings and Lord of lords, shalt reign,
 Abolish death and tears and grief and pain.

And when the wars that wreck the human race,
 And strife shall cease;
 And by Thy power, all tumult shall give place
 To God's own peace;
 Then with Thy praise the vault of heaven shall ring,
 Once man-despised, then God-exalted King.

Until that day, Lord, keep us faithful here
 To Thy loved name,
 And all that now, by grace, our hearts hold dear,
 Bearing Thy shame,
 That, to Thy Kingdom, we may richly be
 Furnished an entrance, gracious Lord, by Thee.

The Knowledge of God's Love.

THE Christian is the object of God's love, which from its immensity and power can secure everything good to its object, yet he is often exposed to the most trying circumstances here. If he were contented as a child of God, to look for nothing but what came from God, he would find how thoroughly he is the object of His infinite love.

As a rule, Christians want God to minister to their fleshly or natural desires; they judge of His love by their circumstances. For instance, if they are poor, they would like God to make

them rich; but if they turned wholly to God He would make them happy in their poverty.

Born of God and poor, you may be supremely happy; whereas, if you are seeking to be rich or to make yourself comfortable here, it is not the love of God you are looking to, but that He should minister to your own selfish desires. If a man is very poor he has more occasions to look to God, whereas if he has means he has what may divert him from dependence on God.

Blessing and Cursing.

(JAMES BOYD).

Substance of a Gospel Address (Gal. 4. 1-7).

I DESIRE to draw your attention to two great lines of truth, which run through the whole of Scripture from beginning to end. One is the line of *blessing*, and the other that of *cursing*. And on one or other of these lines is every soul upon earth. It is not only that those under the law are cursed, though that is so in a special way, but "the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked" (Prov. 3. 33), whoever, and wherever such may be. There is no intermingling of these two principles, as indeed this is self-evident; neither is there any neutral ground, for the principle upon which the soul is in relationship with God determines for that soul which of these he is under.

Now the blessing of the creature lies in his knowledge and enjoyment of God. He cannot do without an object; and to be happy that object must be something greater than himself. His moral and spiritual being is capable of being greatly and pleasantly excited, but if this pleasurable excitement springs from the enjoyment of things on a level with himself, not to say anything of things beneath him, it is not lasting, and his subsequent depression is often greater than it would have been had he not partaken of the stimulant. His object must be something greatly above him; and not only that, but it must be infinite; something that is inexhaustible; something in which he will be finding for a whole eternity fresh delight.

God alone is sufficient for Himself. He requires nothing external to Himself to make His happiness supreme. The creation, which is the work of His hands, has added nothing to His happiness. He brought it into existence for His own pleasure. But that fact does not prove that He could not have done without it. He created it to please Him-

self, and when created, He had pleasure in it, for His thought was expressed in it; and that thought could not be otherwise than pleasing to Him. But it could not increase His happiness, for all that He saw in it was, so far as it went, the reflex of Himself, and by it nothing was added to the infinite wealth of felicity which lay in Himself.

But it is different with the creature who is set in relationship with his Creator. He is not sufficient for himself, but must find all his delight in God. All he has is from the bounty of God, but God is greater than all He gives; and it is Himself, and not merely that which He gives, that makes man's cup of happiness overflow. Our Lord, when here upon earth, in the days of His humiliation, found all His delight in God. He says, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup" (Ps. 16. 5). And this was not to end upon earth, for He also says, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy: at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." True happiness, therefore, is found in the knowledge and enjoyment of God Himself; and that His creature might find his happiness here, He has made Himself manifest in His beloved Son. In Him we find God, and in Him we are brought to the fountain of all blessing.

And God delights in the blessing of His creature. He blessed the living creatures as soon as they were brought into existence (Gen. 1); and man, who was to have dominion over all things that He had made, He blessed also. He Himself is called "*the Blessed God*" (1 Tim. 1. 11); for whatever state in which His creation may be found through the presence of evil, the blessedness in which He dwells cannot be disturbed.

Unfortunately, we have to hear the voice of cursing, as well as the voice

of blessing, for expression must be given to that which is hateful to Himself. Hence as soon as man has fallen away from Him we hear the curse pronounced, and that as distinctly and forcibly as ever the blessing was: "Cursed," God says, "is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3. 17); and later on, when Cain had stained his hands with his brother's blood, it is said to him, "Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." And under the law the curse falls upon the transgressor: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" (Deut. 27. 26). Blessing, however, is the first thing we read of.

But though the curse must come upon everything that lifts up its head in rebellion against God, yet has He at infinite cost to Himself established blessing for men, and in a place to which there is ready access, and where it may be secured without money and without price. But outside that spot in which the blessing has been situated, there is nothing but curse for any human being. The blessing must be found where He has placed it, for it is nowhere else, and to abstain from visiting that place, and securing the blessing placed so convenient to all, is forever to inherit the curse.

This blessing, according to Genesis 12., was placed in Abraham, and confirmed to his seed in Genesis 22. 18. And this seed, we are told in Galatians 3. 16, is Christ. When death had passed upon Isaac, and his father had in figure received him from the dead, God speaks of the blessing as established in his seed. But here Isaac was but a type of Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. The blessing, therefore, is established in Christ risen and glorified, and to Him the gospel directs the attention of all to whom it comes in the grace of God.

None but the children of Abraham

inherit the blessing. But this is not the natural seed, but the spiritual. Abraham was the father of the faithful. They who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham (Gal. 3. 7). The natural seed do not count. Abraham is the father of all them that believe, whoever they may be. His line is the line of blessing, and all who believe are on that line; for all who believe are Christ's, and all who are Christ's are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Now the law is not on the principle of faith, but on the principle of works, for "the man that doeth these things shall live in them." That is to say, the man who fulfils his obligations shall have his days prolonged. If he fail in a single point his previous law-keeping goes for nothing. He is a sinner, and must be dealt with accordingly. Having offended in one point, he has become guilty of all (James 2. 10). Every single transgression of the law is a capital offence. According to the law of England it does not require a man to commit two murders to forfeit his life. But the forfeiture of life is attached to the breach of each single commandment of the ten. A man may not steal, but if he covets, he has forfeited his right to live. It is not hard to see that, this being so, no one under law can escape the curse. For one offence Adam lost Paradise, and came under death. For one offence Moses forfeited his right to enter the land of promise. For one offence Saul was rejected from being king.

The blessing cannot be inherited on the ground of law; the curse is connected with that administration, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." An entirely different principle was brought in in connection with Abraham, and that was the principle of faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15. 6). Having no works except those that would have condemned him,

he was justified on the principle of faith; that is, he was held by God to be righteous because of his faith.

And though he is the first said to be justified in this way, it was just as true of all who before his day believed God as it was of him, and it will be just as true of all believers to the end of time. There are only the two principles upon which the justification of man can be contemplated: the one, grace and faith; the other, law and works; and the two principles are utterly opposed to one another; there can be no mingling of the two. Here in Galatians we are reminded, "that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them."

In this dispensation God is presented as the worker, and not man. God was always the worker, for had He left man to inherit the blessing by his working, he never would have inherited anything but the curse. Only in the past dispensations man was ostensibly and dispensationally placed on the ground of doing, because it was necessary, before that God could publicly take the place of Justifier, to show that there was no possibility of man doing anything by his works except making his condemnation more sure. When this was fully demonstrated then God comes out in the public character of Justifier of the ungodly. Christ dies for our sins, is made a curse for those under the curse of the broken law, settles to the infinite satisfaction of God the whole question of sin that lay between Him and His poor devil-deceived creature, breaks the power of death, and risen from the dead becomes righteousness, life, and salvation to all who believe in Him. And all who believe have these blessings; so that it is said, "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. i. 29). All the promises centre in Him, and we believers have them in possession to the glory of God. The blessing is ours.

But what is the extent of the blessing? Is it merely forgiveness? Is it merely that the believer is justified from all things? Certainly not. The extent of his blessing is that he has received sonship. Blessing greater than this could not be imagined. To be brought to God in the same relationship and love in which His Son is is the highest blessing possible for the creature. Nothing else can be compared with it.

But in order that this should be brought about it was necessary that the eternal Son should become man, and that He should go down into death on our behalf, and put to an end our whole Adam condition as in the flesh, link us up in life with Himself risen, and place us in the full light of the perfect revelation of God in His life and death down here. Therefore we read here, "When the fulness of the time was come"; that is to say, when the probation of man was over, and it was demonstrated that there was no latent power for recovery in the creature himself, nor any real desire for recovery, God Himself took the matter in hand, and "sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Thus has God come out to give effect to the eternal purpose of His love, which could not have been brought to light while the probation of man as a child of Adam was running its course. But now all that is in man having been brought to light, and the fact having been proven that in him there was no moral foundation upon which anything could be built that would harmonize with the mind of his Creator, he is set aside in the judgment of the cross, and God proceeds to work in His own sovereign way, creating men anew in Christ Jesus.

The magnitude of this new creation position is set before us in the message He sends to His disciples after His resurrection: "I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and

your God" (John 20. 17). Here we learn that the place Jesus has in relationship with the Father and God is the place we have. His place determines ours. And what a place that is!

But we have also power given to us by which we enjoy that place. In this same scripture we read that Jesus came Himself into their midst, when they were gathered together, and breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And in this passage in Galatians: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The place is ours, and the affections that belong to the place are ours also. We have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and fullness of joy is our portion.

Dear friends, is this place yours? Can you look up into the face of God, and in the consciousness of sonship before His face call Him Father? Perhaps I had better ask if the place has the least attraction for you. You might not care to be so near to Him. You would rather be a little farther away from His presence. You would not, perhaps, wish to be always under His holy eye. Such a nearness to God has no charm for you. The world has too great a hold upon your heart. You would prefer it to the blessing of God. Are you like the faithless sons of Israel who despised the pleasant land, and in their hearts turned back into Egypt? What a choice! The curse chosen instead of the blessing!

And what about the curse? It is just the antithesis of the blessing. The blessing is, as we have seen, to be taken

into favour in the Beloved, to be in the Son's place and relationship before the face of the Father, in all the love of which He is the worthy Object. The curse is to be driven out from that Presence into the most distant place that is possible for the enemy of God to be driven. It is set forth in those terrible words, which by the Spirit of God are put into the lips of Jesus: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt.). Could anything be more terrible than this, to have one's portion for ever in that place of utter and unspeakable woe? But such is the nature of the curse; and from this there is no way of escape, other than the acceptance of the grace presented to all in Christ. This leads into the blessing of God, which makes rich, and with which He adds no sorrow (Prov. 10. 22).

Dear friends, I have put before you blessing and cursing. The blessing is preached to you, forced upon you; you are entreated to lay hold of it. You have been told where it is. It is in Jesus; and there free for all. You have been told on what principle it is to be obtained. It is by faith. You cannot merit it. You require no merit to possess it. If you believe in Jesus it is yours. You have had both the height of the blessing and the depth of the curse placed before you. You can have no excuse if on the day of judgment you are found to have despised the blessing, and to have inherited the curse. You will only have yourselves to blame. God grant this may not be the portion of any here.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

THE Holy Ghost dwells within us to control us for the Lord to whom we belong. God has taken possession of those which He purchased at a great price, and He has taken possession of us that He might dwell in us as His sanctified ones, and that we might be wholly for Him, so that He might work

in and through us that which is delightful to Himself. "What, know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body . . . which is God's" (chap. 6. 19, 20).

Some Points of Resemblance between “The Pentateuch of Moses” and “The Pentateuch of David.”

(A. W. TRENCH)

IT is well known that the Psalms are in the Hebrew divided into five books, “Each of the first four books concludes with a doxology, and the place of the fifth doxology is taken by Psalm 150. as a full-toned finale to the whole” (Delitzsch).

Ancient Jewish authorities assert that these five books correspond to the five books of the law. They are as follows:—

Book 1—	Psalm 1-41	corresponds with	Genesis—The Book of the Beginning.
Book 2—	„ 42-72	„	„ Exodus—The Book of Redemption.
Book 3—	„ 73-89	„	„ Leviticus—The Book of the Sanctuary.
Book 4—	„ 90-106	„	„ Numbers—The Book of the Wilderness.
Book 5—	„ 107-150	„	„ Deuteronomy—The Book of the Word.

Genesis and the First Book of Psalms, 1-41.

The name means “IN THE BEGINNING” (the opening words of the Book).

Creation in the Psalms. Psalm 8. 3-8; 19. 1-6; 24. 1, 2; 29. 3-9; 33. 6-9; 40. 5.

The Lord looks down from heaven. Genesis 6. 12; 11. 5; 18. 21. Psalm 11. 4; 14. 2; 33. 13; 34. 16.

The Lord “a Shield.” Genesis 15. 1. Psalm 3. 3; 5. 12.

God requires blood that is shed. Genesis 4. 9, 10; 9. 5, 6; 42. 22. Psalm 9. 12.

The Flood. Genesis 6. 17. Psalm 29. 10.

The Trial of faith. Genesis 22. 1. Psalm 11. 5.

Commit thy way to the Lord. Genesis 24. 12. Psalm 37. 5.

The secret of the Lord with them that fear Him. Genesis 18. 17; 41. 15. Psalm 25. 14.

Pilgrim and stranger. Genesis 24. 3; 47. 9. Psalm 39. 12.

God's host. Genesis 32. 12. Psalm 34. 7.

They seek to slay Him. Genesis 37. 18. Psalm 31. 4; 37. 12, 32.

The lifter up of my head. Genesis 40. 13. Psalm 3. 3; 27. 6.

The Shepherd. Genesis 49. 24. Psalm 23.

The Fall of the First Man. Genesis 3. and Psalm 1.

“In the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened” (ver. 5). (“The counsel of the ungodly” (ver. 1).)

“She took . . . and he did eat” (ver. 6). (“The way of sinners” (ver. 1).)

“Yea, hath God said” (ver. 1). (“The seat of the scornful” (ver. 1).)

The Triumph of the Second Man.

Christ alone, the last Adam, answers to the description of the “blessed man” of Psalm 1. In contrast to the first Adam, His delight was in the law of the Lord, and He refused to tread the way of disobedience. As a result the first book of the Psalms closes with the words, “As for me, Thou upholdest me in my integrity, and settest me before Thy face for ever. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from

everlasting and to everlasting, Amen and Amen." Words blessedly true of Christ, as man, raised up from the dead. While Genesis closes with one of the most glorious sons of Adam dead and in a coffin. "By one man sin entered the world and death by sin, and so sin passed upon all men." "The glory of man is as the flower of grass" (M).

Exodus and the Second Book of Psalms, 42-72.

The name means "THESE ARE THE NAMES" (the opening words of the Book). The people were redeemed by name. The great subject of the book is redemption.

Redemption.

"I will put a redemption (margin) between My people and thy people." (Ex. 8. 23).

The first mention of "Redemption" in the Scriptures is in this book. "I will redeem you" (Ex. 6. 6). "The people which Thou hast redeemed" (Ex. 15. 13).

Exodus 13. 13, 15; 34. 20. Psalm 44. 26; 49. 7, 15; 49. 8; 69. 18; 69. 18; 69. 18; 71. 23; 72. 14.

The Redeemer's Name.

The first mention of the Redeemer's special name JAH is in Exodus 15. 2. "Jah my strength." In like manner the name "Jah" occurs in the Psalms for the first time—in Psalm 68. 4, 18 (R.V. margin).

JAH is a contraction of Jehovah, and signifies the absolute supremacy of the self-existing One.

God reveals "His glorious name." Compare Exodus 3. 13-15; 6. 3; 33. 19; 34. 5-7 with Psalm 44. 8; 45. 17; 48. 10; 72. 17, 19.

More about the Name. Exodus 34. 14; 15. 3; 5. 23; 20. 7, 24; 9. 16; 23. 21. Psalm 44. 5, 20; 52. 9; 54. 1; 61. 5, 8; 63. 4; 66. 2, 4; 69. 30, 36.

Crossing the Red Sea. Exodus 14. 22; 14. 21. Psalm 68. 22; 66. 6.

Choosing their Inheritance. Psalm 47. 4.

Compare the following passages:—

Our fathers told us. Exodus 12. 26; 13. 8, 14. Psalm 44. 1.

Thou shalt *plant* them. Exodus 15. 17. Psalm 44. 2.

Covenant. Exodus 24. 7. Psalm 50. 5.

I am God, thy God. Exodus 20. 2. Psalm 50. 7.

"The earth is mine." Exodus 19. 5. Psalm 50. 12.

The pillar of fire. Exodus 13. 21. Psalm 68. 7.

Mount Sinai. Exodus 19. 16, 18. Psalm 68. 8, 17.

"Blot me out of Thy book." Exodus 32. 32. Psalm 69. 28.

"Doing wonders." Exodus 15. 11. Psalm 72. 18.

"Who is like Thee?" Exodus 15. 11. Psalm 71. 19.

Miriam's song. Exodus 15. 20. Psalm 68. 25, 11.

"Sing unto God." Exodus 15. 21. Psalm 68. 32.

"The God of our salvation." Exodus 15. 2. Psalm 68. 19, 20.

Leviticus and the Third Book of Psalms, 73-89.

The name in Hebrew means "AND HE CALLED" (the opening words of the book). This "calling" was for Worship.

The People sanctified in view of God's *Holiness*.

Access of the Redeemed to Jehovah in *Worship*.

The Sanctuary. Psalm 73. 17; 74. 3, 7; 77. 13; 78, 54, 69.

The Tabernacle. Psalm 78. 60; 76. 2; 84. 1; 79. 1 (temple).

Mount Zion, His Dwelling-place. Psalm 74. 2, 7; 76. 2; 78. 54, 68; 84. 7; 87. 1, 2, 5.

The Flock (figure of the *Assembly* of God. Acts 20.). Psalm 74. 1, 2; 77. 20; 78. 52, 53, 70-72; 79. 13; 80. 1.

The Congregation. Psalm 82. 1; 75. 2.

The Assembly of the Saints. Psalm 89. 5, 7; 74. 2, 4, 19; 79. 2.

The House of God. Psalm 84. 4, 10.

The Altars of God. Psalm 84. 3.

The Courts of the Lord. Psalm 84. 2, 10. "It is good for me to *draw near to God.*" Psalm 73. 28.

Holiness. "All nations shall come and *worship* before Thee." Psalm 86. 9.

"Most Holy." Leviticus 2. 3, 10; 6. 17, 25, 29; 7. 1, 6; 10. 12, 17; 14. 13; 21. 22; 24. 9; 27. 28.

"Shall be Holy." Leviticus 6. 18, 27; 11. 44, 45; 19. 2, 24; 20. 26; 21. 6; 23. 20; 25. 12; 27. 9, 10, 21, 32, 33.

"My holiness." Psalm 89. 35.

"I am holy." Psalm 86. 2.

"Holy One." Psalm 89. 18; 78. 41; 89. 19.

"Holy oil." Psalm 89. 20.

"Holy temple." Psalm 79. 1.

"Holy mountains." Psalm 87. 1.

Vow and pray unto the Lord. Compare Leviticus 27. with Psalm 76. 11.

The blowing of trumpets. Compare Leviticus 25. 9, 23, 24 with Psalm 81. 3.

Judgment for disobedience.—Leviticus 26. 28, etc. Psalm 89. 30-32—but mercy and blessing for the obedient—Leviticus 26. 40, 43. Psalm 89. 33, 36, 37—because the covenant is remembered.—Leviticus 26. 42, 44, 45. Psalm 89. 34, 35.

Numbers and the Fourth Book of Psalms, 90-106.

The name in Hebrew means "IN THE WILDERNESS."

The trial of the people in the *Wilderness*.

In the Wilderness.

A prayer of Moses. Psalm 90.

Moses and Aaron. Psalm 99. 6.

Moses. Psalm 103. 7.

Moses and Aaron, etc. Psalm 105. 26; 106. 16, 23, 32.

Divine Providences. Psalm 91. 3, 7, 10; 94. 18; 97. 10; 102. 13, 20; 103. 2-5, 13, 17; 104. 14, 15; 105. 14, 15; 106. 43-46.

Divine Chastisement. Psalm 90. 7, 15; 94. 10, 12; 99. 8; 102. 10; 103. 9; 106. 15, 41, 42.

The Frailty and Brevity of Human Life. Psalm 90. 9, 10, 12; 102. 3-5, 11; 103. 3, 14-16.

The Cloudy Pillar. Numbers 14. 14. Psalm 99. 7.

The Red Sea. Numbers, 33. 8. Psalm 106. 7, 9.

Massah and Meribah. Numbers 20. Psalm 106. 32, 33; 95. 8-10.

Compare the Following Scriptures:—

Numbers 14. 22, 23; Psalm 95. 9-11. Numbers 10. 10; Psalm 98. 6. Numbers 14. 14, 20; Psalm 99. 7, 8. Numbers 16. 5; Psalm 105. 26. Numbers 11. 31; Psalm 106. 15. Numbers 16. 3; Psalm 106. 16. Numbers 16. 35; Psalm 106. 18. Numbers 25. 2; Psalm 106. 28. Numbers 27. 7; Psalm 106. 30. Numbers 25. 11; Psalm 106. 31. Numbers 20. 3; Psalm 106. 32. Numbers 20. 10; Psalm 106. 33. Numbers 35. 33; Psalm 106. 38. Numbers 15. 39; Psalm 106. 39.

Deuteronomy and the Fifth Book of Psalms, 107-150.

The name in Hebrew means "THESE ARE THE WORDS" (the opening words of the book).

Israel in the Land. A Review of their history—to show the ways and end of divine government.

The Words, Statutes, and Judgments of Jehovah.

Praise.

The Review of their History. Psalm 107; 111. 5, 6; 114.; 115.; 118. 2, 3; 124.; 126. 1-4; 129.; 135. 8-12; 137.

The Words of Jehovah.

The Law written in their heart. Hebrews 8. 10.

Psalm 119. is the key of the whole book.

Every letter of man's language is taken up with the praise of the Law.

"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart." Psalm 119. 11.

Psalm 147. 19; 107. 20; 138. 4. Deuteronomy 6. 6; 11. 18; 32. 46.

Compare Deuteronomy 33. 4 with Psalm 119. 111.

"For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119. 89.

"By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Deuteronomy 8. 3.

The Praise Song of the Redeemed.

"Ascribe greatness unto our God. . . . His work is perfect. All His ways are judgment: a God of truth. . . . Just and right is He." Deuteronomy 32. 3, 4.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Psalm 145. 3, 17.

At length Israel is constrained to own that the way Jehovah led them was "the right way." Psalm 107. 7. Compare Deuteronomy 32. 4.

Compare the following passages:—

"*Special Treasure*" (see Mal. 3. 17, margin). All the same word in the original. Deuteronomy 7. 6 ; 14. 2 ; 26. 18 ; Psalm 135. 4.

Wandered in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 32. 10. Psalm 107. 4.

The beginning of wisdom. Deuteronomy 4. 6. Psalm 111. 10.

Righteousness. Deuteronomy 24. 13. Psalm 112. 9.

Idols—the work of men's hands. Deuteronomy 4. 28 ; 8. 15. Psalm 115. 4, 5.

Wiser than enemies. Deuteronomy 4. 6. Psalm 119. 98.

"Preserve thy going out, etc." Deuteronomy 28. 6 ; 16. 16. Psalm 121. 8 ; 122. 4.

Thrones of judgment. Deuteronomy 17. 8, 9. Psalm 122. 5.

Children—His reward. Deuteronomy 28. 4. Psalm 127. 3.

"The Lord will judge His people, etc." Deuteronomy 32. 36 (exactly the same words). Psalm 135. 14.

Hermon. Deuteronomy 4. 48. Psalm 133. 3.

"The Lord shall command the blessing." Deuteronomy 28. 8. Psalm 133. 3.

"God of gods." Deuteronomy 10. 17. Psalm 136. 2.

"Led through the wilderness." Deuteronomy 8. 15. Psalm 136. 16.

"Slew famous kings." Deuteronomy 29. 7. Psalm 136. 18.

"Happy people." Deuteronomy 33. 29. Psalm 144. 15.

"God so nigh." Deuteronomy 4. 7. Psalm 145. 18 ; 148. 14.

"He hath not dealt so with any nation." Deuteronomy 4. 32. Psalm 147. 20.

"God is merciful." Deuteronomy 4. 31. Psalm 116. 5.

What we should Seek After.

MEN of the world, as well as Christians, feel all things shaking, an irresistible torrent rising, professing Christians at their wits' end. The peaceful testimony from a position which God secures is of moment to souls, and however weak it may be individually as such, it tells on people's hearts. My comfort is . . . that the blessed Lord Himself cares for His people; a poor feeble folk, but their home is in the rock. God is raising up many active witnesses, and the Lord is more waited for. He Himself fills the heart sufficiently to enable us to forget ourselves; still the present link with Him, I feel, is not sufficiently felt, so as to bring Him out as fresh and full as He is given to us. That is what we have to seek here, and for that it is death working in us—"always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." That we are dead, and in Him, is a simple and blessed truth, but always to bear it about that only He may appear—this is what we have to seek. . . . I have been thinking of one of the joys in heaven, after Christ—and it will be His joy, seeing of the fruit of the travail of His soul and being satisfied—seeing all the saints perfect according to the heart and mind of God Himself, and His who has sought and saved them. What satisfaction and joy that will be! Truly it is what one's heart desires now. Then it will be perfectly satisfied, and Christ glorified in it; and this, thank God, will surely be. (J.N.D.)

Answers to Correspondents.

The Love of God.

E. O. D.—I am wanting to know the best scriptural way to answer the following: "God loves everybody; if not, why did He create them?" John 3. 16 and 17 is brought forward in favour of it, and I *do* love John 3. 16. But on the other hand, there is the ninth chapter of Romans, and I cannot feel that the phrase is supported by Scripture.

The fact that (as stated in Rom. 9.) God loved Jacob and hated Esau cannot overturn the truth of His love to the world (as given in John 3. 16).

In the latter His love is general and universal. It is the reason why He gave His only-begotten Son, in order that whosoever, whether Jew or Gentile, shall believe on Him shall be blessed; while in the former it is particular, applying as it does to the two nations represented by Jacob and Esau. It is quoted from Malachi, who wrote 1400 years after the two men had lived. God favoured the one nation and disfavoured the other. Then why was Esau hated? What had he done to incur God's disfavour? He was a

profane man, sold his birthright, would not repent for having done so, even though, with tears, he sought the blessing, and thus wickedly forfeited the favour of God, bringing that disfavour on his posterity. It is not difficult to see why God hated Esau. It is most difficult to understand how He loved Jacob, or you or me! As to the phrase "God loves everybody," well, He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," and He "desires that all should be saved," but the phrase itself carries an irreverence that grates upon the spiritual senses. Better to adhere to the words of Scripture that God loved the world, and you stand on safe ground. (J. W. S.)

Sowing and Reaping.

S. B.—"May not God have caused the record of Adoni-bezek's cruelty and his punishment (Judges 1. 5-7) to be given in Scripture as a voice to men who would follow a similar course of cruelty towards others? He had to reap as he sowed."

All that was written aforetime in the Scripture was written for our learning, and in the history of Adoni-bezek the truth is strikingly illustrated that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And he had himself to acknowledge that his punishment was God's judgment upon him. We may see ruthless acts perpetrated which

none seem to have the power to prevent or punish, but God sees all and vengeance belongs to Him; He will repay. This is a solemn consideration at all times, but especially in these days of "frightfulness," and not only for kings, captains and soldiers, but for all, for the great principle extends to every relationship of life.

Melchisedec and Abram.

A. F.—The bread and wine that Melchisedec brought forth for Abram (Genesis 14.) were to strengthen and refresh him after the toil of conflict with the kings, and to prepare him for the further and more crucial test through which he had to pass, and

from which he emerged triumphantly when he said to the King of Sodom: "I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet: and I will take nothing that

is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich."

You will notice that Melchisedec was the priest of the most high God, and that he came forth with God's blessing for Abram, with the blessing of the One who was "Possessor of heaven and earth." Abram was acting as a man of faith, God had promised him great things and to Him he looked and he would not take riches from the world. The bread and wine were significant in this connection; they showed God's care for him in the conflict of faith, showed also from whence Abram drew his strength, and that his communion was not with the world, but with God

who had sent His priest to meet and bless him.

The record of Abram's faith is for our learning. We have been called as he was; ours is a path of faith as his was; we have a priest also, of whom Melchisedec was a figure (see Heb. 5. and 7.); and He is able to succour and strengthen us by grace and mercy from on high, so that we may not fail in the conflict of faith, but refuse the world and its enticements as Abram refused the King of Sodom's offer.

We see no connection between this incident and the Lord's Supper, except that the elements were the same.

The Manifestation of Christ.

WHAT a deliverance from the dominion of sin and from self-service has been wrought in the one who can say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." From thence onward the heart's determination is that, whether by life or by death, "Christ should be magnified in my body." It is no longer a question as to whether a thing is good and pleasing, but is it Christ? He is the Man to be manifested here. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." This simple

rule, which is the sum of everything for walk, and necessarily most pleasing to the heart that is true, would not only make a reformation in all our ways, but would work in us a new way of doing everything here for God's pleasure and serving Christ according to His mind. The constant tendency is to try and improve the manner of one's life here below by adopting Christian principles, whereas you will never arrive at it unless you start from "crucified with Christ." Then it is no longer thinking of what *I am*, but of what *He is*, and "Christ liveth in me."

The Preaching of the Cross.

THE preaching of the cross meets with nothing but rejection from the natural heart of the hearer. It is a stumbling-block to the Jew, who expected the Messiah to come in royal state, take the throne of David, and restore the kingdom to His earthly people. To come in the humiliation that characterised His entrance into the world, His passage through it, and His death as a malefactor on a gibbet, was

not at all to their liking. They were stumbled by it. And to tell the philosophic Greek that he was to find salvation in One who was taunted in His dying moments with not being able to save Himself, was foolishness. But to us who are saved it is the power of God and the wisdom of God; for such are children of wisdom, and of them it is always justified (Luke 7. 35).

Overwhelmed.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THE waves of sorrow do not require to be very deep in order to submerge and overflow the strongest of us. We are small.

"I am overwhelmed," were some of the last words of a famous British statesman. The waters rolled over him without his finding, apparently, any relief from their load.

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I," David could say in Psalm 61. If his heart were overwhelmed he knew of a rock which no floods could submerge and where he could securely stand if led to it by the mighty hand of God. What relief had his burdened heart in this blessed certainty!

How many hearts are overwhelmed, distracted, sorely burdened to-day, as was his!

Note, first, the sense of distance which pressed upon him. "From the end of the earth," he cried. Further he could not be. A feeling of estrangement and solitude filled his soul. He had no temple to which to retire; no fellow-worshippers; no human support; no song of conscious victory to sing. He was desolate; but he cried thence unto God! It was a cry—only a cry, but the history of such cries is intensely interesting. Israel "cried" when under the power of Pharaoh. They could but cry, but they were heard.

In Psalm 107. cries rose from people in every kind of distress; and these, too, were heard and richly answered.

It may be well for us to know "not what things we should pray for as we ought," but this we can do—be our circumstances what they may—and in so doing find the most blessed relief—we can cry: "Abba, Father!" This cry, the first, the simplest and the sweetest, is the crown and climax of

every cry. It is the most musical cry of the Christian heart.

David said: "I will cry unto Thee." And wherefore? "When my heart is overwhelmed." This submergence was the reason.

A silenced heart—one that can only cry, one that has ceased to rebel, that has yielded, that has surrendered its own will and tastes and passions to the supremacy of the good will of God—is just what He wants and what ensures rest and peace for us. It is the experience of heaven here below. It supplies a "peace which passeth all understanding." It was seen fully in Jesus. An overwhelming which causes the heart to simply cry unto God, in the consciousness of utter helplessness, is the most becoming expression of the lip of man when the flood rolls over him. But the waves of sorrow rise and fall. They come and go. They are unstable.

There are altitudes, thank God, which no waters can reach, high lands where the floods of trouble cannot come.

"Lead me," said David, "to the rock that is higher than I."

That rock is stable, permanent, secure and full of comfort. It is higher than I!

Let my efforts fail; let my arm yield; let my mind be filled with perplexity; let my strength and my heart faint and fail, "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

To the rock that is higher than the flood, or the storm, or the trouble, or the perplexity, or all that overwhelms—lead, oh, "lead me to the rock that is higher than I"—Wonderful Rock! "Rock of ages," once cleft and riven to give shelter, indeed, to the sin-burdened soul, now the same Rock of ages risen from the dead, and seated on God's right hand, the unfailing refuge of every sorrow-tossed heart that seeks only to be "led" to Him. If "I" am

small and weak and needy, that Rock is great and strong and secure and everlasting—the “Rock that is higher than I !”

Place, dear troubled soul, the ebb and flow of your sorrow beside the immutability of that Rock, your quickly passing tears alongside of its eternal comfort, and you will affirm that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen : for the things which are seen

are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

But how important is that “look” !

The winds and the waves are but temporal, while He who walked on the water, and to whom the sinking disciple cried for help, was superior to every disaster and could readily answer the cry. Everything depends on the reality of the cry.

*“Oh! Saviour, I have nought to plead
On earth below or heaven above
But just my own exceeding need
And Thine exceeding love.”*

“Look Up.”

*“When the outlook is dark, try the up-look—
These words have a message of cheer.”*

THE words “Look up!” have a place among the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, in speaking to His disciples of days of trouble and agitation—of so great trouble that men’s hearts would be “failing them for fear”—but, so far from suggesting that they should allow themselves to dwell on the trouble, or let their hearts fail, He said to them: “Then, look up!” The call to “Look up” is therefore always in point, and always in force. In whatever direction our eyes fail they should never “fail upward.” And yet that is the direction in which they oftenest do fail. We are all quite capable of “looking down,” and of “looking in,” and of “looking around,” and alas, even of “looking back.” But who has not cause sorrowfully to confess, as did King Hezekiah—“Mine eyes fail upward” ?

And yet, and yet, it is “from above,” and from above only, that our help cometh.

“In the days of His flesh” the Lord Jesus bore Himself as the One whose eyes never failed upward. His most

characteristic attitude is represented to us in the constantly recurring words: “He lifted up His eyes to heaven.” When He wrought “the miracle of the loaves” (Mark 6. 41); when He commanded the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak (Mark 7. 34); when He showed Himself to be the Vanquisher of death at the grave of Lazarus (John 11. 41); and when the end was very near, and He was confronted by His agony and the cross, He “lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come!” From thence came all His succour and joy in that obedient, dependent life that He lived.

From thence also comes all our help, and as we look up we shall obtain grace and mercy and help in time of need. What wonder that His first martyr—whose face during his trial had been “as the face of an angel”—is declared, even when “they ran upon him with one accord to stone him,” to have “looked up steadfastly into heaven,” and to have said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God !”

(J. G. T. Adapted from “Ashore and Afloat.”)

Wisdom's Seven Pillars.

(JAMES GREEN).

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. 9. 1).

THE great world system has been reared upon the twin pillars of infidelity and superstition, resting upon the uncertain basis of ignorance of God. Little do men think that divine strength is about to shake the foundation on which their building is borne up, and involve them in its ruin. Great will be the fall when God by His presence shall remove the rationalism and idolatry on which has been reared the edifice of gain and self-glory, and shall demonstrate the folly of those who seek rest and happiness in any scheme that excludes Himself.

In contrast to this the wisdom of God has provided a sure foundation. The bed-rock on which this rests is the fact that He has been manifested in His own beloved Son, and other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. It is then in the wonderful thirty-three years of His life on earth—between His coming forth from the Father and coming into the world, and again leaving the world and going to the Father—that we must look to see the seven pillars which the might of God has hewn out. On these He rests His eternal glory, on these He has built the house of love, and life, and joy eternal, for all who come to Him in the one and only name that is given for the salvation of men, Jesus the Lord.

The cardinal points in the life of our Lord, around which all His acts and words cluster, are seven. Each forms a pillar of strength dependent one on the other. None can be removed without involving the displacement of the rest. All are bound together in a divine unity, resplendent with the magnificence of God's revelation of Himself. Hewn out by divine power and abiding unchanged amidst the storms of life and the sorrows of death, the fall of kingdoms and the passing away of all things.

Pillar 1.

The birth of Christ.

God's perfect Man.—A new beginning.
Matthew 1. 18-25. Luke 1. 26-35.
Galatians 4. 4.

How great was the incarnation! First, in the miraculous power by which He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin, as the prophet had announced. Second, in the glory of the person who so came: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Third, in the grandeur of the universal, everlasting dominion He would exercise: "Of His kingdom there shall be no end." And, lastly, in the redemption work that He was to accomplish in the body He was taking: "He shall save His people from their sins." Seek not to fathom the holy mystery of His person; perfect in humanity, glorious in Godhead. The only place for the creature, whether men or angels, is to adore in the presence of Him who is beyond all comprehension. A new commencement indeed; for here was one born, not of Adam's order, not of the earth, earthy; but the second Man, the Lord from heaven. Had He been born of natural descent, He would have inherited the sin with which fallen human nature is bound up. He would have been only man and not God, and no more capable of maintaining the government of the world than those who had been before Him. Still less could He have given Himself a ransom for all. These considerations will afford the reason why Satan has used all his arts to sap this first pillar that God has hewn, that is, that behold a virgin should be with child and bear a Son, and His name should be called Emmanuel, God with us. If this foundation could be shaken all else would fall. But it stands unassailable, the entry of the glorious person of the Son of God, the Word become flesh.

Pillar 2.

The baptism of Christ.

God's perfect Servant.—A new principle.

Matthew 3. 13-17. Mark 1. 9-11.

Luke 3. 21, 22. John 1. 32-34.

This was the point where the hidden private life of the home at Nazareth was exchanged for the public service before the eyes of men. For the first time on earth there was a man whose sole object in life was to do the will of God and to fulfil all righteousness even at the cost of death. This governing principle set Him above all other men, and called forth the expression of the deep and full delight of God in Him. At the same time this path of humble obedience became the ground of His exaltation. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions." How strong was the pillar thus established in One who could fearlessly challenge His bitterest enemies with "which of you convinceth Me of sin?" And "If I do not the truth believe Me not." Here was a workman who was worthy and capable of finishing perfectly the work that the Father had given Him to do.

Pillar 3.

The temptation of Christ.

God's victorious King.—A new triumph.

Matthew 4. 1-11. Mark 1. 12, 13.

Luke 4. 1-13.

The consequence of the position thus taken was a challenge to the powers of darkness, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. All the efforts of Satan were brought to bear, to cause Him to abandon the position of dependence and trust in God, which is the only righteous place for man. To have done so, and use His rights as Son of God, would have been to take the place of authority as judge and disposer, and relinquish the object for which He had come, to save and redeem. Man had become the ready slave of

Satan in Eden, but now was seen the glorious spectacle of Satan overthrown by a Man whose sole weapon was the written word of the Living God. The arch enemy had met his conqueror. Baffled and defeated the strong man was bound by the One that was stronger than he, and miracles of power on the captives he had held demonstrated his overthrow and the triumph of God's victor. In thus vanquishing the foe, He became a pillar of strength against which the forces of evil beat in vain. As yet it was for Himself alone the victory was won. Other foundations had to be hewn out before He could put the sword of the Word into the hands of His redeemed, with the assurance that when with that weapon they resisted the devil, he would flee from them as he had done from Him.

Pillar 4.

The transfiguration of Christ.

God's beloved Son.—A new object.

Matthew 17. 1-9. Mark 9. 1-10.

Luke 9. 27-36. 2 Peter 1. 16-21.

The climax of His victorious life was reached on the holy mount. Miracles had been wrought, words such as man never spake before had been uttered, the kingdom of God had been proclaimed and attested, the light had shone in the darkness, and the darkness had comprehended it not. And now He is acknowledged from the place where alone He was appreciated. Not for Himself now, but for those three who were hereafter to testify as eye-witnesses of His majesty, does the Father's voice give Him the unique place: "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." No cunningly devised fable was this. The kingdom was there in power, the dazzling glory of His person shone through His raiment, white as the light, the Shekinah presence cloud enfolded Him, glory and honour rested upon Him. Mighty indeed is this pillar, the centre of the seven. The law and the prophets are there, not as pillars on which to rest, but as witnesses to the

glorious person concerning whose decease they hold converse. Yes, He was about to make His exodus, not, however, from the mount of glory but from the mount called Calvary. Not in the meridian splendour of the light most excellent, but in the midnight darkness of shame and death, shall He leave this world. Yet so it must be, if sinners were to be brought to God, for "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

Pillar 5.

The crucifixion of Christ.

The finished work.—A new way.

Matthew 27. 33-54. Mark 15. 21-39.

Luke 23. 33-47. John 19. Hebrews 9. 27, 28.

Only the One who had hewn out the four previous pillars could have wrought this. The sinless Lamb of God, the doer of His will, the beloved of the Father, the conqueror of Satan. No sacrifice of less worth was sufficient to atone for guilt, no person less glorious could grapple with the tremendous question of sin. Upholding the majesty of the throne of God, He at the same time manifested the love of His heart. Bearing the judgment of sin in His own body on the tree, He opened the way by which the sinner might be freed from its curse and power and brought to God. Wonder of the redeemed to all eternity, theme of their ceaseless praises, untiringly shall they ascribe worthiness to the Lamb that was slain. But who shall estimate the greatness of the work, or who measure the cost to Him before He could say "It is finished." Apart from His atoning death He must ever have abode alone. No happy company of the redeemed could have surrounded Him, for no redemption would have been accomplished. Reign! yes, He could have reigned as Son of Man, but only to dispense judgment on all whose sin was made the more manifest, because He had lived a perfect life amongst them. But if He was to share His throne, His own relationship, the joy

of His own nearness to God, with those whom the Father had given to Him, He must humble Himself to death, even the death of the cross. Here was the filling full of all righteousness; here the atoning blood, by which God could be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; here for all such the ground of settled peace with God, through Him who died for our sins and rose again.

Pillar 6.

The resurrection of Christ.

The perfect triumph.—A new position.

Matthew 28. 1-10. Mark 16. 1-8.

Luke 24. 1-8. John 20. 1-18.

Colossians 3. 1-3.

In bringing this to pass, a power was exerted beyond all creature thoughts. The exceeding greatness of the might of the strength of God, wrought in Christ in raising Him from the dead (Eph. 1. 19, 20). By this act a new creation was begun, a new position for man was formed, and Christ is seen as the occupier of it. Yes, but now able to associate with Himself those for whom He has died, and to say to them, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." The heart of the Father and the power of God was set free to accomplish the eternal counsels of love, and Christ becomes the pattern of the purpose of God for His children. It was never in God's mind that man should spend a brief life on earth with death before him; the entrance of sin brought this state of things about. And the resurrection of Christ is God's answer to it. Beyond all the power of evil to touch, resurrection is the ground on which God is building. It abides unchangeable, the fact beyond dispute "that now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept." If this pillar could be removed, then were our faith vain and our preaching vain, and the Christian would be of all men the most miserable.

Pillar 7.

The ascension of Christ.

The supreme glory.—A new administration. Mark 16. 19, 20. Luke 24. 50, 51. Acts 1. 4-12. Ephesians 4. 7-16.

How wonderful this is, and worthy of our deepest consideration, may be gathered from our Lord's prayer: "Now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Exalted far above all principality and power, a name given Him above every name, a Man in the glory of God, in His manhood the effulgence of Godhead shines forth. Morally it shone when He was on earth, then in lowliness and dependence; now it is displayed in the place of authority and power in the very midst of the throne. We see it now by faith, soon face to face. Then to be with Him, to behold the glory of His own unique place, a glory no creature could share. But there is a glory He has given, and in His manhood He occupies that exalted place, as Head of His body the church, the unfailing source of love, grace, power, direction and sustainment for His members on earth. Complete in Him, no other resource is needed. Nothing of man can add to the sufficiency that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No power can assail His throne or sever one member from Him. The gates of hell cannot prevail against that which He builds. Let us on our side beware, lest spoiled by

philosophy, the wisdom of men; or vain deceit—the imaginings of the mind; we fail to hold the Head, from whom the whole body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

These, then, are the seven mighty pillars on which the wisdom of God has built the house of eternal glory and blessing. The world may count them weak and foolish, but those who rely upon them prove that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Running like a seam of gold through these foundations, and binding them into an inseparable unity, is the truth of the person of the Son. At His birth: "The Son of God"; at His baptism: "Thou art My beloved Son." In the days of His temptation, Satan never questioned His right to the title. On the transfiguration mount: "This is My beloved Son"; at the hour of His death: "Truly this was the Son of God." In resurrection, declared to be: "The Son of God with power"; and received up in glory: "To the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Blessed Lord and Master, glorious exalted Head; when earth is gone, kingdoms passed, heavens no more, still "Thou remainest"; and Thy church built upon Thee, filled with the glory of God, shall abide to His praise to all generations of the age of ages. Amen.

"IT IS I" (John 6. 20). The Divine Person.

"IT IS FINISHED" (John 19. 30). The Divine Work.

"IT IS WRITTEN" (Romans 3. 10). The Divine Word.

"Abba, Father."

"I don't think that I ever enjoyed the two words '*Abba, Father*' more than I did last night. They were a pillow of the softest down to a brain that had been surveying hopelessly the state of things in general. Yes, 'hopelessly,' and then came the '*Abba, Father*' of heaven's repose. It was the fond 'cuddle doon' in the cradle of divine comfort, and the assurance of the help of everlasting arms."

(From a letter.)

The Epistle to Titus.

(E. CROSS).

Foreword.

THE Epistle to Titus, together with the two epistles to Timothy, form the group known as the "Pastoral Epistles" of Paul. This name is given them as connected with the ministry of the pastor, in the upbuilding and maintenance of the order of the assembly, already formed by the dogmatic truths elsewhere set forth. The earlier labours of the Apostle were evangelical. Souls were gathered by the gospel; then assemblies were formed; and finally the great truths that characterize the church, according to the eternal counsels of God, were revealed. But, between the first gathering out of souls by the gospel and the full truth of the heavenly purposes of God in Christ, there comes the history of the assemblies here below, and the ministry needed to exercise the saints, according to the faith they have professed, and with regard to the conduct befitting the house of God. This is the special subject of 1 Timothy and Titus. In the former epistle the Apostle has in view the general principles that pertain to the administration of Christian truths (cf. 1 Timothy 1. 4; 3. 15); in the latter he refers to the application of certain details, in view of the special condition of things in Crete. In 2 Timothy he gives the resources of the servant in the growing failure of the church generally, and the abidingness of what is secured "in Christ," in presence of the increasing evil of the "last days."

Apparently, the Cretans were not novices in the Christian faith. "Devout Jews" from Crete are named as being at Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2. 11), witnesses of what occurred there on that never-to-be-forgotten day. An account of this they carried back with them, no doubt, on their return to Crete. What happened among them meanwhile, or what further ministry they

received, we know not. But that the character of their Christianity was of a Jewish type seems probable from the allusion to "Jewish fables, genealogies," etc., noticed in the epistle (chapter 1. 14; 3. 9, 13); and this, acting on their general character, which was notoriously bad, "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies," seems to have called for the severity of the "rebuke" which the Apostle impresses on Titus as necessary in dealing with them. How different his feelings, on the other hand, toward the Thessalonians. They were young in the faith, earnest and hearty in the service of God, and the brightness of their testimony was known of all. The Apostle's whole soul is drawn out towards them in sympathy and affection, and his tenderness with regard to them was that of a nursing mother (1 Thess. 2. 7, 8). There is no pretence on his part of feeling towards all alike. It is no question, therefore, of gentleness and mildness of speech here, but of stern rebuke and denunciation of conduct, which had remained unaffected by, as it was contrary to, the faith which they professed. To encourage the meek, to help the needy, to instruct the godly, who desire to know the way of life, is happier work for the servant of Christ; but to arouse the conscience, to expose evil, to rebuke the wrong-doer, is equally necessary in its place, and far too often neglected; and it is because judgment against the evil work is not enforced that the practice of wickedness becomes permanent, and strengthened by precedent allowed.

Titus was a Greek (Gal. 2. 3) and a convert of the Apostle, as we may probably infer from Titus 1. 4. He uses the same expression in respect of Timothy (1 Tim. 1. 2). That Titus was held in high esteem by Paul is shown by the notices we have of him in several

places in 2 Corinthians, and to him now the Apostle entrusts the work of putting in order what remained lacking in the various assemblies in Crete. Things there were in a loose and slipshod state. Disorder, ecclesiastical and moral, prevailed; and there were none to whom the others could look up for guidance, or who could speak with authority in regard to what called so loudly for a directing hand. It needed energy, wisdom, a strong hand and a pastor's heart to deal with such a state of things, and out of such a chaos to evolve an order that would be practically suitable to the house of God.

Christianity is the same, to whomsoever it is addressed. It has not two measures, one for the better class, so called, and another for the rest. There is but one God, and one Christ, who reveals Him; and the testimony concerning Him is one. The gospel for the court is the gospel for the slums; and the effect, when received, is the same for both. "The faith of God's elect" is the same, whether in Crete or Palestine; whether in former or later times; and the conduct that becomes the gospel is the same, unaffected by time or place.

The word "gentile" comes from the Latin "gens" = class, or clan; and it betokens primarily the race and surname of families of renown, of noble birth and high rank. The Greek word is "ethnos," whence the word "ethnology" = the science that treats of different races of men. This word is again the rendering of the Hebrew word "goim," nations, gentiles (cf. Gen. 10. 5, Deut. 32. 8, *et al.*). At first it simply marked the racial distinction into which the world was divided, and did not imply any sense of inferiority, or contempt, in the use of it. In the course of time, as the Jews got a special place in the world, and rose in their own estimation in consequence, they used the word to distinguish, in a disparaging way, the other nations from themselves (cf. Deut. 32. 21; Isa. 65. 5; Acts 10. 28, 35; Eph. 2. 11).

From this word "gentile, gentle" = belonging to the same clan, or family, comes our word "gentleman," which connotes a man of superior standing in society, who, by birth, education, fortune, high principle, honourable conduct or other attainment, or accessories, ranks above the menial class.

"In the highest sense the term 'gentleman' signifies a man who not only does what is just and right, but whose conduct is guided by a true principle of honour, which springs from that self-respect and intellectual refinement which manifest themselves in easy and free, yet delicate manners" (Imp. Dict.).

In other words, one who in his conduct responds to and comports himself with the high and honourable position in which, by birth, education, fortune or other circumstances, he is found.

Some one once said to the late G. V. Wigram: "There are no gentlemen in heaven, and we don't want any of them here." "You mistake," G. V. W. replied; "in heaven they are all gentlemen."

And this trait is finely instanced by the late J. G. Bellett in his remarks on Luke 24. 28. "He made as though He would have gone further." "How perfect that little movement was! What title had He, a Stranger as He seemed to be, to obtrude Himself on them? He had only joined them by the way, in the courtesy of one who was travelling the same road. What right had such an one to cross their threshold? If Jesus be but a Stranger in our eyes, beloved, He will still walk outside. Till we know Him as the Saviour, the Lover of our souls, surely He asks for nothing. We may dwell in our own houses, and furnish our own tables, till then. But when He is known by us as the Son of God who has loved us and given Himself for us, then He claims a place in our hearts and in our homes; and then will He dwell with us and sup with us, as it were,

unbidden; entering, in the person of some of His little ones, either to get a cup of cold water, or to have the feet washed, at moments when, perhaps, we looked not for Him." The grace, the dignity, the moral comeliness of the little episode are exquisite, and illustrate to perfection, after the pattern of the Lord Himself, the refined and gentle ways inculcated by His Spirit."

The first effect of the gospel is to

make Christians, to put them by grace in relation with God our Father, through the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; the next effect is to make them "Christian gentlemen"—men and women, who will comport themselves according to the high and holy calling wherewith we are called. Such is the object of the Epistle to Titus, in respect of those of all ranks, without regard to age or sex, whom the Apostle puts under his directing care.

Not Afraid of Evil Things.

(L. S. SOOLE,
Castle Crescent, Reading).

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord" (Ps. 112. 7).

"**N**OT afraid of evil tidings"—Help us, Lord, in peace to rest
Fixed on Thine unfailing promise, though suspense our faith may test;
Shrinking not from any lesson Thou in tender love mayst teach.
Sure, Thou knowest how to answer prayer for those beyond our reach.

"Not afraid"—because Thou lovest all our dear ones more than we,
And the "end from the beginning," in their life-plan Thou canst see.
Troubles which *we* would have spared them may be blessings in disguise,
Working out a glorious future, though now hidden from our eyes.

"Not afraid"—though war or tempest, pestilence or fever's breath
Threaten those united to us with a love as strong as death;
"Covered in the day of battle,"—shielded from all evil things,
Are the souls whom Thou dost shelter, 'neath the shadow of Thy wings.

"Not afraid?" Yet, Lord, Thou knowest love *is* strong and faith is weak,
And our hearts too often tremble with a dread we dare not speak;
Only to Thyself we breathe it, knowing Thou dost comprehend
All the fears and sad forebodings that with faith and hope contend.

Then in hearkening to Thine answer,—words of comfort, peace, and rest
Fill our hearts with sweet assurance—"God is Love"—His will is best;
Should the heaviest tidings reach us, can they really evil be
If our loved ones are safe anchored, tossed no more on life's rough sea?

Shall we doubt that Thou hast given life beyond the life we craved—
That our prayers are fully answered,—Thou eternally hast saved?
Help us trust, then, O our Father, whatsoever tidings come
That reunion will be granted, here, or in our heavenly home!

The foregoing lines were written by the mother of a soldier during the Boer war. They were sent out to him, but along with her last letter were returned to her, for he had fallen in battle. She was able to realize that "heavy tidings" were not "evil," but that her son had been taken from the evil to come.

We believe that they will yield help and comfort to fearful and sorrowing hearts in this sad time, and so insert them.

Subjection of Will.

(T. OLIVER, Galashiels)

IN reading through the Gospels one cannot fail to be impressed with the evidences of the perfect subjection of the Lord's will to that of His Father. The will of His Father was not merely the controlling influence in His life, but it was the very substance of His existence.

“Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22. 42). “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me” (John 4. 34). “I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5. 30). “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6. 38). Food is an essential to existence. It is the stay of life. His staff of life was found in doing the will of His Father.

Had the Christian no other motive than the will of God, how many crooked paths would become straight! If we were never to think of going against what we were assured was the mind of God, how many tangled skeins in the basket of our moral life would be unravelled! Difficulties would disappear, not in a constant struggle for the mastery over evils without and within but in the conscious calm enjoyment of the truth that there is no circumstance for which the grace of God is insufficient and no contingency for which His love does not provide. The wheels of the car of God's providing care run on the rails of His will and there is no possibility of the car being derailed.

In spite of such assurance, we are apt to be for the most part self-will worshippers. One day my attention was arrested by a very effective advertisement of a certain firm's electric lamps. There were shown three Oriental sun-worshippers bowed down before one of the firm's lamps under the pardonable error (as the advertisers averred) that the light came from their god, the sun. One could not but smile at the ludicrous situation. However,

the thought flashed in: Were we very much better than these deluded heathen? We who are divinely fitted to be worshippers of the living God are still largely worshippers of our own wills and ideas. Could we get outside ourselves so as to analyse our attitude towards our surroundings this fact would be more apparent.

In a secular sense, the exercise of self-will is an essential. If it were not for strength of will, man would sink under the degrading influences which tend to debase the highest form of God's creation beneath the level of the lowest. Self-will is necessary to a man's success in the world. It is, however, an insurmountable barrier to a Christian's progress in grace. The Holy Spirit has no fellowship with the tremors of the human will. A beloved departed servant of the Lord once wrote: “The effectual presence of the Spirit crucifies egotism . . . it occupies us with but one object—Jesus.”

“There is sunshine in my soul to-day.
Blessed sunshine!”

That blessed sunshine—the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus exalted in heaven shining in the soul—is the light which eclipses even the brightest rays from the lamp of man's will.

May we be imbued with the Spirit of the Psalmist's prayer :

“Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee. . . . Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God” (Psalm 143. 8-10).

Very often when God has made His will known to us we allow some influence to question its validity. Usually that influence has its origin in good and has a very plausible covering. Yet we do well to follow implicitly His guidance when once revealed.

We may lose God's blessing to our

souls through not recognizing His mind in something which causes us pain. God's way of blessing is in the painful rather than in the pleasant experiences of life. Because in prosperous circumstances we do not often find ourselves in a dependent attitude. We are apt to take credit for success to ourselves. In the painful days of adversity we fall back on God's resources and the blessing flows into our souls. Our own will is the hindrance to the love of God flooding our souls with joy. Self-occupation is the spring of the discontent and wretchedness which so often assert dominion over the spirits of Christians. External trials may cause sorrow but not dire unhappiness; that springs from internal sources.

Spiritual discernment is a gift to be coveted. The difficulty in perceiving the will of God may seem a very real one and we may be disposed to demand a scheme of tests analogous to that by

which the analyst recognizes the presence of constituents in a sample. But the will of God is not to be found out by natural phenomena.

We may, however, be assured that if we are near enough to God in the experience of our souls we shall never be at a loss to know His will. "The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him." That fear is not in the sense of cringing under the rod of a tyrant. The meaning is that those who have a delicate sense or fear of being found in opposition to the current of the will of God are those admitted to the secret of His mind. In connection with the destruction of Sodom, the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do" (Gen. 18. 17). Abraham feared the Lord and as a result was His confidant. "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25. 9).

Grace and Truth.

THE Lord came and dwelt amongst men "full of grace and truth." He came to the deepest depths of our need to meet it. *That was grace.* And He came from the highest height of God's glory to reveal it. *That was truth.* And from the highest height to the lowest depths we behold His glory. (J. T. M.)

The Father's Love for Us.

THE Father's love will not be satisfied until He has us, every child of His, at home in His house forever. But He loves us well that He does not keep us ignorant of the joys of that home until we get there, and He has sent the Spirit into our hearts that we might know them now. That we might be "in spirit there already" and "Abba, Father" cry. (J. T. M.)

Light Divine.

GOD has graciously made the path of His will known for all His saints; others have made difficulties, and talk and write of the surrounding darkness as Newman did when about to go over to Rome, "Lead, kindly light, amid the *encircling gloom.*" J. N. Darby wrote the truth, "*Light divine* surrounds thy going." There are difficulties, for the Scriptures recognize these as "perilous times," but the saints are in the light, however feebly they apprehend it; and the *truth* is given to enable them to meet the difficult times. "The true light now shineth" (1 John 2. 8). Difficulties do not make the day dark; they should stimulate those who are "in the light" to overcome them in faith. (H. J. V.)

God's Ways in Relation to the Gentiles. (A. J. POLLOCK.)

“THE TIMES
OF
THE GENTILES” and
(Luke 21. 24).

“THE FULNESS
OF
THE GENTILES.”
(Rom. 11. 25).

THE right understanding of these two phrases gives us the key to God's public and general ways in this world, enabling the student of Scripture to follow intelligently the prophecies leading up to, and relating to, the future.

In every way at this present time the word—GENTILES—stamps God's dealings with this world.

The times of the Gentiles “began with Nebuchadnezzar,” and this fact is announced by Daniel in his interpretation of that monarch's dream of the great image. For centuries God had worked in connection with Israel* as a centre. But their history had been one long record of lapses into idolatry and rebellion, until at length the kingdom of Judah was broken up, and God's people carried captive into Babylon.

At this time, as J. N. Darby has pointed out, God's calling (that was with Israel) and God's government, which had hitherto been united under Israel, became separated. God's calling, once given, was not subject to repentance on God's part (see Rom. 11. 29), but His government was transferred to Gentile centres because of Israel's complete failure to answer to responsibility.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream illustrates his own Babylonish empire, to be followed by inferior world kingdoms, viz. the Medio-Persian, the Grecian and the Roman. Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar :

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings (=emperor): for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength and glory. And wheresoever the

children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heavens hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold” (Dan. 2. 37, 38).

How sweeping — “Wheresoever the children of men dwell!”

One brief retrospect of history will show the reader how thoroughly God's government was transferred from Israel as a nation to the Gentiles. With the end of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles the public history of Judah as a nation ceased. For four centuries before the birth of Christ we know nothing of Jewish history save from profane sources.

And when Christ came He found Himself in a land tributary to the Romans, the fourth world power of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The Gentile was dominant.

Consequent on the rejection by Israel of their Messiah, the Lord in Luke 21. 20-24 prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place under Titus (A.D. 70); and from that event we read: “Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until *the times of the Gentiles* be fulfilled.”

Is not Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles at this moment? Are the Jews not wanderers in every nation in the world?

“The times of the Gentiles” began then with Nebuchadnezzar, and will go on till the Lord comes to reign as King over his ancient people. He comes as

* *Israel* is used as a general term, and not as distinguishing Israel from Judah. As a matter of fact, Judah was held responsible in the way Israel had been.

King of kings, the true Emperor, and Lord of lords, as Son of Man of universal sway. Israel will never have her rights till the Lord has His.

"The Fulness of the Gentiles."

If the phrase, "the times of the Gentiles," refers to *God's dealings in GOVERNMENT* with the nations of the world, the expression, "the fulness of the Gentiles," refers to *God's dealings in GRACE* in the souls of men.

Chapters 9, 10, and 11 form a great parenthesis in the great gospel epistle to the Romans. In it we see the Apostle Paul's heart going out in deep yearning for the blessing of his fellow-countrymen. Then in connection with God's ways with Israel he asserts the rights of God's sovereignty on the one hand, and the righteousness of His government on the other—sovereignty on the one hand, that is the rights of God to do what He chooses, depending on what God is; and government on the other, that is God's dealings in relation to man's responsibility, depending on how man answers to his responsibility. Now God's sovereignty had given gifts and a calling to Israel. God had chosen to do this.

Let the mind travel rapidly over Israel's history. How unutterably bad it is—a mixture of faithfulness and unfaithfulness—the faithfulness all God's, the unfaithfulness all Israel's. And this dreadful history culminated in the world's greatest crime, the darkest stain on the universe, viz. the murder of the Son of God. And all this only demonstrated what man is. It lets us into the secret of our own hearts.

And shall all this history not be met by the government of God? Assuredly. And yet in the midst of the darkest description of Israel's failure God's sovereignty shines, if anything, more brilliantly because of its dark setting. Like a gem of purest ray flashing in midnight darkness is the verse, "The

gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11. 29).

But what about the government of God? Israel had been set aside as the political centre of the earth in God's ways since the days of the captivity in Nebuchadnezzar's time. That bit of government was pretty severe. But still Israel was the chosen nation to which the Messiah was to come—the fold into which the Good Shepherd was to enter. That had to do with the calling.

And then the sin, black as it was, for which Israel during six long centuries had come under Gentile domination, was thrown completely into the shade. A more terrible sin by far was Israel's, even the murder of God's Son. The Old Testament pages glowed with a bright prophetic light, but when *He* came, of whom they spake, His grace was refused, and His love answered by incorrigible hatred.

In response to such a crime, the greatness and blackness of which cannot possibly be exaggerated, what government is called forth without which God would not be just in His dealings with men? Romans 11. 25 furnishes the answer: "Blindness in part has happened to Israel," often described as "judicial blindness." If God's *government* had been transferred from a Jewish to a Gentile centre as the result of Israel's sin God's dealings in *grace* were now transferred from Jewish to Gentile activities as the result of the rejection of Christ.

How history has proved the truth of this statement! It is notorious how unbelieving the Jewish nation has been. It is the jibe against missions for the Jews how much money per head is expended on each convert to Christianity.

But God has not cast away His ancient people. "There is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11. 5). Many of God's ancient people have bowed the knee to Christ, and are, thank God, true Christians.

But as to the nation generally, Isaiah's prophecy, waiting seven centuries, was at length fulfilled: "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear" (Rom. 11. 8).

Israel for nearly two thousand years has been set aside in the just ways of God. How long shall this last? The answer is explicit: "Until *the fulness of the Gentiles* be come in" (Rom. 11. 25).

When the Lord went "out of the house, and sat by the seaside" (Matt. 13. 1), enunciating the parable of the sower, the great change in God's ways was clearly indicated. Israel had rejected the Lord, and its rulers were plotting His death.

The fall of the Jew was to result in the riches of the world; and their diminishing in the riches of the Gentiles. Look at the activity of God's grace since Pentecost. God has been blessing world-wide.

At the great Jerusalem Conference, James in his speech delivered himself thus: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit *the Gentiles*, to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15. 14); and we remember how when Paul made his memorable defence on the castle stairs in Jerusalem, and narrated how the Lord had said to him, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto *the Gentiles*," that these words threw his Jewish audience into un-governable rage.

But such is the case. God has set aside the Jew in His government, not that the offer of salvation is not made to the Jew still, and every Jew who believes in Christ is eternally blessed, but He has set aside the Jew as the centre of His dealings, whether in government or grace. The Jew presents the extraordinary spectacle of a man without a country. They are a scattered and peeled nation. And yet they are preserved, proof of God's interest in

His people, and that nothing can set aside His promises to them, or His purposes respecting them.

Where are the ancient Babylonians? Gone. Where are the ancient Greeks? Gone. Where are the ancient Romans? Gone. All swallowed by time, and lost in the mingling races of men. Where are the ancient Jews, who were ancient before ever Greece or Rome was heard of? In every country! The marvel of the world. The miracle of the ages. Distinguished to this day by their features. Persecuted yet indestructible. More numerous now than in the palmy days of King Solomon.

Meanwhile God is blessing the Gentiles, and when their fulness comes in, then God will again take up the Jews, and fulfil all His promises to them, and they will be fulfilled when great David's greater Son, their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall reign as King of Israel, and wield universal dominion as the Son of Man.

These present dealings of God in setting the Jew aside, and blessing the Gentile, began when Cornelius and his friends were baptized by the Apostle Peter, and their fulness will practically come in when the Lord comes for His church at His second coming, for the Gentile nations blessed in a future day will be blessed in reference to and through Israel. "For if the casting away of them (Israelites) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11. 15).

No wonder that the Apostle Paul, moved in his deepest depths at the thoughts of God's ways—His sovereignty and His government—should burst forth:—

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11. 33).

The Triumphant Three.

(INGLIS FLEMING).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR versus GOD!
an unequal combat surely!

Nevertheless the Babylonian king in all the pomp and majesty of state made his decree. Princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, sheriffs and rulers of provinces accepted the inevitable and bowed to his dictate. They worshipped the golden image set up in the plain of Dura. In the midst of such an assemblage, representing as it did the overwhelming might and well-nigh universal dominion of the emperor, who would refuse submission?

Three Hebrew youths would.

They had been brought away as captives from their own land. Their names, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (which by their terminations linked them with the true God), had been changed. The great monarch might juggle with their names, but he could not change their purpose of heart. They were faithful in their allegiance to Jehovah their God. Then by wisdom and understanding given them of Him they rose to positions of honour in the province of Babylon. And their prosperity did not mar them any more than their previous adversity had done. Unswervingly they adhered to their faith. Now surrounded by imperial stateliness and magnificence a fresh temptation assailed them. Would they dare to stand erect while all the world prostrated itself idolatrously before its god? Yes! they would dare.

Three against the world. What a sight for angels and for men! Three, do I say? Ah, besides the three frail men was God, there to maintain and uphold them in the face of all the force of the foe.

Accused before the king of having withstood his commandment, he in rage and fury demanded their immediate arrest and that they should be brought before him without delay. Probably because of their former valuable services

his royal clemency was extended towards them and a further opportunity of submission was offered, the threat, however, being repeated that in the event of their non-compliance an awful death awaited them. To this they give a simple uncompromising refusal. "O Nebuchadnezzar," they say, "we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king! But if not, be it known unto thee, O king! that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3. 16-18). There was evidently no yielding here, not to the extent of a hair's breadth.

Was ever haughty monarch withstood thus by three of his weak subjects? But *he* was on trial as well as they. He had before acknowledged to Daniel that the God of the Jews was a God of gods, and a Lord of kings. In his pride he had forgotten this now, however. Before his assembled princes and nobles from the length and breadth of his vast dominions he had entered the lists against Almighty God.

Full of wild anger and with wrathful visage he at once commands that the furnace shall be heated to sevenfold strength and that picked mighty men from his army should bind the heroes hand and foot as they were in their clothing, and there and then cast them into the flames of the fierce fire. The result was that his soldiers proved to be fuel for the furnace, while the pinioned prisoners were set free from their bonds by the same devouring element.

Then, instead of three shackled men writhing in their death agony as he expected to see, the monarch was amazed to descry four men walking at ease, and to his astonished eyes "the form of the fourth was like the Son of God."

It may be that he little understood the full import of his statements. Perhaps, like Balaam and Caiaphas, he was used of God to bear unwitting witness to the truth. But his words of astonishment are recorded for our comfort and encouragement to-day.

May we not believe that this time of outward disaster was one of the best, if not the very best that these valorous Hebrews ever knew. Amid the fires they were not only free from their bonds and out of the reach of their foes, but they were in the presence of the Son of God, enjoying nearness to Him, walking with Him, in a way they had never known before. When they came forth it was as those who had been with Him to be witnesses to His saving strength and power during that awful experience.

And is it not ever thus? The Son of God draws near to succour those who stand for God's glory and truth.

We have an instance of this in the case of the once blind man of John 9. He had been questioned and persecuted, forsaken by his parents and scorned and derided by the religious rulers. Undismayed he had upheld the truth, and more and more the glory of the Great Healer had dawned upon his soul's perception. At length he had been cast out by his adversaries and was alone, despised, abandoned. Yes! so it appeared to human ken, but the One for whose honour he had endured the conflict had not been inattentive. His eye had been upon His stout-hearted servant. It was His hand, unseen, which had ministered grace and strength to him in the hour of his trial. And now that he was deserted, excommunicated, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He made Himself known to the courageous champion of the right in a new way. He presented Himself as his companion in the hour of testing. The Son of God was Himself cast out. They were walking together in the midst of the fire.

It was the Son of God who loosed the bonds of the three young men in the furnace of Babylon. It was He who loosed the bonds which had bound the recently sightless beggar. And it is He who by His atoning death and by His resurrection life looses our bonds to-day. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," He says. But more than that He adds, "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed" (John 8. 32-36).

This liberty is pictured for us in that fiery furnace incident. The fire of judgment at Calvary has been the way of deliverance for us, and how blessed a deliverance it is.

Set free from the slavery of sin. No longer to be driven by the cruel task-master. To hear the voice of the oppressor no more. The cords of iniquity are consumed, the bondage of evil is ended. The emancipated soul breathes the air of freedom now. The truth releases us. Christ has died and we have died with Him. *His death is ours.* Thus we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Yes! we live now in Him. *His life is ours.* Beyond judgment, beyond the domination of sin, beyond the power of Satan we have our being in the sunshine of the smile of God. More than this, it is the Son who makes us free. Then we are free indeed! He gives us to share His freedom before the face of His Father and God. He cried "Abba, Father," in the sense of relationship and nearness, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God's Son, in our hearts cries "Abba, Father" to-day.

We have heard with delight the resurrection message, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God" (John 20. 17). Well may we rejoice. We are not servants now, we are sons. We are no longer minors under the law, we are of full age and under grace (see Gal. 3. 23 to 4. 7). Sonship's joys are ours already and soon we shall be at home as sons in the Father's house on high.

Radiant with glory, fully conformed to the image of God's Son we shall still walk with Him. No longer amid the fire of trial and tribulation but amid the light and love and blessedness of our everlasting home.

Brave three! Their names are inscribed upon the pages of holy writ as men of mettle who feared not to face the whole world for the truth they counted dear. They "yielded their bodies" (Daniel 3. 28), as Nebuchadnezzar said of them later, "that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God." Valiant confessors, your example has inspired the hearts of many and nerved many hands to fight the battles of our God.

"Yield your bodies." So the Apostle Paul exhorted the Christians at Rome, of old, and through them exhorts us to-day. "Yield your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which

is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12. 1).

Have we done this? Have we in honesty and integrity of heart placed ourselves unreservedly at His disposal? Are we at all like the doughty doers of Daniel.

Surely nothing less than this becomes us. Our lives were forfeited through sin and we were exposed to His just judgment, but the compassions of God have been manifested. He yielded up His Son, His only Son, for our salvation. Christ has yielded up Himself even to the death of the cross in order that eternal blessing might be our portion. Surely the only right reply on our part is to yield ourselves to God that in life or in death we may glorify Him. So shall we be like the triumphant trio, and honouring God shall be honoured of Him in the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sovereignty and Responsibility.

(DR. SA'EED, Persia).

IN the East there arose two schools of doctrine, they were termed the Monkey school and the Leopard school. The mother monkey jumps from tree to tree and the little ones must cling fast to her or fall, and the theologians of the Monkey school taught that man must cling to his Maker like that or perish. The leopardess, like the ordinary cat, carries her cubs about everywhere; she gives them no chance of being independent of her, and their safety depends entirely upon her care of them. The leaders of this school contended that the question of a man's salvation was not according to his choice at all, but that he was carried to heaven or sent to hell as suited God best.

There are these two schools also in this land. One says, You must *do* something in order to be saved, and keep on *doing* in order to keep saved; if you don't you will be lost. That is the

Monkey school. The other says, No, you have no need to exercise yourself about this matter at all, nothing counts but God's choice. That is the Leopard school. But we are neither monkeys nor leopards, but intelligent creatures, into whose nostrils the breath of life has been breathed, and we are accountable to our Creator. We cannot ignore our responsibility to God, and yet we know that our works cannot secure His favour, for as sinful creatures we did no good. It is not our works that save us, for it is not by works but by grace that we are saved. Yet none can know the saving grace of God apart from repentance. In turning to God in repentance for our sins we acknowledge our *responsibility* to Him, and then in the salvation wherewith He saves us we see His *sovereign grace*. These two, responsibility and sovereignty, do not clash, but manifest the harmony of God's ways with men.

Oneness.—No. 3.

H. J. VINE,

“Lord Jesus are we one with Thee!
O height! O depth of love!
And crucified and dead with Thee,
Now one in heaven above.

“Soon, soon shall come that glorious day,
When, seated on Thy throne,
Thou shalt to wondering worlds display
That we with Thee are one.”

OUR Lord Jesus Christ loved the assembly, not a part of it, but in its oneness and entirety; and He gave Himself for it. The day will soon dawn when He will present it to Himself without spot or wrinkle, but wholly glorious within and without, for the everlasting joy of His own heart.

As a pearl of great value, she attracted His desire to possess her, and He gave *all that He had* to make her His; yea, more, He gave *Himself*. He loved the assembly; and when in glory she shall shine with Him He will *still love* her; but even now, as the lily of the valleys among the thorns of this world's testings and trials, He loves her with a present, perfect love, and His present service of love towards her will not cease.

Every believer on Christ, the Son of God, sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, belongs to this assembly. Every one redeemed by the blood of Christ is indwelt by the Spirit; and He gives the precious cry of relationship in their hearts—“Abba, Father.” They are spoken of as the children of God in John. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God” (1 John 3. 1). Our Lord Jesus Christ is constantly engaged for the present welfare of these; as their Advocate with the Father, and as their High Priest before God; as their Lord and their Head; and as Son of God, He ever liveth to make intercession for them, for all of them.

The Flock, the Assembly.

The one Shepherd of the flock, raised from among the dead, is called the *great* Shepherd; even as laying down His life for us, He is called the

good Shepherd; whilst in connection with His coming again He is the *chief* Shepherd. Every precious sheep of God's flock is a special object of His thought and care. He calls each one by name. The peculiarities of each one are known to Him. Other shepherds may fail the flock of God, but this perfect Shepherd never fails. Each believer on Him can say, “The Lord is *my* Shepherd”; and as following Him find abundance of blessing.

There is “one Shepherd,” and there is “one flock.” As *Jehovah's* Shepherd He bore the smiting of the sword upon the cross; then the sheep were scattered (Zech. 13. 7; Matt. 26. 31); but in resurrection He gathers them together. (Indeed, the day will come when, as the *national* Shepherd, He will hold the nations together, in a system which Ezekiel calls “Eden, the garden of God”). The truth as to the Shepherd gathers into itself offices and glories far beyond that which is generally understood. Each believer can individually say, He is “*my*” Shepherd. We may know Him as the great, and good, and chief Shepherd; as the King who will shepherd the nations and as *Jehovah's* Shepherd too; but then we are told He is *Jehovah's* Fellow. He is Man truly; but He is also God. What a glorious Shepherd! What a privilege to belong to the one flock of which He is the living Shepherd at this present moment! to the living flock to which He has given eternal life! the one flock for which He died.

The wrong translation of John 10. 16 has done incalculable harm. The reading “one fold” instead of “one flock” has been used to justify the most corrupt and the most superstitious of religious systems. Many pious believers have been enslaved by

the idea of a fold; and many who should have known better have formed organizations and party folds, and ensnared therein true believers to their hurt. Some who have helped to form folds may have sincerely desired to preserve the sheep from other evils; but they must have failed to see that preservation is in Christ Jesus. Their work, however well meant, hinders the true sheep from simply following Christ, and from growing in the knowledge of Him, in the enjoyment of the liberty, life, pasture and salvation which He came to make theirs.

To one who vehemently insisted that folds were necessary the reply was made recently: "When your fold is made, and all sorts are gathered into it, Christ will come, and do as He did before; He will call His own sheep by name, and lead them 'OUT' of the fold (John 10. 3); and when His own are *outside*, you will only have left *inside* your fold those who are not His." So true is this principle, that when the final assembling call of the Lord is given to His own, the folds of Christendom will be left behind, to be treated as the world, falling under the judgment of Babylon (Rev. 19.); whilst the one flock, the assembly in its entirety, is happily and manifestly one with the Lord above. How constantly we are exhorted to express this unity in a practical way now, and how sinful must every tradition or effort be that would maintain or form saints into parties or folds which are a denial of it. We are to "all say the same thing, and that there be not among you divisions; but that ye be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same judgment"; and the Apostle prayed that our "hearts may be encouraged, being united together in love"; and he also desires that we "stand firm in one spirit, with one soul, labouring together in the same conflict with the faith of the glad tidings"; and even for two sisters, that they "be of the same mind in the Lord." Ephesians 4. 3 has been much

discussed, but it would be better to put it into practice than to talk about it. "Bearing with one another in love; using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." This is inclusive of all the children of God; and this is the one way to realize the oneness of which we have spoken.

Love Commanded.

It is no question of church reconstruction. It would be pride on the part of any one to attempt to reconstruct that into which failure came, even when apostles were living amongst the saints. Who are we to think we can do better? We can, however, follow the Lord and keep His commandments, also His *new* commandment; and as to assembly building, we can rely upon Him to build His assembly according to His word to Peter upon the Father's revelation to him of Himself, the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt. 16.).

It is the blessed Lord Himself then to whom we are called. It is Himself we are to follow. He is our Shepherd, our Head, and our Centre. He has given us eternal life. We are to let that which we have heard from the beginning abide in us, and so we shall "abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He has promised us, life eternal" (1 John 2. 24-25). It is here divine oneness is realized; one in the Father and the Son. To such, how precious is *the new commandment*, "LOVE ONE ANOTHER" (John 13. 34 and 1 John 2. 8). Where this is answered to in the light and in the truth, those who are not "of the truth" will not abide. They "go out," as John tells us. Those who are "of the truth" can therefore go on together in love, in the oneness which every true believer desires. The divine nature is there; and the Holy Spirit is there; we have therefore the power to walk in the truth, as well as the nature which both desires and delights to do so. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His command-

ments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5. 2-3). How can they be to those who have the divine nature, and walk in love and truth. The commandments of harsh men may be grievous; but not those of Him whose love the Son has revealed to us. They indicate the blessed channels into which our activities are to be directed. They preserve us in true love to God and to each other, in a circle of holy liberty, life and love.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. There He commanded the blessing, even eternal life (Ps. 133.). Finally, let us remind our hearts again

that our Lord Jesus Christ died to gather us all into one; also that He prayed to the Father in those never-to-be-forgotten words: "*That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one, as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me*" (John 17. 21-23).

"Let, Lord, Thy living word abide in me,
And may it be my joy to feed on Thee,
To find my all in all in Thee to be,
Lord, now and evermore."

The Need of Unity.

(H. P. BARKER).

IT is always true that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and we need, who are of the household of God, to remember the solemn word of Scripture: "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5. 15). These things have been forgotten and the disasters plainly foretold in the Word have befallen, and the work of God is greatly impeded.

If only it were brought home to saints how their disputes throughout the church's history have stumbled souls, hindered the work of God and alienated men instead of winning them, and are still doing so they would be appalled! Why is there so much preaching and such small result? Why so much toiling all night and catching nothing?

A notice board that confronts the traveller who passes over a certain bridge across the Ohio River, at Cincinnati, reads: "*Processions in crossing this bridge must break step.*" What need is there for this? It is a mechanical fact that the impact of every right foot, and every left foot striking together

would so multiply the force of the stroke given, that the stability of the bridge would be endangered.

We ask the question: Why do we not see greater results in the Lord's work? And we venture this answer: *Because we break step.* We do not march unitedly, as being "of the same mind in the Lord."

It is strange that the Supper of the Lord, that hallowed feast, given to be from one point of view an expression of the unity of Christ's body, should have become the expression of *party* unity, and so a means of disunion. It is not only strange but sinful, yet it is not new, for in the seventh century quaint old Thomas Fuller wrote:—

"I have heard some men cavil at grammarians for calling some conjunctions disjunctive, as if this were a flat contradiction. Whereas, indeed, the same particle may conjoin words, and yet disjoin the sense. But alas! how sad is the present condition of Christians who have a communion

disuniting. The Lord's Supper, ordained by our Saviour to conjoin our affections, hath disjoined our judgment. Yea, it is to be feared lest our long quarrels about the manner of His presence cause the matter of His absence, for our want of charity to receive Him."

Of course I shall be told that separations are necessary where evil doctrine or practice is condoned. I quite agree. Athanasius could no more continue to walk with Arius and his followers than light could mingle with darkness. Luther's name is held in honour for his courageous breach with Rome. Thank God for such separations. Surely they have the fullest approval of Him who "divided the light from the darkness." Surely no path becomes the Christian of to-day save that of uncompromising separation from all the abominable heresies that have found shelter under the wing of the professing church. Where there is tolerance of or neutrality towards these, the Christian is called with clarion voice to stand in separation. So, too, when evil *practices* are in question.

But alas! has not use been made of the necessity of scriptural separation to excuse and palliate all sorts of *unscriptural* divisions? Have we not too often been like the man in the fog whose heart beat with fear when he saw a monstrous form approaching?

He prepared to shoot, when the form spoke, and he found it was his brother John!

The phalanxes of darkness are closing in. The end of long centuries of conflict draws near. Satan is marshalling his leagued hosts for the final onslaught. And we, gathered under the banner of our Lord are—disunited!!! Before the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson took two of his captains, Collingwood and Rotherham, who were at variance, and showed them the hostile fleet. "Yonder," said he, "are your enemies; shake hands and be friends, like good Englishmen." *And they did!*

Our great Leader points to the oncoming hosts. Yonder, He says, are the powers of darkness. Stay your strife; be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love; be of one accord, one mind. *And we don't!*

How true it is that the children of this generation are often wiser than the children of light!

Beloved Christian readers, I do not ask what shall we *say* to these things. I ask what shall we *do*? Shall we not arise in God-given strength, and determine (where no question of complicity with evil doctrine or conduct exists) to abandon our aloofness, our contentions, and gladden the heart of our blessed Lord by being of one mind, and of one accord in Him?

The Hearing Ear.

WHEN there is a drift from anything which was set up by God, the appeal is to the individual and the words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," are often employed. This is very noticeable in the Gospel by Matthew, and it is an important word for us to-day. We are to "hear what the Spirit says *TO THE CHURCHES!*" If we have an ear to hear (Rev. 2. 3). Unregenerate ecclesiastics formulate rules and principles, and call upon us to hear them! Degenerate churches tell us that we must listen to them! God says we are to hear what is said "to the churches" by the Holy Spirit! Let us obey God rather than man. *In the assemblies* the testimony of Jesus is maintained, to turn the hearts of the real to Himself (Rev. 22. 16-17). The presentation of His glory and His love set their affections towards Himself in motion; and the Spirit of Truth is here to keep Him before us. The mere ecclesiastic speaks much of church dignity and order; but not of the glory and love of the Son; nor of His new commandment to His disciples, "Love one another."

Studies in the Psalms—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 86. 87.

PSALM 86. is the only one in Book III attributed to David. Its simple character and supposed lack of originality have led some writers to doubt this inscription. I trust we may find a force and power in it quite in harmony with other compositions of the son of Jesse. The occasion of its writing is found in verse 14—"the proud are risen up against me, and the congregation of violent men have sought after my soul." According to verse 7, the suppliant is so assured of deliverance that he celebrates it in verse 13 before he actually experiences it. The lowest Sheol need not be understood as the judgment of God for sin, but rather the death to which he was exposed by the violence of adversaries. This anticipation of victory, the result of faith in God and intimacy with Him, is often found in the Psalms and we may derive much encouragement in this faith from the instruction on prayer in John 14. 16. The condition of the Psalmist is told in verses 1-5, afflicted and needy, yet pious and trustful, instant in prayer, and Adonai (Lord, in small letters in A.V.) is good and forgiving and full of loving-kindness. This seems a reference to the revelation given to Moses (Exod. 34. 6, 7), and is found again in verse 15, an unfailing resource for the repentant sinner who if dealt with simply according to law would find no escape from judgment. We know God delights in mercy and has a clear right to manifest it (Rom. 9. 18). The title Adonai occurs seven times in our psalm, more often than in any other (in the sixty-eighth also seven times)—"it is not the same as Jehovah, which is the covenant Name of God with Israel in eternal faithfulness—here Adonai, one who has taken power and is in relation of Lordship to those who call." (*J.N.D.*)

In the second section, verses 6-13, the glory of God's purposes and the majesty of His person are realized in the soul.

"All nations . . . shall come and worship before Thee, O Adonai—for Thou only art God!" There is no lack of force in this deep sense of what God is and how all His purposes must be fulfilled because of who He is. This realization is the proper result of the exercise of faith in Him in the day of trouble. In passing it is well to remind ourselves that this experience will only grow on the soil of that uprightness of heart which the first section describes. Immediately following on this consciousness of reaching God in the sanctuary of His presence the soul feels the need of a path in which to walk amid all the dangers of the way, and the need also of a united heart having but one object (cf. Ps. 27. 4). When this state is reached the whole heart goes forth in worship to "Adonai, my God." Let His Name be glorified evermore. This is an exceedingly fine sequence: the poor and needy man of verse 1 finds in God, spiritually known, a new centre for his life so that his own littleness is lost in the consciousness of the greatness that is before him.

The last section affords, as already noticed, the circumstances which gave occasion to this "prayer of David"; from these troubles not only is escape sought but a "token for good" in the presence of his enemies that they may see it and be ashamed. Psalm 67. is the description of the result of this "token for good" being manifested to the Jew in a future day. It is only in very special circumstances that the Christian can use this prayer; our Saviour Himself was not so publicly signalized, for His resurrection was only revealed to faith. Alas! the world as such will only know of it in future judgment. To us it is given to suffer for His sake and wait the token for good in another scene (Rev. 3. 9).

PSALM 87. We return in this psalm to the writing of the sons of Korah

None found under this heading is so suited to those who were spared by grace in a day of judgment (Num. 26. 11-1 Chron. 6. 22). It is the celebration of grace and purpose connected with Zion, the first three verses being the declaration of the Spirit to this effect. Verse 1 is explained by Psalms 48. 8 and 132. 14. Foundations thus laid are immutable, whatever the vicissitudes through which this city which God has chosen may pass, between the announcement of election, and the public demonstration of it by power. The site of Zion may be ploughed as a field (Micah 3. 12); a prophecy fulfilled some hundreds of years afterwards, under the rule of the Emperor Hadrian. She may be called "Zion whom no man seeketh after" (Jer. 30. 17), yet the end is sure, "the name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord is there" (Ezek. 48. See also Joel 3. 21). Thus will grace superabound over all Israel's guilt. Further, Jehovah declares a special character of love even for Zion's gates more than all Jacob's dwellings, the reason being that there is in Zion that which truly corresponds to His own nature and declares what He is in grace. On the other hand, Jacob and his many descendants, like the sand of the sea, only manifest in their history the ways of God in government.

We have now to consider who is the speaker from verse 4; in spite of good authority to the contrary, it seems better to read it as the response of Zion herself to the favour announced in verses 1-4 rather than the voice of Jehovah Himself; we shall hear Him speaking in the last sentence of the psalm. The reason for the selection of the five nations named is another point of difficulty: the mention of Babylon indicates a late date for the composition, not necessarily later than Isaiah, with whose closing testimonies this psalm is in evident harmony. With regard to the other four names, Rahab is of course Egypt, which was soon to fight out the struggle for the mastery of the world, in the decisive

battle of Carchemish (Jer. 46. 2). These two are named as samples of this world's greatness: it may be Assyria is omitted, as her failure was already visible at the time of writing. Then attention is called to Philistia and Tyre as neighbours of Israel whose jealousy had declared itself in treacherous cruelty (see Amos 1. 6-10). Ethiopia was further off, but was a great nation, and about the time we may suppose this psalm to have been written was at the zenith of her power. All these are passed over and Zion is chosen to be the mother of some unnamed great one: who would thus be singled out by the Spirit but the Messiah Himself? (vers. 4, 6). Others (literally man and man) are mentioned in verse 5, for all saints must be reckoned as children of grace. If the saints of the present period have Jerusalem above for their mother (Gal. 4. 26), the earthly saint will find his name on the burgess roll of the city of God in his own land (Stuart). The idea of some, that the nations named will be counted as Zion's children, is surely a misunderstanding; it is clear that Babylon will have no such place.

The terseness of expression in the last verse makes it necessary to supply some words in order to convey a meaning; it seems preferable to follow the sense of the preceding verse and read "they that sing as well as they that dance are there." The revisers insert the words "shall say" and thus make the singers and dancers the speakers in the last sentence. Others, and among them the great poet John Milton, understand these last words to be the utterance of Jehovah; and truly all earthly fountains of refreshment for Him are found in the connection of Zion with Messiah, just as now "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are hidden in the mystery of God (Col. 2. 3). In an analogous way the Spirit of Christ assures us that all His delight is in the saints, the excellent of the earth (Ps. 16. 3). So let us understand the last words of this Psalm and in our turn find fresh springs of joy in such an expression of Jehovah's grace.

Heaven Opened.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos. No. XVIII.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God" (Rev. 19. 11, 12, 13).

FROM the opened heavens the Father expressed His delight in His Beloved Son when He emerged from the obscurity of Nazareth. The heavens were opened to Stephen's rapt vision and he beheld that same Jesus, having gone back where He was before, the centre of heaven's glory. Now heaven opens for Him to descend once more, but what a contrast exists between the first and the second advent. How changed His mission, circumstances, and surroundings!

Then He came in grace to declare the love of God, now He descends in wrath to execute the judgment of God. Then as a Lamb to die for His enemies, now as a Lion to crush them. Then as a Saviour to save, now as a Judge to condemn. Then as a Servant to obey, now as a Monarch to command. Then an unresisting Prisoner, now a triumphant Conqueror. Then no room for Him in that inn in the city which was once the home of His royal ancestor David. Then no place to lay His head in the world He had created, now to take possession of the whole of the universe and enforce those rights once refused as Son of Man and King of Israel.

How changed also His name and titles! No longer branded in life and stigmatized in death as a "Nazarene," a "Carpenter" and the son of a carpenter; He is now the "Faithful and True," "The Word of God," the "King of kings and Lord of lords." He was faithful and true in His pathway of humiliation, He is the same to-day in glory. Faithful and true Godward and to us-ward, He is about to prove to the downtrodden, persecuted Jewish rem-

nant that in the darkest moment of their history He abides faithful, and will surely and certainly fulfil the many pledges given by the Prophets for their full and final deliverance.

He is also called the "Word of God." Every thought and purpose of God from the beginning has been expressed in Him. The universe with its celestial and terrestrial inhabitants owes its existence to Him. Without Him nothing on earth beneath or heaven above came into being; He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast. Grace and truth subsisted in Him incarnate. Now we learn that He is equally the expression of every thought of God in wrath and judgment. His vesture dipped in blood as He treads the winepress of the fierceness of the Divine displeasure against sin proclaims Him the "Word" by whom and through whom vengeance is wreaked.

He also has an undecipherable name which "no one knows but He Himself." He bore that inscrutable name in the days of His flesh.

"The Father only His blest name
Of Son can comprehend."

He is God. He is Man. He is both in one person. We bow and worship now, as we shall then, content that the Person of our adorable Lord and Saviour enshrines a fathomless secret beyond human ken.

He has a fourth title, He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." Born a King, but never crowned except in derisive mockery, He is now about to descend suddenly and unexpectedly, to claim His world-kingdom, and assert supreme and universal authority.

Concurrent with this resplendent spectacle, surpassing anything this world has ever seen, a loud voice from an angel standing in the sun bids all the fowls flying in the midst of heaven to the "supper of the great God." The day of grace over, with its great supper, so free to all, despised, alas, by multitudes, nothing now remains but the day of vengeance. Divine love spread a feast and bade many; men excused themselves under one plea or another, now they themselves are feasted on by ravenous birds who fill themselves with their flesh.

The First Battle at Armageddon.

Under the sixth vial, chapter 16. 16, we saw the western powers gathered under the beast and false prophet at Armageddon; here we learn the unexpected end of their ill-fated armies. Instead of meeting the king of the North, or the marauders from beyond Euphrates, the King of kings suddenly confronts them. In their insensate folly "the kings of the earth and their rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed." But He who sits in the heavens laughs; no cannons' roar is heard, no death-dealing bombs are hurled upon them, no "confused noises, and garments rolled in blood" (Isa. 9. 5) mark this battle. Fuel of fire there is, deathly destruction there is, not one of that vast assemblage of trained warriors is left alive on that battle-field, each and all are slain by the same sword. That mighty voice which once summoned the worlds into existence, and cried "It is finished" on Calvary, now speaks. One word from Him and they are consumed "with the spirit of His mouth." "Their flesh shall consume away whilst they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (Zech. 14. 12). The armies of the beast are slain and given to the fowls of heaven.

What becomes of their two leaders, the head of the Gentile western Confederacy and of the Jewish nation?

They declared they were gods, their warlike deeds and arrogant claims had brought them universal homage, the popular cry was, "Who is able to make war with the beast?" Their blasphemous assumption of Deity brought on their heads a hitherto unheard-of punishment. Both are cast *alive* into the lake of fire. The lake of fire opens its mouth to receive its first victims. It had been prepared for them, as also for Satan, but a thousand years elapse before he becomes their miserable companion, and before his deluded followers are consigned there. Thus God singles out these two men for condign punishment. What a thought! Two men in full possession of their faculties cast alive, in awful isolation, into fire and brimstone.

This crushing and complete destruction at Armageddon of Christ's enemies is the first of a series of similar judgments during which

"Crowns and sceptres fall before Him,
Kings and conquerors stand dismayed."

It is the revealed purpose of God to deal nationally, in judgment, with all who have in the past, or who will in the future, burden themselves with Palestine (Zech. 12. 2, 3). The kings from the East also meet their doom there, and later Russia and her followers fall stricken on those "holy fields" (Ezek. 38. and 39.). Psalm 83. groups all Israel's ancient enemies together, and Joel tells us (chap. 3. 11-16) that the nations shall one after another receive their doom at Armageddon in the "valley of decision" or the "valley of Jehoshaphat," so called because there of old the Lord intervened for His supplicating people and laid low their enemies by the word of His lips. These judgments take place during the seventy-five days after the beast is destroyed. Then full blessing will be reached by Israel (Daniel 12. 12), the interim being filled up with a series of conquests whereby Christ prepares His kingdom by clearing out all offending things. These judicial dealings will terminate with the sessional judgment of Matthew 25., after which Israel can peacefully keep the feast of tabernacles.

Light for the Last Days.—No. 3.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy.

THE first note struck in this epistle is that of divine purpose, the counsel of the beneficent Despot of the universe, the living God. The writer here does not style himself an apostle "separated to the gospel of God," and "for the obedience of faith among all nations" (Rom. 1.), nor as a minister of the church, for the calling of Jews and Gentiles into the unity of the body of Christ, but he is "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." He views both himself and his gospel in connection with the eternal counsel of love, which, in order to its fulfilment, necessitates the putting forth of the wisdom and power of a Saviour God.

Promise is presented in Scripture as outside the whole course of nature and of the responsibility of the creature. It is an engagement on the part of God to bring about a certain state of blessing for the creature, which had been already decreed in the determinate purpose of His love; a purpose which originated in His own mind, not suggested by the ruin of the creature, nor by any desire on the part of the creature, for the counsels were all formed, and the promise given, before the foundation of the world. And so perfectly will these counsels be all fulfilled, that in the sphere of blessing, in which the redeemed creature shall find himself throughout eternal ages, everything will be found to be just as it had been purposed before the world was.

This sphere of happiness, to which promise relates, cannot be invaded by the forces of evil, nor into it can anything that defiles find an entrance. It is forever immune from deceit, darkness, death, decay; and from all the sorrow, suffering, and anguish of heart, that results from coming under the power of evil. It is where God shall rest in His

love, for all things there will be the invention of that love; they will also have been brought into being by the putting forth of His eternal might, and by that might they will be maintained in spotless purity.

The promise is *life*, but life in the sphere which is native to it; for this is the way in which Paul always views eternal life. It is the life which is in the risen Christ; the life in which the believer at this present moment lives to God, but viewed by Paul in connection with glory; and therefore the hope of the believer (Titus 1. 2).

John views this same life as in the Son of God down here, and developed in this scene of contrariety, where all its beautiful and varied characteristics were brought to light, as by a prism the rays of the sun are resolved into their separate parts. With him it is this life on earth, where now we have it, and where its beautiful characteristics manifest the children of God as its possessors. It is in Christ in the Gospel of John, and in believers in the epistle (1 John 2. 8).

This is the true and proper life of the believer, the life in which he lives to God. The life he had in Adam has come under the judgment of the cross, and the cross is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be brought to bear upon its every movement, in order that the life of Jesus may be manifested in his mortal body, until that body itself shall come under the power of that same life. And just as sure as our souls have come under the quickening power of the Son of God, so that we partake of that life in which He lives to God in that scene into which He has entered, so surely shall our bodies come under that same quickening influence.

And with the ruin of that which has been on earth committed to the re-

sponsibility of man, it is of the utmost importance to have our souls well grounded in the truth of that which is incorruptible. If the church, viewed in its responsibility as a witness for a rejected Christ, has proved such a failure, and if that failure has become a pressing burden upon our hearts, it is of the utmost importance for us to know something of the church which Christ builds, and against which the powers of death are hurled in vain. This may not be so evident a structure as is that structure upon which men are employed (1 Cor. 3. 10-17), but it is no less real. It is founded upon the truth of the Son of the living God. This is the rock upon which the edifice is being builded, and the Son of the living God is Himself the Builder, and every stone in the structure is instinct with His life. Whatever may happen to that which man has a hand in building, and we see it is to come under the judgment of God, the idea of failure cannot rightly be connected with that which owes its existence to the Son of the living God.

Therefore in the presence of the ruin of the responsible body, the Apostle falls back upon that which is able to hurl back every power of evil that assails it. When this epistle was written the ecclesiastical mould in which the church was cast was fast breaking up. That a man was a professing Christian was no longer a guarantee that he was a child of God, nor was that which was of God any longer popular with the majority of real believers. Departure from the truth of the heavenly calling had already set in, and many had begun to gravitate to the world, ashamed of the reproach of the cross. The visible things were beginning to have more power over their hearts than the invisible. To be associated with a man who wore a chain like any ordinary felon was too much for the fleshly pride that had gained ascendancy over their hearts. Besides all this, the devil had clandestinely introduced his servants among the saints, who spread abroad their pernicious doctrines, thus overthrowing the

faith of some altogether. Hence it became now no longer possible for the heart that loved Christ, and was determined at all costs to be faithful to Him, to walk happily with the great body of Christians. In fine, that which was merely ecclesiastical could no longer be trusted.

Therefore the Apostle falls back upon that which is individual. It is worthy of note that in the epistles, even of Paul's, which depict the evil of the last days, and which give directions to the servant of Christ regarding his walk in the midst of the abounding wickedness, we have no reference to the body of Christ, the house of God, or the supper of the Lord. Whatever be the reason for this we cannot conclude from it that these great truths are to be either forgotten or overlooked, for he says in this epistle, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." But where saints have to choose their company, there is always a tendency to set up a little church of their own, and to connect these privileges exclusively with themselves, not seeing that neither the house of God, the body of Christ, nor the Supper of the Lord, are bound by the limits of any little company.

No outward separations, except by apostates (1 John 2. 19), and this was the renunciation of Christianity altogether, are recorded in Scripture. Such separations seem not to have taken place in the days of the Apostles, nor does it appear that Timothy understood that he was to make the first rent. Of inward divisions there were abundance, and we have the mind of the Spirit about them, but of separations there were none, nor for many a day after the Apostles had passed away.

Now we find ourselves in a profession which has been rent into a thousand miserable fragments, and those who would walk in the truth cannot go with all. But let us be careful that we do not add another sect to the many that are

already in existence; and this I have already done, as far as one individual can do it, the moment I suppose that I can appropriate for any company of Christians that which belongs to all. When I have come to this notion I have lost the true idea of the body of Christ, of which every true believer is a member, and have set up in my own imagination a system other than that which occupies the mind and heart of Christ.

May we keep well in mind the great and glorious fact that none of us belong to any company that is less than the whole household of faith; and may we see, and thankfully confess, that what we inherit as the truth of God has not been gained by our own individual effort, but by the grace of our God through faithful men.

In this epistle God is not designated, as He is in 1 Timothy and Titus, a Saviour-God. In 1 Timothy He is spoken of twice under this designation, and in Titus three times. I suppose the reason is, that in both of these epistles the grace of God is viewed much more in its world-wide character than in either of the other two. In 1 Timothy God would have all men to be saved; and with this in view saints are exhorted to engage in supplications, prayers, and intercessions for all. In Titus, the grace of God that carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, and the kindness and love of God has shone out for men universally. But in this epistle, the manifestation of this grace that saves is connected with His purpose, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time; and the Apostle tells us he endured all things for the sake of the *elect*, that they might obtain this salvation. Now that the responsible witness for Christ upon earth had fallen into decay, and that without any hope of recovery, but rather resolved upon a path more in harmony with the spirit of the world, was it not the time for falling back upon the sure purpose of God with regard to those marked out by His grace before the world was, and for concentrating all his energies upon the salvation of such?

But as this can only be done by means of a faithful presentation of the gospel, he exhorts Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. Gospel activity is not to be in the least abated, but instead of looking for multitudes being baptized, and thus being added to the church, the effectuation of the purpose of God is that which governs the mind of the preacher, and not the adding to a profession already in decay.

Therefore he does not style himself here as an apostle according to the commandment of a Saviour-God, as he does in the first epistle, but an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. This office was not conferred upon him in answer to any desire on his part. His Apostleship was so intimately bound up with his conversion that the Lord could say to him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee" (Acts 26. 16, 17). He had not said, like Isaiah, "Here am I; send me," but had been, by the sovereign mercy of God, rescued from destruction with that end in view. Therefore we hear him say in writing to the Corinthians, that woe was his if he preached not the gospel. It was the will of God that that Benjamite, in whom all Jewish hatred against Christ was exhibited, should become the most devoted slave of the rejected Nazarene, and also the most perfect expression of the love of Christ to the saints; and that he should, contrary to all the powerful influence of natural affection, like the kine of 1 Samuel 6., carry the Ark of God amongst a strange people. His strong natural sympathies and patriotic spirit would have held him at Jerusalem amongst the Jews, and he almost disputes the wisdom of the Lord for relegating his service to a foreign field (Acts 22. 18-21), but ever submissive to the fiat of his beloved Master, he goes to the regions beyond, content to live or die for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Ridiculed, but True.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

"They that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand-staves and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire" (Ezekiel 39. 9, 10).

IT may not be generally known that a large part, perhaps the largest part, of the writings of the prophets, in the original Hebrew, are poetry. The Book of Isaiah, for instance, consists almost entirely of a series of wonderful poems. Several of Ezekiel's prophecies, too, are recorded in poetic form. But the series of chapters with which the book concludes, and which contain the most marvellous and unique predictions of stupendous events in the last times, is written in plain, unvarnished prose. The words quoted at the head of this paper occur in this series. They refer to one of the minor results of the great invasion of Palestine, by the almost countless hordes of Russia (Meshech, Tubal and Rush) and her Allies, when the Jews are again settled in that land. And the prophecy that they enshrine is, let me repeat, not poetry, but prose. Its language is not that of metaphor or symbol but of plain, unadorned fact. It is foretold that after the defeat of the great confederate hosts that advance from the northern countries to besiege Jerusalem, their abandoned weapons, etc., shall serve as fuel for the men of that land for seven years.

This is the statement that has come in for so large a share of ridicule. "Is it to be expected," we have been asked, "that men will revert to the use of these primitive weapons, arrows, hand-staves, and the like? Is it probable that, after learning the use of the 'reeking tube and iron shard,' they should again have recourse to implements of wood, such as would serve for fuel?"

In view of this question, asked by the incredulous and the sceptic, it will be of interest to recall a conversation between some officers over the luncheon table at a hotel in Furnes, during the

present great European war. It is the *Daily Mail* (December 3rd, 1914) which records the conversation. It tells its readers that:

"There was much interesting talk about the extent to which the hand-to-hand fighting in the trenches is leading us back to the weapons and methods of ancient days. Already we are using the old mortars, the fat, stumpy little weapons which can throw a heavy explosive with certainty half a mile. . . . Our men, too, are becoming experts in the use of hand grenades. They are real *grenadiers* again. . . . 'We must get out the catapults again,' said one French officer, 'such as the Romans used. . . . There is no reason also why we should not use *shields* to protect our trench-storming parties.' "

It is also highly significant that an enormous and unprecedented amount of *wood* has been used in the present war, for wagons, ammunition cases and other purposes. It was this fact, no doubt, that led the German Government to declare wood to be contraband of war, a measure which gave rise to great dissatisfaction and resentment in Sweden, a country which produces and exports such vast quantities of it.

Thus in several directions it is evident that a return is being made to the use of primitive materials and implements, making it more and more manifest that men are utterly in the wrong when they ridicule the statements of Scripture. The Word of God is always found to be true. Science that has criticized it has been shown to be false science; history that has contradicted it has turned out to be false history; chronology that has denied its accuracy has been demonstrated to be false chronology.

The Transforming Effect of Beholding the Glory of Christ.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

THE Epistle to the Philippians is written by Paul not as an Apostle but as the bondman of Jesus Christ and exhibits the effect the true knowledge of Christ has on him in this character. Hence he writes: "Be ye followers together of me" (chap. 3. 17), and therefore we may read his letter to his friends at Philippi as giving us Christian experience not specially apostolic. Already the tide of spiritual power and energy which marked the saints in their first love was ebbing, and the evils which appeared so conspicuous in later times were manifest to the prescient eye of Christ's devoted servant. In chapter 1. he tells of "*some*" who preached Christ of "envy and strife." In chapter 2. we read "*all* seek their own things," and in chapter 3., "*many* walk as enemies of the cross of Christ, minding earthly things."

It is of deep interest for us to note how the Spirit in the Apostle meets and overcomes these serious defections. This seems particularly important at the present time when so many are stumbled and turned aside by the too manifest failure even of those who have been esteemed leaders.

Paul meets these various oppositions in the overcoming grace of Christ which is just as available to any of us who desire to follow Him. If with the motive of raising up fresh trouble for him in his bonds (see R.V.) by exciting the Roman authorities against Christianity, some were preaching Christ not purely, he rejoices in the testimony to his Master, and tells the purpose of his own heart, his earnest expectation and hope, that Christ should be magnified in his body whether he lived or died, "*for to me to live is Christ,*" words few indeed in number, but how vast their import! They afford, moreover, a key to the rest of the epistle. In chapter 2. Christ is *in* the believer as life; in chapter 3. *before* him as object; and

in chapter 4. *with* him as power (ver. 13). What opposition can prevail against one so armed? The way of victory is sure.

In chapter 2., in absolute contrast to the sorrowful state of the saints at Rome, "all seeking their own things." Paul and Timothy and Epaphroditus afford us illustrations of the beautiful unselfishness which seeks the things of Jesus Christ; those things are summed up in the welfare of the saints (vers. 20, 21), and through these devoted men the love of Christ flows towards His own. Every one of us may be a channel of these affections; but besides this, in Colossians 3., love is the *bond* of perfectness; and in the chapter now under consideration, unity is realized in "having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." How this love and unity are displayed in respect of the Philippian believers by Paul and Epaphroditus is told at the end of the chapter. The journey of Timothy can be deferred, but "I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, since he had a longing desire after you all and was full of heaviness (not for his own suffering), but because that ye had heard that he had been sick." How unselfish and inimitable is this love!

Further to vindicate how united were these two servants of the Master in their affections and interests, Paul adds, "I have sent him, therefore, the more diligently, that seeing him, ye might rejoice and I might be the less sorrowful"; for his sorrow on account of their distress had been "upon sorrow" for the illness of Epaphroditus; in the joy of the reunion between him and the beloved Philippians, Paul would be the less sorrowful. He had already let them know that his fullness of joy waited for the healing of the little breach of unity which he had noticed among them (ver. 2). These expressions of love explain a remarkable sentence in the Thessalonian letter,

“for now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.” If love flows so exquisitely in the earthly channel, what must the fountain be! If we knew better how to drink of that fountain what a transformation would be manifest among the saints!

In chapter 3. not only do we find the record of Paul's sorrow and tears over many walking as enemies of the cross of Christ, but in verse 2 he stops to warn the saints against three forms of evil, “beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.” The first represents the unclean Gentile ways which had already invaded the church at Corinth; the last, the snare which had caused the Galatian assemblies to fall from grace; while the evil workers (*cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 13) points to those of either class who were undermining the foundations which the Apostle had laid. God's “two centres of holiness” (*J.E.B.*), the cross and the glory, afford a complete answer to those evils as well as to that already referred to in verse 18. The cross in its bearing on Christian character is not mentioned in this chapter, but its effect is seen in the way “those things which were gain to me” are regarded, they were but loss for Christ. The cross for him had put the stamp of death on them so that he was free to have Christ alone for his gain, in place of those distinctions on which the flesh puts a value. To be “thus minded” (ver. 15) was true consistency with the cross, to be earthly minded was contrary to its real meaning, and Paul supplies us with a

true antidote to this evil in the singleness of purpose which he declared: “But this *one* thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching out to the things which are before, I press toward the goal for the prize of the calling on high of God, in Christ Jesus.”

Spiritual power is seen not merely in correcting a perverse way, but in supplying the positive good to supersede it (see Eph. 4. 11 to 18). This enables Paul to say, in chapter 4. 13, “I have strength for all things in Him who gives me power.”

If now we ask who is He that possesses so transforming a power over the soul, whom to know is the servant's chief desire, a full reply is ministered by the Holy Spirit in all the Scriptures, for He has come from heaven to testify of Christ and to glorify Him among the saints. He is the promised One of the Old Testament, now manifested to undo the works of the devil and to bring back to God in immutable blessing a people for Himself. He is the Son of Man to whom God has purposed to subject all things, putting Him over all as Head, and bringing to Him by the power of the Spirit a bride to share His glory and inheritance (Ps. 8., Eph. 1.). The servant of the Lord, anticipating that day, raises his heart to Him, knowing Him while hidden in the heavens “to Him who loveth us and washed, us from our sins in His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father. To Him be the glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.”

“When Ye Come Together.”

WE may come together as of the assembly to enjoy the presence of Christ, and such gatherings have assembly character, though it would be presumptuous and false to speak of any one of them as “the assembly.” The question is not what can we claim to be, but is He Head and Centre to us, and are we subject to His Lordship? If these things are true how blessed it is in His presence to remember Him in death. To know that He died here and yet to know Him as the One who now lives in the glory. His love so fully told in death and His glory in the Father's presence made real to us by the Spirit, and the consciousness given to us by the same Spirit of our nearness to Him, all conspire to produce the overflow of adoration from deeply grateful hearts.

Practical Godliness.

(J. T. MAWSON).

WE gather from correspondence with friends in various parts that there is an awakening as to the great need of more practical godliness in the lives of Christians, and much exercise that so little of it is seen as a result of all the truth that is held theoretically. If this exercise deepens and spreads it will be a cause for thanksgiving, and it is what we should expect in a day when evil in a most diabolical fashion is filling the earth with desolation. If the children of the devil are manifesting themselves by hatred and murder, the children of God should make manifest that they are His children by works of righteousness and love (1 John 3.).

It is not what is held in the head but what comes out in the life, not what we hear only but what we do that tells. We cannot do the works of God unless we hear the words of God, it is of the utmost importance that that should be seen, then we shall value our Bibles more. But we may hear the words and not do the works. The one who hears the Word and does not do it deceives his own self (James 1. 22); but he deceives no one else, neither God, nor his brethren, nor the world.

What has the truth that we know done for us? Does it enable us to bridle our tongues when we are provoked? Does it move us to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world? (James 1. 26, 27.) If not, what we know is worse than useless, and our religion is vain.

We are not talking about preaching, for a man may be a preacher and yet a castaway. We do not belittle preaching. In those bright early days all were preachers, and everywhere (Acts 11.), and we often find ourselves wishing the

wish of Moses, "Would to God that [in these days] all the Lord's people were prophets," but what is not less enduring, or less productive of results, or less acceptable to the Lord, is the keeping of His commandments, for by this we know that we know Him; and this lies within the reach of all.

The misery of a life of selfishness, and the joy of a life yielded to God, the darkness of this world and the brightness of that to which we are going, ought alike to lead us to a fuller and more practical sanctification of ourselves to God and His service; and the love of Christ of which we sing so much will if truly known constrain us in the same direction. And in this each may be a help to all, and none may shirk his responsibility; but more particularly is it necessary that those who minister the word, and so are more prominent than others, should lead in these things. Paul's manner of life did not belie his doctrine. Young Timothy was exhorted to be "an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4. 12). Titus had to show in himself "a pattern of good works" (Titus 2. 7). But the servants, slaves in that day, also, had to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2. 10). And all are exhorted—"Consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Hebrews 10. 24).

Let us read more; keep the Word more constantly before each other; pray more with and for each other, and stir up ourselves to do the sayings of the Lord. Thus shall we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and, living the Gospel, we shall have more power in preaching it, and so shall all our ways be established, and our works shall abide because founded on a rock. (Luke 6. 47, 48).

Why does not God Intervene ?

(J. T. MAWSON).

BEWILDERED."—Yes, thousands are bewildered at the unparalleled destruction of human life of which we are the witnesses—unparalleled not merely as to numbers, but as to the hatred that inspires it, the callous ingenuity with which it is planned, the ferocity with which it is done, and the unspeakable misery and tears that accompany it. They are bewildered because they know that God is good, and also almighty; and they cannot understand why He does not intervene in power and punish the instigators and perpetrators of such crimson deeds, and establish a reign of righteousness on the earth. The scoffer also says, "Why does God allow such things to happen, if He is what you claim for Him?" And in the taunt the blame for all man's misery is cast upon God.

Our concern is not for the scoffer, but for those who truly fear the Lord and whose faith is sorely tried because God does not act as they think they would if they had the power. It is right that for the sake of these the question should be answered.

Do Men Wish for God's Intervention ?

In the first place, would men welcome God's intervention? In democratic countries government is according to the popular voice; and whether "*vox populi, vox Dei*" be true or not, the will of the people carries the day. Let us suppose that in the democratic countries of the world a party could be formed that would adopt as its policy "the unfettered intervention of God in the affairs of the day." What would the answer be to such an election cry? Would the people acclaim the party that raised it? Does any one suppose that they would be returned to power by an overwhelming majority, which would for them be the abdication of all power, for if God did intervene it could

only be on His own terms, according to His own inflexible justice and unerring wisdom, in which neither cabinet nor counsellor could have any part?

Let us consider what the intervention of God would mean in this lurid chapter of the world's history: Prussian militarism would be swept into its proper hell, that of course goes without saying, but are there no other evils on earth the cry of which reaches unto heaven? God is no respecter of persons. He cannot be flattered or bribed into winking at the evil in one land while crushing it in another, and while Britain, France and America have not broken solemn treaties, devastated fair homesteads, and murdered women and children, yet are there not sins within their borders too horribly flagrant to need enumeration? And would not these meet with God's rebuke as well as those of the Central Empires?

It is pleasant and easy to sit in the seat of the judge and to denounce the vices of others, and to wonder why God does not suppress them, and even to criticize Him for apparent inactivity, as though we were more righteous than He, and to point the finger at the enemy and cry, "Thou art the man." But what if, in answer to our denunciation, there rang out the challenge from some prophetic lips, as of old, "Are there not with you, even with you, *sins against the Lord your God?*"

How great is the multitude of those who reiterate the prayer "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Will God ever answer that prayer? Yes, He will, when the moment arrives; but when He does, every act that has its genesis in the will of man as opposed to the will of God will receive an instant punishment, and that punishment will be death. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Are men prepared for that? We know the world a little—its ambitions, and schemes, and ways, and we have read

its character in the Holy Scriptures, where it is plainly writ, and we have no hesitation in saying that it will keep God's fingers out of its affairs as long as ever it can; it will tolerate the most infamous deeds within it, if only God will keep out of it; it will hug its own misery rather than invoke God's intervention. *But the cause of God's non-intervention is not the feelings of men on the subject.*

How and Why God will Intervene.

“Will the Balkan States intervene, and on which side will they stand in the great conflict? And will America maintain her neutrality?” These are questions about which there is much doubt and speculation, and a variety of opinions. But there is no doubt about the fact that God will intervene in the course of this world. And lest any should think that by that statement we mean that He will stand between the hosts of combatants as an arbitrator, and inflict punishment on one side and make awards to the other, we hasten to explain that what we mean is that He will enter publicly and in mighty power into this sin-tossed and devil-ruled world and act according to His own will in such a manner that the dullest intellect in the universe will say, “It is the hand of God.” That He will do so is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow, nay, it is more certain than that, for heaven and earth shall pass away but His Word shall not pass away. And this has been the testimony of all His prophets since he who “walked with God” not less than fifty centuries ago said, “The Lord cometh.” Nor have the manner and the purpose of His coming been kept secret from men, for that same Enoch prophesied, saying, “The Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment” (Jude 14.).

There are two reasons why God must act as His Word declares He will. (1) His rights as Creator and God have

been flouted and denied by men. (2) His beloved Son, rightful Heir of all, has been rejected and murdered by the world. The second act was the ratification of the first, it was the considered declaration on the part of the world, come to maturity, that it would uphold at all costs its early decision to be independent of God. It will be admitted, we believe, by every right-thinking person, that if these things have been done, either of them is a more than sufficient *casus belli* between God and the world; that they were indeed acts of war against God on the part of the world, and that neither of them can be passed over for the sake of peace. If God does not hold the world strictly to account for these things and maintain the eternal honour of His throne in regard to them, He will cease to be God. But that is unthinkable. Then our conclusion, even apart from what His Word has told us, must be, that He must come in judgment.

We would not minimize the deeds of horror which have filled the world with indignation, and for which the perpetrators shall give account to God, but they must take a secondary place in the presence of that terrible act at Calvary, about which *the world* remains unmoved—the murder of the Son of God, the One who was God manifest in flesh, in whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself. This and the world's determination to go its own way, regardless of the will of God, are the great questions at issue that must be taken up by God as against the world. If God takes up the affairs of this world at all, these great questions must take precedence of all others, and that will involve the whole unregenerate world in judgment.

What the Scoffers Say.

Here the scoffers ask, Where is the promise of His coming? (2 Peter 3. 34). All things continue as our fathers have known them. Men have done as they

have pleased with apparent impunity from the beginning. But the scoffers are ignorant of two things: (1) That God did once publicly take account of the ways of the world, when it was filled with violence, and, with the exception of one family, it was totally destroyed by a flood of waters. (2) That a thousand years are as one day in the reckoning of God. The former shows that God is not indifferent to the state of the world, the latter that His ways must not be judged by the ways of men. They live in hours, and days, and years, and must work feverishly lest they be too late to accomplish their purposes. He is the eternal God, whose being is outside the bounds of time, and so He can patiently await the development of all things until the moment is ripe for the manifestation of His glory.

Why God Withholds His Hand.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3. 9).

God does not intervene in the affairs of the world, because if He did the whole unregenerate world would be involved in judgment, and this He does not desire. Judgment is His strange work.

What an answer is that to the scoffers, and to those who, ignorant of the reason, presume upon the fact that God has not fulfilled His promise to come in judgment, and so continue to flout His claims. He is not willing that men should perish, He is full of tender pity, and is waiting for their repentance. How fully His character in this respect came out when Jesus was on earth. He did not intervene in public affairs; had He done so He must have assumed the place of the Judge of all,—this was indicated on that one solemn occasion when He made a whip of small cords and drove the defilers of the temple from its precincts—but He came not to condemn the world but to save it.

God was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. 5. 19). *And the world murdered Him.* But His coming was the proclamation of a great amnesty on God's part, and that amnesty is still in force; it is still the “acceptable time, the day of salvation,” and God's ambassadors are still here proclaiming the fact. It is true that many of them have been treated in the same way as the Lord was treated, and the more faithful they have been the more have they been hated, but God has not withdrawn them, and as long as they are here they are here to beseech men to be reconciled to God, and the door of repentance for men stands open.

But the withdrawal of the ambassadors is imminent; the Lord's promise to them is, “Surely I come quickly”; and the manner of His coming, and their withdrawal from this world, is plainly told us in 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

When that event has taken place there will not be a *true* Christian left on earth, and the world may prepare its forces then to meet God coming in judgment. How vain will be all their power, for when “the great day of His wrath is come, who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6. 15-17).

How shall the Ambassadors Act?

The ambassadors are still here; God's longsuffering is still being manifested, and His longsuffering is salvation; so we count it, and in so doing we are right (2 Peter 3. 15). “I'll tell you why I think this war is allowed,” said a grave-looking soldier to us one day. “It is to make men think, and when a man gets into the trenches, as I have

been, he does think, too." No doubt he was partly right. The mercy of God in this way makes the wrath of men to praise Him, and men are made to think of the great issues of life and death, and to turn to God, and this leads to their salvation. But how shall we (Christians) who are left in this world, which is not our home, act towards those for whom we are left here, towards the men whom God is not willing should perish? Ah, surely if we understand the

times we shall be actively interested in them. We shall beseech them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. We shall be diligent in this our business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. As the time draws near of our withdrawal to our own land, which will close the door of hope for the world as it is, we shall be the more persistent in pressing upon men the claims of God's grace, and in making them feel how tenderly His heart yearns for them.

While God does not intervene publicly and make wars to cease in the earth, He still acts providentially, and brings good out of evil for the blessing of men and for His own glory. He sees every wicked atrocity and says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." He beholds all the sorrow in the earth, and calls the distressed and broken-hearted to find in Him everlasting consolation, and a peace and hope that the world cannot afford. These subjects will be taken up (D.V.) in our next issue along with any questions arising out of this paper.

Christianity is not Stoicism.

(T. OLIVER, Galashiels).

STOICAL indifference and resistance to sorrow should not be the Christian's attitude. Such resistance springs from pride which instead of drawing us nearer to God, keeps us at a distance from Him. Sorrow is intended to deepen our intimacy with the One into whose hand all power in heaven and earth is committed and who is thus able to succour us in every trial.

The Stoics were a sect of ancient Greek philosophers who taught their pupils in the Colonnades of Athens. From this circumstance they were called Stoics or porchers (Stoa, a porch or colonnade). They taught that God, as a spirit, fills all things; that men have naturally the seeds of knowledge; that wisdom is the supreme good; that wisdom alone can make men happy, and hence that the really wise man, being self-contained, is beyond the power of those influences which enslave the larger part of mankind.

They held, moreover, that pain, sorrow and poverty were but fictions of the imagination. Therefore as men grew in wisdom they would become superior

to the influences of either joy or grief, esteeming all things to be controlled by inevitable destiny. In the pursuit of this aim they affected an air of stiffness and apathy.

The Stoics have passed away, but in recent times many of their doctrines have been revived in the cult misnamed Christian Science. Misnamed, because it is not Christian and still less is it scientific in its teachings. Although undoubtedly it may answer to "the oppositions of science falsely so called," against which the Apostle warned Timothy (1 Tim. 6. 20).

Teaching which denies the reality of human suffering, the existence of sin and evil, the need of the atonement, the Biblical miracles, death and judgment, not only contradicts Scripture, but common-sense observation. Such teaching contains the seeds of deadly error from which will yet spring an awful harvest. It is a parasite assuming some of the characteristics of Christianity with a view to mislead the large number of its followers who have been professed Christians. When these characteristics

have had time to wear off, Christian Science will stand out in its true character ; then it will be evident that the delusion has, with other doctrines of demons, concealed " the depths of Satan " (Rev. 2. 24).

While these little systems of false religion have their day and play their part in leading on the " strong delusion " which shall eventuate in all who come under it being damned, because they

received not the truth (2 Thess. 2.), the Word of the Lord endureth ; it lives and abides for ever, and life and salvation are in it. Therefore let us who are real Christians cling to the truth of it which has resisted all the inroads of time and the attacks of evil. Let us be satisfied to wait God's time for the ushering in of that day when there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and no more pain (Rev. 21. 4).

The Bread of Life.

(H. J. VINE).

JESUS, our food from heaven Thou art,
To feed us on our heavenward way:
The Bread of life, our present part,
Affords fresh grace and strength each day:
And Thou dost give our souls to know
The love which makes them overflow.

'Tis known in Thee, that heavenly love;
It brought Thee here that we might live:
It brought Thee from its home above,
Thy flesh and blood for us to give.
This is the love divine we know;
With grateful praise our hearts o'erflow.

The corn of heaven, the mighty's meat,
Fresh fell for Israel every day;
Upon the dew, this food so sweet
Came down, and round about them lay:—
The heavenly type of Him we know,
Whose love has made our hearts o'erflow.

Thus on our journey home we're fed,
And strengthened by the living Bread;
Whilst to the feast above we're led,
Which God our Father there has spread;
Where deeper still His love we'll know,
And sweeter songs shall richly flow.

Then Lord, like Thee in God's abode,
The journey ended here below:
The Bread which fed us on the road,
As " hidden manna " we shall know.
Thy grace and love our lips shall show,
Their melody to Thee o'erflow.

The Cause of Decline.

(JAMES GREEN).

IT was the sad lot of Jeremiah to prophesy in the darkest day of Jerusalem's history, and to have his task rendered all the more difficult by knowing beforehand that the people to whom he was sent would not receive his message. Under King Josiah there had been an outward revival, but the excitement of such a season had soon passed away, the people had no desire to be searched by God's word, and so the time of reviving (although it was helped on by godly men) left the nation in a worse state than before. "Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly (in falsehood, marg.), saith the Lord" (Jer. 3. 10).

The principle of success was indicated to Joshua (Josh. 1. 8). "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." The root evil of departure and ruin in every dispensation has been the opposite of this, viz. the refusal of God's authority by slighting and making of none effect His own written Word.

In order that Jeremiah might be sustained and strengthened for his prophetic office, he was given two visions that set forth two inevitable things: (1) The infallibility of God's word, and (2) the certainty of judgment on those who despised it. The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, "Jeremiah, what seest thou?" and he said, "A rod of an almond tree." Then said the Lord, "Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten My word to perform it" (chap. 1. 11, 12). The Hebrew word "shaked," translated "almond" (ver. 11), is derived from a root meaning "watchful," and the word translated "hasten" in verse 12 is from the same root; so that the import of what the prophet saw was "a watchful

tree"; the almond is one of the earliest trees to blossom in springtime, and God's answer was, "I am watchful over My word to perform it." Never will He be behind time in bringing it to pass, and His eye is resting upon it amidst the upheaval of nations, and the sad failure of His people. What rest, what encouragement for the heart is in this, that the same Scriptures it is our privilege to read are under the watchful eye of God, that He may fulfil them to the letter.

Next, the prophet was shown a boiling pot (chap. 1. vers. 13, 14), God speaking by this of a judgment surely coming, that should make room for His own building and planting, for His compassions fail not, and neither His judgments nor His grace can be found wanting. But how did the people of Judah receive the assurances of God's word of mercy? Alas, they despised it, and when He spoke of judgment coming they refused to believe it. Clearly does the Spirit of God indicate their downward course, in the way they treated His word. In chapter 6. 10, the word of the Lord was unto them a reproach, they had no delight in it. Ashamed to confess it as their rule of life, they lost their pleasure in reading it. Next, chapter 6. 19, they hearkened not to His words nor to His law, but rejected it. The consequence of this follows in chapter 8. 9. They have rejected the word of the Lord and what wisdom is in them, showing that they were preferring the thoughts of men, which are foolishness with God. Again we find in chapter 17. 15, they scoffed at it. Like those who to-day are saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3. 3, 4) they said, "Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now." Further still, in chapter 20. 8, they made it a daily derision, then in chapter 23. 36, they perverted it to answer their own ends, and finally, chapter 36., the head and representative

of the nation burnt it. And when Jehoiakim cast that mutilated scroll into the fire, he cast in with it his crown and kingdom, his royal line and the last hope of mercy; signed the death-warrant of his nation and sealed its doom. But what had he burnt? just the roll of a book, but not the word of the living God. That word is "asbestos," nothing can consume it, it rises from the ashes of the fire in greater vigour than before, with "many like words" added to it (chap. 36. 32). For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven, and Thou art watchful over it.

In the day when our Lord was on earth, the same sad story unfolds itself. But amidst the scrupulous observance of religious ordinances the weapon used against the word was of another kind. The tradition of the elders had enwrapped the Scriptures in a great mass of teaching and exposition. The working of this was clearly exposed by our Lord in Mark 7. In verse 3 they held it, in verse 7 they taught it, again in verse 8 they laid aside the commandment of God in order to hold it, then in verse 9 the commandment of God was rejected that they might keep their tradition, and lastly, in verse 13 they made the word of God of none effect through their tradition. The consequence of all this was that there was no room for Christ. Have we nothing like this to-day? Alas, yes. Whenever we rely upon teachers, however godly and valued they may be, and do not drink for ourselves of the pure springs of God's word; when possibly we devote more time to reading their writings than in pondering over

Scripture, there is great danger of our ending by following the tradition of the elders and excluding Christ. Such has happened in the history of the church, spiritual starvation through lack of the word (Acts 20. 28-30). Paul warned the elders at Ephesus, that the grievous wolves of infidelity would obtain an entrance to the ravaging of the sheep, and that the word of God would be perverted and twisted to serve the ends of leaders, and become of none effect. He warned the Colossians, also (chap. 2. 8), of the same thing.

The remedy in this state of things is to be found in the word of God alone. By feeding upon it, Jeremiah found happiness in the midst of his sorrows. Chapter 15. 16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Mary found it to be the one thing needful, when she sat at the Lord's feet and heard His word. Paul could point to no other resource than God and the word of His grace, with the full assurance of its power to edify (Acts 20. 32). And the man of God needs nothing else to completely furnish him to all good works (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

In conclusion, let us remember that if we are to profit by the Scriptures of truth, we must seek therein the things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. It is more than a book of moral teachings; many have limited it to this, and missed the grand subject of the Holy Spirit's writings, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

"My Favourite Text."

SSOME one asked the late Robert Burdette for his favourite text.

The reply was in terms that many will approve: "When I think of a favourite text, half a dozen dear ones leap to my lips. Stormy days I want a cloak; cold days I want the sunny side of the wall; hot days I want a shady path; now, I want a shower of manna;

now, I want a drink of cool living water; now, I want an arbour to rest in; now, I want a pilgrim staff; now, I want a sword—a right Jerusalem blade.

"My favourite text?"

"I might as well try to tell which is my favourite eye. The one I might lose is the one I might want."

The Doom of Satan.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos. No. XIX.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him. . . . And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20, 1-3, 10).

BRUISED at the cross (Gen. 3. 15); banished from heaven in the middle of Daniel's last week (Rev. 12. 9); bound during the Millennium (Rev. 20. 2); consigned afterwards to eternal misery in the lake of fire (Rev. 20. 10): these are the stages of God's dealings with that mysterious being who tempted our first parents and brought misery on their offspring. Originally set in great dignity, a masterpiece of God's creatorial power, he lost his first estate through pride (Ezek. 28. 11-15; 1 Tim. 3. 6).

The earliest and latest pages of Scripture reveal the fact that he has access to God and is the persistent foe of man (Job. 1. 6; Rev. 12. 10). He is an actual being, not merely a synonym for evil, but the one who introduced it into the world. Nor is he a mere influence, but capable of exercising great influence. He blinds the minds of the unregenerate (2 Cor. 4. 4), energizes them in their disobedience to God (Eph. 2. 2). The world-system is impregnated by him; politically its prince (John 12. 31), religiously its god. He is also the prince of unseen hosts in the air, who willingly do his bidding by corrupting men. But his power is limited and he can only act upon a righteous man by divine permission. He sifted Peter, but could not pluck him out of Christ's hand. He sifted Job, but was not allowed to touch his life. The Christian walking in obedience, keeping himself, can pass on untouched by him (1 John 5. 18).

His varied names indicate the wide range of his ceaseless activities. As

Satan and the Devil he is the malignant and relentless adversary of God and accuser of His people. As Apollyon and Abaddon he is the arch-destroyer. Craft and subtlety mark his ways as the “old serpent,” whilst wars and bloodshed emanate from him as the great red dragon—he is a murderer from the beginning. Cast down from the heavens three and a half years before he is bound, his rage concentrates itself on the godly Jews, who are oppressed cruelly by the beast and false prophet at his instigation. His untiring energy, and the hosts of demons under his control have enabled him to act on men universally, and for six thousand years he has been permitted to pursue his course of rebellion against God. This is now to cease for a thousand years. An angel descends from heaven with a great chain and casts him into the abyss, where he lies fettered and bound—presumably his demon hosts with him—during the reign of Christ. In that happy time there will be neither enemy nor evil occurrent. He is not only chained, but his prison is sealed with an unbreakable seal, unlike that of imperial Rome which sealed the tomb of Jesus.

Loosed from his chain at the close of the Millennium—unchanged by his long confinement—he will again incite men to rebellion against God. From the four corners of the earth he will gather a numerous host and marshal them before Jerusalem—the beloved city. This act seals his doom. Mercilessly cast into the lake of fire—where the beast and the false prophet have been

for a thousand years—he will be tormented night and day, for ever and ever. Not reigning as Milton depicts him, but suffering: the most abject and miserable being in the universe. God will thus demonstrate He is God, and at the right and fitting moment will visit Satan with righteous judgment for the evil he has wrought in the universe.

His ability to concentrate a vast army at the close of the Millennial age is proof positive that perfect environment, peace, plenty, and abundance are powerless to affect man spiritually apart from the new birth. What more perfect conditions, outwardly, can be conceived than those prevailing under the reign of Christ? His deluded followers are consumed root and branch as they stand in battle array, and consigned to the tomb to await their judgment at the Great White Throne.

Stupendous events are grouped together in simple and unmistakable language in the fifteen verses of this 20th chapter of Revelation. Scripture had previously intimated there are two resurrections, but here for the first time we learn that the one is complete *before* Christ's kingdom is set up, and the other does not take place until *it ends*. There is a Millennium of years in between. The first comprises the "just" and those who have "done good." These terms are used in order to include the saints of every dispensation.

It is specifically stated that not only are thrones occupied by the sitters as seen in chapter 4., but also by the martyred remnant slain during the interval between the church being caught up and her return to reign. These saints had lost their earthly portion but are rewarded with a better and heavenly one. They complete the first resurrection which began when Christ was raised. We are not told precisely when they are raised, but the fact only is stated that they share a heavenly portion with those who have been

raised. They are holy in their being, blessed as to their portion. The first term describes their character, the second their privileges. Resurrection is God's great answer to all that Satan has done. It baffles him and silences man. In it is demonstrated the omniscience of God, for who but He could separate the dust of the unjust from that of the just? It also proclaims his omnipotence, for who else could say to dust "live"?

Christ's earthly kingdom given up, the last resurrection takes place, heaven and earth pass away, and everything polluted by sin is removed in judgment. From the depths of the sea myriads will come forth, from mountain and valley, battle-field and cemetery. That voice which wakes the dead will summon them to the last great assize, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, the idle words spoken, and the secrets which never saw the light before. There they stand before a Great White Throne. It is great if we think of the august Judge, of the vast hosts, and of its solemn issues. Before it will stand the brutal Nero, the cruel Herod, together with the cultured scientist and learned critic who has despised the blood of Christ, and not repented toward God. The men of Sodom and the men of Bethsaida will then hear their doom.

The whiteness of the Throne proclaims its holiness. Inflexible righteousness will mark its decrees; none will be judged for Adam's sin, nor for his neighbour's. Differences there will be in the *intensity* of punishment, but none in its *duration*, for all are cast alike into the lake of fire for ever. "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12. 47, 48). The book of life is there but no name is recorded, for all in that book were raised at the resurrection of life.

Death feeds upon the body, Hades is the state of the departed spirit, both are now united, and cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. It is not cessation of existence but eternal separation from God, the source of life and blessing. Man died morally when Adam sinned, but he did not cease to exist. When he dies physically soul and body are separated, but he does not cease to exist, for he is here seen accountable for the deeds done in the body. Man eternally separated from God in the lake of fire still lives on. No "second chance" of salvation after death has any warrant in holy Scripture, and no purgatorial fires can purge away his sins.

Thus ends the closing page of the history of man and demons. The globe, with its surrounding heavens, melted like metals in a crucible (2 Peter 3. 10), is now purged by fire, to be reconstructed afresh with every trace of evil expunged.

What marvels have been wrought on this earth during its seven thousand years' history! Angels have learned God as they never knew Him before, whilst the matchless wonders of redeeming love have been made known; but God is light as well as love, and henceforth His supremacy will remain eternally uncontested.

"Adorning the Doctrine."

I WAS recently asked to give a short gospel message to a large company of men who had gathered at the grave-side of their foreman. I did this with confidence, for I had known for some years the one who had answered his home-call as a happy consistent Christian. I had visited him a few days before his death, and though he was suffering much no murmurs escaped his lips, instead he was full of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord, and insisted on singing a verse of a hymn that had been running in his mind. It was:

"Thy death has brought to light the Father's heart,
 And *mine* has won;
 And now I contemplate Thee as Thou art,
 God's glorious Son!
 And know that I am loved with that great love,
 That rests on Thee in those bright courts above."

I had confidence in speaking of the power of the Lord Jesus to save and sustain, because I could instance my friend as one who in the very presence of death had proved that power. But I had another ground of confidence also. Sitting by my side in the coach on our way to the cemetery was the master of the works where my friend had been employed. He said to me: "We never

had a more faithful servant; he was a most conscientious and honest man, and all the men who attend his funeral to-day will be there out of regard for him." And he gave me instances of his thoughtfulness for, and kindness to others, which made me feel that in preaching the gospel to his fellow-workmen I should have their attentive interest because the effect of the gospel had been seen in his life by them. Not only on a bed of sickness and suffering, but in the humdrum duties of his daily toil he "had adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour." And it is lives such as his that often make men ready to listen to the gospel because with their own eyes they have seen it reduced to practice.

This is the great need in these slack and lukewarm days, these days of inconsistency between the talk and the walk. And if we are favoured by a revival of this practical Christianity we may confidently hope to see great triumphs won by the gospel that brings it about. Let us not forget that "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS" (Titus 2. 13, 14).

“The Bread of the Mighty.”

(H. J. VINE).

“He rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them the corn of heaven; man did eat the bread of the mighty; He sent them provision to the full” (Ps. 78. 24, 25, N.T.).

AS the Israelites journeyed through the wilderness to the land of God’s purpose, they were fed with the corn of heaven, with the bread of the mighty. And the saints of God now, as we accept this world as a wilderness and pass through it to the glory, are fed with the wonderful food which fulfils this type, “*the true Bread from heaven*” (John 6. 32).

What is it? asked the Israelites when they saw the manna for the first time, for they knew not what it was (Ex. 16. 15). Therefore this bread from heaven was called manna, which means, What is it? and when the Son of God, the heaven-sent Antitype of the manna, stood before them centuries later, they knew *Him* not. Although He was promised like the manna. When He told them He was the Bread from heaven, they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we have known? how then does he say, I am come down out of heaven?” The Bread of life was there, and they knew Him not.

There was a time in the early morning when the manna did not appear; but there was also a time in the morning when it did appear. Later in the day came a time when it disappeared; and if any was kept till the next day, it became ill-savoured and wormy.

In the early morn, before the manna appeared, the dew lay all around the host; and although the manna fell upon this refreshing dew (Num. 11. 9) it was not until the dew had “gone up” that this small round thing was seen (Ex. 16. 14).

When the air is full of invisible moisture, holding in that state as much water as it is capable of doing, it is what scientists term at “dew-point.” After sundown the surface bodies of

the earth cool rapidly, and the richly laden atmosphere in contact with them deposits the dewdrops. This is the distilling medium, by which, we are told, God bestowed on the face of the wilderness food for His people; and the corn of heaven, the bread of the mighty, appeared when the dew disappeared.

As the sun waxed hot, however, it melted, and it disappeared as the dew had done earlier with less heat from the same sun. Therefore it had had to be gathered between the times of the dew going up and the sun becoming hot. Moreover, it was to be eaten the same day, or it became offensive and provoked God’s displeasure. A remarkable exception to this was the sixth day. They then gathered twice as much, so as to be free for the rest of the seventh day before the Lord; and the food kept over for that day retained its freshness and sweetness. There was none on the face of the wilderness that morning.

The sixth chapter of John shows that the manna typified our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Bread from heaven. There is, however, this contrast, to which attention is called by the Holy Spirit: “The fathers ate manna and died: he that eats this Bread shall live for ever” (58). As we further follow out the details of the type, the precious teaching concerning the Antitype will become clearer to us.

We saw that before the manna appeared the dew upon which it fell lay round about the camp. Before the light of day the dew was there. The dew signifies the blessed presence of God by the Spirit. “I will be as the dew to Israel” (Hos. 14. 5), He said; and during the time of this world’s night, during the period of the rejection of the

Messiah by Israel, the Holy Spirit is here; and He is here specially in view of the ministry of Christ, the heavenly Bread. Souls, however, must pass out of darkness into light before they can appropriate that food. They must turn from Satan to God before they can feed upon Christ. The Spirit of God and the light of God are both here in view of this. At the beginning the Spirit brooded over the darkness and then at God's word the light appeared (Gen. 1. 2, 3).

When the light shone over the camp of Israel, and when the dew had gone up, the manna, the meat of the mighty, appeared on the face of the wilderness. The dew deposited and the light discovered this bread from heaven. The Spirit and the light have Christ in view. The heavenly and spiritual character of our food is indicated by the fact that it fell upon the dew, and not upon the ground.

We also saw that the manna disappeared when the sun waxed hot: it melted. In the sanctuary and in the home it was still stored up; but it was not seen *publicly* when the sun shone in its splendour over the earth. Nor did it appear at all on the day of rest, the seventh day. These striking facts proclaim that when our blessed Lord shines out as the Sun of righteousness, and reigns in supreme splendour over the earth in the Millennium, when that day of rest shall have come, the thousand-year day, there will no more be seen on the face of the wilderness the heavenly man in lowliness. Indeed the very wilderness itself will be changed, it will then become full of blossom and bloom like a garden; and the once humbled Christ will be King over all the earth. Greatness and glory will then *publicly appear*, rather than lowliness and humility. Not that there is any change in our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The surroundings and circumstances are changed, but not Jesus. Moreover, the manna was stored *within*, though it was not seen publicly *without*; and in that coming day of glory and

rest of which we speak, those that are within shall have the high honour of partaking of the "hidden manna" (Rev. 2. 17).

*"There on the hidden Bread
Of Christ—once humbled here—
God's treasured store—for ever fed,
His love my soul shall cheer."*

We must, however, remember that this is the time for us to gather and appropriate the manna, that we may walk well and worthily through the wilderness. It is strength-imparting food. It is the mighty's meat.

The manna had to be all eaten on the same day that it was gathered; an exception being made on the sixth day in view of the seventh day of rest. If it was kept over on ordinary days till the next, it became ill-savoured and loathsome. The unregenerate who professes to be a follower of Christ and takes upon his lips the words that He spoke when He was on earth in lowliness and humility, but does not assimilate Christ into his being and life, having no real hunger for the heavenly bread, never having felt his need of the Saviour as an undone sinner, answers to this. He is professedly a Christian, but as he does not appropriate Christ as his life, therefore Christ in His grace and lowliness does not characterize his own life. Consequently, as it was with Israel of old, the name of the Lord which he professes becomes loathsome to men; for, instead of the true character of Christ, pure, fresh, and sweet, being seen, that which is corrupt and offensive appears, the ill savour of a corrupt Christianity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is always a sweet savour to God; and when received He is a blessing to man. But how sad it is to see those who profess to be followers of the once humbled Christ cause by their disobedience an ill savour before God, and to see that same disobedience have a corrupting influence amongst men. It is always thus with the sin of man, it breeds corruption. The result in eternity is, "their worm dieth not."

May it be ours to have grace and diligence to both gather and appropriate the daily manna; to feed upon Christ Himself who came down from heaven to be our food. "He that eats this Bread shall live for ever." This is our wilderness fare. This is the mighty's meat.

When the wilderness wanderings were over for Israel, and they entered the land of God's purpose, they fed on the fruit of the land. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn (produce) of the land" (Jos. 5, 12). The natural fruit of that wealthy country was already gathered and garnered for those who entered, but even in its development it *grows up* to meet man. With manna it is different. It is miraculous; and not natural to the place where it is given. And we have to *get up* and also to *get down* to obtain it. Energy is needed. In many ways it stands in contrast to the produce of the land, which was typical of Christ in glory; the manna being Christ in the wilderness.

To the renewed taste of the believer the manna is indeed both sweet and precious. The diligence of getting up and getting down to gather it is well rewarded. Moreover, the strength which this food of the mighty imparts, is such as to enable us to walk the wilderness of this world with unwearied step. As "honeyed wafers," the sweetness of our blessed Saviour gladdens our souls; and as fresh "oil," the energy of the Holy Spirit revives and renews us daily with the ministry of Christ. It was in this same wilderness, on his way to the same Horeb, that weary Elijah received a special cake from God; and, we are told, He went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God (1 Kings 19. 8). Surely that was indeed the mighty's meat. God gave him water also; and thus He did to Israel. In Exodus 16. and 17. we have the bread and the water. In John 6. and 7. the Antitypes of both are given for us, "the living Bread" and

"the living Water." God has given us "provision to the full" (Ps. 78. 25). The Spirit of Truth is here; the true light now shines; the corn of heaven is ours; we may well sing our songs of gladness therefore on our heavenward way.

*"Light divine surrounds thy going,
God Himself doth mark the way:
Secret blessings, richly flowing,
Lead to everlasting day.
God, thine everlasting portion,
Feeds thee with the mighty's meat:
Price of Egypt's hard extortion,
Egypt's food no more to eat."*

The special features of the manna itself only need to be indicated. They are so clear that the simplest believer, in the quiet of the presence of God, may easily see in them the characteristics of our blessed Lord plainly depicted as the heavenly One on earth. It was (1) *small*, a tiny round thing; (2) *sweet*, as honeyed wafers; (3) *lowly*, seen upon the ground; (4) *heavenly*, it fell upon the dew of heaven; (5) *fresh*, as newly made oil; (6) *pure*, as the coriander seed, white; (7) *precious*, its eye being as the eye of the bdellium (mentioned only in Num. 11. 7 and Gen. 2. 12). And as those who are fitted for the ministry of Christ to-day have ability to present Him in the excellent attractiveness of His varied perfections and adaptableness to our need, so then they served this wonderful food in a variety of ways. They ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars; they boiled it in pans or baked it, and made cakes of it to their liking; the qualities of which imparted, as we have said, the strength of the mighty.

The divine purpose in giving this wilderness food is distinctly stated for us by the Holy Spirit in Deuteronomy 8. 3: "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." When our blessed Lord stood in the wilderness

and was tempted of Satan, in answer to the first onslaught, He foiled the foe's weapon with this same mighty sword of the Spirit (see Matt. 4. 4 and Luke 4. 4). Again we are told, God fed them with manna, "that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good in thy latter end" (Deut. 8. 16). In this we see the end of the Lord in giving us Bread from heaven. We learn by it our entire dependence upon Him for the true words of instruction and sustenance. After speaking of Himself as the true Bread from heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ vitally connected the words which He spoke with that which was spoken, when He said, "The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life" (John 6. 63, N.T.). At another time He said He was altogether what He spoke (8. 25). He Himself was entirely what His precious words conveyed. The words expressed exactly what He Himself was.

In conclusion, we must point out that the adorable Antitype of the manna, the sent One and the sealed One of God, the Son of Man, Jesus, in His divine perfection, whilst fulfilling the wonderful type itself, yet necessarily passes beyond it altogether; and that in such a marvellous manner, it could be stated as a contrast: "The fathers ate manna and died: he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever." Could anything outstrip the mighty result of appropriating Christ as here stated? Live for ever! Think of it! What miraculous food to cause the eater to live for ever! Marvel of marvels!

And this is given by a holy God for the life of those who were dead sinners! Oh, the grace and glory of it! Rejoice, my soul! Sing, my glad heart! Let my whole being bless the Lord! It is He who has uttered the words of spirit and life. Thou shalt "LIVE FOR EVER"! Yes, thou shalt LIVE! Not like the wicked, who *exist* eternally in a place and state called "The second death" (Rev. 21. 8). Nay, thou shalt *live* for ever in all the gladness and glory of that which rightly connects itself with the thought of true life. Immortal, incorruptible, unfading, peaceful, joyful, loving, holy; thou shalt indeed live; yea, "live for ever"; thou shalt live with Jesus eternally.

It is not surprising then to find in John 6. that this meat of the mighty, this *new* and heavenly food, our Lord Jesus Christ, is unfolded for us by an *eightfold* description. (1) The *true* Bread (32.). (2) The *living* Bread (51.). (3) The *life-giving* Bread (33. 51.). (4) The *life-sustaining* Bread (35. 48, 50.). (5) The *satisfying* Bread (35.). (6) The *enduring* Bread (27. 50, 58.). (7) The *heavenly* Bread (33. 50, 51, 58.). (8) The *divine* Bread (33.). Words fail to express the wonders of this bountiful provision so freely and graciously given to us.

*"Jesus, the Bread of life, is given
To be our daily food;
Within us dwells that spring from heaven,
The Spirit of our God.
Lord, 'tis enough, we ask no more;
Thy grace around us pours
Its rich and unexhausted store
And all its joy is ours."*

The touch that heals the broken heart
Is never felt above;
The angels know His blessedness,
But sorrowing saints His love.

Studies in the Psalms—Third Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 88. 89.

WE come now to the two last Psalms of Book III. It will be readily perceived that they enter more deeply and in detail than any of the preceding ones into the spiritual distress of the remnant of Israel, in their repentance (Ezek. 20. 42, etc.) on the one hand, and on the other into the fulness of the changeless grace of God in connection with the house of David, although from verse 38 of Psalm 89. the chastening hand of God in government on account of sin is declared, in manifest contrast to the earlier part of the same Psalm. The authors respectively of the two Psalms are Heman and Ethan, both mentioned in 1 Kings 4. 31 as only inferior in wisdom to Solomon himself. It is interesting to observe how the prophetic gift is displayed in these two, and more conspicuously in Asaph, as evidence that in the midst of the ceremonial worship suited to that time there was a real work of God in the singers (1 Chron. 15. 19) who could thus sing with the spirit and with the understanding also.

All writers have remarked the unique character of Psalm 88. in the unrelieved distress it expresses. The terms of address, "Jehovah God of my salvation," do indeed suggest hope, but the fact that the One so known is against the suppliant in wrath, really adds another element of deepest sorrow. He says, "*Thou* hast laid me in the lowest pit—*Thy* wrath lieth hard upon me—*Thy* fierce wrath is gone over me, *Thy* terrors have cut me off." Death as the wages of sin is the dreadful burden on the spirit, so in verse 5 he seems already to have passed into the unseen world, "cast away (or left alone) among the dead, forgotten by God Himself!"

It will be noticed that no particular sin is confessed nor guilt named, it seems as if the whole moral state is felt to be obnoxious to God and invites His

righteous judgment. This is always so where repentance is real and deep. What was it to Saul of Tarsus to find all the deepest springs of his old life utterly broken up, his familiar friends removed from him and himself an abomination in their eyes? The last verse adds in a sort of refrain from verse 8, "Lover and friend hast Thou removed far from me, my familiar friend . . . darkness." With this language may be compared Job 17., especially verses 13, 14. But while Saul's experience during the three days in which he neither ate nor drank may be taken as an illustration of the character of distress here portrayed, the Psalm was written to give expression to the feelings of the remnant of Israel when they loathe *themselves* in their own sight, not merely confess their sins. Reference was made to this in considering verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 85., of which Psalm 88. is an extension. It should be noticed how the repentant ones are definitely separated from the nation which goes on to its judgment, consequent on which these repentant ones take the place of the nation before God, born as it were in a day (Isa. 66. 8), Zion's travail being at length fruitful.

A very interesting point in the Psalm is the six questions (vers. 10–12) presented to the omnipotent Jehovah as if unanswerable even by Him. They are really answered in the next Psalm and more gloriously in Ephesians 1. 19–2. 7. "Wilt Thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the shades (Rephaim) arise and praise Thee?" Psalm 89. 5 replies, "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Jehovah." "Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or Thy faithfulness in destruction (Abaddon)?" Psalm 89. 2 answers, "Lovingkindness shall be built up for ever, Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens." "Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark? and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

Yes, truly "the heavens shall confess (or praise) Thy wonders, O Jehovah, Thy faithfulness in the assembly of the saints," and again, "In Thy righteousness are they exalted" (vers. 6 and 16). We may with worshipping hearts delight to contemplate how in His victory over death God has acquired His richest glories, of which, in the ages to come, Christ and the church will be the fullest manifestation.

A difficult question remains to say a word about. In what way did the Lord enter into the experience of this Psalm? The Book of Common Prayer appoints its use for Good Friday, so that the application to Him is in the minds of many. This however needs to be carefully guarded, or we shall fall into the serious error of interpreting verses 15, 16 so as to draw the conclusion that He was bearing sins and therefore an object of the wrath of God all His earthly days. The opened heavens and the Father's voice to Him on the banks of Jordan and on the Mount of Transfiguration prove how far astray is such a thought, just as the darkened heavens and the cry of abandonment on the cross tell when it was His soul was made an offering for sin. On the other hand, into all that the remnant will suffer according to this Psalm He entered in fullest sympathy as when He wept over Jerusalem, and when He realized the awaking of Jehovah's sword against Himself, to His own cutting off and the scattering, instead of the gathering, of the sheep. Moreover, as the Leader of the remnant of the people in His own day, He felt the sin of the nation and in His unchanging love (according to the love of Jehovah to the children of Israel) (Hosea 3. 1), He made their sufferings His own, finally bearing their sins in His own body on the tree, in order that they might reap all the blessing from their chastening in purification, while escaping the judgment to which they were subject. They would thus prove in result how truly Jehovah was the God of their *salvation* (ver. 1).

PSALM 89. We have just seen how this Psalm provides an answer in divine power (really the power of resurrection) and grace to the distressful questionings of Psalm 88. This power and grace are now definitely applied to King David and His greater Son, and testify to the faithfulness of Jehovah to His covenant as declared in 2 Samuel 7. 15, 16, 25 and 23. 5. Under the title "the sure mercies of David" this divine power and grace are applied in Isaiah 55. 3 to those who have accepted the blessed gospel of verse 1. In agreement with this we learn from Acts 13. 34 that this favour is made good to His people on the basis of resurrection. The same line of truth is brought to bear on the individual servant in 2 Timothy 2. 8, "Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to my gospel." Here the Saviour, the true Vessel of promise, is seen in triumph by virtue of a power which no opposition of men or Satan can withstand; with such a power the servant of the Lord is exhorted to make alliance, and so enter upon a path of victory. We have been led into these reflections from a consideration of verses 1-4 of our Psalm, which are uttered as a song of victory to Jehovah.

The second section (vers. 5-18) enlarges on the same theme, the name Jah being introduced (ver. 8) to give assurance that divine council will be fulfilled. Similarly God's power in redemption (ver. 10) refers to the deliverance from Egypt under the name Rahab, and creation as well as the attributes of the throne witness to faith of victory, so that the Spirit pronounces them blessed who hear the joyful sound; probably this refers to the resounding of the trumpet for the journeying of the people (Num. 10.). Mercy and truth go before Jehovah's face, as the saints walk in the light of His countenance, rejoicing in His name and exalted in His righteousness—blessed associations on the way to God's rest.

The first verse of the third section (vers. 19-37) contains a disputed reading, but in spite of the R.V. I think we must follow many good authorities in translating "Thou spakest in vision of Thy Holy One." The whole section is evidently an enlarged statement of 2 Samuel 7. 12, etc., and is God's testimony primarily as to David, but these sure mercies of David will, as we have seen, only be accomplished in Christ in resurrection. Of Him verse 36 plainly speaks, and the following one shows that Jehovah's faithfulness to His promise becomes, when fulfilled, a witness to Himself, as the moon illuminates the darkness of night and testifies by its reflected light to the glory of the absent sun. The whole passage well illustrates how the inspired writings in the same passage may bear both an historical and a prophetic interpretation and pass abruptly from one to the other.

The remaining part of the Psalm is in entire contrast to what precedes; the line of David is under the rod and stripes of verse 32, and in verses 38-45 the Psalmist pours out the disappointment of his heart that God had made void His covenant (ver. 39), taken sides with the adversaries of the King so that His throne was cast down

(ver. 44). For such days of calamity the prophetic Spirit provides these words of humble expostulation expressive of the distress a godly Jew should feel in viewing the discrepancy between the promise and its accomplishment. The answer to this kind of exercise is found in Habakkuk 2., "The vision is yet for an appointed time," meanwhile the just man lives by faith. Similarly in our Psalm faith turns to Jehovah the covenant-keeping God, and asks, "how long?" reminding Him that as far as outward evidence goes He has made all men for naught and His faithfulness to His oath was really in question, along with the reproach of His adversaries as to its non-fulfilment, a reproach shared by His people and their anointed King. The usual doxology closes the third book of Psalms, which shows us, according to the prophetic interpretation, the people of God restored to their land, yet subject to the attacks of enemies who slaughter them and burn their temple (Ps. 75-79). At the same time they suffer in their conscience the penalty of the broken law (88). On the side of encouragement they are taught to expect deliverance, and in the meantime have access to God in the sanctuary where His mind and purposes are learned.

Divine Love.

"The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17. 22). The Son's rich and unjealous love, for it is divine, gives us the glory which the Father has given to Him, and will display us in the glory which approves before the world that the Father has loved us as He loved Him.

(J.N.D.)

Faith, Hope, Love.

Faith (Heb. 10. 22). "In full assurance of *Faith*."

Hope (Heb. 10. 23, N.T.). "Confession of the *Hope* without wavering."

Love (Heb. 10. 24). "Provoking to *Love* and good work."

Love (Heb. 6. 10). "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the *Love* which ye have shewn to His name, having ministered to the Saints, and still ministering."

Hope (Heb. 6. 11). "But we desire earnestly that each one of you shew the same diligence to the full assurance of *Hope* unto the end."

Faith (Heb. 6. 12). "That ye be not sluggish, but imitators of those who through *Faith* and patience have been inheritors of the promises."

Light for the Last Days.—No. 4.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy.

IN writing this epistle Paul speaks of himself as having finished his course. He is old in years, feeble in body, covered with the scars of a thousand battles fought in defence of the truth. Never once had the enemy seen his back in the battle. From the moment he drew the sword of the Spirit in the synagogues of Damascus until the day in which he laid down his life for that Saviour who was so dear to his heart, it never went back to its sheath. He was always in the forefront of the battle, and not his life, but that which he fought for, was what was sacred to his soul. To be slandered, to be bound, to be beaten, to be imprisoned, were things to which he was well accustomed. And he knew how to meet such persecutions with the kindness and love of a Saviour-God. Hunger, thirst, nakedness, weariness, loneliness, desertion, betrayal, enclosed his pilgrim pathway, and stung him to the centre of the soul. Cursed by his enemies, criticized by his friends, scoffed at by the learned, stoned by the madding multitude, he passed on upon his weary way, distributing infinite blessings and riches imperishable with no niggard hand. Now bent and broken in body, but strong as a giant in faith and hope and charity, he pours out of his sorrowful heart his desires, warnings, and encouragements into the ear of the only man who was like-minded with himself in things relating to the testimony of God. He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, and now nothing remained but to seal that testimony, which he had been by the grace of God enabled to render, with his heart's blood.

He sees now about to take place the evils of which he had long ago warned the Ephesian elders (Acts 20. 29, 30). His departure was at hand, and the grievous wolves were only waiting, as it were, to take a savage and merciless

bound over the dead body of the faithful shepherd, into the midst of the feeble and defenceless flock. The perverse men, who were cowardly and craven in the presence of this man of God, would now see that their opportunity had come, and they would not be slow to take hold of it. But this is his consolation, that in his prayers the image of his son Timothy rises continually before the vision of his soul. And he takes it as an indication from God that at least one faithful man still remained to care for the interests of Christ. He says, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers." The fact that this youthful but devoted servant of Christ came up before the mind of the Apostle when at prayer was an indication to him of the Lord's approval of the spirit in which Timothy gave himself up to the interests of Christ.

It is a matter for great thankfulness to God when He lays any of His servants in a special way upon our hearts at our prayers. We are so apt to think that only those who manifest an inclination toward this evil world, and who seem to be in danger of falling asleep through its soporific influence, are they who really need our prayers, or more than others those whom the Lord would lay upon our hearts. This, however, is a very great mistake. There is far more prayer made to God in Scripture for those who are going on well, than for those who, like Demas, fall under the power of the world. In almost all the epistles written by him who writes this to Timothy he speaks of his prayers, which he offers up to God on their behalf, but in that to Ephesians, with whom he seems to have no fault to find, we have two wonderful accounts of the outpouring of his heart to God, and in one of these prayers he goes so far as to

inform them of the *attitude* assumed by him in his earnest supplications on their behalf: "*I bow my knees.*"

It is an easy matter to pray for saints when they are going on well. One has the greatest confidence in God when going to Him on their behalf. Of the Philippians he says, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." With respect to the Galatians, who were in danger of giving up Christianity altogether, he does not say he prays for them, though he does say, "I have confidence in you through the Lord," in going to Him about them.

As to Timothy, he had evidence of the unfeigned faith which dwelt in him; a faith that had dwelt in both his mother and grandmother; Jewish no doubt in its character, but none the less faith in God. Of this Paul evidently had had witness, and now it was a great comfort to his heart in view of the forlorn hope, and in the midst of the general departure from Christ, he could encourage Timothy to lead.

Timothy had been brought up in an atmosphere of faith, and this can never be without a powerful effect upon the future of the one so highly privileged. And when grace works in the heart of one who has been nursed in such a heavenly environment, a mighty impulse is given to the renewed mind by the discipline and instruction received therein. Even while still in a state of nature the moral framework of the individual becomes bent in a direction that needs not to be reversed when once the soul passes from death into life.

As to himself and his forefathers, not faith but a good conscience is that which he advances on their behalf. This had been, above everything else, cultivated. Before the council at Jerusalem he said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." Not a *purged* conscience; for that he had not until

he had it by faith in the blood of Jesus. That blood, which is of infinite value, is on the mercy-seat before God, and is the witness that the sins of our whole life are as completely gone as the life is in which these sins were borne. Before God the believer has a fixed and unalterable position in righteousness; for on the ground of that precious blood God ever holds the believer as righteous in His sight. And for this very reason there is no more offering for sin (Heb. 10. 18). The blood of bulls and of goats, which was put upon the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, had no intrinsic value; therefore, of the sins for which that blood was offered, there was a remembrance every year, its only value lying in the testimony it maintained of the need of propitiation, and in the fact that it pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ. But the blood of Christ, which is of infinite value, has spoken in the heavenly sanctuary, to which we are called by the gospel, and there our sins can never come, for the One who bore them, suffered for them and died for them is there without them, having in His death made a complete end of them, so that we have boldness to enter into the holiest where that blood is, the eternal witness that they are gone for ever.

And this is altogether irrespective of our walk upon earth, where there may be a great deal of carelessness and miserable failure. Our place in the heavenly sanctuary is maintained by our Saviour who is there, and who makes intercession for us in the power of that priceless offering, and in the strength of that love that came to light in that offering, so that our position there can never be disturbed. But in order to the enjoyment of the place we must be careful to exercise self-judgment, for if we do not we shall certainly grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom alone we can be in contact with the sanctuary; and if we grieve Him, though our position there cannot be disturbed, we shall miss the present enjoyment of all our heavenly privileges. And what un-

speakable loss that would be ! not to speak of the danger of making shipwreck of faith (1 Tim. I. 19).

A purged conscience is by the blood of Jesus, but a good conscience is wholly dependent upon our walk, and the possession of this latter quality is of all-importance where the devil has got to be met in the good fight of faith. The breastplate of righteousness is the second piece of the panoply of God mentioned in Ephesians 6. Without this we would be unable to count upon the support of God in the conflict, and in the presence of the enemy we would be as weak as water. With a condemning conscience our boldness in defence of the truth would desert us, for we would ever be fearing the exposure of our miserable inconsistencies.

But this, while it should always be the possession of the true believer in Christ, is not necessarily the exclusive possession of such. It is, as we see, claimed by Paul both for himself and his ancestors. He had ever been careful to regulate his conduct before God according to his light. The thing he believed he should do, that thing he did; and the thing he believed he should avoid doing, that thing he left alone. And on this very account he was the chief of sinners. He says, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did" (Acts 26.). No doubt there were many others who *thought* as he did, but on account of other considerations they stifled the voice of conscience, and left the doing of them to others whose consciences were more tender, or whose natural hostility to everything that was of God hurried them along in the wake of the persecuting Benjamite.

Conscience in itself is a bad guide. If enlightened by the testimony of God, all is well; but without that it may drive a man to declare war upon the God that made him, and to attempt to

tread down and destroy all that is of God upon earth. At the same time it is not to be trifled with, for if a man believes he should pursue a certain line of conduct, and does it not, he shows his contempt of the authority of God. At the same time things done at the dictates of conscience may be most evil and offensive in His sight.

What is requisite is *light*. This can never be dispensed with. Paul, speaking of his murderous career of persecution, says, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. I. 13). His conscience required enlightenment, and when Jesus spoke to him from the glory it altered his whole career. The pride of his heart was broken; his human righteousness seen to be filthy rags; his pure conscience, which was the treasure of his soul, appeared to him as a veritable Jehu furiously driving him against the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler; and his proud pedigree was proved to be valueless in the sight of God. Destruction loomed black before his vision. He had unsheathed his sword, so he thought, against a deceiver of his beloved nation, but with his face in the dust he has to learn that the heart of the Son of God is the target at which he has been aiming. Poor man! Like a ravening wolf he had been trapped on the highway to Damascus. His confidence in the traditions of his fathers had been his undoing. His wisdom had been his folly, his light darkness, his zeal his condemnation. Misled by his conscience, hardened by his bigotry, carried away by his natural fervency, madly and blindly he pursued his persecuting career. His feet swift to shed blood, his hands full of it, his garments stained with it, he learnt in the heavenly light, and by the voice of Jesus, what a sinner he was. The hot blood that coursed through his veins was frozen at its fountain. His desperate determination to wipe out that holy Name from under heaven proclaims him the enemy of the God whom he was serving with a pure conscience.

Light was what he needed, and he got it abundantly. A light above the brightness of the sun. A light above all created light. Light from the glory of God where Jesus was. Light that withered up his natural vision, but opened the eyes of his spiritual being, and gave him to see himself as he was in the presence of God. But in that light mercy was revealed on his behalf. He says, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1. 14). Well might he afterwards say, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

He will henceforth be as careful to maintain a good conscience as ever he was, but it will be a conscience enlightened with the knowledge of the Father and the Son; and instead of running in a way contrary to God and ruinous to himself, his feet will be found in the pathway of the will of God, and shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. As he had previously been characterized by unbelief, ignorance, and self-will, he will henceforth be distinguished by faith, knowledge, and subjection to the will of God. The chief of sinners becomes the chief of saints; the proudest Pharisee becomes in his own estimation the basest of mankind; the ravening wolf becomes the meekest lamb in the flock of Christ; the relentless persecutor of the saints bears upon his heart the burden of all the churches. Blessed man! Devoted servant of a Master whom he now loves with a love infinitely greater than the previous hatred that filled his murderous heart! Well may we exclaim, as we contemplate this willing slave of the Redeemer of his soul, "What hath God wrought!"

But regarding Timothy's ancestors he says nothing about conscience, as he says nothing about faith with respect to his own. Faith certainly

had not been one of his characteristics; and had Timothy's mother maintained a good conscience she had not married a Greek. We see therefore that one may possess and maintain a good conscience without having the faith that saves the soul. He may indeed be a most ardent servant of the devil. The Lord, when about to leave His disciples in this God-hating world, says, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16. 2). People sometimes say that if one only acts conscientiously he cannot go far wrong; but here in Paul we have a man whose very conscientiousness was that which made him the chief of sinners. It is not conscience that saves but the light of the knowledge of God, as it has shone out in Christ.

But it is also possible to be a child of God and yet do violence to the conscience. This, however, is a very dangerous state to get into, as we have already seen. It is necessary to have both faith and conscience in exercise if we desire to walk through this world with God. Three times over we get them together in the First Epistle to Timothy. In the first chapter he says that the end of the charge, which he enjoined Timothy to keep, and to impress upon the saints, was "love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Then again in the same chapter he says, "Holding faith, and a good conscience," and tells him that some having put away the good conscience have made shipwreck of the faith. Then in chapter 3. he was to see that the deacons were "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." The one is practically useless without the other. It is a great mistake, which some have fallen into, to make everything of conscience and nothing of faith; and it is as great a mistake, on the other hand, to make everything of faith and nothing of conscience. May we know how to hold both together in the fear of God!

The Epistle to Titus.

(E. Cross).

Chapter 1.

THE Epistle to Titus holds a unique and interesting place among the writings of the Apostle Paul. Elsewhere he treats of the great fundamental truths of the gospel, or of the heavenly purposes of God as regards the church, or of other cognate truths. In his Epistles to Timothy he deals with the church as "the house of God" on earth, according to the doctrines whereby she is so formed, and the order and conduct suitable to her as such. But in the Epistle to Titus he is occupied alone with the "order" proper to Christian society, and in so far as he refers to gospel truth, he does so in view of its practical effects, rather than as to its doctrinal bearing. The church is not named, as such, at all; though the existence of churches in various cities is implied (chap. 1. 5). His objective is Christian "order" amongst those professing the faith of Christ, which would bind together in a "healthy" manner (*cf.* chap. 1. 9; 2. 1, 8) the Christian community, as a suitable witness for God in the world.

It is not enough to preach the gospel, however blessedly; it is not enough to outline the purposes of God as regards the church, the body and the bride of Christ; it is not enough to unfold the plan of God for the ages, and the prophetic scriptures on which it rests. These are all subjects of paramount importance, each in its own place. But here the Apostle deals with another most important branch of truth, the "order" proper to the Christian society, as such, in the different relationships of which it is composed.

We have no record, beyond Acts 27., of Paul's having been in Crete; nor have we any account of his missionary work in the island. Probably he found Christianity already existing there, after a sort, as we read of "devout Jews from Crete" being at Jerusalem at

Pentecost (Acts 2. 5, 11), and they would very naturally carry back with them the tidings of that day; and it is not unlikely that it was amongst such that the Apostle sought to establish an "order," which he had not completed when he left the island, and which he now hands over to Titus to "straighten out," or put right, in what was lacking to its perfecting. And with this object before him he writes this Epistle to Titus, outlining for him therein the course he was to pursue.

First, we see him as "a servant of God"; but as well as that, also "an apostle of Jesus Christ"; thus at once raising the status of this private letter to the level of the rest of his inspired writings.

Having in view the state of things in Crete, the next statement, "according to the faith of God's elect," is of great significance. Many professed faith. In our days, we might say that nearly all do so. But of what avail is such faith? The Mohammedan has faith, and so has the Christian; and what is the difference between them? Largely, that in the majority of cases, the Mohammedan's faith is genuine, and deeply affects his life; while the Christian is but too often unaffected by the faith he professes. In such cases his faith could not be called the faith of God's elect, however orthodox it might be as to its tenets. Moreover, this sort of thing was so from the beginning, as we read, "Then believed they His words; they sang His praise; they soon forgot His works . . . they tempted God in the desert" (Ps. 106. 12). And again, "It is a people that do err in their hearts . . . unto whom I swear in My wrath, that they should not enter into My rest" (Ps. 95. 10, 11). James, too, in his Epistle, deals plainly with that kind of faith, and shows its worthlessness. "Thou believest that there is

one God ; thou doest well : the devils also believe, and tremble " (James 2. 19). And Jude adds likewise his warning voice, " I would put you in remembrance . . . that the Lord, having saved a people out of Egypt, in the second place, destroyed those who had not believed " (Jude 5, N.T.); *i.e.* though, in one sense, it was true that they had believed, in another sense, Jude reckons that they had not.

The same thing comes out markedly in John's gospel. " Many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them " (John 2. 23, 24). But not His miracles merely, but still more remarkably His words; " as He spake these words, many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, ' If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' " But their faith in Him left them as they were before ; and while they profess to have " God as their Father " He tells them plainly, " Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do " (John 8. 30, etc.). Theirs surely was not " the faith of God's elect." Where that is, it is efficacious in bringing forth the fruits of it. And that is what the Apostle has before his mind here.

Further, he writes, " According to the real, or full knowledge of the truth, which is according to piety." (New Trans.)

εὐσέβεια, godliness, or piety = reverential respect for God. Of what value is any amount of knowledge that is not after this sort? Knowledge of itself is of no moral value. It is a common saying that " knowledge is power." In human things that is true in measure ; and for this reason all men are thirsting for it, and eager in the pursuit of it. But knowledge was the primal curse of man, according to the pronounced judgment of God. " And the Lord God commanded the man . . . of the tree of knowledge of

good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die " (Gen. 2. 16, 17), and, as a fact, the more knowledge man has acquired ever since, the more he has added to his misery (Eccles. 1. 18). Look at it all around, in every department of the world's constitution ; in the domain of the sciences, commerce, politics, war, religion. To what infernal uses has not this proud asset of knowledge lent itself ! " Knowledge ever puffs up " ; and as man increases the weapons of ' offence and defence ' thereby, the instruments of his invention recoil on himself finally, to his own destruction. For it is written, " the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God " ; and, " He taketh the wise in their own craftiness " (1 Cor. 3. 19).

Now, when we turn to " the words of the wise man," it is profoundly interesting to remark that he begins his exposition of wisdom with the true adjustment of knowledge, when he says, " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge : fools despise wisdom and instruction " (Prov. 1. 7). All true knowledge, as well as wisdom (Prov. 9. 10), begins with piety. There is no true knowledge without it. If " the demons believe and tremble " (James 2. 19), setting in this respect an example to men more foolish than they, it is certain that they also knew more about the Lord than the people He came to save. " I know Thee, who Thou art," they said, " the Holy One of God " (Luke 4. 22-34). But their faith was not the faith of God's elect ; nor was their knowledge of the truth according to piety.

Verse 2.—" In hope of eternal life " does not represent it as something superadded ; something for which, in addition to what precedes, he was hoping ; but rather as the basis, or condition, on which it all rests—moreover, the fact of it was formative in his mind, as it was directive in his letter to Titus—inasmuch as it was promised of God before the ages of time, and therefore unaffected by the vicissitudes

of creature circumstances. Things may wear a very hopeless aspect to-day; but the energy of the Spirit is governed, not by what is visible among men, but by the "promises of God in Christ Jesus," and the resources at His command to make them good (2 Cor. 1. 20).

Verse 3.—But while He has let drop from the cerulean blue of eternity, so to speak, to which in its uncreated, "out-of-this-world order of existence" eternal life essentially belongs—"that eternal life which was of this character (*ἡ τὸς*, 1 John 1. 2) that it was with the Father, and has been manifested to us"—and given us the hope of it in a new creation sphere proper to itself (Rev. 21. 4), He has meanwhile, in its own due time, *i.e.* now, in a world where death reigns, manifested His word, in the proclamation, with which, says the Apostle, "I, emphatically, in a special manner, have been entrusted, according to the commandment of our Saviour God."

This is a special feature of Paul's ministry, of which he is particularly jealous, as he brings the light of the eternal purposes of God to bear on present things. See the way in which

he speaks of himself in respect of the ministry which he has received (Rom. 16. 25-27; 1 Cor. 2. 7-10; Eph. 3. 8-12; Col. 1. 18-29). The great mystery of "Life," with all its eventualities, was before hidden in God (John 1. 4; Eph. 3. 9-11), and the mind of man was powerless to unlock the secret. It is now revealed in the gospel, according to the commandment of the "Saviour God" of the world, for all mankind, by which title He is spoken of frequently—ten times—in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus (*cf.* also John 4. 42; 1 John 4. 14).

Verse 4.—He calls Titus, "My own child according to the faith common to us"; my true, genuine child. He uses the same expression to Timothy (1 Tim. 1. 2). Probably they were both his converts; but the word *γνήσιος*, true, genuine, as used also in Philippians 2. 20, "I have no one who will care with genuine feeling how you get on," may perhaps be taken as "one after his own heart."

In the salutation, "mercy" is left out by many; but it is questionable if the A. V. is not correct in retaining it. *Vide* note in "New Trans. J. N. D."

The Song of Habakkuk.

HABAKKUK is just the word for us in the maelstrom of the day; everything topsy-turvy, upside down, and downside up; trees fruitless, folds empty, flocks cut off, desolation all round; yet faith rejoices in the Lord, takes its stand on the "watch tower"; and, whilst waiting for the vision, looks onward and sees something fine, beautiful, transporting—"the earth filled," not only with the glory of the Lord (as promised in Numbers 14.), not only with the knowledge of the Lord (as in Isaiah 11.), but with both of them, "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord!" Oh! happy Habakkuk! What a vision! Splendid! a mere visionary? Not at all! Why not? Because "the just shall live by *his* faith." "Live," not die, nor decline, nor droop. He shall live by a power as immortal as invisible.

A little bit of cork in the vortex would baffle its suction, and survive its awful maw. Cork on the billow, faith in the Lord. "The just shall live by faith." Harken, ye Romans, ye Galatians, ye Hebrews, ye who live in 1915; thou soul of mine! List to the truth which holds the field in triumph till the vision bursts, and the eye sees, and the hands touch, and things become material, actual, permanent.

How is that? "The Lord is my strength. He . . . will make me walk on my high places." That is the secret of it all. "Because I live ye shall live also."

And the subscription? "To the *Chief Musician* on my stringed instruments."

Most becoming. Sing on, Habakkuk!
(From a letter, J. W. S.)

The Shell and the Kernel.

(WALTER B. WESTCOTT).

IT has been frequently asserted by thoughtless people that the Great War now raging on the Continent of Europe has demonstrated the failure and bankruptcy of Christianity.

Here are "Christian" nations at deadly strife with each other: every invention of man's brain has been utilized for destruction, and precious lives are sacrificed as though they had no value. Moreover some of the methods of modern warfare amongst the most advanced and enlightened nations are such as might well bring the blush to the cheek of a Patagonian or a native of Darkest Africa still uncivilized: the submarine prowling in the darkness and out of sight to ruthlessly destroy unsuspecting non-fighters; the floating mine, the airship dropping bombs, the poison gases—how utterly repugnant, how diabolical these things are!

Then it has been proved repeatedly that the highest pitch of culture is considered to be compatible with the most outrageous sacrilege, and the most brutal treatment of innocent and harmless citizens—even women and children not escaping.

What a commentary are all these occurrences on the growing pride and boastfulness of the late years in "Brotherhood," "Progress," the "Modern Mind," which have kept pace with a wholesale repudiation of those old-fashioned doctrines of the Bible that were "good enough for Puritans," and narrow-minded people whom the sea of modernism had left high and dry on the beach of "exploded theories"!

Small wonder then that the sceptic makes sport of Christianity and inquires scornfully if *this* is the outcome of well-nigh two thousand years of it!

Small wonder either if the devout believer sometimes wavers in his faith, and seeks to inquire how he can still defend the truth.

Clearly there can be only one of two alternatives: either the whole structure of Christianity is rotten and will presently come crashing about our ears, or there is some fundamental fallacy in the popular view that we shall do well to discover.

It is useless to shirk the issue or to ignore the facts. We are face to face either with the greatest failure of the ages, or with a huge profession that has practically no marks of reality—that is, in fact, the SHELL without the KERNEL.

It is by no means unusual during—or at the close of—an out-door gospel meeting for an infidel or socialist to pour ridicule upon the preacher's message by pointing not only to warring "Christian" nations, but also to the inconsistencies of Christians that have grown flagrant in times of peace, and the greed of place and pelf which is such a feature of modern profession. But it does not require very much intelligence to discern the contrast between the conditions that obtain in the religious world to-day, and those that would have obtained had all who have heard the word of the Lord Jesus been doers of it, or to point out how little creed seems to affect practical conduct, and this should give us the clue to the present terrible state of affairs.

The question that now arises is whether truth is to be condemned because of the failure to practise it on the part of those who profess it: whether, moreover, Christendom of to-day at all represents the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles.

What the writer submits is that—except perhaps at the outset—the truth of Christianity has never been received or practised to any wide extent, and that what prevails in Christendom is in many respects a mere counterfeit.

The warring creeds, the gorgeous ritual, the grand building, the surpliced choir, the princely income—where do these find support or precedent in Holy Scripture ?

Let us revert in thought for a moment to the early days of Christianity. The disciples meet in a "large upper room"—they engage in fervent prayer—they preach the word with boldness; there is power to cast evil out of their midst; they are despised and persecuted by the religious world; they proclaim fearlessly the name and worth of JESUS.

As to their leaders, the mighty apostles, let us hear what the chief of them reports:—

"We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . . We both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour, working with our own hands . . . we are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things" (1 Cor. 4. 9-13).

What a contrast between the lives of these noble men and the worldly ease and affluence of many of their "successors"!

And the apostolic writings—has the unbeliever any fault to find with *them*? He may very easily point out that the truth they contain is seldom practised in these days, but that in itself is a testimony to the lofty character of apostolic teaching. Let us put the question thus: if all Christians to-day were marked by the beautiful traits held up before us in (say) 1 Corinthians 13. and many other noble passages in the Epistles, would not the mouth of the gainsayer be closed and the unbeliever be compelled against his inclination to admire ?

And if we leave for a moment the doctrine of the Epistles and trace with reverence the Life of lives in the Gospels, the Life that stands alone in its unique and solitary grandeur, is not criticism silenced here? Must not even enemies admire? As indeed they did when they

said, "Never man spake like this man," and "He hath done all things well."

And so we come back to the searching question, "What think ye (not of Christians, but) of CHRIST?"

We are therefore prepared to admit—with sorrow and with shame—that Christendom (the Shell) has failed—but Christianity (the Kernel)—NEVER!

The heart-breaking divisions, the sorrowful strife, the ghastly war between "Christian" nations, which in reality are not "Christian"—these things are not the result of the teaching of the Word of God, but the flat denial of it.

While therefore confessing the universal failure and being humbled by our spiritual poverty, and bowing our heads in shame because of the lack of real piety and "otherworldliness" even when the heart is right, we still protest against the refusal of the genuine coin because there is much base metal changing hands, base metal which has become the current coin of a false profession.

To the Church at Sardis the searching message comes:—

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3. 1).

It is the corpse of religious profession that the critics are attacking, and right welcome are they to belabour it! But there stands supreme, beyond all criticism, consistent in life and teaching, the living exponent of every word of God, the MAN CHRIST JESUS, rejected by the world, but exalted in heaven, having given Himself a ransom for all.

We point to Him: like the apostles "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." And yet—while none is perfect—there are many true believers, whose lives are a standing witness to the power of God's mighty gospel, and to the grace that keeps as well as saves.

If a little personal testimony be here admitted the writer can look back upon his boyhood days and recall, with gratitude to God, the influence and example of noble Christian parents. There is no room for the critic's scoff and sneer in the heart of a man who has seen *the life lived* that could only be lived in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Let those among the warring nations, and the "churches," dying of formality and self-complacency, who are disappointed and depressed by what they see, hark back to the simple, sublime, God-given teaching of the New Testament Scriptures; they are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Civilization is not Christianity, but often gives the lie to it.

If some wise reader now declares

that to expect any great improvement in the existing state of things is the dream of a misguided optimist, we are disposed to bow to his opinion.

But there is room for a revival, or a restoration, in the hearts and lives of some of us who need not tarry for a "general resurrection." Let us prove the present-day power of the old-time truths and confront the critic not only with the Word of God, but the *work* of God in the transformed lives of some at least who preach it.

This is the strongest weapon and the most convincing argument. It was said of old—"And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, *they could say nothing* against it" (Acts 4. 14).

A healed man is better testimony than a congealed church.

"The Wise shall Understand."

Extract from "The Scroll of Time."—J. A. SAVAGE, 1893.

PEACE fled from this world the day that sin entered into it, with all its dire consequences, and has never yet returned to the world at large, nor will it do so, until the Prince of Peace comes to establish it in His kingdom.

When we look at the past history of this restless and turbulent scene, we see that all the way down from the beginning—a long dark record of nearly sixty centuries—it is deeply stained with innumerable wars, some of them the most horrible and devastating, in which millions of precious souls have been hurriedly driven out of time into the solemn realities of eternity. Yet with all this, as the centuries rolled on, rulers and statesmen cried aloud for peace, and protested that they were about to put an end to all war, and bring about a time of general tranquillity. But these promises have never been

fulfilled. At every fresh stride of civilization our rulers and statesmen repeatedly proclaim with louder voices than ever, often too with the utmost confidence, that all these great improvements are soon to usher in the glorious and long-desired era of peace. That day has not yet come, nor do we see that the much-lauded improvements of these last days—good as many of them undoubtedly are in themselves—have helped in the least to extirpate the demon of war that is still unquestionably lurking beneath the apparently placid surface of the political world. On the contrary, science itself, with some of its most wonderful discoveries, is being more than ever harnessed to the chariot of war; and never has there been a time when the preparations for it have been conducted on such an extensive scale, or when the expenditure of the different nations lavished upon these

preparations has been so enormous as at present. Millions are spent by the nations of Europe in providing the various deadly munitions of war for the mighty conflict that is soon coming. Terrible ironclads and enormous guns, torpedoes and magazine rifles, are some of the awful engines of destruction that are being rapidly multiplied; while governments vie with one another in hurrying on their construction.

It is appalling to think that all these expensive appliances are expressly designed for the wholesale slaughter of human beings and for the destruction of property! Yet the rulers, when they make their set speeches to their people, assert again and again that the result they hope to achieve by these means is peace! Their ministers and statesmen echo and highly applaud their pacific speeches, while they know full well that a gigantic war—the long-expected European conflagration—is impending, and likely to burst over this Continent in the near future. Moreover, some competent authorities, who are in positions to judge correctly as to what is coming, assert that this great conflict will be one of the most terrible and far-reaching as to its consequences that has ever been known.—Furthermore, the great “Eastern question,”

that has been menacing the peace of Europe for so many years, has not been settled, and indeed never will be, until the children of Israel, to whom the whole of Palestine belongs (as it was given to them for a perpetual inheritance by a solemn covenant of God), are restored to the full possession of their own land. But this restoration of Israel is not likely to take place without a tremendous conflict, as is known by those who are acquainted with the state of affairs in the East, and with the undying traditional designs and ambitions of the great power of the north. So here again we have war ahead,—a war that is becoming more imminent every day; and is the constant theme of the secular papers, some of which have more than once predicted that it may come upon us as suddenly as thunder and lightning from a clear sky. My own impression is, that whenever it does come, it will in all probability change the map of Europe, and will be the *beginning of the end*. In this I may be mistaken; but I mention it for the consideration of those who are watching the drifting of things in the restless and unsettled state of Europe and the East towards some momentous crisis. Daniel says, “The wise shall understand.”

Our One Standard.

THE Scriptures are the only rule or standard of faith and practice; but the power that applies them to our minds is the Holy Spirit, and the instruments may be many.

The Bible may be the means of communicating truth; but its great value is, that it is the standard as well as the depository of all truth. (J.N.D.)

“Our Fellowship.”

“*These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full*”; “*that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*” (1 John 1.). This is a very holy place to dwell in, one that becometh saints—one that nothing but the blood of Jesus could purchase—one in which none but God by His wondrous work in Christ could present us faultless.

(J.N.D.)

The First War, and its Results.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THE first campaign on record is given in Genesis 14. It is quite impossible to say what its political results may have been, but there emerged from it a spiritual outcome, the value of which shall be "for ever."

The King of Shinar and his allied monarchs fought with the King of Sodom and his, overcoming them, and taking away captives and spoil. That is all we know. Amongst the captives, however, was the nephew of Abram, who, having left the company of his uncle, had selected the well-watered plains of Sodom for his abode, and had thus become entangled in the misfortunes of that godless place.

Little did Abram concern himself with the quarrels of the potsherders of earth. It was of small consequence to the pilgrim of Mamre, whose expectations were set on a "city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," what occurred to the contending nations around him; but, when he learned that his "brother" was among these captives, his whole soul was stirred within him to deliver this "righteous" but easily-tempted man from the power of hostile hands. He at once armed his band of servants, overtook and vanquished the enemy, chasing him as far as Damascus, and regaining the captives and spoil.

All this he brought back. As a reward the King of Sodom offered the spoil to the victor; but such a reward from such a man he would not accept. He had lifted up his hand to God that he would defile himself by no such bribe. Suffice it that Lot was delivered. All this was clean work; for Abram wrought with God. But, if he did so, he must count on the opposition of Satan; for, in a world governed by the devil, faith in God need look for no quarter. It was just then, however, that God intervened for the encouragement of this man of faith.

Here is the first spiritual outcome of this very unimportant war: "And Melchizedek," we read, "King of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him. . . . And he (Abram) gave him tithes of all."

Melchizedek was "the priest of the most high God," he was also "King of Salem," that is all we know of him. A mysterious, but highly typical personage, he steps upon the stage, with his bread and wine, and blessing. Abram owns his superiority and gives him tithes of all; for, as ever, the less is blessed of the better. Abram is "blessed of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth"; and in the consciousness of this, he is prepared to decline the snares of the King of Sodom.

Let this action of Melchizedek towards the victorious Abram engage your close attention. Who was he? In what order did his priesthood belong? Was it continuous, or was it transmissible? This is elaborated in Hebrews 7. There we read that he was "made like unto the Son of God," (wonderful fact) and that he "abideth a priest continually." He was greater than Abram who gave him tithes, and greater, therefore, than Aaron, and his priesthood than Aaron's.

And, mark, in Psalm 110., Christ was made, by the oath of God, "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Is it wrong then to say that, out of this passing imbroglia in the slime pits of of Sodom, there should come to us a spiritual issue that should last "for ever"?

*"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform!"*

The battle of Sodom, the capture of Lot, his deliverance by Abram, the appearing of Melchizedek and the continuous high priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ all hang mysteriously and

wonderfully together; and, incidentally, but with surpassing sweetness, He is able, to "save for evermore them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 25, A.V., marg.).

Did ever a war of nations evolve such a result? or, if it were not an actual result, is not the coincidence very striking? What immense value attached to the holy and separate and faithful position of Abram! To him the credit belongs and to the grace of God in him. We may say that but for Abram and his spiritual life at Mamre, as also for his vigorous action at Damascus, there would have been no such priestly act of Melchizedek. Such a loss is, of course, inconceivable; but, what is conceivable and imperative is that the attitude of Abram on Mamre should be imitated by every man of faith, and that his example should be followed. The path which carries blessing is not one of association with the interests of the world, but one of communion with and faithfulness to God.

Well, then, the overtures of the King of Sodom were refused, and thereby Abram was placed in a position of peril. What then was his resource? "The word of the Lord," we read, "appeared to him in a vision, saying, 'I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward'" (chap. 15. 1). God becomes the shield of his defence from the foe, and the great compensation

for every loss—a precious experience surely for Abram, and a further result, so far, from "the slaughter of the kings" in the valley of Shaveh.

Still further results follow in train right down the course of time from this act of Abram. A son was given him when all hope was gone. God had taken the place of not only being his shield, but also his reward. Abram believed God, and was reckoned righteous. He was justified by faith. In due time that son was born.

Then followed Jacob and his twelve sons, and the nation, whose chequered history and present dispersion is one of the wonders of the world—one of the proofs of the verity of the Word of God, and whose future, as the chief of all nations, is mapped out on the prophetic page; so that, be the ambitions of other nations what they may, this people, which sprang from the loins of Abram, and of whom as pertaining to the flesh came our Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever, shall yet be the head and other nations but the tail, in the administration of the glorious millennial kingdom.

Hence, we may say that, transitory as was the victory of the King of Shinar over the King of Sodom, that of Abram over the former was fraught with a result of spiritual events and interests whose value shall be for ever.

The wrath of man shall praise God.

What the Lord Wants.

"I have discovered a grave error I have been making for the greater part of my life. He has been asking for ME and I have been offering Him my service instead. WE ARE MORE TO HIM than all our bits of service."

(From a Letter.)

Lean and Pray.

When you run the Christian race
And are foot sore,
You will find the hills less steep,
And the little ruts less deep,
If you *lean* more.

When you're weary with the fight,
And are heart sore,
You will find the foes less strong,
And the fight will seem less long,
If you *pray* more.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Spirit of God.

A.S.J.—When “Spirit” is used with a capital S. in the New Testament it stands for God the Holy Ghost. The first sentence of 2 Corinthians 3. 17 occurs to us as an exception to this rule—there it is the Lord Jesus who is spoken of as the Spirit of the law in contrast to the letter—but such is the rule.

To know the truth as to the person and work of the Holy Ghost is of the utmost importance, for He pervades the entire work of God in men. We can have no intelligence in the things of God, no enjoyment of these things, and no power for reducing what we know into life and testimony before men, apart from Him.

He has come from Christ in glory (John 7. 39), sent by the Father (John 14. 16, 26), to seal and indwell all those who have believed the gospel of our salvation (Eph. 1. 13). These have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6. 11), and their bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in them (ver. 19). Such are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and because of this God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, so that they may cry, “Abba, Father” (Gal. 4. 6).

To say that the Spirit of God dwells in every man is to deny the truth of

these scriptures, and is false teaching, and in direct contradiction to the Lord’s own words. He said, “The Spirit of truth; whom the world *cannot receive*, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14. 17). Those words should settle the question at once, and make clear to us the immense difference that exists between the world and the Christian “ye.”

Those spoken of as being “spiritual” (1 Cor. 2. 15) are those who are led and taught by the Spirit, and they are characterized by an understanding of spiritual things—the things of God of which the natural man, *i.e.* the unregenerate man, knows nothing. All who are indwelt by the Holy Ghost ought to be spiritual, but they are not. The carnal Corinthian condition characterizes a vast number of believers—they mind the things of the flesh, and walk by sight and follow their natural inclinations as natural men do, and so do not grow in the knowledge of divine things as they would if led by the Spirit. They are babes when they ought to be men, and need to be fed with milk instead of meat (1 Cor. 3.). This is a sad state for any Christian to be in; from it may the Lord deliver and preserve His people.

If you learn the truth you will be able to discern every false system by it.

“The Gospel of the Grace of God” and “the Gospel of the Kingdom.”

C.Y.—In calling attention to the difference between “the gospel of the grace of God” which Paul preached (Acts 20. 24), and “the gospel of the kingdom” which will be preached during the great tribulation (Matt. 24. 14), and subsequent to the catching away to heaven of the church, we do not suggest that there is “another gospel” in

the sense of Galatians 1. Those who were preaching that accursed gospel, which was no gospel at all, said that Christ and His infinite sacrifice were not sufficient for salvation and righteousness. They wanted to mix law with grace, the flesh with the Spirit, and ordinances and ritual with the one supreme and everlastingly effectual

sacrifice of Christ. In "the gospel of the kingdom," Christ will be the sole theme, as He is in the gospel of the grace of God, and blessing under this and that can only be known by yielding obedience to Him. Yet there is a very great difference in the fulness and the results of these two gospels. The gospel of the grace of God is gathering the church out of the world to be caught up to heaven, to be for ever with the Lord at His coming *for* His saints (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to prepare a people to receive Him when He comes *with* His saints (1 Thess. 4. 14) to take up His kingdom upon the earth. The first speaks of heavenly blessing, heavenly hopes, and heavenly glory. The other of earthly blessing, earthly hopes, and earthly glory, though both alike have Christ as their centre.

Was the Apostle Paul Inconsistent?

A Young Believer.—It does appear at first sight that Paul was inconsistent in circumcizing Timothy in Acts 16., after the great conflict that he had fought on that very question at Antioch and Jerusalem (see chap. 15.), but we believe when rightly understood there was no inconsistency, but the manifestation of the grace that became all things to all men.

In chapter 15. it was a question of the truth of the gospel. The very foundations were attacked by these circumcisionists. Their doctrine was that Christ was not sufficient, rites and ceremonies, Moses and the law were also necessary; salvation was not all of grace through Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in Galatians 1. and 2. that these men would have perverted the gospel of Christ; would have taken from believers the glorious liberty of grace, and put a yoke upon their necks that none had been able to bear. This was a direct attack of the enemy upon the gospel, and Paul would neither yield ground, nor consider compromise for a moment; if none stood with him he would fight alone that the truth of the

Those who receive the gospel of the grace of God are brought into a wonderful intimacy with Christ, they are one with Him, they are the church which is His body, and are to be His wife to reign with Him and share all the glory that is His as the Head over all things in heaven and earth. Those who will receive the gospel of the kingdom will know Him as their King, they will be subjects in His kingdom and enjoy the peace and prosperity of His righteous rule on earth.

It is as we distinguish these things in the Word that we are able to appreciate "the glory of His grace who has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 6), and to glory in the gospel which has enlightened us as to the way in which God is effectuating His good pleasure.

gospel might remain with the Gentiles: At Jerusalem the question was definitely settled, and the full free gospel that Paul preached was confirmed by the assembly there under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Acts 15. is one of the most important chapters in the book.

The great principle of righteousness and salvation without the law being settled once and for all, the Apostle could now consider the feelings of those Jewish believers whose faith was weak, and who did not walk in the liberty in which he walked, and of the Jews, also, whom he desired to win. So he circumcized Timothy that they might not be hindered by their prejudices from listening to his word. Though he was free from all, yet he made himself the servant of all, that he might gain the more. Unto the Jews he became a Jew that he might gain the Jews. He was made all things to all men that he might by all means save some. And this he did for the gospel's sake (1 Cor. 9. 19-23). This has been very aptly described as "the adaptation of divine grace, without the alteration of divine principles."

Does God Care ?

(J. T. MAWSON).

WE read the casualty lists in the daily papers—lists so long that the mind grows sick at the sight of them, and the sighs break unbidden from the breast, and the eyes grow moist as we recognize here and there a familiar name. But do we realize all that those lists mean? Do we hear in them the anguished cry of strong men mortally stricken upon the blood-dyed field? Or realize the vain yearning for the presence and comfort of the dearly loved far away as the mists gather before the eyes; or the deeper horrors to men, perhaps unprepared, of the sure advance of death—that most merciless and strongest of foes? Do we, as we read those lists, visit in thought the mansion and the cottage and see the broken-hearted mother's lips pressed upon the portrait of the darling boy whom she will kiss no more? Do we think of the sorrow not of one mother, but of thousands rising in an infinite sob to heaven? Do we read in them the grief, too great for tears, of the widow, as she sits bewildered and bereaved in the midst of fatherless children, too young to understand their loss. Yes, in a measure we feel these things, we should be unworthy of the name of Christian if we did not, for no true Christian heart is cold and callous to the sorrows of others; but while we feel and sympathize, how powerless we are to help. Then in our helplessness to whom shall we turn, and from whence may the multitude look for succour? Does God see their sorrows, and does He care? That is a question that is being earnestly asked, and what shall the answer be?

There are some who tell us that God does not care, that He is an indifferent spectator of the present agony of humanity, and that He has no interest in the affairs of this world. Is this true evidence as to God's attitude?—if so how hopeless we are—or is it a devil-inspired slander upon His holy person? It must be one or the other.

We acknowledge the greatness of God, every man who is not a blind fool does that. In the wide-spreading heavens we can read by day and by night the story of His power and glory, but is this all we know of Him? If it is, there lies in it no answer to our question. We may be moved to admiration at the grandeur of His limitless glory, but if that is all we know our knowledge yields no comfort, it only makes us feel that from us He is far removed, and we cannot tell whether He cares or not.

But that is not all we know; He has taken a wonderful way of telling us more. He has sent to us, not an angel, but His own Son, and from the lips of JESUS we have learnt that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice; that He whose word upholds the mighty worlds that He has formed cares for the weakest, and in our thought, the most worthless of His creatures; and as we consider this we are profoundly affected, for here is revealed His character and compassions. It shows us that He is not distant and indifferent when His creatures suffer, it brings Him near to us in our need, and warms our hearts and awakens our hopes, for we reason that if God pities the sparrow that falls, men are worth more than many of them, and He cannot be careless as to the sorrows and fate of men. We feel that we have need of pity, and without mercy we are wretched beyond expression, but the God who is so compassionate as to think of the sparrows must pity men in their sore travail, He must have mercy for them: we feel this in spite of every contrary voice.

Thank God, this feeling is no delusion, we have solid ground for it. Indeed, it is more than a feeling, it is a deep conviction, A FAITH—founded upon a stable base, formed by a sure and infallible testimony, the word of the God who cannot lie; and were the present

sorrow to grow into a world-wide tribulation, we should still sing—

“ Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace ;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”

God has given many proofs that He cares for men, and not the least cogent of these is that He has permitted this great war to commence and continue. He is God, and He is over all, and He could if He saw fit rebuke the ambitions and restrain the wrath of men; this we must concede, for if we deny it we deny that God is supreme, and make evil greater than He. In days of prosperity and ease men place a false value upon things, and they forget God and the hereafter; and present things, which are only illusive and effervescent, assume a substantial appearance. Thus they are deceived by Satan, the god and prince of this world; God has no place in their lives, and they are lured to an eternal doom. But when the things that seemed to be stable are shaken by a mighty convulsion, and when the earth is filled with hatred and lust for blood, the human soul is startled into a sense of insecurity, and longs for something outside and beyond it. And in this result of trouble God's goodness is seen.

If it were impossible for our thoughts and hopes to reach beyond the time-sphere, and if the enjoyment of material things were the only good, if pleasure, ease, and an unruffled life in this world were the highest things to which men might attain, and to lie down in an eternal sleep the lot of all, then these days were dark indeed, the war an unmixed evil, and the God who permitted it were not the friend of humanity. But the truth is that men have immortal souls, that they have been made for eternity, and in comparison with their existence the longest life in mortal flesh is but as a vapour that disappears before the wind; that there is no lasting satisfaction in material things, and that **GOD ALONE IS SUFFICIENT TO FILL THE SOUL WITH GOOD.**

Now God would turn the thoughts of men to the highest good, He desires that they should find in Him their wealth and joy, and we learn—it has been the experience of multitudes, and it is plainly told in the Scriptures—that it is often only in hours of distress that men will turn to Him. How clearly is this declared in Psalm 107: “ Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: therefore He brought down their heart with labour: they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! ” (Ps. 107. 8-15).

The space at our disposal will not permit us to quote the whole of this remarkable Psalm. Our readers have their Bibles, and we beg of them to read it for themselves. It is most apposite to our subject. It proves that God does care, that, as we have said, the very sorrows of men, which He allows to come upon them, are used of Him to turn them to Himself for their everlasting good. And the present experience of men confirms the ancient word. Take the confession of Larredan, the French atheist, which we published in our May issue, and which has since appeared in other papers, and is well worth re-quoting: “ I laughed at faith and considered myself wise. I no longer retain my gaiety over this derision as I see France bleeding and weeping. It is something consoling to know an eternal homeland which shines with love when the earthly is glowing with hatred. . . . Behold, a

nation of dead covers the fields. How difficult to remain an atheist on this vast national cemetery. I cannot. I have betrayed myself and you—you who have read my books and who have sung my songs. . . . I see death, and I cry for life. France, France, turn to faith. I know not if I be alive to-morrow, but this I must tell my friends, 'Larredan dare not die an infidel.' . . . God lives and I stand far from Him. My soul shall joy mightily if ever I experience that moment when, kneeling, I can say, I believe, I believe in God, I believe. These words are the vespers of humanity, for those who know them not it is night."

Or take this extract from the letter of a British prisoner in Germany: "We should always be prepared to meet our Maker, and I am glad to say that ever since we first mobilized in August last I have been prepared; so should every one be, especially those who have come through this campaign and seen hundreds of soldiers dying on every side of them, *their last words being a prayer to God to save them.*"

Who can tell how many thousands in pleasure-loving and infidel France have been awakened like Larredan to eternal realities as a result of the sorrows that have wrung their souls? Who can tell how many thousands of heroic young soldiers have turned to God as they faced the horrors of death upon the field of battle, and so have been gathered to that eternal homeland for which Larredan longed, who otherwise might have spent long years in the sad service of sin?

But what of the anxious mothers and wives who grow pale at the sight of postman or telegraph messenger, or those who sit overwhelmed by the blow that has fallen upon them? For these, too, God cares, and to Himself He desires to draw them that they may know Him as the God of all Consolation, and so gather eternal blessing from their present grief.

When JESUS was on earth God was manifest in flesh, He was here below

showing Himself to men so that they might be ignorant of Him no more, and that revelation of God abides for ever; what God was as made known in Christ He is to-day for all who seek Him. Every phase of human anguish surrounded the Lord and in the midst of it and because of it He was the Man of Sorrows, and at all times and everywhere His tender heart was moved with compassion as He saw it. One instance in which this was manifested must suffice us. There were heavy hearts at Bethany, for Lazarus was sick, and "the Master" knew it, yet He did not move. He could have rebuked that sickness with a word, could have prevented its blight from falling upon that house entirely, but He did not. He waited and allowed the supreme sorrow to afflict them, and so Lazarus died. Did He care? Behold Him as He stands with Mary prostrate at His feet. Listen while she pours out her grief before Him. See her as she looks up through her weeping into His dear face, and see, His cheeks also are washed with tears. Yes, He cares. How beautiful must He have seemed to her that day! How His sympathy must have swallowed up her sorrow! What a revelation of His heart were those tears! What intimacy with Him did Mary's sorrow yield her!

"The bud had had a bitter taste,
But, O, how sweet the flower."

But Lazarus was restored and so the sorrow was removed. That is true. But it was not upon Lazarus that the pound of spikenard was poured but upon Jesus. Mary had gained infinitely through her great sorrow. Lazarus was not less dear, but Christ was supreme in her love. She had learnt in that silent walk by the side of Jesus to the grave of her brother how fully and tenderly He entered into her grief, how able He was to lift her out of the depths and sustain her by His sympathy, how every question that could arise in her mind as to the rightness of God's ways with her was settled in Himself, and how His love so perfect and true, for

it was God's love, was able to heal the wound and fill the void in her heart, and those were lessons, and that was an experience that no mortal words can describe, but the result of it appeared when in silent adoration she poured the precious ointment upon His sacred feet. And what He was to Mary "yesterday," He is "to-day" to all who will bring their sorrow to His feet. And in Him is God revealed, turning that which seems only evil into everlasting good.

Yes, God cares. He has proved it in a thousand ways, but chiefly in the fact that He gave His only begotten Son to die for men; and we would appeal to the desolate and broken-hearted, and especially to those who as yet know not God, to put Him to the test and bring

their woe to Him. He will listen to your cry, pardon your sins, save your souls, pour everlasting consolation in your hearts, and give you a place and portion in that world where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and where [there] shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, [but where] the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21. 4).

Show us a man who says that God does not care, who asserts that He is unmoved by the deep anguish of the human heart, and we will show you a man who bears false witness against the Almighty, and who slanders with the devil's own lie the beneficent and faithful Creator, who longs to be the Redeemer and Father of all.

Our Great High Priest.

WE never know the strength of the love of Jesus—our great High Priest—until we lean upon Him with a heavy burden of temptation and sorrow and fears. Then we realize and experience that He is the man who is God's equal, the Man of God's right hand whom He hath made strong, mighty to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. Then we prove that He knows the sorrow that lies too deep for human ministry; He is able to understand. Then we experience the wonderful tenderness, the compassionate love, the perfect sympathy of Him who is afflicted in all our affliction and is constantly interceding for us above. Such a High Priest is ours in heaven—almighty, omniscient, all-loving;

glorious in His holiness, power, and truth; unspeakably merciful and compassionate. True man is He, having suffered and triumphed as man, and now sympathizes with His saints as Man upon the throne, bringing to us in Himself—JESUS—the Ocean of divine love; for though truly Man, knowing the limitations of humanity, its trials and burdens and weaknesses and sorrows, the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him. He is our Saviour, Friend and Guide; our eternal Lover, the Bridegroom of our souls; alike in shadow and sunshine, amid our defeats and triumphs, sorrows and joys—"THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

"Earthly Things."

IF the Christian's desires and affections are lingering on earth, or stopping short of a glorified Christ in heaven, as the One in whom our life is hid, and to whom we are presently to be conformed in glory, and that in the glory where He is, we shall soon find

that earthly things are something more than dross and dung. Leave a stone on the ground for a time and you will find that it will gradually sink into it, and our hearts, if they are not practically in heaven with Christ, will soon become attached to earthly things. (J.N.D.)

The Rainbow.

(JAMES GREEN).

NO eye dare look upon the un-screened meridian glory of the sun, but who does not gaze with delight upon the matchless splendour of the arch of colour that spans the heavens, the bow in the cloud, telling that the storm has passed and the clear shining is at hand? Yet it is the light of the same sun which we behold, but its dazzling brightness has been broken up into its varied parts, and the eye is presented with an image of incomparable beauty. How like is this to the revelation of God in His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God in His own essential being dwells in light unapproachable, whom no one hath seen nor can see; but how lovely, how attractive is the display of the light in Him who is the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance. Then again the portion of the rainbow which we behold is only the arc of the circle of which it consists, nevertheless if we could see the whole, it would be of the same character as the part we had already seen. Even so the revelation of God in Christ was complete, while we know but in part, but when we see Him as He is, when that which is perfect is come, then shall we know as we are known, then shall we enter into the fulness of that already seen, then shall the eternal glories of the Son be the unending joy and delight of every redeemed and raptured heart. How precious is the grace which gives us now "as heavenly light what soon shall be our part."

Four times is the rainbow mentioned in Scripture. In Genesis 9. 13 it is seen for the first time, set in the heavens as the token of the everlasting covenant. It was God's work, it was His bow, it was for His own eye to look upon, *the sign that judgment was over and gone*. And where shall we look to learn the blessed fact that the storm our sins deserved is past for ever, but upon the face of Jesus our Lord, who is set in the heavens crowned with glory and honour.

What peace, what rest and joy is in that vision. For we are looking where God looks, as He said of the bow, "I will look upon it." His eye and ours rests upon the same object bright and fair, God's own Son, the upholder of His glory and the purger of our sins.

We find the bow next in Ezekiel 1. 28. In connection with the likeness of the man upon the throne, the appearance of the glory of the Lord is said to be like the appearance of the bow in the day of rain. The throne is here set for the judgment of Israel, but true to the token of the covenant, in the midst of judgment God will remember mercy. The storm of righteous anger may fall upon guilty Jerusalem, but the bow is seen in the cloud, giving a great assurance to each of whom it can be said, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. 17. 7, 8).

Yet again we see the bow in its entirety in Revelation 4. 3; here it encircles the throne, its colour like to an emerald, the most restful of all colours. The lightnings may flash and the thunders of judgment roll over a guilty world, but around the throne is the symbol of God's rest in the Son of His love, the appointed Heir of all things, for whom all things were made and in whom they shall be all headed up.

Then lastly, the bow is seen upon the head of the mighty angel in Revelation 10. 1, who is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him alone it pertains to take possession of sea and land, and none but He could swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be delay no longer. He, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, shall put an end to its domination,

and close the period of God's long-suffering and patience with the rebellion of man. Blessed moment. Come, Lord Jesus, and take to Thee Thy great power and reign. This sad earth groans for Thee, Thy saints long to see Thee take Thy rightful place. Then and not until then shall the sword be beaten into the ploughshare and the nations learn war no more. Then shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, and all creation sing in gladness to Thee, and heaven respond with exultant joy, as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of mighty thunderings, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! We wait with our eyes upon the bow in the cloud—the glory of the Lord, sure and certain token that these things shall be fulfilled in their appointed season. We have thus seen that on each occasion the rainbow is mentioned, it is connected with Christ; and the colours of which it is composed may well remind us of the sevenfold glory with which he is crowned at God's right hand.

The colours of the bow are seven, crimson, amber, gold, emerald, blue, purple, and violet. The outside colour of the arch is

Crimson.—The Glory of Redemption.

This is the first we are privileged to behold as we approach from the distance beyond. How precious is it in our eyes, when we gaze as guilty sinners upon that glory. A joy and wonder like nothing else fills the soul when first we can say, "For me His blood was shed." Coming to us out of the infinite, no one can say where the crimson of the bow begins. It grows upon the vision out of that which is invisible; so like the love of God that gave His Son. The motive was His own. Out of the deep unfathomable love of His heart He provided that redemption, which not only meets our ruined souls in need, but in doing so displays the divine resources of grace by which mercy and truth meet together,

righteousness and peace kiss each other. It is the glory of redemption to satisfy fully the love of God and yet leave no stain upon the righteousness of His throne. By this glory the way is open to consider the further glories that are inseparable from it; the crimson passes into the second colour,

Amber.—The Glory of the Sent One.

The meaning of this colour we shall gather from Ezekiel 1. 27. The prophet saw in the vision of the man upon the throne, from his loins even upward and from his loins even downward as the colour of amber. The loins speak of travel and service. It is the glory of the journey of Him who came forth from the Father and came into the world, and again left the world and went to the Father. He descended into the lower parts of the earth that, ascending up far above all heavens, He might fill all things. The soul expands in the contemplation of this. Let us trace again and again that journey in its seven downward and seven upward steps, recorded in Philippians 2. 5-11, until the sight shall form in us the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, and the pride of self be laid in the dust at His feet. Yes, He is upon the throne, the race is run, the goal is reached; and none who shall be privileged to gaze upon His glorious face will ever forget that He was once a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, His face marred more than any man's and His form more than the sons of men. When those who have been born blind bathe in the truth of the word "sent" their eyes are opened to behold the Son of God; and so we pass imperceptibly from the glory of the service of His toil and labour to that glory which belongs to His place in heaven, as it is seen in the third colour,

Gold.—The Glory of Divine Righteousness.

It is a fit emblem of the One who is beyond compare, God over all blessed

for ever. Upon this glory of divine righteousness the Apostle Paul was gazing when he penned Philippians 3. 4-14. Much had he to boast of as a man in flesh, much that would have accredited him in comparison with others, but when he saw the place and standing which had been made available for him in Christ, then gladly did he part with the righteousness that he had by works of law that he might have Christ for gain. And how great the gain to have Christ in glory for righteousness. The highest creature attainments must fade before the claims and acceptance of the Son of God. The purpose of heart that follows on to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus will assuredly lead us into God's own joy in the Son, and it is this that is before us in the fourth, the central colour of the rainbow,

Emerald.—The Glory of the Beloved.

There is no colour so refreshing and restful to the eyes as this. The ancients held that the best cure for defective vision was the sight of an emerald, and certain it is that the spiritual vision is only rightly adjusted when it rests upon the glory of the delight of God in His beloved. Then the eye is single, and the whole body is full of light. But who shall tell forth that light of love? It reaches back into eternity, for He was loved before the foundation of the world. When creation was brought into being, then He was by Him, daily His delight (Prov. 8. 30). Prophet and seer bear constant witness as to what shall be done for the Man whom the King delighteth to honour. During His sojourn in this world the Father's voice proclaimed His deep and full pleasure in Him. Loved because He laid down His life, now having taken it again in heavenly glory, He bears the names of "The Beloved," "The Son of His love." Millennial majesty shall make known to the world that the Father loves the Son, and eternal splendours shall display that place of unique

affection which is the portion of the Son for ever. To the vision of John the Seer, the whole bow appeared to be of this emerald colour, it dominated and gave character to the rest, and in this eternal circle of love divine he found his sweetest refreshment and deepest joy. Here is love's treasure house, here the source of the living waters, here the joys that never fail, here the spring of all true worship and adoration, both now and in eternity. Occupied with these perfections we find ourselves looking at another glory, the fifth colour sets it forth,

Blue.—The Glory of Heavenly Manhood.

It is the colour of heaven, for Christ is not as the first man who was of the earth, earthy, He the second man is out of heaven. His origin, birth, life, affections, motives, relationships, and objects are wholly from above. The honours, titles, splendours, and principalities of earth are eclipsed by the glory of Christ, the heavenly man. Also in Him is seen a character of life altogether above the ways of men, and which forms by the Spirit in the one who beholds, the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. For grace has ordained that He shall not be alone in this heavenly glory, He has companions. The Christian is after the same order, the sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one. Yet more intimately still, Christ, the man upon the throne, is Head of His body the church. United to Him by the Holy Spirit, sharing His life, His members here on earth are nourished and cherished and loved—members one of another, each dear to Him, and destined to share in the glory with which He is invested. At the same time if He has brethren, He is the firstborn amongst them, and each acclaim Him as supreme—personally worthy and worthy to take the dominion and power and to reign, and so we contemplate the glory of the sixth colour,

Purple.—The Glory of Kingship.

Royalty is signified by it. In mockery they clothed Him in a robe of this colour, little thinking that the one they scorned is alone worthy to wear the purple of universal dominion. We wait the day when He shall put on the robes of imperial power, but how sweet the privilege of being admitted into the secret of God's King. Yes, far above the struggling of the nations for the supremacy of the world is One to whom it has been said, "Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." Kings think that by force of arms they can achieve conquest and subdue all to their will, yet their self-centred efforts are only shaping the way for the final overthrow of the nations, and the entry of Him whose right it is to reign, and upon whose brow the diadem of heaven already rests. How calmly then should the believer tread the path of God's will, gazing upon the glory-crowned Lord of all, knowing that His hand is upon the helm of the universe, and although the nations may rage and the people imagine a vain thing, nevertheless God puts it into their hearts to fulfil His will, until the words of God shall be fulfilled (Rev. 17. 17). Then when Christ reigns His saints shall reign with Him in glory. But there is a glory we may behold but never share, so the six colours we have considered would be incomplete without the seventh,

Violet.—The Infinite Glory of His Person.

What succeeds the violet? Nothing,

Jesus is Ours.

JESUS belongs to the sinner. From His infancy in Bethlehem's manger to the agony of the Cross and to His ascension above all heavens He belongs to us poor, guilty, helpless sinners who trust in Him. He is altogether ours. He came to seek and to save us. His sorrow and love, His tears and grace,

it continues into infinitude. Science has searched for the end of the ultra-violet rays without result. Unseen they go on, yet making their presence felt. The so-called X-rays lie in this part of the spectrum, the name given to them is a confession that none can understand them, but there they are, searching with penetrating power the inward parts. How apt a figure is all this of the deep, divine, personal glory of the Son of God, enshrining in His own person the unknowable mystery which none can fathom, for no one knoweth the Son but the Father. He brings to light the deep things of God and searches the depths of the human heart. But how deep and precious is the grace that desires for His own, that they may behold the glory of love which is unchanging from eternity to eternity. We can love when we cannot comprehend, and may have our souls even now filled with adoration and praise, as we contemplate the peerless person of our Lord. Thus shall we abide in Him, and find our true home where He dwells, in the bosom of infinite love. This is the full joy of life eternal. His gifts are wonderful, to serve Him is blessed, but to see Himself, the Son, in His own glory, will be joy beyond compare.

The present effect of contemplating this sevenfold glory is, that our lives will be formed increasingly in the holy graces so precious seen in our Lord as He passed through this world. Christ also shall dwell in our hearts, and the limitless scene of His glory shall fill our heart and mind; and His love which passeth knowledge shall be our present portion.

His prayers and power, His sacrifice and resurrection and glorious ascension all are ours. And in heavenly glory He is ours. His love, sympathy, faithfulness and power are all working for us. We are His thought, His care, His work, and—oh that it were so more abundantly—His joy, His reward.

A Call to Prayer.

AMBASSADORS AND INTERCESSORS—such is our twofold mission as Christians in the world. Ambassadors on God's behalf to men, and intercessors on men's behalf to God. We are this by God's appointment and not by our own choice, and He has given the Holy Spirit to dwell in us that we might fulfil our mission both powerfully and effectually. These facts determine beyond all question that God is indeed "merciful and gracious."

We do not now press the importance of the former; we are apt, perhaps, to dwell more upon it, for there is in it, if we lose the sense and the grace of God that has put the honour upon us, more opportunity to become big and important in our own regard, only then we cease to be *really* what we profess. But in intercession there is room neither to strut nor to boast, it is an hidden service and can only be rightly done in humility and self-judgment. We believe that we voice the feeling of the majority of our readers when we say that **THIS IS THE TIME FOR INTERCESSION**. At no period of our generation has the need for it been so imperative, but we fear we very poorly answer to the demand, perhaps never so poorly as now. We would not, however, dwell upon the failure; to do so will not help us; though surely, with full confession of it and with many tears we should seek God's forgiveness. But the time is short and we must not waste it in useless regrets. But we do need to be reminded that as in every sphere of life powers that are not used become impaired and finally lost, so happens it in spiritual things. Nothing can change the great principle: "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." If we do not exercise ourselves in intercession, we lose the desire and the power to do so at all.

But our God is full of grace towards us and He desires to see Himself mirrored in His children, and this is blessedly done when they earnestly intercede before Him for the blessing of others, for their intercession is the expression of His own desires.

In regard to the present distress in the world we have received an appeal for prayer, both individual and collective, from the sick chamber of an aged servant of the Lord, and we gladly publish it that it may have the consideration of our readers.

"We cannot claim God's mercy, but we can, as others have done in times gone by, crave it, and ask Him, if it be in accordance with His holy will, to avert from this country the bloodthirsty design of the German Emperor.

"We confess we have brought this terrible chastening upon ourselves. The people of God are to blame for their utterly inadequate response to His love to them in Christ, in their practical ways; and then what a sorrowful spectacle in the past, and even to-day, is Britain: vast pleasure-seeking crowds hurrying on to a lost eternity in forgetfulness of God.

"'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' This is a scripture of great comfort. God has always heard and answered the prayers and intercessions of His people. All over this land there are many, many thousands of His people—broken-spirited people—broken and of a contrite heart and in dire distress as to all that is going on.

"Ought not saints of God to come together in their several localities to cry to God to arrest this fearful war of proposed extermination? But, far and away beyond this, that He would graciously let His truth prevail on

every hand, so that saints everywhere might be aroused and recalled to their high destiny and holy responsibilities, and multitudes of sinners be arrested and led back again to God.

“As I look back upon my own career I feel crushed as never before; and I thank God for letting me know that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart He will not despise. How gladly would I join in prayer, confession, and intercession with such a band of men and women, continuing in prayer, and laying aside for ever the unrealities that have marked us.

“Thomas Oliver.”

The above appeal was written at Croydon on July 2nd. On the 16th of the same month the beloved writer fell asleep in Jesus.

The opportunity, the responsibility and the privilege are as great as the need. May God encourage us not to be shirkers of our responsibility. We may stand as Abraham did when he interceded for Sodom (Gen. 18.), and intercede for all men; but we can only do so as we are separate in heart from the principles and ways of the world that have brought it into its present trouble. It was Abraham and not Lot who was the intercessor.

Let us consider for a moment that man of faith as God shows him to us in that ancient story. The executors of the richly merited judgment had departed for Sodom, but the Lord lingered behind with Abraham. He found no delight in the destruction of the wicked city, but He did delight in the fact that Abraham desired mercy for it. Abraham's was the intercession of communion, as the close of the chapter declares. The heart of the Almighty found its expression in Abraham's prayers; He had found on earth one man who had oneness of thought with Himself, and henceforth Abraham was known as “the friend of God.”

We may pray for God's mercy for Britain, though her sins be as great as

Sodom's, and we may reach out to all men in our intercessions, for God pities all. May we at this time prove ourselves to be true children of faithful Abraham.

Then there are the special interests of Christ in the world—the great work which is specially connected with the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth—the calling out of the world, and the building up in the truth of the assembly which is to be the wife of the Lamb. Nothing must be allowed to force this into a secondary place in our thoughts. We need a fresh call, and renewed energy by the Holy Ghost, to bow our knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as to this.

We feel that we cannot do better with this in mind than publish an appeal sent out by the late C. H. Mackintosh about thirty years ago, as it entirely covers the ground in question.

“Beloved in The Lord,

“I have, for some time, been deeply exercised as to the condition of the whole church of God—the body of Christ; the beloved lambs and sheep of His flock, scattered through the various denominations and associations of Christendom. In a word, the low condition of things, on all hands; the little fruit in the gospel, and the excessive feebleness in collective and individual testimony for Christ.

“All this has weighed very heavily on my heart, before the Lord, in connection with the fearful progress of infidelity, in all its phases, and the darkening influence of superstition; and I feel called to send forth an appeal to every child of God and servant of Christ, throughout the whole world, to unite in humbling ourselves before the Lord, in self-judgment, confession, supplication, and intercession.

“I venture, in dependence on our ever gracious Lord, to send forth this little appeal; and I would, in true brotherly love, entreat each beloved reader to unite in earnest, believing

persevering prayer for the following objects:—

“ I. For Christians everywhere; that the Spirit may lead them into deep and true exercise of heart and conscience, as to their position and association, that they may with a single eye and teachable spirit, test the religious systems of the day by the word of God, and turn away from everything which cannot stand the test, that they may see their true place, ‘inside the veil,’ and ‘outside the camp’; and their proper hope, the coming of our Lord.

“ II. That they may be delivered from every hindrance, every stumbling-block, every root of bitterness; that they may be knit together in holy confidence, true brotherly love, and spiritual fellowship; that their meetings together may be characterized by simplicity, reality, freshness, and spiritual power; that the ministry may be with unction and true savour; that they may be entirely delivered from restless activity and unprofitable speaking; that there may be, in all, a clear understanding and a solemn sense of what it is that brings them together; that the Lord’s Supper may ever get its own proper, prominent place; and that nothing may be allowed to interfere with that most precious and important object.

“ III. For the work and the workmen, at home and abroad; that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified; that many precious souls may be gathered in ere the door is shut; that the gospel may be preached, in all its fulness and moral grandeur; that the Lord’s beloved messengers may be cheered by the assurance that, however the church has failed as God’s witness on the earth, yet the gospel tells out what He is to every poor bankrupt sinner that will only trust Him; that the oral and written ministry may be clear, sound, and unequivocal; that all who speak and write may be ruled by one object, namely, the glory of Christ, in the comfort and edification

of His beloved people: *that they may carefully avoid all curious questions, startling theories, hair-splittings, and strifes of words.*

“ IV. For all Christian households; that they may be ruled in such a way as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; that the atmosphere of our family circles may be love, peace, tender consideration one of another, each seeking the good of all, that the unconverted may be gathered in, the wanderers brought back, the backsliders restored.

“ V. For our own souls; that there may be a deeper work of grace in our hearts, a closer walk with God, a richer enjoyment of Christ, a more pronounced and devoted discipleship, a more earnest longing for His coming.

“ Will you, beloved friend, join in crying to God night and day for these things; and seek to get others to do the same ?

“ Affectionately yours in Christ,

“ Dublin.”

“ C. H. M.

We will add no more, except to say that while nations are passing through a veritable agony of endeavour to accomplish what they believe to be right, it would be an infinite disgrace to us, as Christians, if we were slack in that which our knowledge of God calls us to do. Alas, we have been slack in the past, things have been made comparatively easy for us, and we have been more or less affected by the drift of things in the world; we have not felt as we ought the departure from “first love” on the part of the church, and the terrible denial of every truth as to the Person of Christ to which of late years she has lent her ear. There has been much lukewarmness about us, “neither cold nor hot.” But now while everything is being shaken, may we be shaken out of this condition into fuller accord with the thoughts of God.

The Outlook.

(HAMILTON SMITH).

THE fact that the war is practically confined to professedly Christian countries, surely proclaims, with no uncertain voice, that God has a controversy with Christendom. We may well inquire, Why has God, in the ways of His providence, allowed this fearful evil to come?

In seeking to answer this question we must remember that God has revealed Himself to men in three great ways. First, as the Creator of the universe (Gen. 1.). Second, as the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18. 25). Third, as the Saviour God who will have all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2).

AS CREATOR, God has set all His creatures in certain relationships to one another, instituting the whole circle of family relationships.

AS THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH, God has ordained certain powers for the government of the world, such as kings, rulers, and magistrates, into whose hands He has committed the sword, for the purpose of restraining evil, and the punishment of evil-doers.

AS THE SAVIOUR-GOD, He has declared His grace, in proclaiming the forgiveness of sins among all nations, through faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus.

How then has the world answered to this threefold revelation? Alas! is it not manifest that God has been denied—His rights refused and His mercy spurned in every way in which He has been pleased to reveal Himself, and that not only in the dark parts of the earth, where all idea of God has long since been lost, but in Christendom—professing to have the true knowledge of God?

In the scientific world, boasting of intellect and learning, the leaders of science have flouted the idea of a Creator, and sought to explain "life"

and all "natural phenomena" apart from God. The mass, confused by a display of learning, is quite willing to accept evolution, or any other wild theory of man's infidel mind; and thus all thought of God, as Creator, is fading from the minds of men. But in giving up God as the Creator, there necessarily follows the loosening of all those relationships which the Creator instituted. Thus we see, on all hands, family relationships breaking up, and, as the inevitable result, an enormous increase of immorality and corruption.

In the political world, the government of the world is conducted increasingly without any reference to God. Men pass their laws, make treaties, enter into alliances, go to war, and patch up peace, according to the will of the people, and without any thought of God. And, leaving God out, the door has been left open for every kind of political unrighteousness. Truth is displaced by diplomatic lying; principle has to give place to policy; right has to go down before might. The power of the sword, instead of being used to restrain evil, becomes the instrument of expressing the cruelty, lust, and hatred of men attempting to rule without God; and thus violence fills the earth.

In the religious world, in Christendom (of which we speak), we find on the one hand a number of professedly orthodox sects, and, on the other hand, an ever-increasing number of anti-Christian sects.

The anti-Christian sects, such as Christian Science, Millennial Dawnism, Seventh Day Adventists, Christadelphianism, Mormonism, the Tongues Movement, and others, are all alike in this, that they more or less plainly deny the Deity of Christ and His atoning work.

But what of the professedly orthodox sects? Alas! we find in nearly all

these, that "Higher Criticism" has undermined implicit faith in the Bible as the Word of God; gross materialism refuses all that is miraculous—the virgin birth of Christ, the miracles of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ; Unitarianism (no longer confined to Unitarians) denies the Deity of Christ; a barren morality, expressing itself in good works to men, displaces the atoning work of Christ; human organization sets aside the Spirit of God: humanitarianism denies eternal punishment, and a gross worldliness excludes all belief in the coming of Christ. Men of the religious world are treading "under foot the Son of God," counting "the blood of the covenant . . . an unholy thing," and doing "despite unto the spirit of grace."

The eastern section of that which professes the name of Christ is marked by idolatry; the western section is characterized either by the superstition of Rome or the rationalism of Protestant countries. But all these evils—idolatry, superstition, and materialism—lead by different roads to the same end—practical infidelity, or the entire exclusion of God, in fact, if not in name.

Whether then we look at the intellectual world, the political world, or the religious world—in every sphere—we find the same terrible sin, the **FORSAKING OF GOD.**

But what about true Christians? For in the midst of this corrupt Christendom there are thousands upon thousands of the true disciples of Christ—men and women—in whom God has wrought by His Spirit. Scripture speaks of them "as the salt of the earth." But how comes it then that they exercise so small a preserving effect upon the world? The exhortation of the Lord was plain: "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." Alas, so far are they from preserving the world that they have not even kept themselves pure and unspotted from its evil; so far from maintaining peace in the world, they

have not even maintained peace among themselves; indeed so far are they from maintaining peace among themselves that they have become a scandal and a byword through their perpetual quarrels and divisions. So that, in spite of the fact that there are devoted men of God in the world, must we not sorrowfully confess that, speaking generally, the Lord's people are marked by loss of first love; by following what is right in their own eyes rather than holding the Head; by a narrow sectarianism instead of viewing one another as members of the body of Christ; by bitterness rather than love to one another; by worldliness and earthly-mindedness instead of maintaining the stranger and pilgrim character of the heavenly calling; by ease and sloth rather than energy and zeal in the service of the Lord? Thus it has come to pass that the salt has largely lost its savour. View Christendom how we will, on every hand we are faced with failure and ruin.

What a world lies under the eye of a holy God! Heathendom without the knowledge of God: Mohammedanism with a perverted knowledge of God: Christendom forsaking God: and the mass of true Christians backsliding from God.

God bears long with evil, but there comes a time when the glory of His name demands that in His providential government men should hear His voice; that they should reap the widespread sorrow which is only the harvest of their departure from God. But how solemn must be the condition of Christendom which makes such a catastrophe, so far-reaching and overwhelming, a necessity, for we may be sure that if anything less than this would have been enough to awaken men from their sinful indifference to God, and to awaken Christians also from their selfish slumbers, this would not have been permitted, for God is full of mercy.

After long patience God in His governmental ways has drawn a sword

upon the nations, and said, "Sword, go through the land" (Ezek. 14. 17). Every professedly Christian nation is directly or indirectly involved in this terrific conflict, the end of which no man can foresee. It has touched all from the highest to the lowest, believers and unbelievers, involving millions in sorrow, ruin, desolation, and death.

And in the midst of all this sorrow where can the Christian find relief? To whom can the Christian turn? To the world? Alas there is no hope there! To the Christians in the world? Alas there is little hope there! To whom then can we turn? To GOD alone: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in ME is thine help" (Hos. 13. 9). God remains, and with God there is no change. "Thou remainest," and "Thou art the Same."

The world looks to its millions and its munitions, its armies and its navies, to end the war. Let the Christians wait on God, that His end may be reached: "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him" (Ps. 62. 5). Let us look beyond all second causes, and accept this terrible discipline from God: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3. 6).

Let us confess our failure, and seek that there may be, by the Spirit, a great revival in the hearts of God's people, and then let us pass on, and, pleading the mercy of God, send up a united cry for peace in the world. As Christians we have failed greatly, but our failure does not lessen our responsibility to cry to God that souls may receive eternal blessing, and that peace may be restored and maintained while God's people are yet in the world.

When the people of God were in captivity, the Lord sent them a message by Jeremiah, saying, "Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused

you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. 29. 7). The people who were thus told to pray were a failing people. The city they were told to pray for was a doomed city. Nevertheless they were to pray. We might think it hardly decent for such people to pray for others, and quite useless to pray for such a city. But no! for while the Lord fully recognizes the shame of His people, and that His hand was upon them in judgment, for He says, "I have caused you to be carried away captive," and yet He continues, "Pray unto the Lord for the city," for His mercy is very great.

It is our responsibility and privilege to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks . . . for all men; for kings, and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and gravity," and above all that the gospel may be proclaimed in accordance with the desire of God our Saviour, "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 1-6).

May the Lord turn the hearts of all His people to Himself, in individual as well as in united prayer, and intercession, for "who knoweth if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him?" (Joel 2. 14). The rulers of this world know how to leave sorrow and the curse behind them, the widows and the orphans, the ruined and the broken-hearted can rise up to tell: but God—God alone—out of all this woe can leave a "blessing behind Him." And when this present misery shall for ever have passed away, like some evil dream, will not many a soul look back to this sad time,

"And bless the hand that guided,
And bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land"?

Light for the Last Days.—No. 5.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy 1.

THE confidence and joy of the Apostle regarding the reality of the faith of this beloved disciple Timothy causes him to be all the more anxious that the spiritual gift that was in him should not be inoperative, especially on account of its having been communicated to him by the laying on of Paul's hands. It is of all importance that whatever gift may have been given to any one of us should be used to its fullest capacity in the service of the Lord who gave it, and to whom we are answerable for the use or misuse of the same. The wicked servant who did not know his Lord put his gift to no use whatever (Luke 19.); the Corinthians were using their gifts for the glorification of the flesh (1 Cor. 14.); but Paul used his wholly in the service of his Lord (2 Cor. 11.). There is, even with the greatest of servants, a tendency to become occupied with the forces that rise up against us, instead of having the eye fixed upon the forces that are on our side, and hence we find on every hand depression, feebleness, and failure, where there should be confidence in the Lord, courage of heart, and determination of mind, to meet the powers of evil that rise up against us, and to have the utmost certainty of ultimate and glorious victory. The gift of God, which is the expression of the power of life in Christ risen, is more than a match for all that opposes it (2 Cor. 10. 3-5), but if we are to be able to make right use of it we must not trust even in the gift but in our victorious Head, from whom it has been received, and in the Holy Spirit, who is the power of that gift in us.

"God," he tells Timothy, "has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." For whatever we have to do, or whatever we may have to bear in this world, we can always count on

abundance of power from on high; at least it is our privilege to be able to do this. To be strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, is the mind of God for His people (Col. 1. 11); and however great the works were which were done by Christ when on earth, "greater works," He says, "than these shall ye do; because I go unto My Father" (John 14.). The power is His, but this power is exercised on earth by means of His servants.

But it is not mere power, which might be used for the destruction of His beloved saints, it is the spirit also of love, love that sacrifices itself for the good of its objects, and counts that sacrifice a privilege unspeakable. It is a spirit that occupies itself in ministering Christ to the souls of men, in nourishing and cherishing the members of Christ, and delights in spending and being spent for them. It does not hesitate to reprove, rebuke, and exhort; but it prefers to encourage, comfort, console, and intercede on their behalf.

And in order to serve the saints in the interest of Christ it was also necessary to have a sound mind, or wise discretion. Solomon, in the tenderness and artlessness of his youthful heart, and feeling his natural inability to rule so great a people as Israel, says to God, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people" (2 Chron. 1. 10). And if we really know how utterly evil, proud, and imperious the flesh is, we shall be careful to seek the face of God, that we may have in exercise all these qualities that were at all times so necessary to have in manifestation in a day of general declension and departure from Christ.

The gospel was in affliction in the world: it had always been so, but it was now despised and persecuted more than ever. Even those who professed

to believe it were not all now ready to take part in its tribulations. Even the morale of Timothy was not at the high level it once had been; and to stimulate the flagging faith of this hitherto devoted disciple of Christ, so that the gift that had been bestowed upon him might be once more used in the service of the Lord, the Apostle writes this, his apparently last epistle.

Be not thou therefore, he says, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner. There was nothing to be ashamed of. True, it was unpopular in the world. But how could it be otherwise? It declared heaven's acceptance of the One whom the world had rejected. It spoke of His exaltation to the right hand of God, and of His coming again in judgment. It woke up the conscience of the sinner; it unmasked the hypocrite; it chipped off the thin veneer of man's boasted civilization, and showed the rottenness within: but it spoke of a day of grace before the judgment would begin; it revealed a Saviour-God in the person of Jesus, whom man had rejected; it declared forgiveness to guilty sinners; it was the power of God unto salvation to all them that believed; in it the righteousness of God was manifested for those who had no righteousness of their own.

And yet it was hated, and hated just because it testified of these things. It laid at the door of the world the murder of the Son of God, but opened up a way of salvation, which carried with it eternal glory, for every soul under heaven, and all by faith in Christ and His precious blood. Its unpopularity lay in this, that it brought the conscience of every man into the presence of God, gave him to see that the Christ the world had rejected was the sinner's only hope. It brought down the pride of the human heart in the dust, made nothing of his fancied righteousness, and shut him up to the mercy and grace of God. Hence the unpopularity of the heavenly message.

But to this gospel Timothy owed everything he possessed that was worth possessing in the universe. Therefore he was not to be ashamed of it, nor of him who was in prison for its sake. He was to suffer evil along with it, for until the Son of God takes the throne that is rightly His, and puts His feet upon the necks of His enemies, so long will the gospel be in affliction. And until that day all who believe it, and live according to its principles, must suffer persecution. Its subject is Christ, who was hated when here upon earth, is hated still, and shall always be by this evil world, and so also shall all His true followers be.

But this is not to deter them from following the Son of God. They can count upon the power of God for every danger and difficulty they may have to encounter. They are not to attempt any forward movement in their own fancied might. It must be, as the Apostle says, "according to the power of God." Testimony for Christ is not to be undertaken in the power of the creature. But this power has been given to us in the anointing that we have received, and which is in us, and is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4. 4).

The enemy must be met in the power of God, and in the consciousness that He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, which so little depended upon anything that we had done or could do that it could be said to be given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time. Not even our lost condition as sinners is given as an incentive to this activity of divine love, though no doubt it furnished an occasion for the putting forth of the might of God for the accomplishment of this purpose; but it was a gift given to us in Christ Jesus before the world was, and given by Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

This is a rock for our feet amid the shifting and unstable sands of a fallen and faithless creation. Into the composition of the immovable foundation

no element of the creature, fallen or unfallen, enters. We can look abroad upon the wood, hay, and stubble, which unskilful workmen have built into that which has ostensibly the place of the house of God, and we are not surprised at the havoc wrought by the fiery trial through which it is made to pass; we can with equal equanimity behold the thousands of mere worldlings, who have adopted the profession of Christianity without any real work of the Spirit of God in their souls; we can peacefully view the baptized myriads upon whom the word of truth, which has been ministered to them from their very infancy, has had no saving effect, and our faith is not shattered to pieces by the apparent inability of the gospel to effect the salvation of those who are continually hearkening to its sweet and heavenly melody: no, we know well that all that the Father has given to the Son shall come to Him (John 6. 37); and though we may mourn and lament the indifference, and even the innate enmity of the human heart to the truth of God, we are confident that, in connection with eternal purpose, nothing can fail; for the power of God is able to give effect to the counsels of His love. It is also exceedingly reassuring and restful to our souls to know that this purpose and grace, having been given to us in the sovereignty of God, nothing can ever deprive us of it.

And this purpose and grace has been manifested by the appearing of Jesus Christ. That effect might be given to this purpose of God, the One in whom it was originally given to us has been here in manifestation, in order that death, which lay upon us as the just judgment of God, might be annulled, redemption accomplished, God glorified, and life and incorruptibility brought to light by the glad tidings: but this life and incorruptibility are in a new and heavenly sphere, which had never previously been the abode of man. Now that death has been abolished, and redemption completed, Christ has gone

on high, and has taken up His abode in Manhood before the face of God, into which death and corruption have no entrance; and in order that we might have the assurance that this place is ours in Him, He has sent down the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and to give us the consciousness that we belong to that place; so that we rejoice to sing:

“He’s gone within the veil:
For us that place has won.
In Him we stand a heavenly land,
Where He Himself is gone.”

Of these glad tidings Paul was a herald, an apostle, and teacher of the nations. In this he was the most highly honoured man upon earth: for what greater honour could be conferred upon a poor creature, whose stubborn will had been subdued by the grace of the heavenly Christ, than to be allowed to be the exponent of that grace in the midst of a selfish world, and to enlighten the dark places of the earth with the knowledge of the salvation and love of a Saviour-God? And though Paul would have greatly preferred to carry the message to those of his own nation, he was not insensible to the grandeur of the mission with which he had been entrusted.

And because of this the persecutions of his fellow-countrymen dogged his footsteps. They would not have the gospel themselves, neither would they allow it to be preached to the Gentiles, if they could prevent it. It aroused their jealousy to see it pass their door and rest in the house of the heathen, though they knew well they could have had it also had they desired it, for indeed it was to the Jew first, if also to the Gentile.

But of the reproaches, stoning, stripes, and imprisonments he was not ashamed; he rather gloried in these afflictions, for he knew whom he had believed, and he had every confidence that he was able to keep that which He had committed to him against the day of His appearing. His Saviour was well known to him. In His death the

deep fountains of eternal love for the poor, benighted, self-willed Saul of Tarsus had been discovered, and in the light of that love the ransomed soul of this devoted servant had walked since the day in which he was arrested by it on his persecuting career almost at the gate of Damascus.

From that moment the world for him lost its brightness. In the light above the brightness of the sun, which fell upon him from the glory where Jesus was, the gloom of Judaism was like a wintry moonless night, and the Gentile world darker still. There was henceforth to be no home for him here below. As far as the world was concerned his future pathway was to be a thorny one. A long vista of persecutions and afflictions loomed darkly

before his vision. From his Lord he was to hear how much he must suffer for that name he had so despised and hated. Every joy that was henceforth to lighten his heart must come from whence the light came, in which he had learned the exceeding sinfulness of his self-righteous career. But this was all well, for the happiness that the knowledge of Jesus had deprived him of would be more than counter-balanced by the happiness in store for him with his Saviour on high. He could say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8. 18), and, "The life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20).

The Epistle to Titus.

(E. CROSS).

CHAPTER I. 5. To Titus was confided the organization of the Christian Society in Crete. In 1 Timothy we find a similar line of things more elaborately set forth, with the doctrines that connect it with the church as the house of God, the pillar of light and truth to the world around. This is equally implied in the Epistle to Titus, although the church is not formally named, nor the doctrines on which she is built definitely announced. The gospel in its main features is epitomized in chapter 2. 11-15; but it is in view of its effect on Christian conduct in the world, rather than as announcing the evangelical doctrines of grace.

Titus had to set right what remained as yet not put in proper order in the island; *i.e.* to organize into a properly constituted society those who professed the faith of the gospel.

Society is defined as "a union of rational beings for common interests, associated for pleasure or profit. Its natural foundations are the wants and

fears of individuals." The organization of society is the arranging of its parts in a manner conducive to its common weal: and while this is true in regard to ordinary worldly society, it is of still more importance in the community of Christians. The highest form of its development is in the Assembly, as set forth in the Epistle to the Ephesians. But to that height the Apostle does not carry us in the Epistle to Titus. We are occupied here only with what was necessary for the creation of a healthy moral tone amongst those who had been called out from surroundings of a very unpropitious character, to walk according to the faith of Christ.

"Establish elders in every city." Presbyters and elders are the rendering of the same word, *πρεσβύτερος*; while overseer, *ἐπίσκοπος*, translated "bishop" in the A.V., is descriptive of the same person, as setting forth the charge, or office, to which he is appointed.

In the idea of "elders" there is nothing new. They are the natural product of society, of which they form

a part. The word "presbyter" is closely allied to "presbutes," *πρεσβύτερος*, "an old man," with which it is in some cases apparently interchangeable (*cf.* 1 Tim. 5. 1, 2; Titus 2. 2, 3; Phil. 9). But elders are not to be confounded with the "gifts" of Ephesians 4. These were "given" by an ascended Christ, and were the special witnesses of His victory over the powers of evil (*cf.* Ps. 68. 18; Eph. 4. 8). Elders, on the other hand, exist naturally *in se*; while the character of the individuals, necessary for their formal appointment, is here the subject of the Apostle's instructions. They were simply the elder members of the community, who, by reason of their age, godliness, and mature experience, were competent guides and referees in circumstances demanding wisdom and discretion.

We find them as a recognized class in Exodus 3. 16; 17. 5. "Go and gather the elders of Israel." Jethro advises Moses to associate certain of them with himself in the administration of the congregation, in terms which are apparently in the Apostle's mind in his charge to Timothy and again to Titus: "Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee . . . provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them. . . . And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee; but every small matter they shall judge. . . . So Moses hearkened unto the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said" (Exod. 18. 19-24).

This advice given by Jethro—probably a cryptic interference of the gentile in the most important matters, from the very beginning, with the affairs of Israel—was manifestly sanctioned of the Lord, as we see from Numbers 11. 16, 25, etc. And here we have apparently the foundation of what was afterwards known as the Sanhedrin, which, through various vicissitudes and breaks

in its history, reappears and still continues into N.T. times. To this body of men was committed the maintenance of order in all matters concerning the welfare of the community; and to it as the great court or council, subject only to Moses as its Superior, belonged the administration of the most important affairs of the nation, both civil and religious. It had the power of life and death, and its judgment was final, without appeal (*cf.* Deut. 19. 12; 21. 2, 6, 20 *et al.*).

Such is the general idea connected with elders. Peter ranks himself as one of them; and from him we have a fine association of the three words, elder, overseer, and shepherd, 1 Peter 5. 1-4. "Shepherd the flock of God." "They are to act in this character, or have it by their acting. It is not simply an exhortation to go on doing it; but to acquire, or have that character by doing it; to be so characterized" (J.N.D. *N. Tr. note in l.*).

The power of appointing elders belonged to the Apostle, and, apparently also, those associated with him (see Acts 14. 23). This power he delegates to Titus to be exercised in Crete. Probably he gave the same power to Timothy; but it is not so stated. Indeed so far from appointing them, Timothy is instructed rather to be deferential to them, as becomes a young man speaking to his elders (1 Tim. 5. 1, 19; Lev. 19. 32), and this is comely and seasonable, as conduct suitable to the house of God (1 Tim. 3. 15).

A question here arises: Where is the power to appoint elders to-day? But another question claims precedence: Where is the Assembly over, or in which, to appoint them? And herein is the wisdom and the power of God. Elders are, so to speak, a natural order. Their first appointment was by the advice of a gentile—to use a figure, "extramural." They existed already. Their statutory recognition was subsequent, and dependent on the divine recognition of the nation, or of those

who represented it. When the nation goes, the Sanhedrin goes with it, as to its powers, as they themselves own (John 18. 31; Neh. 9. 36, 37). But what is natural abides; and there are elders still, and where they are truly such, according to Exodus 18. 21, 1 Timothy 3. 2-7, and Titus 1. 6-9, they will be recognized as such, at least by some, though Israel be not gathered, and the Church be so split up by the folly of man, as not even to know where to find herself. "Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis." All things change here, and we with them. But God abides; and nature, which carries the indelible imprint of His hands, abides likewise.

Verse 6. "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife," etc. That may mean either (1) that he must be a married man, having grown-up children, walking in the faith, and of good repute; or (2) that he must not have been married twice; or (3) what is more likely, that in view of the looseness as regards the marriage tie among the Jews (see Deut. 24. 1-4, Mal. 2. 14-16, Matt. 5. 31, 32; 19. 1-12), as also among the other nations, instructions were given of a prudential kind, which, though not of an absolute or essential nature, would be of circumstantial importance. In view of other cases, not wholly different in nature from this, the Apostle, "speaking by permission, not of commandment" gives his judgment, as "good for the present distress" (1 Cor. 7. 6, 26), to which he adds, "and I think also that I

have the Spirit of God" (ver. 40). Again, speaking on the subject of marriage, and the relative value of Deuteronomy 24. 1-4, the Lord affirms the primordial principle connected with it "from the beginning"; and then, stating facts known to all, which were of relative importance, adds, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." And it is fairly permissible to conclude that the Apostle's restrictions, both here and in 1 Timothy 3. 2, were prudential, having regard to the times and circumstances in which he was writing, rather than essential *in se*. However we may interpret the words, it is plain that Timothy could not have been Bishop of Ephesus—he could not have been a bishop or elder at all, for he was still a young man (1 Tim. 4. 12), the addendum to the Epistle in the A.V. notwithstanding; nor is there any ground, other than tradition, for supposing that Titus was Bishop of Crete. It is at best but a matter of inference, and belongs to the time when we can place but little reliance on the judgments handed down to us from then.

Finally, as a fact, elders exist, by the very necessity of the case, to-day as ever; and among them are those capable of guiding, and who do guide well, men "worthy of double honour, labouring also in word and teaching," 1 Timothy 5. 17; and all who have the interests of Christ at heart most thankfully own them, despite the fact that in the present dislocated condition of the church there is, in the wisdom of God, no formal power of appointment. *J.N.D.*

Freshness of affection to the Lord and quickness of understanding in the things of God go together. There is less spring, less apprehension, less clearness when our hearts are not happy. On the other hand, my judgment is clear when my affections are warm. Motives that acted before cease to be motives when my affections are warm. *(J.N.D.)*

One moment's real apprehension of Christ in the glory is sufficient to dim the brightness and glitter of every earthly thing: but the soul must be occupied alone with Christ for this.

Fasten your grips fast upon Christ. I verily esteem Him the best property that I have. Having Him, though my cross were as heavy as ten mountains of iron, when He putteth His sweet shoulder under me, and it, my cross is but a feather. *(Rutherford.)*

Words of Spirit and Life.—No. 1.

(H. J. VINE).

"It is the Spirit which quickens, the flesh profits nothing: the words which I *have spoken* unto you are spirit and are life" (John 6. 63, N.T.).

MULTITUDES followed our Lord Jesus Christ, not because of Himself, the blessed Son of the living God, but because they had seen the miracle of the multiplied loaves and desired to be fed continuously by Him. His wonderful works in their midst were signs, showing the glory of Him who did them, but it was not for Himself but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled that they sought Him.

He knew this, and said to them, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth." There is food to be had which abides unto eternal life. The Father now gives that food,—the Living Bread out of heaven. Those who ate the manna in the wilderness died; but if any one shall have eaten of this Bread he shall *live for ever*. A wonderful proposal—"He shall LIVE FOR EVER!"

Surely such vital words as these, words of spirit and life, would produce a profound impression upon the hearers, and be eagerly welcomed by them. But such is not the case, either then or now. Some may say, in a sort of selfish ignorance, "Lord, ever give to us this Bread"; not understanding what is involved; but when tested, the *natural* mind murmurs at these words, and reasons them away (ver. 42). The Lord announced the fact that His death was a necessity before this eternal life could be received by any,—that though He Himself is the Bread of Life, nevertheless His flesh must be given for the life of *the world*, for this life could not be confined to *the Jews*; but against this the *religious* mind contends; saying in unbelief, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (ver. 52). The unregenerate man whether religious or otherwise will not accept this as the only way of life. He will appropriate the outward benefits

granted by a merciful Creator; or if religious will welcome, it may be, the questionable advantages of carnal religion; but will not appropriate the flesh and blood of the Son of Man in faith, as the only way of life eternal. It is not a question here of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. John gives neither the supper nor baptism. It is entirely a matter of the appropriation of faith, of receiving the truth into our hearts, as made known by our Lord's words of spirit and life.

Those who have learned from God, and have consequently been made to feel their need, knowing that death has passed upon all men, and upon themselves, for they like others have sinned; these appreciate and thankfully appropriate the blessed truth made known in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. They recognize that life (and righteousness along with it), can only be theirs through the death of which these vital words speak. Death entered the world by sin, and life can only be ours through a death which put sin away. Life is not to be obtained through carnal religion, whether it be *called* Judaism, Christianity, or anything else; it can only be ours through the death of the One of whom the true believer delights to sing:—

"Our Lord, our Life, our Rest, our Shield,
Our Rock, our Food, our Light,
Each thought of Thee doth constant yield
Unchanging, fresh delight."

When such as these are tested, though others turn back, they say like Peter in verses 68-69: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast *the words of eternal life*. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." It is a living, loving Person who is before their believing hearts; not a dead religious system. Christ becomes everything to them. The Gospel of John was written that life

might be the portion of those who thus believe on Him, as we read, "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have *life through His name*" (20. 31).

Life through Death.

We are told that if there had been a law able to give life, then righteousness would be on the principle of law (Gal. 3. 21). Life and righteousness necessarily go together. Paul's letter to the saints at Rome shows how righteousness reaches us; John 6., the way in which life is ours. Since there was no law which could quicken dead souls into life, some other way must be found, that life and righteousness might be ours. The upright soul under law finds that when the law speaks in power to him, it condemns him as in the flesh. "The commandment having come," he says, "sin revived, but I died, and the commandment, which was *for life*, was found, as to me, itself to be *unto death*" (Rom. 7. 10, N.T.). Only through the death of One upon whom *sin and death* had no claim could life be ours. By one man *sin* entered into the world *and death* by sin; by another Man, a sinless, holy, obedient Man, *righteousness and life* have been obtained for us through His death. A death, not necessary for Himself personally, but absolutely necessary if we were to have the justification of life, the abundance of God's free favour, and the free gift of righteousness, so that we might eventually reign in life by our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory and power for ever and ever. All this is ours through His death; and even now in the overabounding of divine grace, because of that death, grace reigns through *righteousness* unto *eternal life* in all its fullness; even as previously *sin* had reigned in all its lawlessness unto *death* (Rom. 5. 21).

Before sin came in, "out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; *the tree of life also*"

(Gen. 2. 9). This tree of life in the midst of the garden was not forbidden to man; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was. After man had fallen, lest in that fallen and sinful condition he should "put forth his hand, and take also of *the tree of life*, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden" (Gen. 3. 22-23). The Cherubim and the flaming sword were then placed at the east of the garden to keep *the way of the tree of life* (24). In grace our Lord Jesus Christ came into man's place of condemnation and death, and by the sacrifice of Himself put away the sin which had brought this about and opened for us the way of life. But if in the earliest chapters of the Bible we find man excluded from the tree of life in the midst of a *paradise of innocence*, in the closing chapters we find him redeemed through Christ's precious blood, and in the paradise of God—*the paradise of holiness*, eating of the Tree of Life, in a higher sphere and condition than before; in a realm of life and love and holiness, where sin can never come; in a scene of immortality, incorruptibility and unfading glory.

The death of our blessed Lord has opened up this way of life for us. His flesh has been given that we might have life. His blood has been shed to cleanse us from every sin. Every righteous claim that could be raised has been met; and life for the sinner has been secured. The one who knows his need appropriates by faith this way of life. And there is no other way; as verse 53 plainly states, "Unless YE SHALL HAVE EATEN the flesh of the Son of Man, and DRUNK His blood, ye have no life in yourselves" (N.T.).

There is a moment in the history of the soul when it receives in faith the story of Christ's redeeming love; when for the first time with personal interest it believes on Him, and can say, The Son of God loved ME and gave Himself for ME. Eternal life is consequently the present portion of such a one. For

he that has the Son has life. He does not at once understand all that this means: possession and understanding are not the same. Now if verse 53 refers to that which we have done in *the past* to obtain life, verse 54 speaks of that which we do in *the present*; of that which is continuous, and characteristic of those who have eternal life. "He that EATS My flesh and DRINKS My blood has life eternal." The world is felt to be a wilderness wide by those who have eternal life. The springs of that life are outside of it, for Christ is the fountain of that life for us. But though there is nothing in the world to minister to our new life, yet, whilst in the world, that life which we have is abundantly sustained, in energy and freshness, as we feed upon the death of Him who is apart from it; and we thus prove experimentally the verity of His blessed words of spirit and life, "My flesh is truly food and My blood is truly drink" (ver. 55, N.T.).

The glitter and glamour of the world has no charm for this new life of which we speak; though the believer has sin still in him; and if allowed to act it will lead him worldwards; like Lot, who, when leaving Abraham, pitched his tent towards Sodom. Like him too, the true believer would soon find his soul grieved, when drawn into the world; for it is made up of lust and pride (1 John 2. 16). The new life can find no true joy or peace there. Christendom has largely sunk into the world. It has been said that in Popery the church sought to rule the world, but in Protestantism the world rules the church, and when the Lord comes, it seems evident that even Protestantism will be treated as the world by Him. For He comes as a thief to it: not as a bridegroom (Rev. 3. 3). As a whole, the worldly religious systems will become Babylon; and when John was to see this false woman in all her gorgeous deckings, he was carried into a *wilderness* to behold her (Rev. 17. 3). The true church was seen by him afterwards from a great and high *mountain*

(Rev. 21. 10); far above the mists and delusions of the world.

Those to whom the Lord has given eternal life are not of the world, but our separation from it must not be that of the monk or nun. Nor that of the Pharisees, who claim to be religious and orthodox, and set themselves apart from the general worldly drift, and yet do not enter into the living realities of which we have spoken; for they have not the Unction from Christ, the Holy Spirit. Of all religious professors, these seem to be the most wretched. Our blessed Lord came that we might have life, and have it in overflowing abundance; also that we might enjoy the precious privileges and intimacies of that life. Therefore He said again in verse 56, "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood *dwells* in Me and I in him." Could we have a better dwelling and more exalted company? Could we have greater privilege and intimacy given to us in this world? The divine and heavenly graces of life eternal as we know the blessedness and power of them, will give character to us. It is as we dwell in Him and He in us that love, joy, and peace will mark us; holiness, righteousness, and truth will give colour to us; knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of a spiritual sort, will be ours in richer abundance and energy.

Our *dwelling* is no longer in the old man which corrupts itself, in its state of lawlessness and death; but in the Living One who died to sin once and now lives to God. We not only have life; but in Him we have left the old state and condition; and we are now blessed in the new. We have life: we have also passed out of death into life. There are three things that are true of every believer on the Son. (1) Life eternal is his. (2) The home of that life is also his, for he *dwells in Christ*. (3) The company also, which belongs to that life and home, is likewise his; for *Christ dwells in him*. All this has been secured for us by His death. Blessed be His holy name for ever! It is ours to enjoy in the energy of faith.

Propitiation.

(F. B. HOLB.)

IN view of present-day tendencies the frequent restatement of fundamental truth of the simplest nature is never out of place. It is indeed against such fundamental truth that the most subtle attacks of the devil are directed, for if a destructive blow reaches the foundations the whole building of truth is shaken and weakened.

Nothing is commoner at the present time than statements from professed teachers of Christianity as to the redemption work of Christ which are loosely worded and vague, if not positively erroneous. And the former are generally more mischievous than the latter.

To juggle with the word "atone-ment" is an old device, leading to positive error. It is a simple matter to insert two hyphens and print it "at-one-ment," and this proceeding adopted, nothing is simpler than to evacuate the word thus mangled of all its proper meaning. It is not surprising if the unwary and unlettered are deceived by such dishonest playing with words, for they may not have means to hand whereby the fraud may be discovered. But what shall we think of those who perpetrate it? Are these would-be teachers without understanding also? We would fain think so, for the only alternative is to regard them in the light of those who wilfully corrupt the Word of God.

For what are the facts of the case? They are these: "Atonement" is an exclusively Old Testament word. It appears once in the New Testament of the Authorized Version, viz. in Romans 5. 11. But there it is a manifest mistranslation. The marginal reading "reconciliation" being the correct word. In the Old Testament it frequently occurs, and there, as may be easily verified by the simplest reader, if a good concordance such as "Young's" be at hand, always as the translation of the Hebrew word the simple significance of which is "to cover."

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," was David's exclamation in Psalm 32. 1. Here we have the great Old Testament thought as to God's dealing with sin in forgiving mercy. It first appears in Genesis 3. 21, where after the ineffectual efforts of Adam and Eve to cover their sinful nakedness from God's presence by fig-leaf aprons of their own manufacture, God Himself covered them by coats of *skins*—such coats necessarily involving the death of a victim. The thought so clearly enshrined in this picture, suitable to the infancy of the human race, recurs again and again in Scripture. The meaning of the word "atone-ment" is thus clearly established as the *covering of sin by sacrifice*.

There is thus about the word no thought at all of making two parties one in mind and purpose—men being lifted by Christ and His example to the level of His own high ideals and conceptions of God—which is the thought attempted to be derived from "at-one-ment." The fact is the real and simple meaning of the word is just that which this new spelling was expressly designed to avoid.

But in Old Testament times Christ was as yet unrevealed; His work as yet unaccomplished. It was the age of forecasts, types, and shadows, and such necessarily lack the sharpness of outline which we expect in the substance. The term "atone-ment" therefore is, as one might expect, general and comprehensive rather than detailed and particular. When we come to the New Testament therefore we find that the Old Testament term is dropped and other terms of more special and limited bearing take its place.

One such term is "Propitiation," which stands at the head of this paper.

The word *propitiation* occurs but a few times in the New Testament scriptures, yet as presenting to us the

redemption work of Christ in its bearing Godward, rather than manward, it is of the greatest possible importance. It is the first and most fundamental thought connected with the death of Christ.

The Epistle to the Romans presents us with an orderly unfolding of the Gospel. Its first two and a half chapters are occupied with the assertion and proof of universal sin and corruption. Every kind of man is condemned, all pretension to goodness is demolished, and all the world is brought in as "guilty before God" (chap. 3. 19). From that point the gospel of God, which alone meets this condition, is unfolded, and in this unfolding the first great landmark is found in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, meeting every claim of the righteousness of God. "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness" (ver. 25).

The reader is asked to read carefully the whole passage, verses 21 to 26 inclusive, whence the above quotation is taken. He will find the following:—

1. The Righteousness of God.

i.e. The maintenance by God of all His rights in a right way. This necessarily comes first into prominence inasmuch as sin is lawlessness, *i.e.* the assertion of man's will as against God's rights. It is fitting then that the first word of gospel after the terrible unfolding of man's sin should be "the righteousness of God" (see Rom. 3. 21).

2. The Law of Moses Superseded.

The righteousness of God is manifested "without the law." The law was the careful declaration of God's rights first and foremost, and of those duties which in a secondary way man should render to his fellows. The smallest infringement of God's rights under law brought condemnation and death.

3. "Righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all those who believe."

(*New Trans., J.N.D.*)

Here we have the wonderful fact that in connection with Jesus Christ, and not law, by faith and not works, God has so maintained His rights that He approaches all men favourably in a right way; and as regards all who believe, His righteousness is upon them, that is they are justified or made right in His sight. Under law there was no satisfying of God's righteous claims, no harmonizing of the "light" which had been outraged by sin with the "love" which delights in mercy. In Christ, there is all this. In Him, "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," and God can exercise His rights of mercy in a right way, *i.e.* without jeopardizing the display of any attribute of this character.

But how so? At what particular point in connection with Christ do we find the "righteousness of God" established. The answer is, we find it in

4. Propitiation.

"Christ Jesus . . . set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood." The word used here is one which signifies the place where propitiation was typically accomplished under law, viz. the mercy-seat. Christ Jesus then is set forth as the mercy-seat, and the propitiation is made in His blood.

The type may help us as to this. In keeping with the instructions given in Leviticus 16. it was the duty of the high priest to enter the Holy of holies once a year, "not without blood," as Hebrews 9. 7 says, "which he offered for Himself and for the errors of the people." This blood was sprinkled *on* the mercy-seat and *before* it seven times. In virtue of this blood-shedding, which was the witness of death—the

original sentence on sin—executed in a flawless victim, God was propitiated or rendered favourable by having His righteous claims met.

In the type all was provisional and shadowy, in the mighty sacrifice of Christ all was real and eternal. The one was like a promissory note, valid in view of its redemption at the due date, yet intrinsically valueless, being only a piece of paper and a little ink. The other is like the whole sum in fine gold of perfect intrinsic value wherewith the note is redeemed.

“Once in the end of the world [the consummation of the ages] hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9. 26).

Propitiation is also mentioned in two other New Testament books.

In Hebrews 2. 17 we should read that Christ is “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” Here again we have it emphasized that whilst propitiation is needed on account of “the sins of the people,” it is essentially Godward in its bearing.

It is also alluded to in 1 John 2. 2 and 4. 10. And here a point of great importance stands clearly out, viz. that Christ’s sacrifice viewed as a propitiation covers not only the believer’s sins, but also the whole world.

In connection with this care is needed, for it is very easy here to speak unscripturally. Nowhere are we authorized by Scripture to speak of Christ dying for the sins of everybody in the sense that He was everybody’s substitute. On the other hand, we are nowhere authorized to limit the bearing of His sacrifice viewed as propitiation. In this connection its scope is nothing less than the whole world.

A clear understanding of this simple distinction is the key to the interpretation of scriptures which appear to clash. Such as, for instance:—

“To give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20. 28).

“Who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2. 6).

The former has in view a *substitutionary* work. He died as a substitute for all who believe, hence they *must* go free; righteousness demands it. He did *not* die as a substitute for all, else *all* must go free.

The latter has in view a *propitiatory* work, i.e. the meeting of the divine claims apart from the question of its application to individual cases. The death of Christ being of infinite value meets God’s claims in regard to the question of sin regarded as one whole. It stands good therefore for all, as far as its intention is concerned.

The two points of view are brought together in the words already quoted from Romans 3. Righteousness is truly “upon all them that believe”—that is substitution in effect; it is just as much “towards all” in intention and offer, and this is connected with propitiation.

No illustration “runs on all fours,” but there is a distinct analogy traceable in the schemes of insurance which have become so common in connection with publications such as diaries. On obtaining one at the new year the purchaser finds that by filling up a small coupon enclosed and remitting it to the office of the insurance company, together with a few stamps to cover cost of registration and reply, he is entitled to free insurance benefit for accidents, etc. The benefits offered do not appeal to some and they neglect it, others register and qualify for them if an accident befalls them.

Behind the thousands of small registration transactions, however, lies the one transaction between the publishers of the diaries and the insurance company. A cheque running into thousands of pounds has been paid by way of premium. It is not paid by way of

covering any individual claim, for at the moment no one knows what claims, if any, there will be; though of course in effect it *does* cover *every* individual claim which can be sustained under the terms of the policy. It is paid rather by way of satisfying the claims of the company as a whole in regard to the liabilities they assume. Being thus satisfied they are favourable—*propitiated* if you will—towards all who purchase the diaries and therefore willing to consider them as definitely insured if registered.

Let the *many* small registration transactions represent that which takes place in conversion. Then it is that we each for ourselves, one by one, register under God's great salvation scheme, and discover that the price paid in Christ's redemption work suffices for us, so that we may look back and regard Him as our Substitute. Then it is that we gladly sing:—

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
I am my Lord's and He is mine."

We sing rightly, for the transaction between the soul and God at conversion is indeed *great*.

Infinitely greater, however, is that other transaction. ONE in contrast to many. The *one* paying of the great premium price which the claims of God's righteousness and outraged holiness demanded—the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. Its primary *object* was, we repeat, the satisfying of divine claims, its *bearing* Godward; though in its ultimate *effect* the need of the repentant sinner is met.

At the same time, be it clearly understood, *both* propitiation and substitution were accomplished in the one sacrifice of the cross. It was there that He stood as the "ransom for all." There too that Jehovah "laid on Him the iniquity of *us all*"—*i.e.* of all repentant believers.

The foregoing scriptural distinctions are of great importance to those who preach the gospel. They should be carefully observed by those who would present the divine message without obscurity.

The great theme of the preacher going forth as a herald into a world of sinners is *propitiation*. He preaches Christ's work in that aspect, showing that thereby a righteous way has been made by which judgment against sin is deferred whilst forgiveness and salvation are made available for all, and are being preached amongst all nations. He speaks also of repentance and faith, and announces that "all who believe are justified from all things," thus leading up to *substitution*. This latter truth is, however, more particularly that which is needed by the awakened and anxious sinner to lead him into peace with God.

In so saying we do but follow the order divinely worked out in Scripture. Propitiation is found in Romans 3. 25. Substitution in chapter 4. 25. Peace with God in chapter 5. 1.

One thing more. Behind the truth of propitiation lies the fundamental fact of the anger of God against sin, which expresses itself in penal retribution. In this behold the real reason why every teacher of "modern" tendencies avoids the subject even if he does not attempt to flatly deny or explain it away. And yet how oft reiterated in Scripture! Terrible indeed, yet staring us in the face upon almost every page of our Bibles. God "*hates* wickedness," He is "*angry* with the wicked every day" and ultimately "the wicked shall be cast into hell"—whether men believe it or not.

Let us boldly maintain this great truth of Scripture and suffer no strange or misty statements to loosen our hold upon it. Depend upon it, it is fundamental to the last degree.

“Would that We had listened Earlier.”

(A. J. POLLOCK).

“**B**EFORE I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word,” was David’s acknowledgment in that matchless Psalm 119, verse 67.

Theories, criticisms, ideas, will do very well for fair-weather days when the sun is shining and the birds are singing and the zephyr breezes are fanning the cheek. But let the storm and darkness come, let peril cross our path, and we find that we need a refuge, a haven, aye, above all a Friend, who will stick closer than a brother, who can be described as “the Rock that is higher than I.”

Thus it is in these days of storm and stress multitudes are turning to the Bible with a fresh interest.

Especially is this the case with those who have allowed themselves to be turned aside into false beliefs that the Scriptures are not fully inspired, that many of its chief truths must be taken seriously.

A case in point is interesting. A well-known minister, who had tampered with “Higher Criticism,” and who ranked himself as “among the number of the uncertain,” writes the following most significant sentences:

“We have re-discovered the value of the Psalms and the Prophets: they bear to us to-day a startling message from God. In the dim light of our study they have meant little to us; but in the terrible light of life, reddened with human blood to-day, we have learned their Divine meaning. Would that we had listened earlier!”

How full of pathos is this writer’s closing sentence, “*Would that we had listened earlier.*” Better late than never, though even at that it is sad indeed.

How inexpressibly sad will it be, if it should become *never*, and the sad

eternal wail will be, “Would that we had listened.” The blessing missed for ever!

Thank God, this writer had listened at last, but oh! the sadness of the confession, “*Would that we had listened EARLIER.*” How much blessing and comfort he had missed by not doing so.

There is no voice of absolute truth outside the Word of God. Every human opinion is biased more or less. Pilate might well ask, “What is truth?” It stood incarnate before him in the person of Jesus, and—*nowhere else*. All who are influenced by Him are influenced by the truth; and the more they are influenced by Him the more are they influenced by the truth. But He was absolute truth.

And His word is absolute truth. Weakness in belief of one part of the truth involves weakness in belief of all. Though composed of sixty-six books written by almost as many writers extending over many centuries, it is one component whole. It is like an arch. Take out one stone and the whole is weakened.

To be weak in a belief of the Psalms and Prophets is to be weak in a belief of Christ Himself, for they spake of Him. Read the matchless Psalm 22. “In the dim light of the study” one would have thought that the divine page would have shone with startling light, as showing the mind of the Spirit, the mind of Christ, filled with the cross even to its details, a millennium before it occurred—the cross evidently

“... the centre of two eternities
Which look backward and forward with
rapt adoring eyes.”

Or take those magnificent verses, Isaiah 9, 6, 7—just two out of the whole of the prophets: “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful,

Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

What a magnificent sweep! How it starts in a fathomless searchless past eternity, brings in the wonderful incarnation of the Son of God, the perfection of His work, and looks forward to the time when this sobbing, trembling earth, purged by His judgments, and prepared by deep repentance, shall be

soothed to peace and rest by His smile, who shall be King of kings and Lord of lords.

The greatest comfort is to know Him and that He cares with an infinite tenderness for His people, that He loves them with a love the spring of which lay in Himself and not in us.

It is as we know Him that all Scripture opens out to our wondering gaze.

May we listen, earnestly, reverently, believing, and find in the Word of God the compass of all true knowledge and truth, and avoid as far as possible by God's help the sad acknowledgment, "Would that we had believed earlier."

Jesus Shall Reign (Ps. 72. 8).

(J. W. McC.).

HE shall dominion have
From sea to storm-swept sea,
Till every wild and wandering wave
Shall own His sovereignty.

He shall be all in all,
Until, with meed of praise,
The kings before His footstool fall,
And peoples love His ways.

And till, with one glad theme
From shore to answering shore,
The happy hearts that wait for Him
Shall laud Him evermore.

He shall transform this scene
By Satan now so marred,
Till reigns alone the Nazarene
As Universal Lord.

And earth and sky and sea,
And all that therein is,
To Him shall bow the adoring knee,
And every heart be His.

Then to these wearied eyes
That sought it long with tears,
That morning without clouds shall rise
To shine through endless years.

And this wide wilderness—
This howling waste and bare,
This life-bestowing light shall bless
And bloom with roses rare.

And on the new-mown grass,
And pastures parched and brown,
Like summer showers that softly pass
Messiah shall come down.

Break forth, my soul, and sing,
For, in that glorious day,
Thine eyes shall see the Saviour-King—
And then shall share His sway.

And with this scene of strife
Thy time no more employed,
The fulness of eternal love
Shall be at last enjoyed.

Oh, fair surprising thought,
Jesus as Lord shall reign;
Our God's own purpose shall be wrought,
And earth shall smile again.

My soul, dwell on this theme
Till all *thy* prayers are o'er;
And thy sole joy be Christ supreme,
And Christ for evermore.

“All Things New.”

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John in Patmos. No. XX.

IN the thirteenth century Cardinal Hugo divided the Bible into chapters, but in doing so he sometimes separated an important subject. Properly the first eight verses of Revelation 21. belong to chapter 20., and form the conclusion of the Revelation as to the eternal state. That which follows carries us back to the Millennium. In chapter 20. time closes, and eternity begins for the wicked dead. Peter predicts the melting of the elements which now compose earth and the heaven surrounding it, and describes the noise which accompanies their removal (2 Peter 3.). Chapter 21. opens with the eternity of the righteous and unfolds a blessed scene, never before revealed, of the portion which awaits the redeemed.

God had rested after creation, but His sabbath was disturbed by sin. God will rest in His love to Israel during the days of the Millennium kingdom. He ever rested complacently in His beloved Son, but here for the first time He will rest after the full accomplishment of all His counsels and purposes. The Sabbath was rest from labour. The Millennium is rest for a groaning creation. Eternity is God's rest. Into that rest we shall enter. There will be no evil to repress, no enemy to subdue, no disturbing element to control. Righteousness will reign in the Millennium, but it will *dwell* in eternity. Perfection of existence will then be reached, all according to God, and as God would have it to be. Christ having brought all into subjection, before giving up the Kingdom, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15.), as is here seen.

A new heaven and a new earth are formed by His gracious hand perfectly suited to the conditions of life and being which will then exist. Then as now there will be bodies celestial and terrestrial. The heavenly saints, raised and changed, will occupy the heavens, whilst the saved

of the millennial earth will find a perfect abode below. “There is no more sea.” That restless mass—so typical of wicked men—which now separates one land from another, will cease to exist; whilst the elements, purified by fire, will be reformed into a sinless globe. What its size or configuration will be we are not told; but if this earth which will pass away evoked the shouts of angelic hosts, and caused the morning stars to sing together at its foundation, we can readily conceive that the advent of the new heavens and earth into the universe will call forth their greater admiration, at the glory which excelleth.

If nothing is said as to its form, or component parts, much is said as to that which makes it morally and physically a marked contrast to the globe. Death will have no place there. It will never soil the new earth with its corruption, or break sorrowing hearts any more. Pain and sorrow, crying and tears will be things of the past, gone, never to return; every tear graciously wiped away by the tender hand of an ever compassionate God. What a cheer in the midst of suffering here to anticipate that day of eternal happiness! Conceive what it will be to have bodies absolutely free from pain, and the many and varied sorrows sin has brought in. No more sea, no more sorrow, no more death, no more pain, no more crying! How the heart longs for that eternal day to dawn!

More than this. God in all the fulness of His love, and in accord with His thoughts before worlds existed, will find His happiness in dwelling with His redeemed. Already we Christians are a new creation, but we are still linked with the old by bodies of suffering. The first man was created before he had life, we have life before we get our glorified bodies. In these new heavens we shall be in our native element. We also

learn from this brief but graphic description of the new heavens and new earth that there is a tabernacle *in which* God dwells, men *among whom* He dwells; two distinct companies.

God has had four dwelling-places. The tabernacle in the wilderness, the Temple in the Land, both of which were superseded by Christ becoming both tabernacle and temple in whom the fulness of God dwelt (see John 1. 14; 2. 19). After men had sinned all three away, God formed a new dwelling-place on the day of Pentecost—the church which will abide for ever—composed of believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Into this fair and beautiful new creation the church descends from God out of heaven, henceforth as the New Jerusalem to be the new centre of the Universe, just as Israel had been of this world.

In all the beauty Christ has put upon her she comes down, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband, although it is a thousand years since the marriage.

During the King's reign she shared His earthly glories, and after this she is still fair and beautiful as on her nuptial morn, the eternal companion of the Bridegroom—not confined to one place in the universe—but being the fulness of Him who fills all things. Moving as He moves, she is viewed as a tabernacle—not a temple—but not now in wilderness scenes or circumstances but in company with Christ, as joint-heirs through the glorious inheritance in all its vast extent. Her proper sphere will be the new heavens, whilst the millennial saints will occupy the new earth. She is heavenly in her origin and in her dwelling-place, it is from God *out of heaven* she descends. The Father's house—not the air—is her home. At the beginning of the Millennium she leaves the prepared place where she has dwelt in the interval between being caught up at Christ's

coming and returning with Him to reign. Clearly she had gone back there after the days of the kingdom, and now returns to take up her new place in that scene of peace, rest, joy, light, and love when all things are made new.

Now we get a word added for us to-day. Who is to share in these things? *The Overcomer*. Who is an overcomer? It is a man who trusts God in the face of an hostile world, and believes the testimony of God to His Son. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5. 4, 5). Faith puts us into the relationship of sons. "I will be his God and he shall be My son."

Who will forfeit these things? The man in whom is no faith. "The fearful and unbelieving." Faith from Abel downwards ever marked the people of God, unbelief from Cain the dupes of Satan. The awful catalogue of sins that follows, in verse 8, is the outcome of the unrenewed man whose portion is the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Is it God's wish that any should be thus punished? The eternal future with its torment side is revealed at the end of chapter 20. The eternal scene with its blessedness in chapter 21. Listen to the last message from the God of all grace. Up to the end of the church history God had said, "Whosoever will *let him take* of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17). Here in view of that which abides eternally in holiness and happiness, the heart of the blessed God pours itself out in one last loving gracious message, "*I will give* unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." "I WILL GIVE." "LET HIM TAKE."

Ponder these words from the Giver of that living, giving fountain, for on your answer to them depends the weal or woe of your eternal future.

Since writing the above paper our dear friend and helper has answered the home-call, and is now absent from the body, and present with the Lord, whose glories in this last series of papers, as in all his ministry, he has delighted to unfold.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Lord's Coming for and with His Saints.

S.—It is most important, if we are to understand the sure word of prophecy, to see that the Lord is coming first *for* His saints and then *with* them. He is coming *with* them, or rather they are coming *with* Him (Rev. 19. 11-14), but before this can be they must first be with Him in the glory.

The two are brought together in 1 Thessalonians 4. In verse 14 we learn that when He comes to the earth God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus; then we are told in verse 15-17 how they, and those also who are alive and remain at the moment there spoken of, will be with Him first in the glory in order to come with Him from that glory. Of His coming *for* His saints not many passages in the

Word speak, but that which is said is most precious. John 14. 1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4. 15-17 and Philippians 3. 20, 21, are the Scriptures that speak definitely of it, while 2 Thessalonians 2. 1, Revelation 3. 10, 11, and 22. 16, 17, 20, and some others make reference to it. But the Old and New Testaments abound with prophecies as to His coming to reign on the earth, when His saints shall come with Him. His coming *for* His saints might be spoken of as a secret to inspire and cheer their hearts during their absence from Him. His coming to the earth to take up His rights in it is an important part of God's testimony to men now. Between the two will be the great tribulation, and the events recorded in Matthew 24. and Revelation, chapters 4. to 19.

God's Work subsequent to the Catching Up of the Church.

Norwich.—The nation of Israel, *i.e.* all amongst them whose hearts turn to the Lord, and these will not be few, will be saved after the church has been caught up to be for ever with the Lord according to 1 Thessalonians 4. Romans 11. is a helpful chapter as to this subject. From amongst these the Lord will send heralds to the nations, *i.e.* the heathen, to preach "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24. 14), which is identical, we believe, with "the everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14. 6, 7). The purpose of this preaching is to gather the nations into the Lord's earthly kingdom, and the result of it will be seen when He sits upon His throne in His kingdom, as He has told us in Matthew 25. 31-46. The sheep on the right hand are those nations that receive the heralds, whom the Lord calls "My brethren," and their message; they will enter into the widespread blessings of His king-

dom. The goats on the left hand are those nations that persecuted these heralds and refused to believe their words. None will be neutral then, all will be ranged on one side or the other.

This gospel will have no reference to any one who has heard and refused the gospel in this present time. The doom of all such is clearly writ in the Word, "*Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2. 10-12). That passage can only apply to those who have had the opportunity of receiving the truth, but it excludes none that have refused it from the judgment of which it speaks.

The "Well" and the "Rain."

(T. OLIVER,
Galashiels).

"Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools." (Ps. 84. 6).

"THE valley of Baca" is the valley of tears or of weeping. To some Christians it may only be a shallow depression in an even plain of easy circumstances. To others it may prove to be a deep dark ravine in a continuous succession of untoward circumstances. Even as different characters of wind must blow on different gardens to cause the spices to flow out (Song of Sol. 4. 16), so differences in depth and character of the valley are necessary that God's work may be rendered effectual in our souls.

To one, the valley of Baca may be the removal by death of him or her who has become the idol of the heart; to another, it may be the rupture of bosom friendship; to a third, it may mean the loss of health; to a fourth, it may involve the loss of the means of subsistence; to a fifth, it may be merely the thwarting of the will. The last-mentioned may seem to some a very shallow valley in the plain of human experience. But these little realize the thralldom of the human will, and what a very painful process is involved in the breaking of it. It is, however, in the painful rather than in the pleasing paths of life that we get refreshment from God. When a man or a woman has come to the end of self, God has found His opportunity to bless that person.

Hagar got no sustenance from God until, weary and footsore, with an empty water-bottle, she had cast her child under a shrub in the desert and retired that she might not witness his death, and that she, too, might die. She had not only come to the end of her efforts, but to the end of herself as well. God then opened her eyes and she saw a well of water in her "valley of Baca" (Gen. 21. 14-19). The well had been there, but she had not had the perception with which to see it. How often have we in time of trial allowed nature

to obscure our spiritual vision and we have failed to find a well in the valley!

Again, Samson in the moment of victory over the Philistines, exulting in the glory and strength of his own arm, just as he had made an end of boasting, suddenly found himself precipitated into the valley of Baca (Judges 15. 14-19). He became sore athirst, nigh to the point of death, but he turned to God in his extremity and God opened his eyes to see a "well" of water in the dried jawbone which he had cast away in the moment of his triumph. As a consequence, Samson's spirit revived in contact with God's resources.

The valley of Baca is then not merely a valley of sorrow. It is also a valley in which we are brought into contact with God in order to learn His resources when our own have failed, and so a valley of blessing and very great joy. The Psalmist in the eighty-fourth Psalm ascribes blessedness to the man *whose strength was in the Lord*, and that is the secret that makes all the difference to us in passing through the valley of Baca.

"I take this pain, Lord Jesus,
From Thine own hand.

'Tis Thy dear hand, O Saviour,
That presseth sore,
The hand that bears the nail-prints
For evermore."

The unexercised soul may pass through the salt vale of tears but finds no well there: the one whose heart delights in the Lord and is confident in the precious thought that He does everything right finds not only a well in the valley, hidden from the careless glance, but the blessing of God to his soul is such that there is rain filling the pools or surface depressions too. The well is fed from secret springs, but the rain betokens blessing so much in evidence that even the sceptical mind cannot gainsay it.

"Who passing through the valley of

Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools" (Ps. 84. 6).

The Psalmist concludes this Psalm with the exclamation, "O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in Thee." He goes from strength to strength and has the cheering prospect as some one has said that "there will be no dark valley when the Lord Jesus comes." To the natural mind God's

movements are shrouded in mystery, but there is a key which unlocks the whole mystery. Now for a moment there is the gloom of the dark valley. But following on the sorrows which inspire weeping will yet come the coronation which crowns with rejoicing.

Side by side the gladness and the sorrow,
Deepest shadow and eternal sun,
Two lives live we till the glorious morrow,
When the life is one.

Changing.

(H. J. VINE).

THE usual indiscriminate condemnation of *change* is a great mistake. Truly, some change for the worse; but there is change of the right and necessary sort, which is a mark of the true believer.

From the cold dark winter, the weather changes to the bright, fresh spring and warm summer: from the decaying seed in the earth, the shoot springs up, changing to bud and beautiful blossom: from that deep mine, a rough stone is brought up; in the hand of man, it changes until its sparkle and brilliance proclaim it to be a precious diamond. Is the believer to know no change? Brought out of darkness into light, out of death into life; quarried from sin and Satan's power, and blessed in Christ Jesus through His blood: is he not also to be

changed from glory to glory by the Spirit he has received?

Why should self be clung to so tenaciously? Why this talk, I am just *myself* and can be *no different*? I do not believe in changing! Is *self* to be so much admired? Are there not to be *great* changes with us? Yes, verily! and such changes will take place rapidly, as we admire the moral glory of our Lord Jesus Christ instead of self; as in liberty of thought we look on "the glory of the Lord," we shall be changed greatly, "transformed (metamorphosed) according to the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3. 18, N.T.). There is no veil now to cover the glory. There is no need of "a glass," or a mirror. The glory shines in the face of Jesus. He alone knows no change. He is perfect. He is always the same. Blessed be His Name.

The Love of Christ Begets New Tastes.

"I MET a man last week, and I will tell you his story. He was once a great lover of horses; he just lived for horses. When he became a Christian, his passion left him, and he became a thorough-paced evangelist. A lady friend said to him, 'Captain —, I hear you have become a Christian, and have given up your horses, but,' she said, 'if So-and-so asked you to a hunt next week, you would like to go; now, wouldn't you?' He said, 'Lady Mary, when I was a boy I was very fond of marbles; but when I became fond of

horses, I lost all taste for marbles. Now, you go and turn that over.' This lady afterwards became converted, and when he heard about it, he said, 'Lady Mary, I hear you have become a Christian, and have given up dancing; now, if So-and-so was to give a nice little dance, you would like to go, wouldn't you?' She looked at him quite seriously, and said, 'Captain —, when I was a little girl, I was very fond of dolls; but when I became fond of dancing, I lost all taste for dolls. Now go and turn that over.' " (Selected).

Christianity is not one big "Don't."

(J. T. MAWSON).

A GARDEN would not be a thing of beauty if the owner of it spent all his time and labour in keeping down the weeds. Weeds must be kept down if flowers are to flourish, and he is a poor gardener and a disgrace to his profession who neglects this side of his work; but that is only incidental, his main business is the cultivation of flowers.

She is an unwise mother upon whose lips are constantly the words "Don't," and "You must not." "Mary, you must not do that, and go and see what Harry is doing and tell him not to" is not the most successful way of training children. They certainly need correcting, and repressive measures are sometimes called for, but to occupy their minds and hands with good things is the only way to make them thoughtful, kind and useful.

Christianity is not a system inaugurated for the suppression of the noxious weeds of the flesh, it is not one big and perpetual "DON'T," though many seem to have acquired that idea of it. The law was that, but its repressive measures produced neither flowers nor fruits for God's delight; indeed, they only made the ill weeds grow stronger, and demonstrated beyond all question what the flesh-plant in the soil to which it was indigenous was capable of producing. It is not upon that principle that Christians can "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

The moral glory of Christianity does not lie in the suppression of evil, but in *the expression of a new life*. We need to be clear upon this. Christianity—we speak of that which is vital and real, and not of a dead, false profession—is not a new set of ideals calculated to uplift the old flesh-life, or a system of ethics to correct the evil tendencies of it, or the introduction of new forces for its reformation, but a new life imparted to those who believe on the Son of God by the Holy Ghost, who is Himself the power of it.

Those solemn words "Ye must be born again" (John 3.) tolled the knell of any hope of fruit from the old life of the flesh—which is not life towards God but death, for its first principle is to act for its own pleasure regardless of God's will. This flesh has been proved to be a vicious plant in its very nature. To cultivate it is useless, for cultivation will not make the thistle produce figs, nor can it change the flesh into spirit. But those same solemn words ring joyfully with the promise of a new life in a new kingdom—a new life produced by the power of the Holy Ghost, introducing the one who is the subject of His operation into the Kingdom of God—a kingdom not of Egyptian darkness and bondage, but of grace and liberty and love, a kingdom that is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And against such things there is no law.

The wonderful Bedford tinker had learnt more than the schools could teach him when he made his pilgrim fly from the City of Destruction, crying, "Life! life! eternal life." He was divinely taught, for it is life that every awakened soul cries out for, and to be delivered "from the body of this death." Nothing less than this will do for those who feel the burden and the bondage of the old life of disobedience which lies under the condemnation of death, and nothing less than this is the will of God for men. And this life God gives with the liberty that belongs to it. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The old flesh-life expressed itself chiefly in its opposition to the will of God and in all those evil things that the Christian hates, and it needed the law with its pains and penalties to keep it within bounds. It needed the big and perpetual "Don't." But the new life is entirely different; God is its object as well as its source, and as it draws from its source and delights in its object by the Holy Ghost it needs no

external laws to direct it into right channels or to prevent it from running into wrong ones. It fulfils the will of God, but not by constraint and in outward form only, but from the heart, willingly and with joy, for its very nature is to delight in what is of God. Love and righteousness are the two ways in which it finds expression. But is there not the new Commandment "Love one another"? Yes, and the dinner bell is a command to the healthy hungry school boy, but it is one that he delights to obey. So this new Commandment is not grievous to the child of God who is in a healthy spiritual state.

There is a spontaneity, force, and exuberance about this new life which is irresistible when the soul is in the freshness and power of the Spirit. Two great passages from the words of the Lord describe it. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4. 14). And, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7. 37-9).

Who shall tell the fulness and power of the life these words describe? None but He who spoke the words and the Holy Ghost who can lead us into the blessedness of it. But while we wonder at these proposals, surpassing in their greatness all bounds of human thoughts and hopes, let us not say in unbelief that they are impossible. The Lord Himself spoke the words, and He did not exaggerate for the sake of a momentary enthusiasm, or in His zeal overstate the truth; these are failings that belong to mortal flesh, but He is the eternal Word and His words are words of truth, as He Himself is the Truth, they are words of spirit and life. We

may accept them as they stand and expect the fulfilment of them to the last letter.

We dwell too much upon our experience, or lack of experience, of what Christianity is; or we complain that we do not see this life in its abundance in others, and in dwelling on the failure we sink into a kind of living that is less than God's thought for us, and we imagine that the best we can do is to labour at the suppression of the works of the flesh, and this is the sure way to prove the strength and persistence of it, and thus we are often depressed and weary in the way, instead of ever rejoicing in the Lord in the force and flow of the divine life by the Holy Ghost.

Of course the utter corruption of the flesh must be learnt, we must come to the conclusion, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing." And having learnt that, perhaps by a painful experience, we must also believe that "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." But do we learn this great lesson, and did God do this great thing merely to make an end of the hateful flesh? Surely not, but that this new life of blessed liberty might possess us entirely—that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus might set us free from the law of sin and death, that we might joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ and have our fruit unto holiness.

There are those who speak much of surrender, and of the sacrifices that it is necessary that Christians should make in order to be faithful to the Lord, and they do it in that tone of voice and expression of countenance that leaves the impression on the hearers that the Lord's yoke must be very hard and His burden very heavy, and that the path of obedience to God must be one to be trodden with sighs and tears. We also deprecate levity and frivolity, which is doubly sinful in these serious days, in which, more than ever, the Christian ought to be vigilant, sober, prayerful;

but these things are not inconsistent with joy in the Lord and a continual triumph in Him, and to put surrender and sacrifice in the forefront and to make everything of that is to throw into the background God and His unspeakable gift, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and what that grace led Him to do for our sakes. Mark well that the living water, the new life in the power of the Holy Spirit, which springs up in glad and holy worship to the Father and flows out in fulness of blessing to men, is not given in return for any surrender on our part or effort that we can make or price that we can pay. "I shall give," said the Lord, and "if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

It is true that we are exhorted to yield ourselves unto God, as those alive from the dead, and our members instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6. 13). This is the natural result of having received from Him. But before we are so exhorted God is made known to us in the gospel—"God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). Is it a hard thing to yield ourselves to the One whose love to us is so great, and whose will is our everlasting blessing? Surely it is the only natural and the most delightful thing that we could do. And it is *as those alive from the dead* that this exhortation comes to us. The old life of sin brought us under the condemnation of death; now by the grace of God we are alive in Christ, it is only right that it should be yielded to Him whose gift to us this new life is.

Having yielded ourselves unto God, we have our fruit unto holiness, we "are God's husbandry" (1 Cor. 3.), God's garden, and as God's garden we are not to lie as a piece of useless soil but to bring forth the flowers and fruit of the new life. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; *against such things there is no law*. No continual "Don't" is

needed here. As a garden puts on its most beautiful garb when refreshed by the gentle rain from heaven and bathed in the beautiful sunshine, so we, under the influence of the love of Christ and refreshed and strengthened by the Spirit, are to "put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel [complaint] against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him" (Col. 3. 12-17).

These are heavenly flowers and fruit, exotics in this barren world, to flourish and shed their fragrance in spite of every adverse element, they are the life of Jesus reproduced in us below, and how beautiful and precious they must be to God! To these things let us give our thoughts, and the noxious weeds of the flesh will trouble us less.

Space and time fail us to speak of what we are as children of God, called to be imitators of Him and to show forth His praises. (We are not placed by Him under the repressive measures of some legal system that would fill us with dread of Him, but we are given the happy liberty of that life which belongs to the relationship into which His grace has brought us. And in this life we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, being zealous of good works, filled with joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another (Rom. 15. 13, 14).

The Father's House.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

IN lowly grace, tender love, and compassionate goodness Jesus moved among men. His delight was to go about doing good, relieving every kind of distress, and showing kindness to the unthankful and the evil. He welcomed children, cared for the bereaved, wept, sorrowed, and suffered. He was ever the meek and lowly One, His life a sweet savour of perfect obedience, delighting and glorifying the Father in every word and deed. Having finished the work the Father gave Him to do, He was "received up in glory." Luke's Gospel closes with this same Jesus, whilst in the act of blessing His disciples, being parted from them and carried up into heaven. Then, we are told, they returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*.

Was this joy of the pure unselfish character the Lord referred to when He said, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father"? (John 14. 28). We know not; but we may well ask ourselves, do *we* rejoice that Jesus is with the Father?

For three and thirty years He had been here on earth in humiliation, and now He was going back whence He came, but going back to the Father as Man, having taken part in flesh and blood. The Son of God became the Son of Man, but as such He was alone; that holy thing which was born of the virgin was distinct from all others in this world. He had, however, come in order that others might share with Him the joys of the Father's house; such was the purpose of His Father's love.

On the cross He bore the judgment of sinful flesh, and in resurrection became the Head of a new race; having finished the work the Father gave Him to do He became in resurrection the sheaf of firstfruits, the "First-born among many brethren," and was received up into glory. The highest dignities awaited Him there and He

sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: "Honour and majesty were laid upon Him."

All this, and much more, we can say He is worthy of, but there is something more than a throne and a crown, "fulness of joy" belongs to the presence of the One to whom Jesus went as a blessed Man; Psalm 21. 6 speaks of His being made *exceeding glad* with the countenance of Him whom Jesus the Messiah knew as His Father.

Affections, we may surely say, were more to the Lord than distinctions; to be with the Father was His supreme joy as Man. How shall we speak of the Father's delight in receiving back in glory His well-beloved Son, the holy joy of that moment when the Son re-entered as Man the home which He had with the Father before the world was?

It is surely good for us to dwell more fully on the matchless delights of the Father's house; acquaint ourselves with its joys in order to take in what it was for the Son to be back with the Father and all that awaited Him there. But if He has returned there, it is not His purpose to be in that home alone.

Did He not say to His disciples ere He left them, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that WHERE I AM, there ye may be also?" It is that same lowly Jesus who trod this earth, but now in altered circumstances, who says, "I Jesus . . . I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

In response "the Spirit and the BRIDE say, COME." Why the bride? Is it not that she belongs to heavenly associations, and knows the heavenly character of the Morning Star? Before Christ shines forth as the Sun in all the splendour of His kingdom, He is known to the Church as the bright and Morning Star, and as such He is the attraction and hope of the Bride.

He will meet all the redeemed in the air and conduct them into a circle of joy ineffable; His desire expressed in John 17. 24 will have its fulfilment; they will be with Him WHERE HE IS, behold the glory He had with the Father before the world was; He who was daily the delight of the Father's heart in the past eternity will introduce the many sons into the home circle.

If love to Him is shown by our rejoicing that He is back with the Father, His love to us is shown by taking us to the Father and introducing the many sons to share the joys of that home.

We rejoice with all our hearts that as the Root and Offspring of David He will fill this world with blessing. We delight to know that at the NAME OF

JESUS every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him as Lord to God the Father's glory, but there is something inexpressibly sweet in the thought that we shall behold a glory the world will never see, we shall share a home of divine affection, be near to the Son and the Father, be together with Christ for ever in glory.

“ . . . With unwearied gaze
Our eyes on Him we'll rest,
And satisfy with endless praise
A heart supremely blest,”

and then come forth with that same Jesus to share with Him His royal rights and kingdom glories in the world to come, but we shall then be in the conscious enjoyment of sonship in all its fulness, ever before the Father's face in love.

“ Men ought always to pray.”

“ I will . . . that men pray everywhere.”

“ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace ” (Hebrews 4. 16).

Our Lord is more ready to hear than we are to pray. The door of His audience chamber is shut neither by day nor by night. We may find our way to the very throne where He sits with hands outstretched in welcome to all who feel their need of His mercy. We can never take Him by surprise, for He is always expecting us to come and exercise our right of appeal to Him.

We can never fail to interest Him in our case, for there is nothing that concerns us that does not concern Him. Our lives may have become a tangle and our way closed up, but He is more than equal to our need, for His power, wisdom, and skill are as great as His compassion which, in turn, is deeper than our deepest need, and higher than our best desires. (*Adapted.*)

“ When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day

by day our daily bread ” (Luke 11. 2, 3).

How often we put ourselves and our interests first in our prayers. It was not thus that the Lord taught His disciples. He taught them to put God first. To pray that His name might be hallowed, and then to stretch out in their desires to the utmost bounds of the earth, to plead that every evil imagination might be overthrown and every evil work might be judged, and every will might be subdued to God's will, and that the whole earth might be filled with the glory of God. Then, when the heart has reached up to the sacred glory of God's name and broadened out to include every habitation of man, we may ask for our daily needs. And then we shall not ask selfishly but confidently, joyfully, adoringly, with a sense in our souls of the greatness of our Father's name and of the blessedness of His will, subject to which we ourselves have determined to live, for otherwise our prayer that that will might be done on earth would be glaring hypocrisy. (*J.T.M.*)

The Epistle to Titus.

(E. Cross).

Chapter 1.

Verse 7.

THE character of the bishop, or elder, as described here, and in 1 Timothy 3., is one of very high excellence, and naturally so, seeing that he is God's steward to care for His concerns in His house, to guide, order, and direct in a manner suitable in all practical respects to His holy name. The word "bishop" is a corruption of "episcopus," which means overseer, or inspector; and the terms presbyter, or elder, and overseer, or bishop, are used indifferently of the same person; the former having reference to his age, gravity, experience, and the like, the latter to his duties (cf. Acts 20. 17-28). As has been already remarked, the qualities set forth here, and in 1 Timothy 3., are but an expansion of what we find in Exodus 18. 21, and the prayerful consideration of them cannot fail to be of direct profit, even for those who are not called to fill this responsible office; and the fact alone that the Apostle has seen fit, under divine inspiration, to record them separately in two of his epistles, justifies us in giving them a minute consideration in detail.

The bishop is "God's steward." That is what he is characteristically. How many bishops there are is not in question, be they one or more. It does not mean that there is one, and only one, in a locality. The word is anarthrous, i.e. it has no article, and is not definite, but characteristic. In fact there were, as a rule, more than one bishop in a locality, and necessarily so. Titus was to establish them "in each city." Hear what one of themselves says on the subject: "The deduction of Bishop Taylor 'one in one city, many in many' is certainly precarious" (Bishop Ellicott *in loco*).

Accordingly it may be remarked, in passing, that the comparatively modern idea of a bishop over a diocese is without

warrant in Scripture. It is, in a word, unscriptural, the product of the corruption of the church, when she had already departed from the directions of the Apostle, and from the idea connected with the word, either in its natural or scriptural usage. From ecclesiastical history we learn that "already in the second century, one bishop presided over each church: in the third century the bishops, instead of appearing at the ecclesiastical councils as representatives of their churches, claimed authority from Christ to bind and control the churches. This again was followed by authority given to one of the confederated bishops over the others, as archbishop; and from this originated the prerogatives of metropolitans. Later on certain chief men were placed over the church in different parts of the world, in order to preserve the coherence of the whole body; whence came Patriarchs, and ultimately a Prince of Patriarchs, the Roman Pontiff, the Pope." And all this, with the evils attending it, the result of disregarding alike common sense and the direct teaching of Scripture.

Character and qualities of the overseer.

The overseer must be,

(1) "Irreproachable," ἀνεγκλητος. Twice over the Apostle insists on it that he must be such, that a reproach cannot be raised against him. Called in the place of judgment, he must be himself a pattern of the conduct he requires in others, so that his authority be enforced by his own example. He is "God's steward" to insist on a conduct suitable to His house, and he must be himself the exponent of his own utterances. He must have a good testimony from those without, so that he may not fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3. 7).

(2) "Not headstrong," *αὐθάδης*, from *αὐτός ἡδόμεαι*, self-pleasing, led by his own *self-will*, in *self-gratification*, i.e. having himself before him to please; regardless of the feelings of others. However right he might be in his judgment, otherwise such a spirit would be wrong, and incapacitate him wholly for the office of a bishop.

(3) "Not passionate," *ὀργίλος*, irascible; for, if he cannot command his own temper, how could he command others? Self-control is one of the first elements in usefulness, as well as in greatness.

(4) "Not violent, or disorderly through wine," *πάραινος*, and in agreement with this,

(5) "No striker," *πλήκτης*, coming to blows, seeking thus, in the excitement of his uncontrolled temper, to enforce his words. Alas! how much evil is done by this spirit; quarrels, dissensions, controversies provoked beyond hope of reconciliation, by disregard of this simple and pregnant scripture.

(6) "Not seeking gain by base means," *αἰσχροκερδής*, whether by the money placed at his disposal for sacred purposes (Ellicott), or otherwise. A man's reputation for such a spirit, evidenced in any line of life, would effectually discount his moral weight; all the more so in divine things.

And now, having disposed of what is evil, he turns to what is good.

(7) "Hospitable," *φιλόξενος*, a lover of strangers; having a kindly feeling of affection towards such, his heart goes out to them because they are strangers. Of this quality much is said both in the Old Testament and in the New. At the very outset, by the law of Moses, the stranger's position was fully provided for. "One law was to be for the stranger and the children of Israel" (Ex. 12. 48). And again, "Ye shall not

oppress the stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22. 21; 23. 9; Lev. 19. 34; Deut. 10. 19; 16. 14). How little they obeyed these injunctions, and how severe was the chastisement that followed their selfish disregard of them, we gather from Judges 19. 15, etc., Jeremiah 7. 6, and elsewhere; while, on the other hand, we see how marked is the Lord's approval of the exercise of hospitality, in such scriptures as Luke 10. 33; Matthew 25. 35-44; Hebrew 13. 2; 1 Peter 4. 9.

(8) But while he loves strangers, he is also "a lover of what is good," *φιλάγαθος* i.e. of what is good because it is good. His heart delights in good in every form.

(9) "Discreet," *σώφρων*, soberminded, "having the mind properly balanced as the result of habitual self-control." This word occurs six times in the epistle (chap. 1. 8; 2. 2, 4, 5, 6, 12). It is a quality of the highest value, and is emphasized accordingly, contributing as it does largely to the furnishing of the bishop with the moral dignity corresponding to his highly responsible position.

(10) "Just," *δίκαιος*, righteous, and,

(11) "Holy," *ἅγιος*. These two words constitute the new man, as "created of God in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4. 24).

(12) "Temperate," *ἐγκρατής*, holding himself in control, continent. So in 1 Corinthians 9. 25, in a figure drawn from the gymnasium, "every man striving for the mastery is temperate in all things." No one is fit to command others who fails to command himself.

(13) "Holding fast against all opposition," *ἀντεχόμενος*, the faithful word, according to the doctrine already taught, so as not to be tossed about, through an unfurnished mind, with every new-fangled notion; but estab-

lished in the truth for himself, first as an anchor for his own soul, so that he may be able also to comfort in the faith others who desire to follow in the truth; and,

(14) To refute those who speak against it. This refers not so much to the unbelieving world outside, though doubtless including them also, as to the judaizing Christians within, the life-long plague of the Apostle, and the bane of the church of God from the beginning.

Verse 10.—The necessity for such men, as overseers, is declared, "For there are many unruly talkers of mere nonsense and deceivers of people's minds, specially they of the circumcision." They were not deceivers in the ordinary sense of the word, but perverters of people's minds and sound judgment, *φρεναπάται*. And to this sort of thing, Judaism lends itself in a special way, in opposition to "the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2. 14).

Verse 11.—Power, both official and moral, to stop the mouths of such men was necessary, for they were perverting the faith of whole families, through their pernicious doctrines, propagated for the sake of pelf, and this insidious evil must be emphatically counter-vailed by capable men, clothed with the authority of their office, and supported by the moral dignity of lives personally above reproach.

The national character of the Cretans too was of a low type. According to a prophet of their own country, Epimenides by name, who lived as far back as about 590 B.C., "Cretans are always liars, evil wild beasts, lazy gluttons." And people embracing Christianity from such antecedents and surroundings were but too likely to bring many of their old ways and manners of thought into the new company; and that, with but little sense of their incongruity. This, unless corrected, tends to lower the character of Christianity, through disregard of what is becoming to the moral order of the house of God. Hence the necessity

of "sharp rebuke" in order to arouse their consciences to a healthy state, that they might be "sound in the faith."

Verse 14.—"Jewish fables and commandments of men." What a part they have played in poisoning the springs of thought and deed in the church of God ever since the beginning!

Verses 15, 16.—These two verses let us into the secret working of much of this mystical and pernicious legality. At the root of it lies the idea that "matter is evil," and man has, by one means or another, to free himself from its defilement. "This thing is pure, and this other is not"; and rites and ceremonies are imposed accordingly, to avoid the impurity; ignoring the fact that it is from within the defilement comes. "Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, etc. . . . and all these evil things, which, coming from within, defile the man" (Mark 7. 21-23).

Now, "to the pure all things are pure." "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4. 4). This, on the other hand, is a slur on the Creator, a blasphemy against Him, asserting the need for man to purify himself from the evil of the Creator's hand. Hence this gnostic ritualism in its many forms, fasting, celibacy, and such-like, with all their consequent corruptions and abominable impurities; for they throw the soul in upon itself for purity, while implicitly charging the impurity on God. It was so with Adam at the beginning, "The woman Thou gavest me." It is easy to see the source of such ideas. It is difficult to understand the folly that accepts them.

Verse 16.—The withering language of this verse sums up the portentous evil of their professedly superior knowledge of God, while it sets forth the judgment of His Spirit as to their real character—"abominable, disobedient, and as to every good work found worthless."

The Burden of Dumah.

THE world's day weareth to its eventide;
 Time steals away;
 The shadows of the eve are stretchèd wide—
 Wide, deep, and grey.
 In boding clouds sinks down the cheerless light,
 The morning cometh, also comes the night.
 Long hath the noon of pride and wrong blazed high,
 And Satan reigned,
 And men blasphemed, and sin sent up its cry,
 And earth complained.
 But none were looking for the day of doom—
 None prayed the year of the redeemed might come.
 And still, 'mid portents of a coming woe
 Men made wild mirth.
 Joy lights the festive chambers, and they grow
 Wanton on earth.
 They plant, they build, choose Sodom's smiling lot,
 And mock at sin, and say, "Why comes He not?"
 O dweller of the earth! fear comes on thee—
 The pit—the snare!
 Blackness in heaven—sorrow on the sea—
 O'er all, despair!
 Dimness of anguish on the earth shall fall,
 And death, and doom, and darkness cover all.
 But lo! a gleaming from the watch-tower seen!
 A star of dawn!
 Long, wild, and weary hath the darkness been,
 'Twill soon be gone.
 The cherished ray that cheered thro' all the night,
 E'en now seems blinding with the eastern light.
 For the sad church, morn hath not broken yet,
 To chase her fears.
 Her path to glory hath been dark, and wet
 With blood and tears.
 Her eyes have failed with looking for the day,
 It seemed so fair, but still so far away.
 The darkness fingers, but she sings, "'Tis well—
 He cometh now!"
 The storms that lay the cedars, only swell
 Her fig tree bough.
 Still as the world's sky threatens, hers grows bright,
 Their cloud of darkness is her pillar light.
 Sing songs, thou sad one, at the door of hope,
 Thy last by night!
 Dark is the threshold ere the kingdom ope—
 Then all is bright.
 The Bridegroom cometh! Hark! He calls thee home;
 Ere thou "believe for joy," He shall have come.

Light for the Last Days.—No. 6.

(JAMES BOYD)

Notes on 2 Timothy 2.

PAUL exhorts Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words "which," he says, "thou hast heard of me." Nothing that this disciple had heard from the Apostle was to be let slip. But it could only be held in faith and love, both of which were in Christ Jesus. They were the words of God, and they carried all His authority with them to the conscience. They were not to be held in the fierceness of fanaticism, or in the insane bigotry of a blind and bewildering superstition, but in that faith which links the soul in a practical way with the living God, and in the love that seeks the good and the enlightenment of the creature, not binds him hand and foot under the authority of darkness. And this "faith and love" is in Christ Jesus. There are all the rich supplies of heavenly grace, which flow freely forth in the power of the Spirit into the souls of those who in the consciousness of their own nothingness draw from that fulness.

The truth may be, and alas is often, imposed upon souls in such an arbitrary, lordly, and tyrannical way, by those who undertake to minister it in God's Assembly, as brings the hearer under the despotism of the teacher, instead of setting him in the exercise of his faith in the presence of God; and the consequence is, that instead of ministering to the growth and development of the divine nature, which is love, fear becomes the dominating principle in the soul of the disciple, and darkness and superstition are engendered and promoted, instead of light and the true knowledge of God. This is the devil. But if those who seek to minister the faithful word to the souls of men hold it in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, God is brought before the soul of the hearer, he is led into the Divine presence, the new nature is nourished and promoted, and holy liberty, instead

of cruel bondage, results. God grant that His precious truth may be still more clearly ministered to the souls of men, but that it may be ministered in its own nature, sweetness, tenderness, power, and spiritual pathos!

That precious deposit of truth which was committed to Timothy he is exhorted to keep; but not in his own power, which he would find when the test came to be worse than useless. The Spirit of God is alone the power by which the truth is by us apprehended, and it is only in that same power we can cleave to it, especially in a day like the present when it has become so unpopular even where it is supposed to be held with reverence. All creature power is valueless in the things of God, and the sooner this is learned by all of us the better it shall be for us. All that were in Asia had turned away from Paul, and unless Timothy leaned upon a power greater than his own he would be carried away in that cowardly panic-stricken current of worldly-minded men.

The Apostle is only able to mention one man whose affection for Christ enabled him to rise above the pusillanimity of the mass who shrank from the reproach of the cross, and who manifested that affection in his earnest search after the poor persecuted and forsaken servant of the Lord, and who rested not until he found him. This man has honourable mention; and in the day of Christ's glory it shall not be forgotten by Him. Nothing done for the Lord out of love to His name shall ever be forgotten by Him. He is an example for us to follow. May we keep him in mind!

In Timothy we get the typical servant of Christ who is to continue throughout the whole of this present dispensation. Feeble in body, and without that force of character marking, even in his un-

converted days, the man who writes this epistle, he could draw nothing from the resources of his nature to help him in the maintenance of the testimony of his Lord. Not that this testimony is, for its subsistence in the world, to be debtor to the flesh; but where there is little nervous vitality, bodily weakness, and natural timidity, one is likely to exaggerate the difficulties that beset the lonely path of the servant of Christ in a day in which the gospel, instead of breaking down all opposition, and compelling multitudes to submit to the authority of Him who is the subject of it, its flowing tide of popularity and successions of victories are slowly beginning to ebb, and to lose, at least in outward appearance, the power and might that had once so startled the nations that the preachers were branded as men that had turned the world upside down. In such a day one naturally pessimistic requires special grace to rise above that which is so calculated to dishearten and depress.

The mind is greatly affected by the body, and the latter may be in such a state of nervous debility that one may become, as people say, afraid of one's own shadow; and, on the other hand, one may appear to be without nerves at all. But in the things of God neither of these conditions is to be of any account. In natural things they may count, but not in the things of God. The courage of a Simon Peter will only bring a man into the danger, but will desert him in the hour in which he has to make a stand for Christ. This kind of courage has to be guarded against, just as carefully as the natural timidity which would drive a man from the roughness of the way and the opposition of the world, as John Mark was driven from companionship with Barnabas and Paul at Pamphylia.

The work of God is not to be carried on in the might of the creature. In his unconverted days the Apostle seems to have possessed a force of character far beyond that possessed by any of his

contemporaries. A man of strong convictions, mind, and will, and all possibly supplemented by a healthy body, he was not compelled to seek a fountain of energy outside himself. But all these went, with the man that possessed them, in the judgment of the cross, and in Christ he found himself weaker than water spilt upon the ground. But in this felt weakness, which was new to him, he cries to the Lord, and finds in Him a bountiful supply of grace which meets all his need, for it was infinitely greater than all the resources that he had hitherto found in himself. He says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 13). He has learned that all that is done for God upon earth must be done in His power. He says Christ "was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you" (2 Cor. 13. 4). Christianity and everything pertaining to it is established and subsists in the power of God, and there the mere natural energy of the creature has no place.

To this fountain the Apostle directs his beloved child in the faith. He says, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." This grace is greater than any power that can rise up against it. In all its might it is set before us in Christ Himself, in whom it is available for us. Writing to the Corinthians that Apostle reminds them of this, in those words that are engraven in the heart of all who love Him: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). This is where its power is seen; and as we contemplate it in all its infinitude, almightiness, wealth of glory, sweetness, and unselfishness, we become convinced that all the forces that could be arrayed against us would be as nothing, were our hearts well established in its divine and heavenly fulness. And this

Timothy could not do without, but having it he needed nothing more to fit him for the line of service entrusted to him by his Saviour and Lord.

He was to see that the truth he had heard from Paul, to whom it had been revealed by the Spirit of God, and in whose power it had been spoken, was to be communicated to others, faithful men, who would be in their turn used to instruct others also. Neither Timothy nor such men could say that they had these communications first-hand: Paul could, for he had them by the revelation and inspiration of God, and that direct, without any intermediary (Gal. 1. 12). But we who have heard them are put in trust with them by the Lord, and are answerable to Him for the use we make of them. We are to keep them in the purity in which we have received them; and if any of us are used of God in ministering them to others, we must do it in dependence upon Himself and in the might of His Holy Spirit, in order that as little as possible of the human element may be mixed up with the sacred things that have emanated from the mind of God. It is needless to say that a certain amount of weakness, imperfection, and failure is sure to be mixed up with our reception of such stupendous revelations, as well as with our setting of them forth, but there is the perfect Word in the holy Scriptures to fall back upon, not only that the one who ministers may have his thoughts more perfectly adjusted according to the truth, but to which the attention of the hearer also may be directed; and to which, thank God, now that Bibles are so plentiful, he can have easy access; for, after all, it is only the Scriptures that have authority over conscience, mind, and heart. In the hands of men we are never safe, for the human mind in itself is always opposed to the truth of God. The apostles themselves were, in this respect, no more to be depended upon than other men, but they were kept by the power of the Spirit of God under the most perfect control, their own natural minds by that same Spirit

rendered quiescent, so that they received the thoughts of God in all their purity, and conveyed them to others by words as truly given to them by the Spirit as were the thoughts themselves. Because of this we can with unbounded confidence turn to the writings of these men, assured that we have the communications of God therein as unadulterated and as pure as if they were audibly spoken out of heaven by the voice of the living God. And in these sacred Writings we have sufficient light to guide us through the darkest hour of this Christian dispensation, and through the most intricate and bewildering circumstances that the power of the devil and the corruption and apostasy of mere professors can throw across our pilgrim pathway. Let us, then, with thankful hearts hold tenaciously to the Holy Scriptures, as a child to the hand of its parent amid the devouring darkness, or as the blind to a faithful and unerring guide.

Timothy was to take a lesson from the soldier, the athlete, and the husbandman. As a soldier he was to be at the instant command of his captain, and to endure all the hardships that were incident to such an arduous calling. As an athlete he was to give particular attention to the rules of the game, not seeking by unlawful means to obtain the crown, for this would be to lose it. As a husbandman he must exercise patience, knowing that the labour must precede the gathering in of the fruit. But the Lord would give him understanding in all things. He had only to keep well in mind what the Apostle was bringing before him. This was all that was necessary on his part; the understanding would come from the Lord. This is very encouraging. We have no reason to lament our lack of cleverness; for cleverness is valueless in the things of God. He can teach the most stupid, and He delights to do it; and if we only place ourselves in His hands, and meditate on His Word, He will give us a surprising measure of true insight into His thoughts.

Timothy was also to keep in mind that everything is now given to men on the platform of resurrection. Even the "sure mercies of David" were to be given to the people on that ground (Acts 13. 34). This takes everything completely out of the hand of the creature; and though the gospel that makes this known is in rejection here below, and has to suffer affliction, nevertheless the purpose of God is sure to triumph in the end, for nothing can withstand His might. Both life and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel, but they are revealed as in another sphere than that which belongs to flesh and blood, in which we see nothing that is not subject to death and corruption. Hence in the presence of the failure of all that which professes the name of Christ, it is good to have the eye directed to a power that death itself has not been able to withstand.

And if for the Word of God—the revelation of His grace, His love, His counsels, His activities in Christ for the effectuation of those counsels—the Apostle suffered trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds, what mattered it if that Word was unfettered? It was His power to salvation to all them that believe; the means by which He was gathering His elect out from a world guilty of the murder of His Son; and for whose sakes, that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory, he endured all things. His Lord had already lost His life upon earth for the truth of God, and faithfully following in those divine footsteps, the servant counted not his life dear to him, but only that Word with which he had been entrusted; being well aware that if we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him; and if we suffer, we shall reign with Him; knowing that the opposite was also true, that if we deny Him, He also will deny us; and if we believe not, He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself. What confidence would we have in Him if He could?

Timothy was also to keep in mind

that all his service was to be devoted to the profit of those who heard him. There was to be nothing in his ministry for the mere natural mind of the creature. The great end to which his energy was to be directed was to get into the souls of those who listened to his voice the great thoughts of God. The saints were to be guarded against indulging in theories that had their origin in the fleshly mind. What was calculated to profit souls in their relations with God was the only thing of importance.

Therefore this man of God was to see that the various lines of truth, in the revelation given to us of God, were presented to the saints in their own special and individual character, and also in their relation to that revelation looked at as a whole. He would thus prove himself to be a workman, approved unto God, and needing not to be ashamed, for the effect of such labour would stand for eternity.

Profane and vain babblings he was to shun altogether, for ungodliness would result from such teaching; and the word of such as indulge in those vagaries of the fallen human mind would eat as a canker.

But in spite of all such confusing and corrupting influences that were ardently at work for the destruction of souls, and that within the sacred enclosure of the house of God, it was a comfort to the heart of the Apostle, and he reminds Timothy of it, that the firm foundation of God stands. This is Christ: and where this is laid in the soul it is immutable and unshakable; and though in the faithless profession there may be a great claim of acquaintance with Christ, and a clamour for signs and signals of recognition, we are comforted and encouraged by the certainty that the Lord knoweth them that are His; though the only way in which they can be manifested to men is by their departure from unrighteousness; for the name of the Lord is not to be mentioned where evil is tolerated. In this way those who are His are known by us who cannot read the heart.

“On His Head were many Crowns.”

(A. J. POLLOCK).

Revelation 19. 12.

THERE are two words translated “crown” in the New Testament—*διάδημα* (*diadeema*) and *στέφανος* (*stephanos*). The distinction between these words and their usage are both important and interesting.

Stephanos is used by Greek writers to indicate the wreath awarded to a conqueror, the prize awarded to a victorious athlete in the Grecian games, the crown conferred on a citizen in token of public services. The wreath was composed of leaves: of wild thyme at the Olympic games, of laurel at the Pythian, of parsley at the Nemean, of ivy at the Isthmian. Such crowns were perishable. Placed on the victors' heads, they looked fresh and green whilst the shouting lasted, but in a few hours they began to fade. Hence the Apostle Peter writes in contrast of “a crown (*stephanos*) of glory that *fadeth NOT away*” (1 Peter 5. 4).

The word *stephanos* was NEVER used in the sense of an IMPERIAL crown.

Diadeema was used originally to indicate the blue band worked with white, which went round the turban (or tiara) of the Persian king; hence our English word, *diadem*. The word is used to indicate an imperial crown.

Believers have crowns awarded to them, but they are always *stephanos*, and not *diadeema*.

The Lord Jesus is pre-eminent; He wears both *stephanos* and *diadeema*.

An artist will paint the background of his picture in neutral colours, so as to bring into prominence his main idea in the foreground depicted in brighter colours. In the same manner the writer would describe the crowns the believers have in order to bring into prominence the glorious crowns the Lord Jesus wears.

The writer, as it were, would convey the reader along a pleasing road full of interest and beauty in order to bring him to a spot of surpassing glory and charm.

“A Crown (*stephanos*) of Righteousness.”

See the aged warrior—the Apostle Paul. His course is nearly over. From that memorable day when he was stricken down by the light above the brightness of the sun he was captured for Christ. He served Him diligently and faithfully for long years. Now, at the close of his career, he says to Timothy, his son in the faith, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown (*stephanos*) of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4. 6-8).

How stimulating and encouraging is this reward! And mark, it is not beyond the reach of any of us. We should shrink from instituting a parallel between ourselves and the great Apostle Paul. Look at his wondrous office: “the Apostle of the Gentiles”; see his gifts, his zeal, his labours, his suffering even to martyrdom. But it is open for us all to “love His appearing.” This supposes, however, a happy, earnest state of soul. Who would love the Lord's appearing but those who are seeking to order their Christian course in the light of His presence and according to the ordering of His Word!

This *righteousness* is not the fruit of the Lord's work on the cross, but the result of the practical ways of the Christian, “the righteousness which is

by faith " is clearly a gift; this righteousness is, as clearly, reward. How gracious of the Lord to open to us such an incentive in our Christian path! May we respond to it more and more.

"The Crown (*stephanos*) of Life."

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive *the crown (stephanos) of life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1. 12).

Here again the reward is held out to all those that love the Lord. If we love the Lord we shall fear to grieve Him, and when temptation, whatever form it may assume, is permitted to try us, we shall endure it. It is by enduring temptation that the reality of our faith is proved and so God is honoured, and life will be the reward of faithfulness. Here again it is not life in the sense of God's sovereign gift, or the entering into eternal life as the result of faith in the uplifted Son of God, but life as the practical result of our Christian life. Men of God in all ages have endured the trial of their faith, and in consequence God is not ashamed to be called their God. The same privilege is ours.

In Revelation 2. 10 the temptation depicted is tremendous. This scripture presents such temptation as would imperil physical life, if yielded to, but no such thing as surrender comes into the Lord's mind for His own. "Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee a crown of life." How deeply encouraging is all this!

"A Crown (*stephanos*) of Glory."

Encouraging the shepherds of the flock of God to faithfulness this incentive is held forth, "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown (*stephanos*) of glory, that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5. 4). We can all do our little bit in encouraging each other. Some are gifted by the Chief Shepherd with special pastoral gift, leading them to a very helpful ministry, having in view the whole church of

God upon the earth, but we can all act in the spirit of the pastor, that is to minister Christ and to help and cheer and encourage, and, if need be, in faithfulness and humility rebuke and exhort those with whom we have access.

A word of warning comes in. It occurs in 2 Timothy, where the Apostle Paul describes the condition of things in "the last days." Surely these last days are fast running to a speedy close. What lawlessness there is, what loosening of what is according to God! Hence the warning: "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not *crowned (stephanos)*, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2. 5). The rules of the game are put down clearly in God's Word. Do we allow expediency, *laissez faire*, shrinking from unpleasant consequences, to hinder us from acting on God's Word and shaping our conduct by it, personally, domestically, ecclesiastically? May we have grace not to do this.

Let us now consider the subject in relation to the Lord Himself.

"A Crown (*stephanos*) of Thorns."

"And when they had platted a crown (*stephanos*) of thorns, they put it upon His head" (Matt. 27. 29). Could irony and scorn have gone further? To put upon His head a crown indicative of winning a prize, of honour, of glory, not made of laurel or parsley or ivy, but of—THORNS; how complete was the dishonour done to God's blessed Son, the delight of the Father's heart, the joy of heaven.

In the neighbourhood of Jerusalem there can still be gathered the material from which this crown was made. Such thorns, so long and sharp, it would be difficult to find.

But the verdict of the world is not that of heaven. Quoting from Psalm 8., that wonderful *night* psalm, which still awaits its fulfilment in a future day, Hebrews 2. 7 says, "Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels; thou

crownedst (*stephanos*) Him with glory and honour." But at any rate the central figure of Psalm 8. is before our eyes. "We see Jesus . . . *crowned* (*stephanos*) with glory and honour."

Thank God, we turn from the verdict of the world to bow before our Lord Jesus Christ, and adore Him as worthy of God's highest honour.

If the world put its mocking *stephanos* upon His blessed brow, God has in ascension glory put HIS *stephanos* upon His brow—the mark of His approval.

Let us now examine the word crown (*diadeema*), designating an imperial crown, which is only thrice mentioned in the Scriptures, and each time in the Book of Revelation.

The first mention occurs thus. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns (*diadeema*) upon his heads" (Rev. 12. 3).

Here we get the great usurper, Satan. What right has he to the diadem? "The last words of David," a man of long experience, were, "He that ruleth over men must be just; ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23. 3). How opposite to this is Satan's course! He may be allowed to wear his diadems for a day or two ("a thousand years is as one day" with God), but his triumph and power will be short-lived. He is king over the myriad demons connected with the bottomless pit, but the day is coming when he shall be cast with his dupes into the lake of fire.

The second mention of diadem is as follows: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns (*diadeema*), and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Rev. 13. 1). Here we have presented to us, in symbolic language, the political head

and form of the revived Roman Empire. We are told the dragon, Satan, gives the Beast his power and his seat and great authority. To take anything from the hand of Satan is to court disaster, and in the great battle of Armageddon the diadems will be struck off the head of the Beast, and he will find he serves ill who serves Satan.

Satan usurps the diadem for himself, and he gives the diadem to his tool and dupe, the Beast, but both their triumphs shall be shortlived, and hell will be their everlasting doom.

How serious it is that the spirit of all this is in the world now. How conscious one is of special Satanic power in connection with the Kaiser's ill-starred effort to snatch the diadem of world-empire.

Doubtless things are shaping themselves for the manifestation of Satanic power to be seen after the assembly of God has been caught up to glory, but even now there are ominous premonitory signs of what will soon take place in this world that is fast throwing off every restraint of God, whether in creation or revelation.

The last mention of *diadeema* in the Bible brings us very happily to the title of our article. The Lord Jesus comes out of heaven with his armies to act decisively in the Battle of Armageddon. With the breath of His mouth He will righteously destroy all His foes. The description of Him is terrible for His foes, entrancing for His own. His titles are "Faithful and True"—"The Word of God"—"King of kings (= Lord Emperor), and Lord of lords." We read, "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns (*diadeema*); and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself" (Rev. 19. 12).

We have presented to us the *only* One who has the right to wear *the diadem*. From the foul brow of Satan

his usurped diadems shall be struck; his myrmidon, his tool, the Beast, will find diadems of Satan's conferring an illegal burden, soon to be lost when the true Emperor asserts His rights, and makes His foes His footstool.

But upon *His* worthy brow, once bound by the crown (*stephanos*) of thorns in bitter mockery, shall be placed **MANY diadems**. "On His head were many crowns" (*diadeema*). We repeat, the *only* person who has the right to wear them, and the *only* person in the end to wear them, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be pre-eminent. Then in the glorious millennium shall be brought to pass David's last words, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

The dragon's triumph will be short-lived; the Lord alone is worthy, and from His brow His diadems never shall fall. The dragon is said to have seven diadems; the beast ten diadems; "upon His (Christ's) head" shall be "*many diadems*." No definite number is stated, for His glory is beyond measure.

"All hail the power of Jesu's name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal DIADEM,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

"Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

Blessed Saviour, my Lord and my God, Thou art indeed thrice worthy. Language utterly fails to express Thy worthiness and glory.

Our Great Sorrow.

Stormy wind fulfilling his word (Ps. 148. 8). One day by God's great mercy, . . . we shall know how the stormy winds have wrought out our deliverance. Now we see only the mystery of this great sorrow; then we shall know how the threatening enemy was swept away in the wild night of fear and grief. Now we look only on the loss; then we shall see how it struck at the evil that had begun to rivet its fetters upon us. Now we shrink from the howling winds and muttering thunders; then we shall see how they beat back the waters of destruction and opened up our way to the goodly land of promise. (*Pearse.*)

Little Sins.

The little foxes, that spoil the vines (Cant. 2. 15). You and I are often great sinners in little things. The little meannesses of word and look, the irritations of temper, the small duplicities of speech, . . . the little affronts and petty spites, the thoughtless neglect of other people's welfare, and the paltry excuses by which we strive to rid ourselves of painful duty—all these make up an awful aggregate of sin. It is the total amount of inconsistent acts and neglects of duty that impair the influence of the individual Christian; they may accumulate into snowbanks that block spiritual progress and bring the work of God to a standstill. No sin is a trifle; no sin can be safely allowed to get a headway. (*Cuyler.*)

A Well and a Tree.

Abraham . . . digged [a] well, . . . and . . . planted a tree in Beer-sheba (Gen. 21. 29-33) (margin). Trees and wells, especially in dry or desert places, were naturally associated, as at Elim. The well watered the tree and the tree sheltered the well, and the two together made an oasis. Blessed is the disciple who wherever he goes digs a well and plants a tree—opens up the testimony of the Word to others and himself illustrates and vindicates it by his own living witness, and so makes in this desert world one more oasis. (*Pierson.*)

"Our Faces in the Dust."

THE pretensions and energy of man are strongly manifesting themselves, but to learn, in a day of grace, to be still, and know that God is God, is completely above the education of the flesh.

The spirit of the age affects many Christians, who labour to restore old things for the service of God, instead of being broken before Him by the sense of their downfall.

To confess openly that which we are, in the presence of that which God is, is always the way to peace and blessing. Even when only two or three are together before God, if it be thus with them, there will be no disappointments nor deluded hopes.

The word for the remnant is, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." The Holy Ghost does not gather saints around mere views, however true they may be, upon that which the church is, upon that which it has been, or that which it may be, on the earth, but He always gathers them around that blessed Person, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. "*Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.*"

We need to be watchful against boasting; we need to be still in the presence of God: for there is much independence and self-will almost everywhere.

If anyone speaks of separation from evil, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply only that which at all times has constituted sects, and produced doctrinal heresy. Nearness to Christ would keep us from Sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart.

Now I know, at the present time, of no service which is worthy of Him, if it is not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the church of God, so

dear to Christ, is dishonoured in this world; if it is scattered, ignorant, afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. True service of love will seek to give according to the need, and because of their need, he will never think of slighting the objects of the Master's love because of their necessity. Men taught of God, for His service, go forth from a place of strength, where they have learned their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Christ Jesus is everything in the presence of God, and Jesus Christ is everything for them in all things, and everywhere. Such men, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, are real helps for the children of God, and they will not contend for a place, or a distinction, or for authority, among the scattered flock. The communion of a man with God about the church will show itself in a willingness to be nothing in himself, and such a one will rejoice in his heart to spend and to be spent.

Neither the anger, nor the prudence, nor the pretensions of man can do anything, in the state of confusion in which the church is now. I freely own that I have no hope in the efforts which many make to assure themselves an ecclesiastical position. When the house is ruined in its foundations by an earthquake, it matters little how one tries to make it an agreeable dwelling-place. We shall do better to remain where the first discovery of the ruin of things by man's deed has placed us—with our faces in the dust. Such is the place which belongs to us by right, and, after all, it is the place of blessing.

I have read of a time when a number of persons were gathered together in such sorrow of heart, that for a long time they could not utter a single word; but the floor of the meeting-room was wet with their tears. If the Lord would grant us such meetings again, it would

be our wisdom to frequent these houses of tears, for "*they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*" It is not only for the earthly remnant that this is true, it is also written for us. I would willingly take a long journey to join these afflicted ones; but I would not go a step with the object of receiving from the hands of most excellent men power to overturn all to-day, and reconstruct to-morrow.

We need to watch over ourselves, lest, after having been preserved from the corruption of the age by the very precious truths revealed to us in our weakness, we should be taken in the net of presumption, or thrown into insubordination. These are things which God can never recognize or tolerate, since we are called to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

(J.N.D.)

Casting the Blame upon God.

(J. T. MANSON).

A LITTLE fellow had set his heart upon having a pocket-knife, and pestered his parents about it so persistently that at last they yielded and allowed him to have his own way, and spend his shilling upon the coveted treasure. It was not long before he had cut his fingers very badly with it, and then he turned on his father and said, "You ought not to have let me buy it."

When we heard the story we were reminded of some who when they fall into any trouble always cast the blame directly upon God. "Why," say they, "did God allow this to happen?" This is a question that is being asked by many in regard to this desolating war. "Why does God allow it to continue?"

The fact is that all trouble in this world is the result of sin being here, and especially may this be said in regard to this almost world-wide war. Sin is lawlessness—independence of God, the determination of men to go their own way without reference to His will in any matter. If men are determined to please themselves, like the boy with the knife, and, in spite of the warnings and entreaties of God's Word, will persist in the refusal of His will, and of the way that He points out to them as the way "of pleasantness and peace," how can they complain if they reap the harvest of their own sowing? "God is not mocked" and men cannot flout His will and then expect that He will

shield them from the consequences of their folly. "They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own ways and be filled with their own devices." Thus it is written in the Word of God, and His Word cannot fail.

If men in this time of trouble would turn to God, not to blame Him for the consequences of their own folly, not to link up His name impiously with their own sinful ambitions and devilish schemes, but to hallow His name by acknowledging that He is just in all His dealings with them, and that His way is always right, and to repent before Him because of their waywardness and sin, then they would immediately find Him to be a very present help in time of trouble, for none ever called on His name in vain.

None of us can do his own will and expect to be immune from the consequences, but blessed it is to know that there is forgiveness with Him that He might be feared, and though the cut fingers may not be immediately healed, yet the heart may be comforted by God's grace, and the valuable lesson learnt, that His way is better than ours. "Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. i. 33).

Words of Spirit and Life.—No. 2.

(H. J. VINE).

The Living Bread. John 6.

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ was here as a dependent Man, He, the Son, lived on account of the living Father: and now He Himself is the Source of life for us: We live on account of Him; as He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." He lived because of the living Father: we live because of Him. It must be remembered that though this new life is ours through His death, yet He Himself is the Same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Yesterday He was upon earth in humiliation: to-day He is glorified in heaven. His royal throne shall be for ever and ever: but He is Himself always the Same: His circumstances may be changed, but not Himself: He changes not. He came near to us in grace that we might be able to appropriate Him. He is the living Bread which came down out of heaven. It was there before it came down; but He came in the only way that this living Bread could become ours—as a Man; and He said, "He that eats this Bread shall *live for ever*" (verse 58). Yes, mark it well. "LIVE FOR EVER!" We "live" now, and shall continue to "live" eternally. The wicked will not "live" for ever in the sense of this scripture: they *exist* for ever, in a place and condition called the second "*death*." The fathers even "did eat manna" and died: but mark the emphatic contrast which the Lord emphasizes in this verse. The one who eats this living Bread from heaven, unlike the fathers, receives a life therefrom that knows no death. The silver chord may be snapped: the earthen vessel may be broken: the tent may be taken down: the physical system may be dissolved by mortality and corruption, the life, however, which is now ours cannot be dissipated, it survives triumphantly all changes; for Christ Himself is our life; and we live because of Him who is eternally the same.

Before He came out of heaven, His recorded word said, "*I am Understanding*" (Prov. 8. 14); and we are told, "Understanding is a wellspring of life to him that hath it" (16. 22). We made our beginning in this when we were brought to the fear of the Lord. All that hate Him love death: but whoso findeth Him findeth life (8. 35). He is now found, thank God, by those who sought Him not, as Isaiah foretold (Rom. 10. 20). He sought and saved us when we were wandering in the wild wastes of sin and folly. He is now our salvation: He is our life: and He makes us to hear the words of life. Those words, eaten and digested, become a living energy within us; for wisdom and understanding are ours thereby. One of old said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." His words are spirit and life: they flow from Him who is the Fountain of life: the wellspring of true vitality. His fruit too is sweet to our renewed taste: He is the Tree planted by the living streams—the Tree of life. If it is always true, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life," it can be said in the highest sense of our blessed Lord; for His vital words are used with wisdom. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright" (Prov. 15. 2). May we have grace and faith, in the power of the Spirit, to take in those words; to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, for our spiritual understanding.

The Book of Proverbs, which speaks of our blessed Lord as Wisdom, abounds with that which would direct the spiritual concerning the energies of life; although the book primarily may be said to give guidance for the earthly life. How significant are such words as these: "The law of *the wise* is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death" (13. 14). Truly the teaching of Christ keeps in healthy and happy vitality,

free from the lethal influences of the world. Again, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death" (12. 28). As we have seen, righteousness and life go together; the believer is in the path of righteousness, and the living Bread is provided there for him. So it is also said, "Righteousness tendeth to life" (11. 19); also, "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (11. 30); for there are results in the blessing of others through this living energy when it is rightly directed. So again we read, "The mouth of the righteous is a well of life" (10. 11): life-giving communications flow from him. This was pre-eminently true of the blessed Lord.

We are further told, "He is in the way of life that keepeth *instruction*" (10. 17); and we are warned against the world's way of death; against the subtleties of the strange woman. "Lest thou shouldest *ponder the path of life*, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them" (5. 6). Nevertheless, "The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and *He pondereth all his goings*" (21). The goings of the seducer lead to death and to hell. Therefore it may be earnestly said to any soul in danger, Listen not to her words, though they drop like honey, and her lips be smoother than oil! Heed the words of Wisdom! Let the words of life, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, enter into thine ears! Let them sink down into thine heart! For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is the report from God which His words bring to you! "Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For *they are life* unto those that find them" (4. 21). It is with the heart man believes to righteousness; and "out of the heart are

THE ISSUES OF LIFE" (23).

Therefore "take fast hold of *instruction*, let her not go: keep her, for she is thy life" (13). Christ's words are spirit and life indeed!

We have said that the living Bread came out of heaven: that it was there necessarily before it came out: that, to bring it within our reach, Christ became Man: also that His death was necessary before this living Bread could be ours. Now, in Christ, we may feed in faith upon it bountifully, thanks to our God. Oh that our appetite for it might be increased! Oh that our appropriation of this food from heaven might be more abundant! Oh that our appreciation of its divine character might be enlarged, so as to produce from our hearts liberal thanksgivings to God for His unspeakable gift! He has bestowed upon us the best of heaven! The fatness of His house, the wealthy provision of it, the exalted preciousness of it, the Bread of God, are now ours! The Corn of heaven, the Bread of the mighty. What royal grace! What marvellous love to such as we!

Eight things are said concerning this new and living Bread which has been so bountifully given:

It is True: My Father giveth you the true Bread (32).

It is Living: Jesus said, I am the living Bread (51).

It is Life-giving: Jesus said, It gives life to the world (33).

It is Life-sustaining: He said, I am the Bread of life (48).

It is Satisfying: The eater shall never hunger (35).

It is Enduring: That which endures unto life eternal (27).

It is Divine: The Bread of God which gives life (33).

It is Heavenly: The Bread from, or out of, heaven (41).

As we meditate upon the wealthy and profound import of these blessed words, all finding their measureless meaning in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ: as we thankfully consider the moral and vital opulence of these riches, which still surpass our limited comprehensions, in their divine, heavenly, true, life-giving and life-sustaining reality, we may well relieve

our adoring hearts by singing the praises of Him who has made these things ours.

And it is because the Holy Spirit has been given to us, that we are enabled to take in these vital truths in measure. The natural man cannot do so. The flesh profiteth nothing: it is the Spirit which quickeneth. As we feed upon Christ, we shall build up a healthy spiritual constitution; and know how to leave alone that which is not of Him: not in a mere captious spirit; for there will be the desire that others should share in the blessedness of eternal life. The Jewish religious spirit wanted bread for themselves alone; but when Christ gave His flesh, it was for nothing less than "*the life of the world*" (51). Therefore out of the believer on the Son is to flow rivers of living water, as we are told in chapter 7. 38. There is vital fruitfulness in the blessing of

others, as we abide in Him. And again, we are told in chapter 4., there is not only a fountain of living water in the believer, satisfying his own heart, so that he shall never thirst for ever; but there is the upspringing of life to the divine Source; and worship flows from the heart to the Father in spirit and in truth.

Truly the blessed Lord said, "He that comes to Me shall never hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst at any time" (6. 35 N.T.). *Inward* satisfaction for our own hearts: *outward* overflow also for others; and *upward* worship to the Father: all in living energy by the Spirit, because of our blessed Lord and Saviour, our living Food, to whom be eternal praise.

"He freely gives, 'tis all His own,
The Spirit's goodly fruit:
Praise, issuing forth in life, alone
Our living Lord can suit."

"Live in peace" (2 Cor. 13. 11).

MY soul, where art thou planted? Do thy roots take hold of that which means tranquillity and comfort for others as well as thyself? or art thou dwelling where nothing Christlike can grow? There will be no fruit to perfection if we remain in bitterness and strife. Such things slay all fruitfulness and prevent development. We might just as well expect to grow wheat in ice, or grapes in snowdrifts, as holiness where anger, malice and envy abound. If we live in peace we shall grow in grace, but if we dwell in strife we shall become fruitless and unprofitable. (*Champness.*)

"Keep thy soul."

"*Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently*" (Deut. 4. 9). A Christian cannot help others where his own footing is uncertain. He cannot lead others to abide in Christ if he himself abides partly in the world. He cannot speak convincingly of joy and peace unless he has them steadily in his own soul. He can have power and value only by following Christ closely himself. (*Miller.*)

"Prepared unto every good work."

WHEN the men sent by Cornelius knocked at Peter's door he was ready to go down and open it to them, for they came at a time when he was in communion with the Lord. If we are not ready to answer the call of needy men and are not prepared unto every good work it is because we are out of communion with the Lord.

Studies in the Psalms—Fourth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 90., 91., 92., 93.

THE fourth book includes Psalms 90.-106., and as we have seen presents certain analogies to the fourth book of the Pentateuch (see page 156 *antea*). In this connection we should remember that the Book of Numbers is not only the history of the wanderings in the wilderness, but after chapter 21. is largely occupied with an outline of the purposes of God for the people of Israel in relation to their earthly inheritance. Three outstanding illustrations may be given. First, Jehovah will have His portion in the sacrifices (really Christ), "My food for My offering—a sweet savour unto Me" (chap. 28. 2). Second, judgment must fall on the enemies of the people. Third, the people are to have the land (chap. 34., etc.). Similarly the fourth book of David's Pentateuch tells of the coming of Him who adjusts all on earth according to God (Psalms 97.-101.; Matt. 13. 41).

PSALM 90. has a special interest, being, according to the title, "a prayer of Moses, the man of God," and is thus by far the oldest in the whole collection; nevertheless it has its proper place in the Psalter as the first of the fourth book. There can be little doubt it was written in the plains of Moab at the close of the wilderness journey, when the sorrowful results of Jehovah's chastisement were plainly manifest. Every man of those numbered by Moses and Aaron at the beginning of their march had fallen (Num. 26. 64; Deut. 2. 14, 16); and we read in our Psalm, "We are consumed in thine anger and by Thy wrath are we troubled." Yet Adonai had been in all generations a dwelling-place or refuge for them (*cf.* Deut. 33. 27) had they sought Him aright, but the people are regarded here in their failure and in utter contrast to the One whose eternal being is affirmed in the striking language, "Even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Frail man is turned to dust, and the next

generation which takes its place finds the same end. All this melancholy spectacle of death and its ravages is traced to sin: "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret (the adjective is singular, so we may understand it to apply to the whole moral state) in the light of Thy countenance, for all our days are passed away in Thy wrath, we have spent our years as a thought" (not "a tale" as in A.V.). Yet the question is put in verse 11, "Who knoweth the might of Thy anger and Thy wrath according to the fear due unto Thee?" This leads to the desire that God would so teach us to reckon our earthly days that we may get us a heart of wisdom, a prayer often deferred till late in life after too many years have been spent in folly.

Evidently at this point all hope in human resources for recovery is lost, and He who said, "Return, ye sons of Adam" (ver. 3), must Himself return to effect any lasting good for His fallen creature. It never could be God's ultimate thought that our days should be passed in His wrath, rather if "satisfied with His mercy that we should rejoice and be glad all our days" (ver. 14). The Spirit taught Moses, as He would teach us, that when God works, all this history of disaster must be reversed, and the people shine forth clothed in His beauty. What a contrast to the picture presented in the Psalm! And how remarkable to notice that at the time and close to the place where this Psalm was written Jehovah was giving through the wicked Prophet Balaam (Num. 23. 24) a full answer to the desires and petitions it contains, so far as could be at that time. In place of death levelling the people of God to the common lot of all, we read, "The people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Instead of their sins receiving the righteous judgment of God, it is written:

"I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel." In answer to the prayer "Let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us," we are allowed to see in the vision of the Almighty "how goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as lign aloes which Jehovah hath planted, as cedar trees beside the waters." The last utterance of Balaam is really the answer prophetically given to the prayer, "Return, O Jehovah, let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants." A star rises out of Jacob and a sceptre from Israel; their enemies are crushed and they are themselves exalted. In this wonderful way does the blessed God answer the craft of Satan and the exercises of His servant quite apart from any knowledge on the part of the people as to what was going on among their foes.

PSALM 91. We shall not understand this Psalm unless we see that Messiah alone has title to dwell in the secret place of the Most High on the ground of personal merit, although others may indeed join Him on the ground of redemption. The thesis of the Psalm is that he who finds that dwelling shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. This abiding in security is in direct contrast to the passing away under God's wrath of the poor failing man of the previous Psalm. May the Spirit teach us to value ever more deeply our association with Christ in the secret place of the Most High which grace, only grace, gives us, as spoken of elsewhere, a banqueting house in which He provides the feast and where the banner of a triumphant love is over our heads! Moreover, it is not only that we learn through Christ the value of the secret place of the Most High, but also through Him the import of the dispensational names of God given in the Old Testament; as Almighty He was known to the Patriarchs, for He quickened the dead (Rom. 4. 17); as Jehovah the eternal and unchanging God He re-

vealed Himself to Israel (Ex. 6. 2, 3; Mal. 3. 6); as Most High He will in a future day be supreme over all the earth (Psalm 83. 18). The Christian has had the Name of Father made known to him (John 17. 26), and the value of the other titles is for us too through Christ (see 2 Cor. 6. 18).

Following this, in verses 3-8, the one who has found the secret place is assured by the speaker of verse 1, of all the good of the shadow of the Almighty in the way of earthly preservation and deliverance. Another speaker is introduced in verse 9 (though apparently the Revisers do not so understand it), one who can say, "Jehovah, my refuge." Is this not the voice of the writer of the Psalm, representing the true remnant of Israel, addressing Messiah and adding their voice in perfect harmony with what precedes? Certainly the Lord in no way refused the application to Himself when Satan sought to turn Him from the path of dependence by a perverted quotation of verses 11, 12. Eventually we know the Lord gave up the title to deliverance found in this Psalm* in order to accomplish redemption and overcome the powers of evil, the force and craft of Satan, represented by the lion and adder, in a moral way, for it was by death, not by power, that He annulled him that had the power of death. This is of practical importance for His followers, who would not find His support in a literal application of these promises to themselves. The character of our deliverance may be plainly read in Romans 8. 35-39, which teaches that if "for His sake we are killed all the day long—in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." A victory of this order does not appeal to the natural man in the least and indeed is only realized in faith.

Looking at the Psalm in the light of these considerations we can see how

* The reader to whom Mr. Bellett's "Meditations on the Psalms" is accessible would value his remarks on this Psalm on this point.

exquisitely suitable is the conclusion, which shows us Jehovah opening the heavens to Him who, in order that the purposes of God might be fulfilled in righteousness, refused a mere temporal deliverance. He says, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment even so I do": the answer comes in the Psalm, "Because He hath set His love upon Me therefore will I deliver Him, I will set Him on HIGH because He knoweth My Name." He had proved His knowledge of that Name in verse 2, in taking JEHOVAH for His God. In Him thus set on high the Christian may see both eternal life and salvation revealed (ver. 16), and thus adoringly learn how the blessed God has achieved victory in a Man for Himself and us, over all the disaster of the previous Psalm. The repetition of the word "because" in verses 9 and 14 should be particularly noted as showing the perfection of motive in the life of the Lord Jesus, and how each motive was appreciated in heaven and received its due reward. May our souls find in this perfection our spiritual food so that we may truly live by Him (John 6. 57).

PSALM 92. This Psalm has the title "A Song for the Sabbath Day," and according to the Mishna, a Hebrew treatise on Jewish customs, etc., was appointed for use in the Temple services on that day (Perowne). We know from the teaching of our Lord that though the Sabbath was made for man, it was never enjoyed by man, and the Psalm evidently looks forward to that time when the whole world will be blessed under the righteous sway of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and enjoy a true and lasting rest.

The structure of the Psalm is noteworthy; there is a central verse composed of only one line, with seven verses preceding and seven following it. The central verse gives the great subject and foundation of the whole: "Thou, O Jehovah, art on high for evermore." There is therefore no question, as in

the previous Psalm, of finding the secret place of the Most High and the restful shelter of the wings of the Almighty; but the might of Jehovah is celebrated, being witnessed by what He has manifestly accomplished. His works are great and His thoughts deep. The natural man, like a brute or a fool, sees not the purpose of God either in mercy or judgment. The difficulties that arise in so many minds (see Psalm 73.) as to the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous are here quickly solved: if the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they should be destroyed for ever. To one taught of God their present prosperity is evidence of their ultimate ruin (Luke 16. 25).

In the first part of our Psalm, we find that the knowledge of the ways and works of Jehovah (ver. 4), which manifest His lovingkindness and faithfulness (ver. 2), and thus lead to true acquaintance with Him and the value of His Name (ver. 1), call forth praise and thanksgiving.

Such is the way God is pleased to reveal Himself in all dispensations. His work for us indicates His true character, and the knowledge of Him, thus revealed, is the measure of our spiritual growth.

The last seven verses emphasize the same line of thought, but in the reverse order; the enemies of Jehovah are first judged and then the righteous are blessed, exalted and flourish, not in a hostile world but in the courts of Jehovah, in privileged nearness to Him. There, in contrast to the ephemeral prosperity of the wicked, they bring forth fruit in old age, are full of sap and green, and this to show that Jehovah is upright and that no unrighteousness is in Him. How may we translate this into New Testament language? The blessed grace of God has planted us not in the precincts of any temple made with hands, but "in Christ," and just as the Apostle would have his beloved children reminded of

“my ways which be in Christ” (1 Cor. 3. 17), so also he exhorts the Colossian believers to walk in Him (chap. 3. 6). Another Apostle tells us that it is only as we abide in Him we bear fruit (John 15.). This preservation in continued fruitfulness of the righteous is according to our Psalm dependent upon the great fact of the central verse: “Thou, O Jehovah, art on high for evermore.” Similarly in the New Testament prayer for the Christian is that he might be strengthened according to the power of His glory, and this as the means of bearing fruit in every good work (Col. 1. 10, 11). Those of us who have sought power and inspiration from within will realize the difference of drawing from another and unfailing source of supply.

PSALM 93. This Psalm concludes the introduction to the fourth book. The reign of Jehovah is celebrated and the world enjoys a rest, never before known, under the greatest of the sons of Adam. The kingdom of Solomon with no adversary or evil occurrent had prefigured it. But the Psalm looks forward to the time when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and this scene, hitherto marked by the repeated overturnings of God’s chastisements, shall be established that it cannot be moved. All the hostile

forces of the nations, represented by the floods, the many waters and mighty breakers of the sea, may spend their rage: all their efforts will be vain; Jehovah on high is mightier than all. Heaven and earth will be shaken in the conflict, but the result will manifest what was always true to faith that the testimonies of God are very sure and can be implicitly trusted. Finally, power will be put forth to secure what had never been reached during the ages of man’s testing and responsibility, the holiness proper to the house of Jehovah, and this for ever. This character is attached to God’s dwelling among men at its first mention in Exodus 15. 13, and will be its final state according to Ezekiel 43. 12. The church at Corinth is reminded that “the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3. 17). How sadly the church has lacked this, practically, history bears abundant witness. So notorious is this that a prominent ecclesiastic of last century had to admit that the holiness of the church could only be known by faith. What a burlesque of the truth! For if holiness is not manifest, testimony to what God is fails. But it is well to remind ourselves that this sad and undeniable corporate failure only makes the demand for holiness in the individual more imperative (see Phil. 1. 20). And grace to overcome will not be lacking.

Unity.

“**B**EHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps. 133. 1). Many things are good, as works of divine justice, and destroying the enemies of God, yet are not pleasant; and many things are pleasant that are not good, as the pleasures of sin for a season must be pleasant; but unity amongst brethren is both *good* and *pleasant*. Shall we kill and devour one another all the day, and lodge together in one heaven at night; and can we say to one another in heaven,

“Hast thou found me, O mine enemy”? Truth is never victorious by persecution: now the Scripture speaketh of a persecution with the tongue, “Come” (say they), “let us smite Jeremiah with the tongue.” Lions and wolves pursue lambs. But we have not heard of war between lambs and lambs. Why should we strive, for we are brethren? How unseemly that one redeemed one should hate, persecute, and chase another redeemed one, even into the gates of heaven. (*Rutherford.*)

The Collapse of Christendom.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

THE collapse of Christendom does not mean that of the church. By the former we understand the moral sphere of the profession of Christianity, formed by the administration of Christian rites and sacraments; by the latter the work of God in the hearts of men by His Word and Spirit—the body of Christ, of which every true believer is a member, and united by the Holy Ghost to Him, the Head on high. This is clearly a divine work and wholly indestructible, one against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. It was “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world”; and, though gradually formed on earth during the period of Christ’s session at the right hand of God, it will give glory to God through the eternal ages, as we learn from the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is, *par excellence*, the work of God, created in Christ Jesus, the result and fruit of the indwelling Spirit, who is both the seal and the earnest of the final and indefectible result in heavenly glory. For such a work to God be all the praise. It is the outcome of “the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is the church of God—His assembly, and composed of such as we, whose origin and history could not have been worse, for we were dead in trespasses and sins, having no hope and without God in the world. But then, God, who is rich in mercy, loved us while in that condition, and devised a way through the blood of Christ to bring us nigh in Him, and to place us in the relation of children, so that we have “access by one Spirit to the Father.”

Wonderful grace indeed. Well may our hearts flow over in worship.

Then what is Christendom?

It is, in result, the human imitation of the church, a creation by man of the vast profession around us to-day, which has been moulded and defined by certain

Christian doctrines and practices which are distinctive in themselves from other religious or heathen observances. Hence we have Christendom and Heathendom.

Christendom is a generic term used to cover the whole profession of which the true church is but a part, an “*imperium in imperio*”; it is like the shell which contains the kernel, the field in which the crop of wheat exists. It is, administratively, the kingdom of heaven, as in Matthew 13.

In early days the church and the profession were conterminous; they were, indeed, the same. At that time the fires of holiness and devotedness to Christ burned so strongly that “of the rest durst no man join himself to them.” That little, brilliant, faithful company of apostolic Christians offered no worldly attractions to would-be followers. Silver and gold they had none. The cross was their glory; the name of an earth-rejected Christ was their boast; the power of divine love their bond; and the Word of God their weapon and food. They were in the joy of death and resurrection with Christ; their face shone like an angel’s; they were full of the Holy Ghost, and fell asleep in full view of “the glory of God and Jesus.”

Days all too short, testimony all too brief. The thing was so enchanting that the devil could not let it alone. He planned persecution; but martyrdom for Christ’s sake became a pleasure. He devised something more effective, and introduced imitation. Nothing could be more diabolic, nor more awfully successful. “Certain men crept in unawares (Jude), and false teachers brought in damnable heresies” (2 Peter 2.). Wolves spared not the flock, and perverse things were spoken by those least suspected.

The ministry was usurped by those to whom the truth meant nothing. The pulpit began to monopolize the

ministry, and was occupied by the hireling. The proclamation of the pure gospel of God's saving grace was set aside for the teaching of philosophy and ethics. Culture took the place of conversion, and fables that of the truth, and "a great house" has been constructed full of vessels to dishonour as well as, thank God, of honour. But the net result is Christendom, the appalling witness to man's unfaithfulness in failing to safeguard the testimony of the Lord committed to his trust. The leaven of evil (for so it always is) has permeated the entire mass, and fowls of the air find a lodging-place in the branches of the mustard tree.

The spiritual collapse of the profession is complete. A "form of godliness remains," but it is so disfigured by the love of pleasure, and other glaring defects, that the man of God is charged to "turn away from" it (2 Tim. 3.) and to honour the Lord which makes wise unto salvation.

Its end is announced in Romans II. There continuance in God's goodness is pressed, "otherwise" (mark the word), "thou shalt be cut off." Just as unfaithful Israel was cast off, so shall this

highly privileged but most infidel profession of Christianity be finally and definitely "cut off." It shall be (as we read in the letter to the church at Laodicea) spued out of the mouth of the Lord. How nauseous it must be to Him!

The church "caught up!"

Christendom "cut off."

The saints raised and changed, every one of them, in heavenly glory!

The mere profession, opening its door to the coming man of sin, shall, under his hypnotic influence, believe the lie, and be damned because it believed not the truth.

Such is to be the doom of Christendom. "Judgment begins at the house of God"; but, if so, where shall it end?

The days are serious, the end is nearing. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," possibly very nigh. Oh, how deeply welcome to the faithful heart; how terrible to the false professor!

"I would," says the Lord, "thou wert either cold or hot."

Answers to Correspondents.

Will the War further the Kingdom of God?

"Would it be right to say 'The war is being waged by the Allies in order that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ'?"

As far as we are able to judge, we believe that the Allies desired peace and not war, and are fighting for the high human ideals of liberty, the sacredness of treaties and the right of the smaller nations to immunity from attack by more powerful neighbours.

These things are good as far as they go, and may come under the head of "righteousness that exalteth a nation," but they no more make a nation the kingdom of God than the payment of

twenty shillings in the pound makes a man a child of God. They are simply great principles of conduct that are right and proper between nations, to violate which is to be dishonoured before the world. But the kingdoms of this world, whether honourable and faithful to their pledged word or dishonourable and unrighteous in their dealings, remain the kingdoms of this world, they do not by any of these things become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. The war will

only settle current difficulties between the nations involved; and whatever the result of it may be it will be no guarantee that fresh difficulties will not arise to plunge the nations into yet more disastrous conflicts. Those questions that lie unsettled *between God and the world*, and that must be taken up and settled before the kingdoms of this world can become His are not touched by the conflict at all.

No one intelligent in the "sure word of prophecy" could make such a statement as this question suggests, nor venture the opinion that this war will end war, for it is evident from the Scriptures that after the translation of "all that are Christ's" to heaven (see 1 Thess. 4. 13-17), which event coincides with the opening of Revelation 4., fresh and terrible wars will ravage the earth, and particularly Europe, until there arises the man to whom

Satan will give his power—the beast of Revelation 13. 1-10—who shall unify the powers by his superhuman ability and lead them in the most terrible war of all time, to do battle against the Lamb, who is King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 17. 14). But these confederated enemies of God and the Lamb, the nations in full rebellion against God, in the height of their pride and the strength of their resources, shall be utterly humbled and broken by the judgment of God in the valley of Jehoshaphat in the land of Palestine (Joel 3. 9-16; Rev. 19. 11-21). This will be the great Armageddon of which the Scriptures speak, and it will be consequent upon this, when the whole military glory of the world has been destroyed by the coming of the Lord, that the kingdoms of this world will yield to the Lord and He will shape them as He wills.

The Prayer Taught by the Lord to His Disciples.

T. D. R. W.—"Is the prayer commonly called the Lord's Prayer a suitable prayer for Christians to pray now? I have met those who say it is not."

The disciples during the Lord's sojourn upon earth were not in the full Christian position and relationship, they could not be until redemption was accomplished by the Lord in death, and He was glorified as the risen Man at the Father's right hand, and the Holy Ghost had descended from heaven to indwell them as the sons of God (Gal. 4. 6) and as members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12. 13). In connection with these great events there were wonderful revelations of truth which were not made known to them when the Lord was here, and for these revelations He prepared them in John 15. and 16.

Now intelligent prayer is always in accordance with the truth that has been revealed and the relationship in which it puts those who receive it. Thence we find that in the prayers of the Apostle Paul (see Eph. 1. 16-23; 3. 14-21; Col. 1. 9-11) a range of things comes into evidence that is not

contemplated in the prayer in question. That prayer was as suitable to the position in which those disciples were as are these later ones to the position in which we are.

Does then the truth of Christianity, which has been revealed by the Holy Ghost and has the once crucified but now glorified Son of God as its Alpha and Omega, make void those things that the Lord taught His disciples? Certainly not. They abide for us in all their blessedness as the very words of God. And, while we know and maintain the truth that our destiny is the Father's House, and our hope to meet the Lord Himself in the air to take us there, we cannot be indifferent to God's rights in the earth or forget that it is part of our inheritance, as being "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8. 17). So we may surely take up the words of this prayer happily and earnestly, for what can the true Christian heart desire more ardently in days

when God the Father's name is so dishonoured than that it should be "hallowed"; and that His will should be done upon earth, where at present it is so flouted and where the devil and lawless men seem to be having things all their own way; and that His kingdom might come—that kingdom of righteousness and blessing which shall end forever the strife of the nations and the groanings of the earth, and in which His glorious name shall be truly known? These are surely most suitable desires for all who love God

now as they were when the Lord was here. What is objectionable and, indeed, profane is the repeating of the words of this prayer as a parrot might repeat them by multitudes to whom they mean nothing and who have no wish that the Father's name should be hallowed, or that His will should be done on earth, who have never given that will a thought as having any reference to their own lives; for such the repeating of the prayer is vain and sinful repetition.

Service and Fellowship.

F. G.—“Ought my activities in service to be limited to the sphere of my fellowship?”

To confine your service for the Lord to those places or people where, and with whom you feel that you can have happy fellowship without compromising the truth that you know may hinder you from being entirely at the Master's disposal, and would make you a vessel governed by some rule or regulation which would make it impossible for you to be subject to His will and ready for every good work. A needy world is the sphere of our service, but your fellowship, if you walk according to the truth, will be limited to those who fear the Lord (Mal. 3. 16) or those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2. 22).

You may, if you are a vessel meet for His use, be sent to serve Him, and to witness for the truth in places where you could have no right fellowship at all. The prophet of 1 Kings 13. is an instructive illustration of this. He was sent by the Lord to Bethel to witness there against the idolatrous altar that Jeroboam had built, but he had not to *eat bread*—always in Scripture a figure of fellowship or communion—in that city, for it was defiled by its association with that evil altar, and the servants of the Lord must not have fellowship with iniquity. The prophet courageously and faithfully delivered his message, but when that was done he lingered beneath an oak in that place, and yielded

to the temptation to eat bread with an old prophet there. He was punished with death, and stands among all the characters of the Old Testament as “the disobedient prophet.”

You may in serving the Lord have to carry His message into strange places, and witness for the truth in uncongenial surroundings. He may direct you to go and speak for Him where there may be gross unfaithfulness to Himself, in order that you may save some, “pulling them out of the fire,” but, if so, see that you do it with fear, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh (Jude 23.), and be careful lest you are ensnared into acting as though you were indifferent to the unfaithfulness, or had any fellowship with those who are unfaithful.

They may plead that they are Christians and servants of the Lord even as you are, just as the old prophet of Bethel claimed still to be a prophet of Jehovah in spite of his indifference to the dishonour done to the Lord by Jeroboam's altar. You must be guided not by the opinion of others, but by the Word of the Lord, and in the Word we find that if any would be “a vessel unto honour sanctified, and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work” he must purge himself from the vessels to dishonour (2 Tim. 2. 20, 21).

“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14. 27.)

(J. T. MAWSON).

HOW is it possible to keep the heart from troubling when trouble is knocking at every door and peering through every window, and when tribulation and sorrow are rolling about us breast high? How, when cherished props are broken and useless, and earthly hopes have failed and fled, when the human arm upon which we leaned sustains us no more, and the heart from which we drew our sympathy lies dead and unresponsive to our cry? How can we be unafraid when black hatred and unholy strife are tearing with wolfish jaws not the flesh only, but the very souls of men, and all the foundations of the earth are out of course, and our Lord's promise to return seems so long of fulfilment? Can it be possible to keep our hearts from troubling in such sad days, and in such conditions as these, and to have no fear though the road be rough and long, and the earthly outlook so appalling?

Yes, it must be possible, or He who never will deceive or disappoint would not have spoken the words. To discover the secret of this great tranquillity we must work back through these words of the Lord. This absence of all foreboding is the result of a peace which He gives to us, and which He calls “My peace.” He made peace for us by His death, and that peace He has left with us, but that which He speaks of as “My peace” is something different and additional. It is the peace that filled His own heart when He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, the deep unbroken quiet of His soul that depended not on any outward circumstances, but belonged to the place where He dwelt and dwelleth still—the Father's bosom, *i.e.* the love of which He spoke when He said to the Father, “Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.” In this love He dwelt, it was the home of His heart, and so He is described as “THE

ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, WHICH IS IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER.” This peace is connected with this dwelling-place, and within it only can it be known.

This peace was His, for that dwelling-place was His. It was His before the ages of time, it did not cease to be His when He tabernacled amongst men. He had a right to it and was worthy of it: fully, at all times, and for ever worthy of it. He did not leave that dwelling-place when He came to earth, the Father's bosom was still His home, and the peace that belongs to it was His, and He says, “MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU.”

But how can this be? That question also is answered for us by Himself, for He added, “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” The world stands at the doors of its fair mansions and dispenses its benefactions to the poor and distressed that gather at its gates, but these same poor cross not the thresholds, they have no place or portion within the doors. Not thus does the Lord give unto us, for not thus could His peace be ours. He opens the door of His dwelling for us, and bids us “Come and see.” He tells us that His home of love—the Father's bosom—is ours, He shares it with us as His companions and His brethren, and wants us to know its joys and the changeless peace that belongs to it. Can any trouble disturb the deep serenity of the Father's bosom? Can earth-born storms create forebodings in the heart that dwelleth there? And this is the true home of every child of God, it is the place of their dwelling now and for ever.

This surely is the secret of this blessed peace. For notice, that the Lord had already said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your re-

membrance, *whatsoever I have said unto you.*" He had told them of the Father, and of the Father's love. His words were the revelation of the Father, the unfolding of the Father's bosom, of His deep thoughts of love towards them. The Holy Ghost was to bring all this back to their remembrance, and to be the power within them by which they should enter consciously and intelligently into that which had been revealed. And their portion is ours; yours, tired and trembling believer, and mine. You and I may

dwell in the Father's love and enjoy the peace of Christ which passeth all understanding here and now.

Let us not stand at a distance, the prey of dark misgivings, nursing our sorrows and fears as though the Father had forgotten us or was angry with us, but take up the children's place and rest in the Father's love and enjoy that surpassing peace, and let not our hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid, though tribulation in the world be our appointed lot.

Take Things from God's Hand.

BEWARE of brooding over second causes. It is the worst form of atheism. When our most fondly-cherished gourds are smitten, when our fairest flowers lie withered in our bosom, this is the silence of all reflections: "The Lord prepared the worm." Accident, chance, and fate have no

place in the Christian's vocabulary. His is no unpiloted vessel, left to the mercy of the storm. "*The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.*" "Fear not, it IS I, be not afraid." There is but one explanation to all that befalls us: "I will be dumb, I will open not my mouth, because THOU didst it."

The Glorious City to Come.

"There shall be no more curse,"—Perfect freedom from sin.

But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it,—Perfect administration.

And His servants shall serve Him,—Perfect service.

And they shall see His face,—Perfect delight.

And His name shall be in their foreheads,—Perfect resemblance.

And there shall be no night there,—Perfect intelligence.

For the Lord God giveth them light,—Perfect blessedness.

And they shall reign for ever and ever."—Perfect glory.

We should say, What pleases God pleases me. As in active obedience, we do duty because it is His will to command; so, in passive endurance, we bear because it is His will to inflict.
(*Philip Henry.*)

Nothing does so establish the mind amidst the rollings and turbulence of present things, as both a look above them and a look beyond them;—above them, to the steady and good hand by which they are ruled; and beyond them to the sweet and beautiful end to which, by that same hand, they will be brought.

(*Jeremy Taylor.*)

There is in Christ something proportionable to all the straits, wants, necessities and trials of His saints on earth.
(*T. Brooks.*)

When the creature well has failed try the infinite Fountain-head. Test His ability and willingness to sustain and comfort thee in the hour when the best human solaces reveal their inadequacy.
(*McDuff.*)

The House of the Rechabites.

(WM. HY. WESTCOTT).

Jeremiah 35.

THERE are some lessons, I think, behind the story of the Rechabites. Their manly refusal of wine has, of course, been emphasized by Temperance Reformers, and their history been bent, to serve the teetotal cause. This seems to me to miss the whole end of the chapter. The test which God permitted Jeremiah to apply to them was not, as some might think, a temptation to drink. God, who knew their principles and their faithfulness to them, wished to bring out their obedience to their father's word in contrast to the disobedience of Israel to His laws.

It was not a temptation to evil, but a test of principle, and it found them staunch and true. You train a horse to jump, and when he has practised and you know his mettle you take him to the five-barred gate. Your object is not to break his leg nor to throw him, but simply to show that the training and discipline have done their work.

But why did Jonadab the son of Rechab issue such strange commands to his sons? "Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers."

In the first place, it is obvious that you cannot make this a teetotal question. The whole instruction is one; it relates as much to house-building, and seed-growing, and fruit-growing, as it does to wine. You cannot do what Jehoiakim did in the next chapter, excise with your penknife what you do not wish to hear. The knife and the fire serve the *self-will* of the man who hates God's thoughts, but not the *broken spirit* of the one who longs to be suitable to God. Who then was Jonadab? What led him to the conclusion to which he came, and

induced him to pass so stringent a rule, and to urge so strange a life on his posterity?

His short story, as given in the inspired record, is found in 2 Kings 10. 15-28. His ride with Jehu, and his presence with that king when he destroyed the Baal-worship—that is all.

But when you study things, perhaps you begin to understand. What were the times in which Jonadab, or Jehonadab, lived? His name means "The Lord (Jah) is liberal." Evidently his father Rechab had known something of the true God, and had desired his son to bear the testimony throughout the whole of his natural life that God is good. Else why give him such a name? It is when we have tasted that the Lord is gracious we become anxious to transmit the knowledge and conviction of His liberality and grace to our offspring. Yet think of the times in which that testimony was to be borne. Ahab king most of the time, with Jezebel—the most wicked woman of all ages—inciting him to evil. His death did not end the evil, for Azariah, his successor, followed on the same lines. Finally Joram came to the throne. Against him God, through Elisha, sent Jehu. The people were sunk in idolatry, they had turned to Jehovah the back and not the face; the prophets of Baal swarmed over the country; even the removal of 450 of them by Elijah had made little impression; and the sins of Jeroboam wherewith *he made Israel to sin* were raging among the Israelites. So common and so dreadful was this departure from holiness and truth, that it became a formula to describe the state of kings and people: "He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused the children of Israel to sin." It was at this time

that Elisha said to Gehazi, "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?" Elisha had wished to teach Naaman that "Jah is liberal," but Gehazi, by his wish to get a settlement on himself, had frustrated his intention. "The leprosy therefore of Naaman," said the prophet, "shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever."

Do we perceive these lessons? Do we discern the times? Do we understand the state of things around us?

Now it is possible, if not probable, that Jonadab knew Elisha; at any rate, he seemed to have formed the same estimate of his environment that Elisha did. Both appear to have stood morally apart from their generation, Elisha in his service, and Jonadab in his testimony. The days were evil, and he was not at home in them. He was surrounded, it is true, by the favoured nation of God; but they had sunk, as God said they would, to the level of the nations among whom they dwelt (Exod. 34. 11, etc. etc.). When Jehu appeared, like a great revivalist in the midst of the evil, commissioned by God to punish Israel for their sin, he may have thought: "Here comes the change I have longed for; now the worship of Jehovah will prosper; now the people will learn God's righteous ways." And, on Jehu's invitation to ride in his chariot (evidently being known as one who would rejoice to see God's glory manifested), he gave him both heart and hand, to see his zeal for Jehovah. Surely he must have thought the tide had turned when the huge congregation of Baal-worshippers was exterminated.

Alas! how soon must he have been disillusioned. Twice is it immediately stated that Jehu departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin. He went wrong himself, and led others wrong too.

Was it the sense of the hopelessness

of things in an outward way that led Jonadab to be a stranger and a pilgrim in the midst of his own people? Was it the feeling that if, like Abraham, he was on the Divine ground, he was, equally, with Abraham, apart from all that surrounded him? Did he realize that where Jehovah was rejected and His word despised was no settling place for him? Of the father of the faithful it is written: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." For him and his children, the life of strangers; for him, no building of houses, no planting of vineyards,—nothing to tie him to this earth, nothing to even seem like a portion here. He awaited the time when an order of things would be established on earth, wholly of God. Till then he took the pilgrim's garb, and walked the pilgrim's path, and, above all, showed the pilgrim spirit. God was his portion, and he would take nothing in gift from the world, whether from the king of Sodom (Gen. 14. 17 *et seq.*), or from the sons of Heth (Gen. 23. 3 *et seq.*). He held to this principle equally in the day of his prosperity and in the day of his adversity. None but those who have trodden this path a little will know what I mean. Not to let the appetite for gain be whetted when the air rings with the shouts of success, nor to hanker after the getting of things for nothing when the atmosphere is heavy with the pressure of untoward circumstances. Such was Abraham's life; a life of magnificent nearness to God and of corresponding moral distance from those who surrounded him. His heart was attracted by things Divine, he lived in them and fed on them; he had his estimate of his environment formed in God's presence; there was nothing to attract *his* spirit in what attracted Lot, and certainly nothing to attract in the ways of the Canaanite and the Perizzite who were then in the land. So he went

from place to place, and trained his son and grandson to do the same, a dweller in tabernacles.

Is Jonadab's spirit not the same? Was it for him a question of partial abstinence or of teetotalism? No, surely not. His refusal to take part in the pleasures of those around, and indeed to have any portion whatever in the land in the condition which then characterised it, was his protest against that condition. If Jehovah was rejected, and like a stranger in His own land and among His own professed people, so would Jonadab be.

Thus far Jonadab and his sons. But what about ourselves and the times in which we live? Theoretically the hope of the Christian is laid up for him in heaven (Col. 1. 5). It is when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, that we shall appear with Him in glory (chap. 3. 4.). The order of things purposed by God will be ushered in at that time, and *our* part will be a heavenly part with Christ in glory. But somehow the truth has fallen in the street, the professing church suffers "that woman Jezebel" to exercise her baneful influence (Rev. 2.), and the majority of professing Christians seek a portion, and influence, pleasure and position, *here* where Christ was rejected, and where even now few regard His word. The *wine* of human recreation or enjoyment or indulgence exhilarates even Christians; the thousand and one hobbies and recreations, and entertainments of the world, seduce most from their loyalty to Christ, and hinder their spending and being spent for Him. Nay, I will go further. And I will say that the strongest and most successful testimony for Christ is not found usually with those who "buy houses, and plant vineyards" here; with those who join their building societies and possess their own property on this earth. The loosening influence of whole-hearted devotedness to Christ is plainly seen in Acts 4. 34, where "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them." We can easily

see that encumbrances are best got rid of. But in our day it is even more needed, if our testimony is to have a true ring. For we are surrounded by the Ahabs and the Jezebels in the Christian profession; all seek their own also, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. The earth-dwellers are in our midst, they mind earthly things. I do not speak alone of *worldly* things, but *earthly*. The numbers of those who speak of a heavenly calling are great; the souls who are true to it,—can we say they are many? But the worldliness of the Christian profession as a whole, the unmistakable revolt against the authority of God's Word, the consequent disobedience to the simplest requirements of holiness and truth, the love of pleasures distancing the love of God, the settling down into things and affairs *here*—all these call loudly for a seed of Jonadab.

It is a joy to learn from Jeremiah 35. 19 that, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever." So pleased was Jehovah with their obedience to their father, and their fidelity to their pilgrim principles, that He pledged His own Name to secure a succession of "sons of Jonadab" down to the end of time. The question for us is, are we among them? Do we seek after the intoxicating pleasures of this world which wine symbolises? Do we build houses, as though we were fixtures here? Are our hopes detained here by things we should gladly bundle to one side, if we thought the Lord were coming to-morrow? Oh, what need there is for intensesness in our spiritual life, to be *constrained* by the love of Christ! Do you know, I used to think it said "the love of Christ constrains us to live to Him"? That is not it. The love of Christ constrains us, *constrains* us, **CONSTRAINS US!** It holds us, sets the forces of Christian life *in motion*,

never relaxes its hold, always exercises its gentle, happy pressure. It is this that leads us to choose the Abraham path and not the path of Lot. It is this that makes Jonadabs of us, makes association with the sickly and wicked

condition of things around us impossible, and induces the simple pilgrim life in which the heart aims to be free from entanglement here, that it may be yet more willingly and more fully under the constraint of His love.

It was Needed.

THERE is nothing capricious or arbitrary about God's dealings with us. Unutterable tenderness is the characteristic of all His allotments. The world may wound by unkindness; trusted friends may become treacherous; a brother may speak with unnecessary harshness and severity; but the Lord is "abundant in goodness and in truth." He appoints no needless pang.

When He appears like Joseph to "speak roughly" there are gentle undertones of love. The stern accents are assumed, because He has precious lessons that could not otherwise have been taught. There is some deep necessity in all He does. In our calendar of sorrow we may put this luminous mark against every trying hour, "*It was needed!*"

God's Changeless Love.

THINK of the love of God to us, when He spared not His own Son—His well-beloved, but delivered Him up for us all. That love is the same at this hour—the hour of your deep sorrow. O, broken-hearted child of God, it is infinite, immutable. Yes, we may well be quiet, and hush every murmur though all *earthly* blessedness were denied us, if ordered by Him who gave JESUS for us. Lying meekly in the

arms of His mercy, be it ours to say in filial confidingness, "Lord, anything with Thy love."

Let us lean upon Him in little things as well as in great things. After the pledge of His love in Jesus nothing can be wrong that comes from His hands. If tempted at times to harbour some unkind misgivings, let the sight of the cross dispel it.

The Lord's Way.

WHAT is the cause of so much depression, overmuch sorrow, and ungodly murmuring in the hour of trial? It is what Rutherford calls, "Our looking to the confused rollings of the wheels of second causes"; a refusal to rise to "the height of the great argument" and confidently say, "The will of the Lord be done"; a refusal to hear His voice, His loving voice mingling with the accents of the loudest storm, and saying, "It is I!"

loves His people too well to entrust their interests to any other. He metes out our portion. He is the Author alike of mercies and sorrows, of comforts and crosses. All the mercies we have are lent mercies—by Him bestowed, by Him continued, by Him withdrawn.

And how often He does take away, that He may Himself enter the vacuum of the heart and fill it with His own ineffable presence and love. No gain can compensate for the want of Him; but He can compensate for all losses.

(*The Bow in the Clouds.*)

Is there a bitter drop in the cup, and the Lord hath not mingled it? He

A Word to the Weary.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

LET me quote the verse from which these words are taken: "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned (the instructed) that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Is. 50. 4).

1st. Who speaks the word in season.

Who is that "Me" who is instructed by the Lord God for a service so precious and so deeply needed?

It is He who (as the same passage states) asks the question: "Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? . . . I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."

In His hand is all that power. He can redeem; He can deliver; He can darken the face of the sky; in His hand is omnipotence—a truly wonderful Person is He!

And yet He it is who is qualified to do a service so infinitesimal as to drop a word of comfort into the ear of the weary. What vast extremes are in His service!

He who covers the heavens can comfort a poor weary heart here below. And He does!

2nd. How did He acquire this ability?

How, in what school, did He receive this learning? How comes He to act in sympathy and to feel the sorrows of His afflicted people? The answer is given us in Hebrews 2. and 5. There we read that He "took part in flesh and blood"; He became incarnate; He stooped from Godhead glory into the fashion of man; as man He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. He who had hitherto commanded, who "spake and it was done," now learns obedience in suffering, as each of the four divinely-given biographies of His perfect life makes known to us; it was in this school

—that of weariness and weeping, of hunger and poverty, of contact with every phase of human misery and woe, the tears of the doubly bereft widow and the desolated home of Bethany, the painfully visible effects of sin and the groan of a convulsed creation—in this familiar school and not in the unruffled dignities of heaven He learned the art, rare and precious, of sympathy and of speaking a word to the weary. His sympathy is the result of dearly-bought experience, and is, therefore, ever efficacious.

He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. "He was tempted in all (note the word) points like as we are, yet without sin" (sin wholly absent).

3rd. The Word spoken is seasonable.

His word to the weary is spoken, we read, "*in season.*" That is, He knows the exact moment when to whisper into the wearied ear, and just when to support the breaking heart.

It was in a moment of physical crisis in my own career, that I learned the meaning of His rod and staff comforting me. I had, till then, attached the idea of support to that staff. Now, I discovered that there was also "comfort." So says the charming pastoral psalm, where we find the sheep drifting down through the valley, but, even there, comforted by the shepherd's rod and staff! Yes, but this makes the dreaded valley a very easy journey when you find that such comfort is yours in it, and that beyond its shadow is the House of the Lord for ever!

Christ's ministry is always seasonable, never out of season. It may not assume an audible form, as it oft-times did in days of old, as, for instance, to Abraham, Moses, the prophets, or to Paul, once and again, but in some sweet and suitable way by the Word, or otherwise—a psalm, a hymn, or a spiritual song—the patient service and comfort of the living Lord, is proved by the weary.

4th. Who are the weary?

Well, such a question is superfluous to-day. . . . Who is not weary?

“And they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (ch. 51. 64)—a striking statement at the close of this significant prophecy, but not very dissimilar from the “groan” of Romans 8. Wearying and groaning are, did we only allow the fact, the chief features of humanity to-day. The frivolity of nature can only be accounted for by its insensibility. The awful fact is that “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not,” and this diabolic obfuscation of mind, on the part of all such, is the reason of this sad phenomenon. Did

every one feel as he should that he “must give account of himself to God,” how different would be his thoughts and habits! But “God is not in all his thoughts,” and hence the trifling.

But not so is the weary. To him God is real, and needed, and obeyed, and loved. He follows in the blessed steps of his Master and Lord. He realizes the contradiction to God on all hands. He is oft-times weary, rightly so, and he it is who receives and enjoys “a word in season” from Him who has power to redeem and to deliver, as well as to cover the heavens with blackness, or do what He will in the armies of heaven.

*“Thy sympathy how precious,
Thou succourest in sorrow.”*

First Love.

(T. OLIVER, Galashiels).

“Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works”
(Rev. 2. 4, 5).

AS years go on, the Christian has the opportunity of growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Yet the period of “first love” is unique and unsurpassable. What memories to conjure with as we look back on the long nights during which we lay awake filled and thrilled with His goodness, with His love, and with a new-found joy!

But the Lord would have us to continue in the glow of first love. To depart from first love is far more serious in the view of the One whose eyes are as a flame of fire than in our view. The word “*somewhat*” in the authorized version has no equivalent in the original. Its presence conveys the idea that “leaving first love” is a trifle, when in reality it saps the very foundations of experimental Christianity.

With what significance the Spirit would press this matter home to the conscience of His hearers. The word translated here by “left” *has the force of dismissal* and is the same word as in 1 Corinthians 7. 11, relative to the

solvency of the marriage bond, and was applied to the bill of divorcement with which a man of the world at that time put away the wife he had ceased to love. Thou hast “*dismissed*” thy first love.

How terrible that such a parallel can be drawn as descriptive of a soul's relation to its Lord! The Ephesian church had divorced from her heart her blessed Lord. She was losing spiritual stimulus. She was substituting self for Christ. She had ceased to be impelled with a living power within, and hence her Christian life had degenerated to a mere perfunctory routine.

The important point to observe is that this great departure was a natural consequence of the first step. There was, however, little outward evidence of the dread decay which had smitten the roots of the tree. Years later, Ignatius, one of the early fathers, wrote a letter to Ephesus full of her praise. She seemed to him to be still in all her original glory. But his eyes were not so piercing as the eyes which were as

flames of fire. Later on temple and testimony vanished from Ephesus. Her candlestick was removed out of its place!

How often this vivid picture is true of individual experience! The Apostle Paul could say of his Ephesian ministry that for the space of three years he ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears; teaching not philosophy, not ritualism, not the dignity of humanity, but the plain, old-fashioned and much-needed story of repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesus was the scene of his longest ministry. The effect of which had been marvellous. Magicians were rebuked; philosophical libraries were burned; the very temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was in danger. "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" (Acts 19. 20).

The Ephesian assembly received the deepest teaching from the Apostle, as shown by the character of the Ephesian epistle. What Paul had planted, Apollos had watered, and undoubtedly Timothy and John had nourished. Moreover, it was from Ephesus that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19. 10).

What an excellent start Ephesus had made! What an excellent start many a backslider has made too! Many a bright young Christian who bade fair to be a true servant of His blessed Lord slipped away from first love; his spiritual fervour got chilled and now he is fallen. It is the end, not the beginning, which tests our course. The Apostle could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7).

"But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel!" (Isa. 43. 22). Can there be a more heart-affecting expression? This is the mournful language of a neglected friend. Men have conspired to blot out all remembrance of Christ. The church, called by His name, for

the most part rejects Him. The majority of those who profess to shepherd His flock will not hear His voice. Decorum forbids His name to be mentioned in respectable circles. Social life has cast out the Lord of glory as a disturber of its peace. Science ignores Him. Art dedicates its colours and music its melody to other gods. Literature boldly disclaims connection with Him. As the carpenter of Nazareth, the great religious teacher, He may be admissible, but not as Lord over all.

What sufficient reason then there is for His mournful complaint that so many of His blood-bought ones have ceased to call on Him, and have grown weary of His name! Once they seemed to wait upon Him, but now they love the world and the things in the world, preferring its husks to the bread of eternal life.

To such there are three priceless admonitions in the fifth verse of Revelation 2.

1. REMEMBER. "Remember whence thou hast fallen." When God would bring back Israel from sin through His servant Moses, He bids her "remember the days of old" (Deut. 32. 7). There is nothing stirs us up like the memory of brighter days.

2. REPENT. This is a word which is fast becoming obsolete. However painful the process may be it is none the less necessary. Indeed it is in the painful rather than in the pleasing experiences of life that we get the blessing.

3. RETURN. "Do the first works." Go right back in the soul's consideration to where the backsliding crept in and begin over again. There will be found the same loving Saviour at the very spot where the digression began. Our years of failure have not changed His heart of love.

"To those who fall how kind Thou art,
How good to those who seek!
But what to those who find? Ah! this
Nor tongue nor pen can show
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know."

The Ark of the Covenant.

Papers on this instructive type of the Lord Jesus appeared in the March and April (1915) issues of this Magazine. The following notes are additional, and will no doubt be welcomed on a subject that is inexhaustible.

The History of the Ark.

(JAMES GREEN).

EVERY reader of the Old Testament must be impressed with the place which the Ark of the Covenant fills in the inspired record. As far as time is concerned its history covers a space of over one thousand years. Constructed by Divine direction in the first year of the wilderness journey from Egypt to Canaan, and accompanying the hosts of Israel during their forty years' wanderings, it became the centre of attention at the crossing of the Jordan and the taking of Jericho. After this the ark remained at Gilgal for seven years until the division of the land was completed, when it was transferred to the tabernacle set up in Shiloh. During the troublous times of the judges it remained in this place for about four hundred and thirty years, until the death of Eli, when it was captured by the Philistines at the battle of Aphek. This point is a crisis in its history. Hitherto the glory of God had rested upon the mercy seat, now this was so no longer, Ichabod, the glory is departed, was written upon Israel. Psalm 78. 56-64 shows what led up to this and the serious change that had taken place. Up to this time the ark is looked at in connection with the inheritance and the promises and purposes of God. Jordan is the death and resurrection of Christ; Jericho, the victorious power belonging to His place in the heavenlies; Gilgal is the sentence of death upon the flesh; and Shiloh the peace that follows. The deliverance of His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand, sets forth the death of Christ from another point of view, viz. the heir, David, and the sure mercies connected with him.

To return to the history, after being seven months with the Philistines, the ark was restored to Israel, and a place was found for it in the house of Abinadab

at Kirjath-jearim. Here it remained undisturbed for twenty years until the battle of Mizpeh. In the seventy years that follow, during the judgeship of Samuel, the reign of Saul and the first ten years of David's reign, little is heard of the ark. It would seem to have been carried about to various places, for it was with the army at Gibeah (1 Sam. 14. 18), and probably was also at Nob under the care of Ahimelech. However, after the destruction of that city by Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam. 22. 19), we find it again in the house of Abinadab. From this place David sought to remove it, and when his ill-advised attempt had ended in disaster, Obedom the Gittite became its custodian for three months. Great was the rejoicing, when in the appointed manner the ark was brought to Zion and placed in the tent that David had prepared for it; this was its abode for forty-one years. The place which it had in the affections of David is touchingly set forth in Psalm 132. 1-8. During the remainder of his days the king ever resorted to it as the symbol of God's presence with His people, and his faith ever recognised that the ark was the pledge of God's covenant, although no Shekinah glory had dwelt upon it from the days of Shiloh. And faith also now is fully assured that although as yet no manifested glory has crowned the blessed person of our Lord Jesus Christ, nevertheless, He is the pledge of the fulfilment of every promise of God, in the coming days of His Solomon reign. Meanwhile how precious is it to seek Him in the secret place and learn the depths of Divine love and counsel which centre in Him; and, like David, to rejoice in the grace which takes account of those who in themselves are unworthy after the order of the man of high degree.

Then in the history of Israel came the day when the temple of Solomon was completed, and the ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, the staves by which it had been long carried were removed and the glory of God once more rested upon it. Patiently for four hundred and twenty years God was in the midst of His people, bearing with their sin and folly until there was no remedy. The hosts of the Chaldeans were allowed to lay siege to doomed Jerusalem, and then slowly and sorrowfully the glory left its place between the cherubims and the long sentence of "not my people" was written upon the nation. From this time all mention of the ark ceases, it probably perished in the destruction of the vessels by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24. 13). Jewish tradition says that it was preserved by Jeremiah, but there is no evidence to support this, and Jeremiah 3. 16 is against it. The Holiest of the second temple was empty, and when Christ, the true Ark of the Covenant, came to His own, His own received Him not, nor shall the excellent glory be manifest in the midst of the nation, until they shall say, "blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We may gather from what has been said that the history of the ark is divided into four parts: (1) in the wilderness; (2) in the land; (3) in its time of obscurity; (4) in the glory of the kingdom. Christ is the Antitype of the ark in these four ways. Firstly, He was here on earth in wilderness circumstances; He tabernacled amongst men, He was the revelation of God and His oracle, for God was speaking in His Son. In His heart the law was hidden, and in His life it was fulfilled. But, secondly, the land, the purpose of God was before Him, and passing the Jordan of His death and resurrection, He has entered into possession of the inheritance, the true Canaan, the heavenly places. Thirdly, still here on earth it is the time of His rejection and obscurity. Men will seek His help in times of stress, and pray to Him to further their schemes of national advancement; but there is no place in this

vast world system for Him, nor can there be except in those hearts which grace has opened, and in those homes where affection for Him reigns, and who make Him a place as did Abinadab, Obbedom, and David.

Presently the remnant of Israel will seek to find Him a house of rest, and turning to the stone which the builders have rejected, they will refuse to give sleep to their eyes or slumber to their eyelids, until they find out a place for Jehovah, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Like John in Revelation 11. 19, they will look up to see their Messiah, the true Ark of the Covenant, in heaven, the security, the Yea and the Amen of all the promises of God to their nation. Then, fourthly, when He shall have unrolled, with its accompanying judgments, the scroll of the inheritance of the earth, that glorious kingdom shall come, and He shall sit upon the throne of His glory; the house more magnificent, the kingdom more blessed, the glory more excellent than its foreshadowing in the days of Solomon. The true place of the ark on Zion shall be seen in Christ, Jehovah's choice, His dwelling-place and His rest for ever; and Christ shall be acknowledged as the true Shekinah, the effulgence of the glory of God.

Returning again to the history something further may be gathered. The last mention of the ark is in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. 35. 3). But although the desire of the good king was to turn the hearts of the people once more to God, and recall them to God's centre, their regard for the ark had that superstitious character with which they looked upon the idols they revered. So the ark, like the serpent of brass in the days of Hezekiah, must disappear, and Jeremiah's word to them was that they should no longer have it as an object before them. In the days to come when Israel shall be restored to their land, they shall not say, "The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it;

neither shall it be magnified (marg.) any more" (Jer. 3. 16, 17). The name of the Lord shall take the place of the ark as God's gathering centre for all nations. So when the Holy Spirit mentions the ark in Hebrews 9. 1-5, with other vessels of the sanctuary, He says, we cannot now speak of these particularly or in detail; they are types which have passed now that the reality has come in Christ. It is noticeable that in this passage no mention is made of the altars of incense and burnt-offering, and on comparing Ezekiel 41. 22 and 43. 13-17, we find that these two vessels and these only have a place in that glorious

millennial temple of victory and praise. This is exceedingly beautiful, for the sacrifices which will be offered on the one, and the incense on the other, will be the continual remembrance of the victorious work of Calvary and the praise and worship which will arise in the fragrance of Christ. No ark will be needed, for He will be there in person; no shewbread for a memorial, for all Israel will be gathered; no candlestick, for the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh; no laver, for a fountain will be opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness.

The Place of Communion.

(JAMES McBROOM).

The words "*There will I meet with thee, and will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel*" (Exod. 25. 22), refer to the ark, mercy seat, and cherubims in combination, as they served together to form the throne of Jehovah in Israel. There He dwelt, and from thence He communicated His thoughts to His people. In its typical teaching there is presented to us our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. God has spoken in Him (Heb. 1. 1). By Him God was declared (John 1. 18). Every principle of blessing shadowed forth in that ark, whether we look at it as one whole or at each part separately, find their centre of expression and shine forth fully in Him who was God manifest in flesh.

The holy place in the tabernacle and its furniture may typify Christ and His people, or more accurately Israel, as seen in Christ under the eye of Jehovah, but in the holiest, the place of the ark, it is *Christ alone*. Nothing could surpass for heavenly grandeur that which is outlined in the ark. It is Christ, standing alone in His own unique glory and dignity, and in the measureless distance that lies between Him and every other man as the revelation of God—

God manifest in flesh, and as we see this we can understand the words, "There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee."

The Book of Exodus, in which we are introduced to the ark, does not give us the blood-sprinkled mercy seat—that belongs to Leviticus and is connected with our approach to God. Here it is God speaking to man in that glorious Person whose name is "Wonderful," and in it comes before us the fathomless depth of that wonder of all wonders, the inscrutable mystery of the Word made flesh. We must not lose sight of this distinction between Exodus and Leviticus.

God is there. Whether we survey the pathway of the Lord through this world or take it in detail, God is there. Take, for instance, His words to the demoniac, Luke 8. 39: "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things *God hath done for thee.*" The Father was in Him and He was in the Father, and His Deity was recognised at last by the disciples, when Thomas worshipped Him as his Lord and God (John 20. 28).

Perfect manhood is there. From His sinless human heart there flowed holy feelings of deep compassion, as when He removed the fears of a daughter of

Abraham who had sought blessing from Him (Luke 8. 48). Matthew 8. 17 is an instructive passage in this connection also.

The mercy seat is there. He appeared as the mercy seat when a guilty woman of the city drank deeply of the mercy of God at His tear-washed feet (Luke 7.). And when the Pharisees on another occasion would have made Him the servant of the law, to condemn a sinful woman to death (John 8.), He stooped and wrote upon the ground, and if we had discernment we might read that writing; may we not say that it is found in another scripture: "*I will have mercy and not sacrifice*"?

Justice is there. Justice, of which the cherubims spoke, was not wanting. How stern was the rebuke with which He silenced the Herodians and Pharisees. "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22. 21). To trace out the blessed perfections of our adorable Lord is happy work, and the preciousness of the theme must be accepted as my apology for dwelling upon them. The communications from between the cherubims may be viewed as foreshadowing the purpose of God as coming out in the ministry of Christ, particularly in the Gospel of John. He appears in that Gospel as rejected from the beginning (John 1. 10, 11), and there He is presented not in relation to Old Testament promises, but in relation to God's eternal purposes. In His person

divine and eternal relationships are revealed which are set forth as the thought of God for those who believe on Him, and which would be entered into when He had gone back to the Father. Eternal life, Sonship, and the knowledge of the Father, communion with the Father and the Son by the Holy Ghost in a new relationship based upon His finished work. These are some of the communications that came out in Him, and they all referred not to the day in which they were spoken, but to this present time in which the Spirit of God is here below and Christ is at the right hand of God.

But while distinguishing between the mercy seat of Exodus 25. and the blood-sprinkled mercy seat of the day of atonement (Lev. 16.), they must not be separated, for all the communications promised in Exodus 25. had the day of atonement in full view, though the fall of the priesthood (Lev. 10.) was the immediate cause of the ordinance of that day, yet we gather from Exodus 30. 10 that Jehovah had before Him the yearly service of Leviticus 16. before the failure of the priests. So while pointing out the perfections of the Incarnate Son we cannot separate them from His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. Incarnation naturally preceded atonement; but nothing is lost, and all the communications that came out in His life are carried over into resurrection and are established now in Christ and the church.

Why is there no mention of the Ark in the Post-captivity Temple?

The ark was really the throne of God amongst His people Israel, but when they broke His covenant and cast Him off and so acted that through them His Name was blasphemed amongst the nations He gave them up to captivity. Earthly power passed out of their hands and was given to the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and the throne of God in regard to the earth was transferred to heaven, as we read

(S. M. ANGLIN).

in Daniel 4. 26, "the heavens do rule."

On the return of the remnant of Israel from the captivity to Jerusalem the temple and the altar were restored, but nothing is said of the ark. One reason for this we believe to be that though God, because of His mercy, and for His own Name sake, would still be amongst them (Haggai 1. 13), and they would have everything necessary for their worship

of Him, *yet sovereignty was not to be restored to them*; they were not for the time to be great in the earth, but an afflicted and poor people trusting in the Name of the Lord until He who alone could bear the sceptre for the glory of God should come (Zeph. 3. 12). This remnant again failed, as we know, and only a very few were found looking for the Lord when He did come (Luke 1. and 2.).

The lesson is needed by us, for the church has failed in her witness to the world as Israel did to the nations, and consequently any pretentious claim by any party of Christians to "having the ark" is both foolish and mischievous.

Christ (the true Ark) is in heaven. We have Him there, and He is available for all God's people. And if we are, because of the universal failure, an afflicted and poor people in spirit, trusting in the Name of the Lord, we shall have God and the Word of His grace with us, and an altar, too, that is, the power to worship God acceptably (Heb. 13.). We shall be able to "draw near" to God, and enjoy the blessedness of communion with the Father and the Son. These things are still available for all the children of God, every member of the body of Christ; they are enjoyed by those who in true-heartedness and in a humble and contrite spirit answer to the call of God in Hebrews 13. 13.

The Pre-eminent One.

(H. J. VINE).

IN glory bright above
 Thou art exalted, Lord;
 And we who know Thy love,
 Unite in glad accord
 To sing Thy praise, for Thou alone
 Art worthy to ascend the throne.
 Pre-eminent on high,
 O'er all things now supreme,
 Thou once didst stoop to die,
 And by Thy blood redeem
 Our souls from sin. We praise Thy Name!
 Worthy art Thou of endless fame!
 Of all creation, Lord,
 Firstborn, Thou art the Head:
 By Thee, the eternal Word,
 The universe was made:
 Incarnate, Thou the Son didst come,
 That we might share Thy heavenly home.
 And risen from the dead,
 Firstborn in life art Thou:
 The assembly's living Head,
 In heavenly glory now:
 Our glorious Lord! Worthy of praise!
 To thee our joyful songs we raise.
 Son of the Father's love,
 Pre-eminence is Thine;
 O'er all things Head above,
 For ever Thou shalt shine.
 The Godhead fullness dwells in Thee,
 In whom we're blest eternally.

Pre-eminence.—No. 1.

(H. J. VINE).

“That in all things He might have the Pre-eminence” (Col. 1. 18.)

THE question of pre-eminence has been settled long since. It has been settled unalterably by the One who could do it with authority and finality—by our blessed God Himself. Pride, restlessness, and ambition have at all times aimed at pre-eminence. Satan, the first of God’s creatures to fall, fell first through this (and that without any hope of redemption). He was in the mountain of God’s glorious government, and in the Eden in which God’s thoughts displayed their beautiful order; but pride, the snare concerning which grave warning is uttered as to those who have to do with the order of God’s house to-day (1 Tim. 3. 4-7), was his fault and his fall.

Both political and religious pre-eminence call into play the proud energies of men, who have not accepted in faith God’s settlement of the matter. Such efforts will earnestly progress, until a trinity of evil, as foretold in Revelation 13., have their short-lived day upon the earth; when political and religious power will be headed up in two clever men, the beast and the false prophet, energized by Satan. Those who intelligently accept the settlement that God has already made, and have bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ, are sanctified, or set apart, by the truth, from the present workings of “the mystery of lawlessness” which will culminate in the brilliant but diabolical trinity just mentioned (2 Thess. 2. 7).

Pre-eminence in all things belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ. It has been the pleasure of the Godhead thus to settle the matter. This pre-eminence is universal, embracing not only the earth, but also the heavens. It is true that a stupendous work had first to be undertaken and finished by Him, because of the presence of sin, before He could take up the public pre-eminence; and that this work involved the blood-

shedding of Calvary to bring in peace; but we speak rather of the pre-eminence itself, and of the One to whom it unalterably belongs.

It pleased the blessed and ever-glorious Godhead to dwell in Christ, that by Him, through the work done at the cross, all things might be reconciled to that Fullness which dwells in Him; in the Son of the Father’s love, who became Man, and who died and rose again.

As to Israel, and man generally, He is still rejected; though at God’s right hand He is exalted; and all things are put under Him, according to the divine settlement; but not yet as a *public* fact. *Faith* views clearly the present peculiar position; for faith is “the conviction of things not seen,” not seen publicly by the natural eye. Those who have faith take their stand with Christ, and shape their present path in loyalty to Him to whom pre-eminence in all things belongs. This is the present test of faith, and where victorious, it will “be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Everything will be righted then according to the purpose of God in His Son; though that purpose itself goes deeper than filling the universe with glory; but this is “*according to*” it.

Pre-eminence (*proteuon*) is mentioned once only in Scripture, in Colossians 1. 18. Christ is “the Head of the assembly; who is the beginning, first-born from among the dead, that He might have *the pre-eminence in all things.*” The first place is His alone. In this same chapter we read of that which some speak of as the two headships. The headship in creation and the headship in redemption, or more correctly, reconciliation. This is a helpful way of putting it, for “First-born” (*Prototokos*), twice mentioned here, involves headship. In verse 15

Christ is the Firstborn *in the creation*; and in verse 18 He is the Firstborn *in the reconciliation*; and this latter in resurrection, as the former in incarnation. The distinction and dignity of this is His, not because He was, as to time, the first to be born, but because of who He is. Had He been the last to be born, the headship in all creation as Firstborn would still be His. Solomon was not the first to be born of David, but He reigned in regal glory as firstborn on the throne. It is a matter of distinction; only, in that of which we speak, it must necessarily be held in perfect righteousness.

At the present time there is much in connection with "the mystery of lawlessness" which seriously disputes Christ's pre-eminence. It is greatly significant that John, in connection with the one allusion to "the assembly" in his Gospel and Epistles, should single out a proud, place-loving ecclesiastic as usurping pre-eminence; and so, unwittingly perhaps, disputing Christ's pre-eminence; and also as casting out of the assembly brethren whom Christ had received. Neither would he receive an apostolic communication nor apostolic witnesses; but spoke against these latter with wicked words. The Holy Spirit describes this Diotrephes with one word,—*Philoproteuon*, meaning, Lover of the pre-eminence, or Lover of the first place. This word also, like the one which tells of the pre-eminence of Christ, is used but this once by the Spirit of Truth. This man, like those of whom he is a type, set his heart upon the place which belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ alone. He stands out as a solemn warning to any, who, whatever may be the ostensible motive, *seek* a personal *control* in the assembly. This Diotrephean work is seen in casting out and not receiving the brethren. In the third letter of John, which speaks of it, the beloved Gaius is told, in contrast, to be characterized by following what is good, and by receiving the brethren. And especially those who go forth for Christ's Name, and "those who would receive"

the brethren, are mentioned commendably. In the apostle's day these outcasts were in good company; and like the one who suffered from men of the same stamp (described in John 9.), they cannot be deprived of the joy of worshipping in the blessed presence of the Son of God.

The Father has decreed that all shall honour the Son. His voice from heaven singled Him out as His beloved Son, and told us to hear Him. *The Holy Spirit*, too, has come to us, as we are told in John 16. 14, to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ. *A faithful servant* of Christ points souls to Him, as one such said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, Lord" (2 Cor. 4. 5). *His own*, those He is "not ashamed to call brethren," who know His grace and love, show forth His praises, not their own; and as *He* said, "I am glorified in them." Even when He shines out in supreme splendour in the future radiance of majesty and might, in the kingdom and the dominion, we are told, "HE shall have come to be glorified in His saints, and wondered at in all that have believed" (2 Thess. 1. 10). May we therefore have grace to glorify Him more *now*. There will be no failure *then*; but may He be exalted in and through us at the present time.

"He shall be great."

It was in incarnation that Christ appeared as "Firstborn" in the creation. The Headship was His when He came into it in that way; and this place was necessarily His, "because by Him were created all things" (Col. 1. 16). He Himself, as the Creator Son, is uncreated and eternal; for it is said of Him, as the Son of the Father's love, that "*all*" that is "*created*" was created by Him. He could not therefore have been created Himself. He is the One whom Isaiah calls, "Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity." He is the Word who was with God, and who was God, and He it is who became flesh, and came into the creation which He Himself had made, and dwelt among us! [He came,

full of grace and truth, to redeem and reconcile! Wonder of wonders! Marvel of marvels! Behold Him! A Child born, a Son given! "A little Child with Mary His mother"! "His Name is EM-MANUEL, which is, being interpreted, GOD WITH US." Of Bethlehem of Judæa, the favoured spot in the creation, at which the incarnation took place! The Spirit of God said seven and a half centuries before, "Out of thee shall He come forth unto ME Who is to be Ruler in Israel: whose goings forth are from of old, *from the days of eternity*" (Micah 5. 2, N.T.). To Mary, the angel Gabriel said, "*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end*" (Luke 1. 32, 33).

His fragrant life amongst men proclaimed the presence of One who was greater than the greatest that earth had ever seen. The Son, incarnate, had come into His creation. The Firstborn of all creation was here. Men did not recognize this, though they often showed that they felt themselves to be in the presence of One who was beyond their comprehension. When He raised the son of the widow of Nain, "fear seized on all, and they glorified God, saying, *A great prophet has been raised up amongst us; and God has visited His people*" (Luke 7. 16). The woman at Sychar's well enquired, "*Art Thou greater than our father Jacob*" (John 4. 12)? On another occasion the Jews asked, "*Art Thou greater than our father Abraham?*" He replied, "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8. 58). When in the garden beyond the brook Cedron, the band of soldiers with their officers, and the betrayer Judas, sought to take Him; He uttered again those words, I AM; and they went away backward and fell to the ground.

His personal greatness was declared by the works that He did. The fish of the sea obeyed His word; water turned to wine at His bidding; demons released

their victims at His command; and disease disappeared at His touch; strength, and sight, and speech, and hearing returned when He spake; yea, death and the grave, and even corruption, yielded up their prey at the sound of His voice. And these things He did as He walked in this world in lowly circumstances; when with the humble and the meek He was as One that served, when He humbled Himself to minister rather than to be ministered to. What divine grace!

A time, however, is drawing near when He will come in "*great power and glory.*" Circumstances of mighty majesty and regal radiance will then surround Him. All will be changed when He thus returns to take up publicly the Headship in every circle,—in the religious and political, and in the social too. The "great Prophet" will be the Priest-King over all the earth! He shall be great indeed! He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high! So shall He startle many nations! Kings shall shut their mouths at Him! At the One who was once despised and rejected!

Greater than Jacob; greater than Abraham; He will surpass the highest hopes of those men of ancient faith. He will, nevertheless, be still the same Jesus, although no longer in circumstances of humiliation. He Himself is the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Blessed be His Name. When, however, glory is publicly His instead of humiliation; might instead of weakness; majesty instead of dishonour; and universal homage instead of hatred and rejection; He will still use the same powers for the world-wide healing and blessing of men, "the powers of the age to come," which He used before. Then all shall know Him from the least to the greatest, at "the appearing of the glory of OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST," who gave Himself for us, to redeem us to Himself.

*"He who with hands uplifted,
Went from the earth below,
Shall come again all gifted,
His blessing to bestow."*

Conformity to Christ.

(EDWARD WHITE).

Romans 8. 28, 29.

IN this scripture we see what God's purpose is regarding us—that we should "be conformed to the image of His Son," and how all His ways with us as individuals are in keeping with that which He has set His heart upon; nor will He rest until this is brought to full fruition.

In Genesis 2. 2 it is said that God—having finished the work of creation by the forming of man in His image and after His likeness—*rested*. With joyful satisfaction He contemplated the work of His hand in creation and pronounced it very good. But how soon was this condition of things spoiled by the appearance of sin with all its dire consequences, making it impossible for Him to longer rest. How could He rest in a world of sin, corruption, and death? Instead, the words of the Lord Jesus in John 5. 17-27, tell us not of rest, but of the divine activities of the Father and the Son amongst men, so acting in quickening power that another race of men—a new creation, might be produced from Him to whom it is given "to have life in Himself"—a race of men which should be altogether for God's glory, and of which Christ should be the Head—the Firstborn among many brethren. When this is brought to pass and the Firstborn and the many brethren—the Heir and the joint-heirs (Rom. 8.)—are set over a redeemed creation, then God will be able to rest once more in joyful and unbroken contemplation of the wonderful results of the redemptive work of His Son.

The first man was made in the image of God, and after His likeness, crowned with glory and honour and set over the works of creation, as given us in Genesis 1. 26 and Psalm 8.: placed thus to represent God in authority and character. Had Adam retained this position He would have been for God's glory. Instead of this, however, he fell

a prey to the seduction of the enemy; distrust usurped the place of implicit confidence in God, with the result that so far from holding sway over the earth, as representing God, he and his progeny became subject to the evil power to whose enticements he had succumbed; and instead of retaining that moral likeness to God, the Lord Jesus could say, when here on earth, "Ye are of your father the devil." Such was the condition into which man was brought by sin that, instead of holding his place of dominion subject to God's supremacy, he deliberately handed it over to Satan who has taken the sceptre as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

Yet everything that God has made must come under man's dominion, for so God has purposed and decreed; and though this has not yet been brought to pass, yet we can say that in the MAN CHRIST JESUS, exalted at God's right hand, we see the appointed Heir of all things; One altogether for God's pleasure, the effulgence of His glory, the express image of His Person. He is competent to recover all for God. In a day to come He will take up this position and reign over the wide creation.

But God's purpose involves more than having Christ personally in such a sphere of glory, there must, also, be the "many brethren" of Romans 8. 29; the "many sons" of Hebrews 2. 10. His purpose is that we should be associated with His Son, and conformed to His image, when Christ will be seen *in us*, a fitting outcome to the arresting truth made known in the first verse of this same chapter, Romans 8., that we are "in Christ;" not in Adam, for in God's sight we have been transferred from the Adam race to that of which Christ is Head. The death of Christ, who was the "last Adam," severed our

links with that old race that lies under the condemnation of God. In resurrection the "last Adam" is a "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15. 45), and He breathed into His disciples on that resurrection day that "life more abundantly," life on the resurrection side; a life to be enjoyed in the power of the Holy Ghost; a life, too, not innocent as that breathed into Adam, and which became fallen and sinful, but a life holy in nature, the energy and power of which is the Holy Ghost.

How good to know, then, that God sees us no longer "in Adam" but "in Christ," and that all His ways with us are to produce *Christ in us* even now, so that nothing but Christ will shine forth from us in that day when He is manifested, and we conformed to His image are manifested with Him.

It is as we grasp the truth of verse 29 that we can take up the words of verse 28 and use them intelligently—"we know that all things work together for good." This has been illustrated thus: A sculptor selects a piece of marble, having in his mind a form to which the finished work will correspond. He starts to work, and at first—if we may imagine the stone to be imbued with human faculties—it winces at every

blow of the hammer and endeavours to escape the unpleasantness of the chisel's sharp edge, muttering complaints all the while, expressing its inability to understand why it should be subjected to such a disagreeable process when other pieces seem to have such an easy time. The sculptor ceases work for a moment, explains his object in choosing this piece from amongst others, and setting his own model before the stone, says, "This is what you will be like when I have finished with you." "Like that?" says the marble; "had I known this at the start, how patient I should have been." Forthwith we can imagine the piece of stone becoming almost enthusiastic as the work progresses, encouraging itself with the thought that no matter how sharp the blows, each one is working out the design of the master-mind. Thus if we keep in mind verse 29 that God's thought is to have us like Christ, this will enable us to say in every circumstance of life, "pleasing or painful, dark or bright," "We know that all things work together for good," for they all are in view that day of days when God's gracious purpose shall be brought fully to pass, and we whom He foreknew before the world had shape shall be glorified before Him in the relationship of sons and in the image of His Son.

The Love that is Stronger than Death.

"O love of God, how deep and great!
Far deeper than man's deepest hate;
Self-fed, self-kindled like the light,
Changeless, eternal, infinite."

"*MANY* waters cannot quench love." Christ loves you better than His life, for He gave away His life to get your love. He spared neither cost nor expense. Christ, who was without sin, gave Himself a ransom for you. They laid thieves' bands on our Saviour's hands, that had never stolen, that had never shed blood. Bands bound His hands, but love, mercy, and grace bound

His tender heart with stronger bands and cords, to loose us out of the bands of sin. Live on His love, and you are wholly fed. Lie on His love, and that is a sweet bed.

Christ's sufferings were so admirable that they made Him a world's wonder! Look on His Person, and wonder that the Way should be weary; He had

strength, yet was faint; Life, yet died; Bread, yet was hungry; and Water, yet was thirsty. Is not this a rare matter? What wonders do we see! The hand that spanned the heavens pierced with nails! The feet of Him that treadeth on the stars, nailed to a tree!

Darkness was in all Judea when our Lord suffered. And why? Because the Candle that lighted the sun and moon was blown out. He took away the sun with Him, as it were, to another world, when He that was the world's sun was put out. When He went out of the earth, the sun would not stay behind Him. Sun, what ails thee? "I have not will to shine when my Lord is going to another world."

He fought through death and hell to find you; seek ye Him through all troubles. . . . He left heaven for you; will ye not quit the earth for Him?

Man's love and a king's love are hunted for very much; and yet they die, and their love dies with them, and often their love dies before themselves. But who seeks Christ's love, that changes not? Yea, this is a matter of admiration and wonder, that Christ should have thought on us worms of the clay ere ever we were.

"*He was asleep on a pillow*" (Mark 4. 38). He was asleep who can neither slumber nor sleep. How then? Can God sleep? Christ took our condition and place to express the depth of the love of God to mankind: the lower our glorious Redeemer was, it hath the greater impression of love. *Love, love* answereth all our questions of wonder? O bread of life, why wast Thou hungry? O well of life, why wast Thou thirsty? Hast Thou not made all the fountains in all the earth? Love, free love, answereth all these questions: for us, for us sinners He came thus low.

Oh, what love! Christ would not intrust our redemption to angels, to millions of angels; but He would come Himself, and in person suffer; He would

not give a low and base price for us. He would buy us with a great ransom, so as He might over-buy us, and none could over-bid Him in His market for our souls. Oh, we under-bid, and under-value that Prince of love, who did over-value us; we will not sell all we have to buy Him; He sold all He had, and Himself too, to buy us.

When ye seek Christ, you know not His weight and worth: when you shall enjoy Christ immediately up at the well-head, this shall much fill the soul with admiration: "I believed to see much in Christ, having some twilight and afternoon, or moonlight glances of Him down in the earth; but, oh! blind I, narrow I, could never have faith, opinion, thought, or imagination, to fathom the thousandth thousandth part of the worth, and incomparable excellency I now see in Him."

"Amen: Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It shall not be well till the Father, and Christ the Heir, and all the weeping children, be under one roof in the palace royal. The wife of youth, that wants her husband some years, and expects he shall return to her from oversea lands, is often on the shore; every ship coming near shore is her new joy; her heart loves the wind that shall bring him home. She asks at every passenger news: "Oh! saw ye my husband? What is he doing? When shall he come? Is he shipped for a return?" Every ship that carrieth not her husband is the breaking of her heart. What desires hath the Spirit and Bride to hear, when Christ shall say to the mighty angels, "Make you ready for the journey; let us go down and divide the skies, and bow the heaven: I will gather My prisoners of hope unto Me: I can want my Rachel and her weeping children no longer. Behold, I come quickly." The Bride, the Lamb's wife, blesseth the feet of the messengers that preach such tidings: "Rejoice, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments; thy King is coming."

(Sermon by Samuel Rutherford.)

Light for the Last Days.—No. 7.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy 3.

THE Apostle does not lead Timothy to look for any improvement of things in Christendom. The first chapter speaks of the decline of heavenly-mindedness and spiritual vigour, and the second chapter of the corruption of the truth by profane vain babblings, and the need for separation from men who traffic in such things. And these evils were existent in the day in which the Apostle wrote this epistle.

But worse was to come. The baleful influence of these errors were to be felt throughout the whole professing body, and not only here and there was the gangrene to manifest its deadly presence, but the whole mass was to feel the horrible effects of the invasion of those accursed pestilences, that had their origin in the abyss of evil.

In the last days—days that were yet to come when the Apostle was writing—difficult times were to manifest themselves, for men would become selfish, covetous, self-willed, unnatural, hateful, traitorous, savage, pleasure-loving, with a thin veneer of piety over all, but without the smallest particle of its true power.

And all this in that which still professes the name of Christ. It is not a description of that which has always been found outside Christianity, but a description of the corruption of that which was originally established in such heavenly power and blessing at the beginning of the present dispensation of grace. The world, as such, was always evil, but in the company described in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles there was nothing of that which we get here. Then men loved God; and not themselves, but one another. Then men were not covetous, but each man was found giving all he possessed for the good of his neighbour. There one might have breathed the atmosphere of heaven, here spreads its noxious odours the effluvia of hell.

From these Timothy was to turn away. There was no mending of them. Instruction would all be lost upon them. They were to be left to God, who would take them in hand in His own time and way. The dupes of those who arise out of this horrible miasma of evil are silly, giddy worldlings, who never come to the knowledge of the truth, though always learning and apparently anxious to be in possession of it. But having given their ears to those who oppose the truth, as these leaders do, it is impossible for them to come to the knowledge of it. The fact is, they have no heart for that which is of God, whatever profession they may make of love to Him, and therefore the lie of Satan has more acceptance with them than the truth of God.

But those leaders who spring up out of the pleasure-loving mass described in the beginning of the chapter withstand the truth. They set themselves in opposition to it, in the same way in which the magicians withstood Moses; that is, by counterfeiting the power of God. When Christ ascended on high He gave gifts for the effectuation of all that relates to the purpose of God regarding this present dispensation: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These were to remain for the perfecting of the saints, with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ, and they do remain until the present time; for Christianity truly subsists in the power of God. The creature can contribute nothing to it. These gifts are the expression of the power of God in Christ risen and in the Holy Spirit on earth, and by them all the work of God is continued until this present day, and shall be continued while the church is upon earth.

But men who have no part in this power have imposed upon Christendom a class of men who answer to the

magicians of Egypt who stood up against the emancipation of the people of God from the slavery of Pharaoh. They profess by human ordination and a smattering of learning to do the same things as the true servants of the living God do by His almighty power. But their object in this is to keep the saints of God, who are a heavenly people, still in connection with the system of the world. The truth is that which leads the hearts of the saints of God heavenward, and out of the world of which the devil is the prince and god. Speaking to the Father, the Lord says, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth." This it is which sanctifies the true people of God, leading their hearts to where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and therefore is the truth opposed by those who desire to hold fast to things here, and who know little or nothing of the true heavenly character and calling of Christians.

But what is needful is a perfect acquaintance with Paul's doctrine. This is of the utmost importance in a day like the present. The true heavenly calling of the people of God, and their session even now in the heavenly places in Christ were truths that, if we are to be here in a way pleasing to the Lord, we cannot do without. To maintain this position in a practical way while here upon earth we have to meet the infernal forces which are all marshalled against us (Eph. 6.), and if we are not continually watchful we shall be driven from it. Not that the position could ever be really lost to us, for it is held by Christ, but we might lose it as a governing truth and an enjoyed portion in our practical lives. Let us see to it that we put on the whole panoply of God, and in dependence upon Him draw the sword of the Spirit in defence of the land that is really ours, and let not the fruitful land of Bashan divert us from our true inheritance beyond the power of death.

But there is also the manner of life of the Apostle to be considered. His manner of life was consistent with his teaching, as it always should be with all

the ministers of the truth. He was not like the Scribes who sat in the seat of Moses, teaching one thing and doing another. With Paul the truth he taught was set forth in his ways. It was delineated in his manner of life. He could say to the Philippians, "Brethren, be followers together of me." He was a true follower of Christ, and was therefore that which every other saint should be.

But he also mentions his purpose. His one object, as far as his walk upon earth was concerned, was to live Christ; that Christ should be glorified in his body, whether by life or by death. Christ was his one object in all his activities down here; and also He was the goal before him in glory. To reach Him there, and to be conformed to His image, was the one pursuit of his soul. He says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (or out from among) the dead. . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." With him Saul of Tarsus was utterly displaced by the Christ of God. What an object lesson for us!

Next he speaks of his faith that nothing could shake. His confidence in God under every circumstance stood the test imposed upon it. His long-suffering, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings, all of which were well known to this devoted disciple of Christ, as also was the never-failing intervention of the Lord for the deliverance of His beloved and faithful servant. But throughout this whole dispensation no other pathway than this can be found for the faithful, for things will become worse and worse in the profession of Christianity, and therefore all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

But the faithful disciple is to abide in the things he has learned, knowing of whom he has learned them. He is not to trust to men he does not know. Others may put their trust in what they

are pleased to call the fathers of the church, but the true disciple of the Lord has no confidence in any of them. He knows the apostles, and those whom the Spirit of God has used to make known His mind, but the fathers he knows not, nor can he trust his soul to the doctrines put forth by any of them. Some of them may have been in their measure devoted to the interests of Christ; he is not called upon to pass any judgment regarding them, but he trusts not to their teaching, except so far as it is in accord with the Word of God; but if it is in accordance with the Word of God, then it is not the men he is trusting, but the writers of the Scriptures, in which everything is found that is necessary for us to know.

Timothy from a child had been acquainted with the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. It is the Old Testament Scriptures that the Apostle speaks of, for Timothy could have had no others; but these testified of Christ, and when he was brought, through the instrumentality of the Apostle, to faith in Christ, what he had learnt became of infinite value to his soul.

It is well to have the youthful mind well stored with the precious truth of Scripture, for even if for many years there may be no appearance of the quickening work of God, still when that does take place, all that has been learnt in childhood becomes a mine of wealth which can be used by the Spirit of God for enlightening and establishing the heart in the knowledge of the divine mind. The seed sown may take long to germinate, but the one who thus sows the precious seed in the youthful soul will not find in the day of the Lord that his labour has been in vain.

But now the Apostle can also speak of the New Testament Scriptures, and he says, "All Scripture is given by in-

spiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." The Scriptures cannot be done without, and the man of God requires nothing else to give him the knowledge of the will of God. There is no good work that has not its origin in the Holy Scriptures. Everything needful for our path through the world is found there.

But we require to have that Word as the living principle in our own souls. The Apostle prayed for the Colossians that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing. It is not only our privilege to see the will of God in Scripture, but to have it engraven upon our hearts, so that we are filled with the knowledge of it. It becomes then part of ourselves. It is not merely an external rule to guide us in our earthly journey in harmony with the mind of the Master whom we desire to serve, but it has formed us by its own living power, which is that of the Holy Spirit of God, so that it is our very nature. It is not a mere commandment, though it never ceases to be the authoritative voice of God in His Word to our souls, but it has so shaped us, that we fall naturally into the pathway of His will, as a path well known to our souls, and in which is all our delight.

It cannot deceive us, so we may put our whole trust in its communications. We cannot transgress its statements with impunity. We are to carry out its principles, precepts, and commandments, unhampered by the fear of man. May we not forget, when we read it, or hear it read, or when it comes up in our minds, that it is to be esteemed more than our necessary food; for man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The Epistle to Titus.

(E. Cross).

Chapter 2.

HAVING given directions regarding the bishops, the Apostle now turns in a more general way to the conduct that becomes Christians in the various walks in life in which they are found, old men, old women, young men, young women, and slaves. The absence of instructions for masters is significant, leading to the inference that few in Crete, or more probably none such, were found among those who had embraced the faith of the despised Nazarene. We may remember how that of those who followed the Lord Himself when He was here, the chief among them were "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4. 13). How "marvellous" then were the effects produced in them by the fact that "they had been with Jesus"; and it is on the necessity of like effects being produced amongst the "believers" in Crete that the Apostle insists in this Epistle to Titus. In any case, where effects are not produced, either the cause is not efficient in itself, or it is hindered by opposing elements. The powder may be of the finest quality, but a little damp, or other deleterious circumstance, may destroy its efficacy. The vine may be of the "choicest" kind (Isa. 5. 2), but the fruit may be disappointing. The seed may be of the best (Luke 8. 11), and skilfully sown, but the quality of the ground may render it fruitless; and, as the object of his labours, it is fruit the husbandman seeks. The final word of exhortation left by the Lord to His disciples, at the close of His ministry, is, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13. 17). He had taught them many things through His life. This was to be the test of their profit, and the happiness accruing to them thereby.

Much stress is laid in this epistle on "good works." Indeed, it might be said to be the subject uppermost in the

Apostle's mind in writing it. A survey of the state of things in Crete, and the well-known character of the people (chap. 1. 12, 13), makes this easy to understand. Of what avail would Christianity be if it did not produce a radical change in their ordinary habits and ways of living? Of what avail is it to us, if it does not act similarly? The mere acceptance of truths, however blessed in themselves, is of no practical value, if it leaves us where it finds us. Better never to have known the truth than, professing to know it, "by works to deny it." Such knowledge is profitless to the soul; it is dishonouring to God. It is for this reason that the Apostle is here so insistent on the need of "good works."

There are two words in the original which we render alike "good"; *ἀγαθος* and *καλός*. Of these the first, "agathos" = that which is in itself essentially, supremely good; which, in its own kind, is superlatively so, and perfect. It is accordingly so said of God. "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good, but One; that is God" (Matt. 19. 17). It occurs in the following passages in this epistle:

Titus 1. 16: professing to know God in works they deny Him, . . . as to every *good* work found worthless,

2. 5: wives are to be *good*—really so—chaste, etc.,

2. 10: slaves are to show all *good* fidelity to their masters,

3. 1: and, believers were to be ready to do every *good* work.

The second word, "kalos," means rather, fair, comely, beautiful in outward form, adapted to the end in view. And so the disciples spoke of the "goodly" stones with which the temple was adorned. It appears in our word "calligraphy," the art of beautiful writing.

It occurs in the following passages in this epistle:

Titus 2. 7. Titus was to show himself a pattern of *good* works.

2. 14: Christ would redeem to Himself a special people zealous of *good* works.

3. 8 (*bis*): It is a matter to be strenuously insisted on that they who have believed on God may take care to pay diligent attention to *good* works. These things are *good* and profitable to men.

3. 14: and let ours also learn to apply themselves to *good* works for necessary wants, that they may not be unfruitful.

These passages show the importance of a conduct and manner of life, which is not only essentially good in itself, but beautiful and comely in its outward display, as well for the glory of God as for the profit of those who are the subjects thereof. There is but one spirit running through both the Old Testament and the New, and He, who, by His Spirit, moved the Apostle to speak of these things to Titus, is the same who tells us that, "In that day shall the germ, or sprout, (tsemach, from which the branch, netzer, springs, Isa. 11. 1) of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel" (Isa. 4. 2). And what will be effected prophetically for Israel by and by by their Messiah, is effected now by His Spirit for those who believe in Him beforehand. Such is the adaptation to circumstances by the Apostle of the workings of God in grace, which are in themselves constant and independent of times and circumstances, according to His will. For an example of a similar kind of adaptation, cf. Psalm 116. 10, 2 Corinthians 4. 13.

Another word in this epistle to which attention has been already called, and one on which the Apostle lays much emphasis, is *σώφρων*. It is a highly important word, and never more worthy of consideration than it is to-day.

Sōphrōn = soberminded, having the mind sanely, savingly girt up in self-control and reflection, clear of the influences that make for folly and frivolity in the world. When one sees the thoughtless irreflection, the giddy and irresponsible occupation with the show of things as they clamorously invite attention, the vanity without substance, without God, in which men drown themselves in perdition, the value of this word stands out as of striking importance. It occurs in the following passages in the epistle:

Titus 1. 8: the bishop must be *sober-minded*, that he may be able both to encourage with sound teaching, and refute gainsayers.

2. 2: aged men must be *grave, sober-minded*.

2. 5: aged women are to teach the young women to be *discreet*.

2. 6: younger men are to be *discreet*.

2. 11: the grace of God, that carries with it salvation to all men, teaches us that we should live *soberly*.

The importance of this cannot be overstated. It would be impossible to conceive a picture of Christian conduct without it. The omission would leave a gaping blank, presenting neither form nor fashion consistent with the faith of God and of Christ.

Verses 9, 10: "bondservants to be subject to their own masters." This would correct any erroneous notion that Christianity was meant to upset any of the existing relationships of social life. Contrariwise, it confirms the order of God in the world, and establishes it on the indestructible basis of the obedience of Christ. The Christian slave is a slave still, according to the flesh; but he serves his master henceforth according to the will of God. He is accordingly to conduct himself, not only externally in word and deed, but in the feelings of his mind internally, so as to adorn the teaching, which is of God our Saviour,

in all things. A beautiful picture of that which is reserved for the poor slave, found oft-times in the power of a hard and unsympathetic master, and with but scanty privileges to relieve his lowly lot, or to elevate him in any way either in mind, body, or estate. It would not be within the power of art to paint the lily, or to beautify the rose; yet here the slave is set on what is infinitely higher, viz. to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in everything. Wonderful grace to stoop so low, "to raise up the poor out of the dust, to lift up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes," and thus to magnify the saving power of God, out of the wreckage that sin has effected in the misery of man!

Verses 11-14: The reason for the preceding directions is here given, founded on the universality of the grace of God, which carries with it salvation for all men, not excluding slaves, having appeared. It might be grammatically rendered, as in the A.V., "has appeared to all men"; but that would be to miss the evident thread of the Apostle's argument. The saving grace of God has appeared. Sin had held man captive in its power; but the saving power of God has appeared. It was the "epiphany" of this saving power, come in the coming of Christ. The same expression is used in 2 Timothy 1. 8-10, "be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who has saved us . . . according to His own purpose and grace, given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time, but has been now made manifest (*φανερωθεῖσαν*, flared out into the light of revelation) by the epiphany of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." Think of the vast scope of this passage. Think of its application, among other things to the conduct of a poor slave in his menial circumstances, encouraged thereby so to conduct himself as to adorn the doctrine of God in the details of his humble and unnoticed life. Think of

the powerful and holy motives whereby his soul would be strengthened in the endeavour to act in some measure of consistency with those divine and incorruptible principles, amid the dark and difficult circumstances in which his lot was cast. The saving power of God would lift him out of the degradation of his social standing, ennoble his mind, and elevate him in the service of God to an equal status with the highest of the high, the noblest in the land.

Such is the saving grace of God that teaches us through discipline (*παιδείουσα*) that, putting pressure on the evil that is inherent in us, we should live as to ourselves soberly, in self-restraint, as to others righteously, in consideration of them, and as to God piously in this present age, looking forward beyond it to another age of transcendent blessedness, where all the hopes begotten in us by the Spirit will be fulfilled, at the epiphany of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us,—the greatness of the price showing the value of the asset,—that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous for good works.

A "peculiar" people, *περιοῖσιον*. This word means first, something over and above, and from thence the idea of something special, and then specially good, excellent, peculiar. It is said of Israel (Exod. 19. 5, Deut. 7. 6, Ps. 135. 4), and both Paul and Peter refer to the same idea as a "possession" of costly price; cf. Ephesians 1. 14, 1 Peter 2. 9.

Verse 15: These things Titus was to enforce by speech, by exhortation, by rebuke, and that with all authority. At all costs, and by every means, they must be insisted on. Nor was he to allow himself to be gainsaid, or his authority flouted. He had Cretans to deal with, and he must deal with them accordingly. It is not, as in 1 Timothy 4. 11, 12, a question of his youth, but of his authority. ۛۛۛ }

Studies in the Psalms—Fourth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 94.—96.

WE have seen in the preceding Psalms of this Book an outline of certain of the circumstances in which the Jewish believers will find themselves in the last days. The wilderness journey of Psalm 90. will be repeated in some of its features. The enemies of Psalm 92. will be pursuing their works of iniquity against the righteous, and the great Gentile powers referred to in Psalm 93. will add other elements of distress to their cup of sorrow. Hence the great burden of Psalm 94., found in verses 1, 2, is a cry for vengeance, while at the same time there is the acknowledgment that such dealing belongs to God alone. The parable in Luke 18. refers to such a prayer as this, the very words of which the Spirit supplies in the Psalm. In the Gospel the Lord gives assurance of God's answer, "and shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night to Him, and He bears long as to them?" Although while grace reigns such a petition is out of harmony with the dispensation; yet it is manifestly in accordance with righteous government, and therefore when the throne of God is no longer a throne of grace (Rev. 4. 5), a prayer for retribution on enemies will again be offered and answered (Rev. 6. 10, 11).

The second section, verses 3-7, exhibits the pride, the abominable cruelty and impious character of the oppressors of the saints. Little wonder that in their helplessness they cry to God, or that in the might of His delivering power He responds, "the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come" (Isa. 63. 4).

Following this, in verses 8-11, an appeal goes forth to those among the people (Jews) who, deceived by the subtlety of the oppressor, will take sides with him. Whatever may have been the historical occasion of this Psalm (in the Septuagint it is attributed to David), prophetically it looks on to the

time of the wilful king of Daniel 2. 36, who will occupy the throne of verse 20, and those of the people who follow him will be increased with glory, causing them to rule over many and divide the land for mutual profit (ver. 39 R.V.). These misguided patriots are charged (in the same terms as in Psalm 92. 6) with the senseless folly of attributing deafness and blindness to the Creator of ears and eyes. In truth it is the rebellious will of man which asserts his nescience and says to God, "Depart from us" (Job 22. 17). Verse 10 adds a further argument from the moral government of the world, and should be rendered, "He that exerciseth discipline over the nations, shall not He correct? Even He that teacheth man knowledge."

The next section, verses 12-15, shows how in all the conflicts of the powers of this world and consequent suffering of the saints, the believer finds his blessing in the instruction of Jah; for suffering apart from such teaching, not rarely, hardens the heart. Let us then seek while under suffering to learn, and not rest content with the common platitude, "it must be for some good purpose." In thus profiting by discipline we enter into rest, even while the days of adversity continue, and are able to leave the dealing with evil with God, awaiting His time (Isa. 30. 15). For Jehovah never gives up His own, and presently judgment and righteousness too often separated, as in the courts of Ahab (1 Kings 21.) and Pilate, will harmonize, and the upright in heart will be blessed in attaching themselves to the God whose authority will be enforced in justice.

In verses 16-19 the Psalmist tells the effect on his own spirit of the distress he is passing through. There are many anxious thoughts, but in the midst of these Jehovah has comforts which delight the soul. Such comforts are much more than the help of the hand of power ministered according to the

need of the moment; rather it is the consciousness of divine favour which affords the truest solace in times of sorrow. Both succour and sympathy are supplied from the present priestly service of Christ, but it is the latter which delights the soul. So in Psalm 3. the power of Jehovah's hand truly sustains, but in Psalm 4. the light of His countenance is the good which puts gladness into the heart more than when corn and wine increased.

In the last section, from verse 20, out of the rest of heart already reached, there arises the conviction that the downfall of the enthroned power of Antichrist is necessitated by the very fact that God also is enthroned. How could it be possible for Him to share the administration with one who framed mischief by statute? The end might be delayed, but the result was certain. "Jehovah our God will cut them off."

We now come to a series of seven Psalms, terminating with 101., affording a complete answer to the appeal of Psalm 94., and celebrating the coming of Jehovah into His kingdom. They begin with the call, first to the Jew, in Psalm 95., and to the Gentile, in 96., to be ready to meet Him. Psalm 95. divides into two parts at the end of the second line of verse 7. In the first section three reasons are given for praise: first, on account of Jehovah's greatness and supremacy. Second, as the Creator and Upholder of all things. Third, because "we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." At last the terrible sentence *Lo-ammi* (*Hosea 1.*) is removed, and how rightly may the people praise! The correspondence between these verses and the terms of God's everlasting Gospel (*Rev. 14. 6, 7*) should be noticed; also that the reason for heeding this urgent testimony which will go forth to all, "for the hour of His judgment is come," is quite in accordance with the solemn call, "to-day, oh that ye would hear His voice!" of our Psalm. This correspondence is one of the many indications that the Psalms have their full accomplishment

in the period after the church is complete and has been translated, and before the coming of the Lord for His kingdom. Christians enjoy the use of them during the church period, not forgetting to apply them according to the truth of the present dispensation.

The warning in the latter part is applied in the Hebrew epistle to those who have taken the Christian profession; its moral force should be carefully considered, for it cuts distinctly across our natural tendency to defer a whole-hearted response to the claims of grace until "a more convenient season." Circumstances, we think, will be more favourable presently. In direct contrast to these carnal reasonings the Holy Ghost saith, "*to-day* if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

The liturgical use of this Psalm from very early times, under the title of "the Invitatory Psalm," must be taken as an indication how soon the appreciation of spiritual worship was lost in the church.

As we have seen, it is addressed to Jews, and the reasons for thanksgiving fall far short of the truth revealed in the present time when the Spirit of God's Son is in our hearts crying, "Abba, Father!" Such worship the Father seeks, and it is our highest privilege to render: of this the Psalm knows nothing. To hear His voice "*to-day*" will lead us into deeper blessings than any in the Psalms of David. .

Psalm 96. has in the Septuagint the title, "When the House was built after the Captivity," also "an Ode of David." These two statements cannot both be correct; but that David was the author is probable from the employment of this Psalm, when the ark was being brought into the tent, prepared for it by David, see *1 Chronicles 16.* This happy event was the foreshadowing of a greater, when Jehovah will come and establish His throne in Zion. The Psalm is the call of the Spirit in Israel to the nations and peoples to praise Him in a new song, bringing their offerings into His courts (*ver. 8*). That such a

testimony will go forth is plainly told in Isaiah 66. 19, and the result in Malachi 1. 11. The restored remnant of Israel, instead of forbidding to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, will be the foremost evangelists of that time, and their reception and restoration to national blessing will be as life from among the dead to the Gentiles. This Psalm shows the result.

The first section, verses 1-3, indicates this prophetic character, for it is stated that the glory of Jehovah carries with it salvation; this is now attributed to His grace (Titus 2. 11-13).

In verses 4-6 He is to be praised as the Creator of the heavens, but also in His sanctuary where His power and glory are to be known.

Verses 7-10 testify to the nations how Jehovah is to be approached, they must understand that He now occupies the throne and under His sway the earth is established that it cannot be moved. In the last three verses the whole creation is viewed as rejoicing that the Creator, so long refused by man, is at last in His rightful place administering righteousness and judgment universally (cf. Psalm 72. 1, 2).

The Bridegroom's Voice.

(JAMES BOYD).

Canticles 2. 10-13.

HARK! 'tis the voice of my Belov'd that breaks
 From yonder hills;
 Thro' verdant valleys, and from golden peaks
 It softly thrills
 My soul; which through the long night, deep and lone,
 The sorrow of a hope deferred hath known.
 He speaks! that voice! O how could I mistake,
 When there is none
 So strong, so sweet, to bid my heart awake?
 Only that One
 In heaven or earth my soul delights to hear;
 Again it falls upon my listening ear:—
 "Arise, my love, my fair one, come away!
 The night is past;
 The sun has climbed the mountains, and the day
 Has dawned at last;
 The frosts and snows of winter are no more;
 Stilled are the tempests, and the rain is o'er.
 "The flowers appear upon the earth, and shed
 Their perfume far.
 Deceit, oppression, hatred—all are fled,
 And waste of war.
 The birds awake the echoes, and their song
 Throughout the welkin thrills the whole day long.
 "The forest trees with precious fruit replete
 Stretch out the hand;
 The vines with tender grapes give odours sweet,
 And fill the land;
 And earth delivered from the curse is gay—
 Arise, my love, my fair one, come away."

Answers to Correspondents.

God and "the Powers that be."

How are we to understand the relation in which the powers that be stand to God? Can it be said that they are under His control?

The 82nd Psalm may be of some help as to the relation in which "the powers that be" stand in regard to God. It opens with the reassuring statement, "*God standeth amongst the mighty; He judgeth amongst the gods.*" The word "gods" stands for those in high positions—the mighty, having authority and power. The reference in the first place is to the judges in Israel, as the Lord's citation of this Psalm clearly indicates (John 10. 34, 35), but "the powers that be" in all nations are also included, for "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 3). They are representative of Him in the way of government, little as they may realize it; indeed, they are spoken of as His ministers, and He will hold them responsible for the way they use the power deputed to them.

In democratic lands it is usual to speak of "the people" as the great and final tribunal at which the verdict is passed upon the acts of the rulers; and "the bar of humanity" and "the verdict of history" are common phrases, but God is He who will have the last word about everything; every act of every ruler will be judged by Him finally, even as He controls all things now. If "the powers that be are ordained of God," surely He can and will control them. They may determine to do their own will, their wild ambition may result in far-flung battlefields and torrents of blood and tears, yet if God permits this He still holds the reins and says to them as to the ocean's billows: "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraineth the rest." "He judgeth among the gods" and "He is supreme." This

we must recognize and hold without fear, doubt or equivocation, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, for it is only as we do this that we shall have confidence and rest of soul in the midst of the welter of iniquity that abounds. Consider the alternative: If any evil power in the universe could break the bounds of God's permission, and act in defiance of His absolute will so that the final supremacy of that will would be made impossible, there would exist a throne of darkness against which He would have no power, and He would cease to be God, faith would be vain, and the hope of the complete overthrow of evil would vanish for ever. That is unthinkable. We must maintain with the utmost tenacity the absolute sovereignty of God in the affairs of this world. He is not for the moment intervening publicly, nevertheless providentially He controls all things. GOD IS, and must for ever be; this is the immoveable anchor for our souls amid the threatening waves of time.

"The powers that be" have failed more or less in the maintenance of justice in the world. The failure would have been absolute but for the overruling hand of God, and if we see evil pursued and punished and justice in a measure upheld, we are entirely indebted to the mercy of God for it. The failure is there, however, as the challenge of the second verse of our Psalm shows: "*How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the person of the wicked?*" And the exhortation is given in which the purpose of their ordination is set forth: "*Deliver the poor and the needy; and rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*" If they did this they would rightly represent God in this respect, for He cares for the poor and the needy. But often the spoilers of the

widow and the orphan are honoured by the rulers of this world if they have wealth and power enough to bring them into notice, and their victims cry in vain except to God. It is not always so, because of God's restraining hand upon evil; nevertheless that is the trend.

So it has to be said, "*They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*" How true of the present state of things is this latter sentence, the result of the fact that the rulers of this world walk on in darkness instead of in the knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

But the time is coming when God will remove them. Then the prayer which closes the Psalm shall be answered. "*Arise, O God, judge the earth, for Thou shalt inherit the nations.*" God will yet show to the world what righteous judgment is: "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isa. 11. 4). This righteous

rule shall obtain when the Lord Himself, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, shall take the sceptre. Then all the nations shall be His inheritance.

The Christian has to recognize the powers that be as ordained of God. To embarrass them in any way, to join in an agitation against them, or to rebel against their authority is an unchristian act—a resistance of the ordinance of God (Rom. 13. 2). It is the Christian's duty and privilege to pray for them, not for the rulers of one land only, but for *all that are in authority* (1 Tim. 2), that the people of God in all lands may be unmolested in their Christian walk and able to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. We may in this way prove a blessing to men generally, little as they may recognize it. Finally, we know that these powers are but temporary, they are necessary to the existing state of mankind, and serve God's purpose in the meantime, but they must be shaken and pass away to make room for a kingdom that cannot be moved, the metropolis of which will be the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

The King who regards not the God of His Fathers nor the Desire of Women.

J.M.—Who is the king referred to in Daniel 11. 36, 37? when will he appear? and what is meant by "the desire of women"?

The king of these verses is Antichrist, who will come in his own name and whom the apostate leaders of the Jews will receive after they have been restored to the land of Palestine. He will appear after the translation of the church to heaven (see 1 Thess. 4.), for he is the second beast of Revelation 13.

"The desire of women" has been interpreted as being the Messiah of Israel, of whom every Israelitish woman hoped to be the mother. This we believe is the generally accepted interpretation, but we would suggest the following as being simpler and more natural.

There are two things that the king

disregards: the God of his forefathers and the desire of women. The former is *religion*, or shall we say "the fear of God," and the latter we believe to be *love*, or the family relationships.

These two are the forces that have exercised a greater influence upon mankind than any other, and that influence has been, generally speaking, a restraining and ennobling influence. The one holds the conscience and the other affects the heart; they make for righteousness and morality amongst men and, indeed, humanly speaking, make life possible in the earth.

But this coming king will be a man with neither conscience nor heart.

More monster than man, he will be unaffected by the things that have moved ordinary men. He will overturn the very foundations of society and tear down every cherished institution. He will neither worship nor recognize God, and the tears and entreaties of broken-hearted women will be spurned by him, and all his gifts will be given to the red-fanged god of war. That is the

man whom the nation of the Jews, who would not have Christ, will receive. Under his domination they will suffer for their rejection of their true Messiah, until at last they cry out for Him; then will He bring them deliverance, and their oppressor along with the first beast of Revelation 13., whose coadjutor he is, will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19.).

The Prayers of the Saints in the Golden Vials. Rev. 5. 8.

H.N.—The prayers of the saints in golden vials in heaven are evidently unanswered prayers. And since the church will be in heaven in Revelation 4., the only unanswered prayers which have been offered according to God's will will be prayers in connection with His coming Kingdom—the cries of His people that righteousness might supercede iniquity in the earth. From Enoch onwards the saints of God have sighed and prayed that God's will might be done on earth, and that His kingdom might come, but their prayers remain unanswered as yet; they have not

been unheard though, but have all been stored up in heaven as sweet odours to God, for they are the result of the communion of His saints with Himself. And now at length the time has come for the answer to be given, and they come afresh before God in connection with the opening of the seven-sealed book, the unfolding of His intentions with regard to the earth. The answer to them means judgment for the earth, for they, mingled with fire, are poured out upon it (see Rev. 8.). Only by judgment can evil be overthrown and righteousness be enthroned.

The privilege of prayer to me is one of my most cherished possessions, because faith and experience alike convince me that God Himself sees and answers, and His answers I never venture to criticize. It is only my part to ask. It is entirely His to give or withhold as He knows is best. If it were otherwise, I would not dare to pray at all.
(Grenfell.)

It has been well said, "One faithful Christian is doing more to explain Christianity than all the treatises ever written." It was Hume, the infidel, who said, as a young man whose manner of life he knew well passed him with a Bible under his arm: "There goes an argument for Christianity that I cannot answer."

The more you converse with Christ, the more you partake of heaven; to be with yourself is to be in ill company, to be with the world rubbeth rust on you, to be with Christ leaveth a dye and colour of another world in you, that you shall never rub off.
(Rutherford.)

I charge you to fear and love Christ, and seek a house not made with hands, but your Father's house above. This laughing and white-skinned world beguileth you; and if ye seek it more than God, it shall play you a slip, to the endless sorrow of your heart. But think of the Lord's love, be delighted in Him, who is altogether lovely. I give you the word of a King, that ye shall not repent it.

CORRECTIONS.—We learn that the paper "On our Faces in the Dust," which appeared in our last issue under the initials J.N.D., was not from the pen of Mr. Darby, but was written by a contemporary writer, J. J. Penstone.

On page 267, line 30, read "blended" instead of "blinded."

The Eagle's Nest.

(T. OLIVER,
Galashiels).

MOSES in his last exhortation to the children of Israel likens the Lord's dealings with His people to the eagle stirring up her nest (Deut. 32. 11). The eagle is a very sagacious bird. It is said that in building her nest she lays the floor with sharp thorns and covers them over with soft down. In this cosy bed her young are hatched and grow up. As they become strong enough to fly, they are loath to leave the comfort of the nest. But that condition would not fit them to fulfil their normal functions in subsequent life. Hence the mother scrapes up the down in the bottom of the nest. When the young eagles feel the sharp thorns they jump over the side of the nest, and thus the strength of their wings and the support of the air are tested.

Christians are frequently placed in similar comfortable circumstances. Not a jarring note breaks in on the harmony of their life. As with the eagle's nest, however, underneath the downiest bed are strewn the sharp thorns swept in from the hedges of life's chequered pathway. If there were no thorny incidents in our career we should never be caused to experience the wealth of God's resources. He stirs up the most comfortable nest and causes the inmates to feel the thorn pricks. As a result, they are made to jump out, metaphorically, into the atmosphere of God's resources, and the wings of faith are called into action.

That we should mount up spiritually with eagle's wings is God's desire (Isa. 40. 31). When the young eagle grows weary the mother flies beneath and bears it up on her wings (Deut. 32. 11). So is the care of the Lord for His people (Ex. 19. 4): "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

The Lord never makes a breach or gap in our affections by removing some one or something dear to our hearts except for the purpose of strengthening the link already formed between our

souls and Himself. If we can learn just a little bit more of His love then it will be worth all the sorrow which has ever fallen to the lot of man or woman to experience. Because there is nothing in this world of change and decay to be compared with His love. It is as enduring as Himself, "Changeless throughout the changing years."

That there is great variation in human experience is a matter of commonplace observation. Some are passing smoothly through life, others are constantly involved in difficulty and trial. But it is a great comfort to realize that whom the Lord loves He chastens.

The Apostle Peter, in encouraging the strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor, said, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (or put to grief by various trials), that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 6-7).

In view of this we should not feel downcast in trouble. The trial is but for a season, literally, for a few moments, or a little while, and it only comes our way if *need be*. The One who has the oversight and the control of the "need be" is God, and no one can go behind His mandate.

Nero, the infamous Roman emperor, set the beautiful city of Rome on fire, and as he witnessed the spectacle from his window he played a violin and sang songs as evidence of his pleasure in afflicting his people. Such is man, but God takes no pleasure in afflicting. If there is a need for it we are tried, and then only for a moment: "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12. 11).

It is important to observe that the fruit of righteousness, which in Scripture is so constantly associated with peace, only springs up within those who are *exercised* by the trial, and it comes *afterward*. God has no respect to the stoical or to the slothful condition of soul.

To the exercised soul there is no sweeter time than that of trial. Heaven becomes its home. For a mere trivial

affliction the Lord substitutes Himself in the soul. In time (a momentary interval) the sorrow passes, but our Friend remains. He has borne our griefs, He has carried our sorrows and will ere long make us co-sharers of His joy for ever.

Soon will the Master come: soon pass away
Our times of conflict, grief and suffering
here;
Our night of weeping end in cloudless day,
And sorrow's moment like a dream appear.

All Things are Yours.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9).

OURS are flowers that know no fading,
Everlasting is their bloom:
Ours is light that knows no shading,
Shining e'en 'mid Egypt's gloom.
Ours is glory—
Ours is life beyond the tomb.

Ours is strength that never faileth,
Rough and dreary though the way;
Ours is power that still prevaieth
'Gainst the hostile foes' array.
Ours is pardon—
Peace that none can take away.

One there is to whom we're going—
One to whom we owe our all;
Daily grace is He bestowing;
He sustains us lest we fall.
Precious Saviour!
On His name we love to call.

All the flowers that know no fading,
Sprang to beauty at His word;
All the light that knows no shading,
Shines in Jesus Christ the Lord.
Life and glory
Have we in the Lamb of God.

Strength have we that never faileth,
In the shining of His face—
Power that evermore prevaieth,
Through His all-sufficient grace:
Blood-bought pardon—
Jesus is our Hiding-Place!

(H. K. Burlingham).

That Terrible Hour.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from THIS HOUR: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name" (John 12. 27).

"This is YOUR HOUR, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22. 53).

CONSIDER these words, my soul, in the presence of Him who spoke them. Note well the fact that there was an hour in the years of the Saviour's life below that was full of horror for Him, an hour from which He shrunk with a perfect shrinking and from which He would have escaped had any way been found in heaven above or on earth beneath. It was the hour of the unrestrained hatred of men and of the power of darkness.

He had trodden a rough road, but in all His ways God had given His angels charge over Him, and in their hands they had borne Him up, lest at any time He should have dashed His foot against a stone. So that, though His adversaries hated Him with a virulent hatred, they could not hurt Him. They led Him to the edge of the rock upon which their city was built in order to hurl Him into the abyss beneath it, but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way unharmed. The very stones that they picked up to cast at Him clave to their murderous hands while He "passed by." No malice of evil, whether of men or devils, had been able to break through the unseen angelic cordon, but for this terrible hour that protection was taken away. An angel brought Him heavenly succour in the garden and withdrew, and He turned to His foes and said to them, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke 22. 43-53).

It was then that every element of evil beset Him roundabout. The floods rolled upon Him, and no voice was uplifted to cry unto them, "Hitherto shall ye come and no further." The dread array that had sought means to crush Him during the days of His lowly service amongst men combined against Him. The reins that had restrained them were thrown free, there was no check upon them, and their utmost

fury broke upon Him. He was reproached, despised, and railed upon. Strong bulls of Bashan encompassed Him, gaping upon Him as a ravening and roaring lion; dogs beset Him; the assembly of the wicked enclosed Him. The sword, the power of the dog, the lion's mouth, the horns of the unicorn (Ps. 22.)—all these in that dread hour sought out His soul to destroy Him; for to destroy Him was to destroy all that was good, and to overthrow Him was to overthrow the very throne of God. Upon Him—that one solitary Man, the Nazarene—who in that darkness had no helper, depended every hope of all the saints, and the confidence of the host of great unfallen angelic principalities, and the stability of the universe, and the supremacy of God.

We dwell upon the hatred of men, but we have seen nothing and known nothing so terrible as their hatred of Him, for never before, nor since, had proud men been confronted with absolute meekness; never before, nor since, had sin been unrestrained in the presence of perfect goodness, unprotected. But what of the malignity of the devil, and of those awful and entirely evil spiritual powers in rebellion against God, the roll of which is called in Psalm 22.? Of these how little we know. Thank God, we know so little; we should have known much more had our Lord Jesus not faced them for us; but He knew, with divine and all-embracing prescience, their full strength before He entered that hour. Do we wonder that He prayed, "Father, save Me from this hour." But how worthy of everlasting adoration is He because of that supremely blessed and full consecration of soul which made Him say, "FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME." This was the grand purpose of His life below, and to secure this He entered and passed through that hour.

It was the supreme hour in which darkness wrestled against light for the mastery. How closely He was beset in the palace of the High Priest, before the Sanhedrin, in the house of Pilate, before the throne of Herod; in the place called Gabbatha, on the road to Golgotha, and finally on the malefactor's gibbet. We are permitted to hear His cry, "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death. . . . Deliver My soul. . . . Save Me."

There was not a weapon in the vast armoury of evil, that Satan and his hosts had been preparing throughout the ages for this awful conflict, that was not brought against Him, the sent One of God, to force Him from the path of God's will and to make Him cry "I yield" to the authority of darkness. Yet He did not yield. He was wholly light, darkness could gain no foothold in Him. The prince of this world came, but he had nothing in Him. Blessed, holy, adorable Lord! Having exhausted every device of their almost boundless malice, and exhausted themselves in their fury against Him, they sat down to watch Him there (Matt. 27. 36)—men and devils, amazed, baffled, defeated, crowding together about Him. Thrones and dominions had fallen before Satan as the great leader of all evil, so that he had become "the prince of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air." His conquests were far-reaching and his triumphs great; he had only to drive back the Son of God from doing the will of God and then would his victories be crowned with everlasting success; but in that one poor and lonely Man, despised by the people, abandoned by lover and friend, and forsaken of God, he met his conqueror.

Consider Him, my soul; He had neither reply nor reproach for the men who mocked Him; had He cursed them Satan would have triumphed, but

only prayers for their blessing were forced from His suffering soul by their cruelty. He was laughed to scorn because God did not aid Him in His dire necessity; and to make Him cast off His faith was the enemy's fell purpose, but neither repining nor rebuke were heard in His cries as He poured out His sorrow before God, whose ear seemed deaf to the voice of His supplication. Nevertheless he still cried, "My God, My God . . . O My God. . . . Thou art holy. . . . Thou art He. . . . I was cast upon Thee. . . . Thou art My God. . . . O My strength" (Ps. 22.).

So He triumphed, and trod the foes of God beneath His feet by being trodden down. And because no power of evil could overcome Him He was able to take up the question of sin on behalf of sinful men and settle that question to the everlasting glory of God, by bearing His righteous judgment against it. He had suffered for righteousness, and in faithfulness to the will of God, but when the full tale of His suffering in regard to these was told He entered into deeper depths and into a darker hour, for He was made "to be sin for us who knew no sin." It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He put Him to grief when He made His soul our offering for sin. He died, and through death He has annulled him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He lives again and has the keys of death and hades. He is crowned with glory and honour. He must be exalted and extolled and made very high, and He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied when the greatness of God's triumph through Him is publicly manifested to the wide universe. How glorious is He. The forces of evil have been met and vanquished; the judgment of God against sin has been borne and His justice glorified; the power of death has been destroyed by His dying, and He lives to die no more. No wonder that His saints delight to sing—

"Bless, bless the Conqueror slain,
Slain in His victory,
Who lived, who died, who lives again,
For thee, His Church, for thee."

Some Names and Titles of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

To turn our thoughts to the consideration of the person and glories of Him of whom all the Scriptures testify.

The Son of the Father.

The Son	1 John 4. 14
The Son of God	John 1. 34
The Son of the living God	Matt. 16. 16
His only begotten Son	John 3. 16
The only begotten Son of God	John 3. 18
The Son of the Father	2 John 3
The only begotten of the Father	John 1. 14
The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father	John 1. 18
His own Son	Rom. 8. 32
One Son (His well-beloved).	Mark 12. 6
My Son	Ps. 2. 7
His dear Son (or the Son of His love)	Col. 1. 13
The Son of the Highest	Luke 1. 32
The Son of the Blessed	Mark 14. 61

The Word by whom God is

Declared.

The Word	John 1. 1
The Word was with God	John 1. 1
The Word was God	John 1. 1
The Word of God	Rev. 19. 13
The Word of Life	1 John 1. 1
The Word was made flesh	John 1. 14
The Image of God	2 Cor. 4. 4
The Image of the Invisible God	Col. 1. 15
The Express Image of His Person	Heb. 1. 3
The Brightness of His Glory	Heb. 1. 3
Wisdom	Prov. 8. 12, 22
The Wisdom of God	1 Cor. 1. 24
The Power of God	1 Cor. 1. 24

Testimony borne to the Son by the Father, by Jesus Himself, by the Spirit, by Angels, Saints, Men, and Devils.

My Beloved Son, Matt. 17. 5	God the Father
I am the Son of God, John 10. 36	Jesus Himself
The Son of God, Mark 1. 1	The Spirit in the Word
The Son of God, Luke 1. 35 ; Luke 2. 11	Gabriel
This is the Son of God, John 1. 34	John Baptist
The Christ the Son of God, John 20. 31	John, Apostle

He is the Son of God, Acts 9. 20	Paul
Thou art the Son of God, Matt. 14. 33	Disciples
Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, John 1. 49	Nathanael
The Christ the Son of God, John 11. 27	Martha
Truly this was the Son of God, Mark 15. 39	Centurion
Thou art the Son of God, Mark 3. 11	Unclean spirits
Thou Son of the Most High God, Mark 5. 7	The legion

"He is before All things, and by Him All things consist" (Col. 1. 17).

The Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come	Rev. 1. 8
The Creator of all things	Col. 1. 16
The Upholder of all things	Heb. 1. 3
The Everlasting Father (or Father of Eternity)	Isa. 9. 6
The Beginning	Col. 1. 18
The Beginning and the Ending	Rev. 1. 8
The Alpha and the Omega	Rev. 1. 8
The First and the Last	Rev. 1. 17
The Life	1 John 1. 2
Eternal Life	1 John 5. 20
That Eternal Life which was with the Father	1 John 1. 2
He that liveth	Rev. 1. 18

"Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah of Hosts" (Isa. 6. 3).

Jehovah	Isa. 40. 3
The Lord Jehovah	Isa. 40. 10
Jehovah my God	Zech. 14. 5
Jehovah of Hosts	Isa. 6. 3 ; John 12. 41
Jehovah God of Hosts	Hos. 12. 4, 5 ; Gen. 32. 24
The King Jehovah of hosts	Isa. 2. 5
The Strong and Mighty Jehovah	Ps. 24. 8
Jehovah, mighty in battle	Ps. 24. 8
The Man, Jehovah's Fellow	Zech. 13. 7
Jehovah-tsidkenu (the Lord our righteousness)	Jer. 23. 6
The Lord	Rom. 10. 13 ; Joel 2. 32
The Lord of Glory	1 Cor. 2. 8
The Same	Heb. 1. 12 ; Ps. 102. 27

Keeping the Unity of the Spirit.

(F. B. HOLE).

DURING the first twenty years of the Christian era, we find, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, circumstances arising which seriously imperilled the oneness of heart and soul which so happily marked believers at the beginning. The occasions were these:—

1. The murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews (chap. 6.).
2. The gathering out of the church from amongst the Samaritans (chap. 8.).
3. The conversion of the first Gentiles—Cornelius and his friends (chaps. 10. and 11.).
4. The controversy as to the law of Moses and the Gentiles (chap. 15.).

In each case we see how the disruptive forces at work were checked and defeated, and a brief survey of them may not be without its usefulness to-day.

Two things stand out prominently, and must be carefully distinguished: First, the divine wisdom that wrought providentially behind the scenes; second, the grace and wisdom of the apostles and early Christians, which was the human element in the case.

As to the former we can only notice it with admiration and pray that in the present days when disruption has been so sadly consummated, a like providence may yet be operative towards God's saints. As to the latter, let us note and inwardly digest with exercised consciences, that at least we may learn how better to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4. 3). We shall thereby prove afresh how these God-breathed Scriptures are profitable "for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

1. The Murmuring of the Grecians (Acts 6.).

All the disputants in the case were Jews nationally. The only differences

were matters of upbringing and traditions. The Grecians, or Greek-speaking Jews, whose ancestors had for long been outside the boundaries of Palestine, naturally had a different view of things from the Hebrew-speaking Jews, who had been carefully guarded in the land under the strictest regime. Suspicions, therefore, were easily excited and quickly expressed. The matter in question was wholly of a mundane order.

The workings of divine providence in this first case are not clearly manifested. The human side, however, is distinct enough. We would specify three things.

(a) The apostles boldly tackled the difficulty as soon as it was apparent. They did not wish for it to spread and grow. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

(b) They would not suffer themselves to be diverted from their great work of ministering the word by any such dissensions, but cast the responsibility of a godly settlement upon the whole body of saints.

(c) The believers at large recognized it was an occasion to express and confirm their interest in these Grecians, who were more or less strangers in their midst, and hence chose as overseers men whose names indicate that they were mainly selected from the Greek-speaking section. Unselfishness triumphed. Suspicions were allayed.

2. The Work at Samaria (Acts 8.).

No dissension was actually manifest here. It was a case of prevention rather than cure. The antipathy between Jew and Samaritan was of long standing. Such scriptures as 2 Kings 17. 24-41 and John 4. enlighten us as to it. With these before us it is easy to see how Philip's very successful evangelistic labours opened up a dangerous question. On the one hand, the church in Jeru-

salem might wish to repudiate any real connection with believers from amongst their despised rivals. On the other it would have been natural for the Samaritan church to have nursed its old feelings and refused to be in any way guided by the authority of the apostles at Jerusalem. In this way the scandal of division might early have appeared in the form of a Samaritan "church" and Jerusalem "church."

In contrast with the first occasion, the main thing mentioned in this chapter is the divine workings in providence. Philip preached, multitudes believed and were baptized, but no Holy Spirit was given. The usual method of divine procedure was in this case suspended, and it was not until the two apostles came upon the scene, with prayer, and laying on of their hands—symbolic of the identification of the apostles and those they represented with the believers in Samaria—that the Holy Spirit was given. By this simple variation on God's part it became out of the question for the Jewish saints to repudiate the Samaritan, or the Samaritan to declare their independence of the Jewish.

On the human side we have only to notice the fact that the apostles were subject to the divine leading. They did not attempt to give rein to natural prejudices by denouncing Philip as irregular in his proceedings, or seizing upon the absence of the gift of the Spirit as a reason for discounting, if not disowning, the whole work. They bowed to the sovereign grace of God and selected from their number to go to Samaria two who ranked amongst the very chief of the apostles, Peter and John.

3. The Conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10. and 11.).

This was perhaps an even more critical moment than the foregoing, inasmuch as the Jewish feelings in regard to the Gentile were far more pronounced than against the Samaritan.

The divine providences were many! The angelic messenger to Cornelius; the vision granted to Peter; the instantaneous giving of the Spirit upon reception of the gospel, which rendered it impossible for any Jew, however great his natural prejudices, to forbid the baptism and formal reception of such believers. All these show us how God was at work manipulating events so that every barrier which might have withstood the thorough fusion of both Jew and Gentile in the one body of Christ was swept away.

On the human side the outstanding feature was the action of Peter in taking "certain brethren from Joppa" (10. 23), "these six brethren" (11. 12), with him.

By this wise act he not only assured ample witness of what really transpired, but he did away with any suspicion that he acted behind the backs of his brethren. There was nothing underhand, no attempt to settle a thorny question apart from fellowship with his brethren.

The effect of this is seen in chapter 11. When in conference at Jerusalem certain brethren of extremely circumscribed views raised difficulties, the evidence was so conclusive that they ended by admitting God's work amongst the Gentiles and glorifying God.

4. The Controversy as to Law (Acts 15.).

This was perhaps the most dangerous crisis of all. Though Gentiles were admitted into the fellowship and privileges of the church yet there were many Jews who wished to maintain a Judaized or legalized form of Christianity and to Judaize the Gentile converts as well. This was stoutly resisted by Paul and those with him.

Galatians 2. 1-5 throws light upon this occasion, showing how uncompromising Paul was because he saw that vital truth was at stake. It shows also the working of divine providence

inasmuch as it was "by revelation" that Paul went up to Jerusalem. The church at Antioch "determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up" (Acts 15. 2); but behind the scenes was that revelation to Paul which was the governing factor.

On the human side we notice :

(a) The obedience of Paul and his friends to the revelation. They might naturally have felt that they were throwing away their case—which they knew to be right and of extreme importance—by consenting to go for a settlement into the city where the influence of their opponents was so great. They waived all natural feelings and calculations and *obeyed*.

(b) Free but sober *discussion* was allowed. The case was freely stated on both sides. No attempt to score points by descending to the level of the barrister in the law courts is recorded. There was much discussion (ver. 7).

The truth is great. It fears no investigation.

(c) Finally Peter cited *facts* and James cited *Scripture*, and stated his judgment founded upon both, to which judgment all agreed. Facts, and Scripture which interpreted the facts carried the day. There was no appeal from these things. To them all bowed.

Is it not evident that had similar wise procedure been followed, aided by similar desires for the unity of God's saints, the history of the church would have been much different from what it has been?

And is it not equally evident that even though the history of the church has been so full of failure and disruption, our responsibility to keep the unity of the Spirit still remains, and that these Scriptures may help to make us wise unto salvation from further disruptive tendencies?

"Phebe, our Sister"

(H. P. BARKER).

And her Letter of Commendation. Rom. 16.

"PHEBE, our sister," was about to pay a visit to Rome. It was no light matter for women to make long journeys in those days. Yet some seem to have travelled far and wide. We find, for instance, Lydia coming to Europe from her far-off home in Thyatira, no doubt for the purpose of selling the purple cloth for which her native city was so famous.

Whether Phebe was going to Rome on secular business or on matters connected with the service of Christ we do not know. Nor are we told whether she was leaving her home at Cenchrea for good, or whether she expected merely to pay a visit to the metropolis of the empire and to return. In either case she would have many precious opportunities for Christian fellowship with the brethren and sisters in the imperial city, and in order that her welcome

among them might be of the warmest kind, Paul himself gave her a letter of commendation, dictated by him, and written by a brother, Tertius.

"I commend unto you Phebe, our sister," said the Apostle. Letters of commendation were very necessary in those days. They were days of much travel, and people were constantly coming and going among the various churches, especially the churches of the Gentiles. And "false brethren" had already made their appearance, men who caused divisions and offences, who sought to undermine the truth of the gospel, and to subvert the minds of the saints. With fair words and plausible speeches they sought, and sometimes gained, entrance among the people of God.

Some testimony, then, was necessary

in order that those who were true servants of Christ might be distinguished from those who were to be avoided. This testimony generally took the form of a "letter of commendation." Of course, such testimony was not needed where there was personal knowledge of the individual concerned. "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you?" asks the Apostle of his Corinthian converts (2 Cor. 3. 1). He, surely, did not need them, but "some others" evidently did. If Paul disclaimed their necessity in his own case, he affirmed it in the case of others.

It is no disparagement to any one to say that he or she needs a "letter of commendation." Who could bear a more excellent character, or deserve a warmer place in the hearts of the Lord's people than "Phebe, our sister"? She, however, needed such a letter. It is simply a question of testimony, on the part of one who knows the person commended, to those amongst whom he or she expects to go.

The Epistle to the Romans seems to be an enlarged letter of commendation. Paul, indeed, had not yet visited Rome. But a large number of his personal friends were then living, or sojourning, there. And to all he would be well known by name. So he commends Phebe to them, and takes the opportunity not only to send warm, loving greetings from himself and others to some dear brethren and sisters in the city of the Cæsars, but to unfold in a masterly way the gospel of God, to the preaching of which he was so specially called. The epistle becomes, therefore, more of a treatise than a letter. This, however, does not hinder it from serving the purpose of commending Phebe to the love and care of the saints at Rome.

Let it be noted, further, that the letter of commendation is by no means a mere ticket of admission to the Lord's supper, or a passport entitling the bearer to "break bread" at any particular place. It is much more than that. The Apostle bespoke for Phebe a reception such as saints should give. "Receive

her in the Lord," says he, "as becometh saints." It was not very long ago that they themselves, for the most part poor sinners of the Gentiles, had been received by Christ. The warmth of *that* wonderful reception would still be fresh in their minds. *It* was to be the measure of their reception of their fellow-saints. "Receive ye one another," says the Apostle, "as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom. 15. 7). Thus was Phebe to be received at Rome.

Was there some likelihood of her needing assistance in the business that she had in hand? Paul counted on the love of the saints towards this dear servant of Christ who was coming among them to render such assistance. He does not base his commendation on the bare fact of her being in happy communion with the church at Cenchrea, but mentions that she had been "a succourer of many, and of myself also."

She was, moreover, a servant, or minister, of the assembly at Cenchrea. We may be sure that her service there was such as became a godly woman. It would not take the form of *public* preaching or teaching, though women, when they had arrived at a certain age, were exhorted to be "teachers of good things" (Titus 2. 3). There are many forms of service open to those who, like "Phebe, our sister," have the heart for it. In many a loving way such may serve the Lord and His people. They may, if they have a house, "lodge strangers." They may "wash the saints' feet," and "relieve the afflicted" (see 1 Tim. 5. 10).

It does not need much "gift" or ability to be one of whom it may be said, as of Philemon: "the saints are refreshed by thee, brother."

Little things are often more effective than those generally reckoned of greater importance. This truth is beautifully stated in the following lines by the late Miss Havergal:—

"The memory of a kindly word,
For long gone by;
The fragrance of a fading flower,
Sent lovingly;

The gleaming of a sudden smile,
 Or sudden tear;
 The warmer pressure of the hand,
 The tone of cheer;
 The hush that means 'I cannot speak,
 But I have heard';
 The note that only bears a verse
 From God's own Word;
 Such tiny things we hardly count
 As ministry,
 The givers deeming they have shown
 Scant sympathy;
 But when the heart is overwrought,
 Oh, who can tell
 The power of such tiny things
 To make it well?"

Whatever the form of "ministry" rendered by Phebe it was acceptable, not only in the sight of the Apostle, but in the sight of Him whose faithful servant this dear sister was.

Notice another thing. "Churches" are spoken of in various ways in this chapter (Rom. 16.). They are spoken of with reference to the town in which a particular church, or assembly, is found: "*the church which is at Cenchrea.*" Also with reference to the sort of people who compose them: "*the churches of the Gentiles.*" Also with reference to the place where they held their meetings: "*the church that is in their house.*" Lastly, with reference to the One whose assemblies they were: "*the churches of Christ.*" But while the churches are thus mentioned, it is not from any one of them that the letter of commendation was sent. It was not written "in the name of," or "on behalf of," the assembly at Cenchrea (where Phebe lived) or of the assembly at Corinth (where Paul was). It was addressed by a servant of Christ to the saints at Rome (see chap. 1.).

We find the same thing in the Third Epistle of John, which appears to have been another letter of commendation, commending a brother named Demetrius to the love of another brother, well known for his hospitality to the Lord's people. John had previously written to the assembly, but there were influences at work which resulted in the Apostle being refused. If they refused *him* it was not likely that they would receive Demetrius. So John commends him to Gaius, that he might receive

him, and thus be a "fellow-helper to the truth."

There is no rule laid down in the Scriptures as to letters of commendation. I do not say that they may not rightly be addressed by any *company* of saints to another such company. We find such an instance in the case of Apollos, on whose behalf *the brethren* wrote, exhorting the disciples in Achaia to receive him, on the occasion of his leaving Ephesus for that province (Acts 18. 27). I merely point out that it is not *necessary* for this to be so. It is quite according to the Word of God for one Christian to give another a letter, either to an individual like Gaius, or to a company, like the saints at Rome, stating what he knows as to the bearer. Let not such a letter be couched in mere formal language. Let it rather be framed on the model of Paul's letter, warmly greeting those to whom it is addressed, and speaking in terms of Christian affection of the brother or sister commended.

We hear no more of "Phebe, our sister." But we may be sure the reception she got at Rome was not lacking in warmth. Maybe some of the beloved saints there came out to meet her (if perchance they heard beforehand of her coming) as far as Appii Forum and The Three Taverns, even as they did later on when Paul himself came to their city.

We can picture the sweet times of communion which Phebe would have, and especially with such dear and honoured sisters as Prisca (or Priscilla), Mary, Tryphena, and Tryphosa, all of whom the Apostle greets by name.

Christian love and fellowship are very real things. Thank God, they remain to this day. There will always be, "until He come," those who are dear to Him, and in whom we may see much of Himself. Happy for us if we can truly sing:

"With these our happy lot is cast,
 Through the world's deserts rude and
 waste,
 Or through its gardens fair."

The Epistle to Titus.

(E. Cross)

Chapter 3.

Verse 1.

HAVING spoken of the conduct becoming Christianity from the personal and social point of view, Paul now draws attention to the relation of the Christian to "the powers that be," and the behaviour suitable thereto. Crete had not long been incorporated in the Roman Empire. It was subjugated by Metellus, 67 B.C., and its democratic institutions had not taken kindly to the Roman yoke, so that there remained a continued undercurrent of disaffection, which displayed itself from time to time in outbursts of opposition to the ruling power; and this would appeal as patriotism to certain national elements among them. A similar difficulty was in the minds of those who asked the Lord, "thinking to entangle Him in His talk; is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?" His reply was simple and unanswerable: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's" (Matt. 22. 15).

In a similar spirit Jeremiah had spoken the word of the Lord to the captives in Babylon: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace" (Jer. 29. 7). Rebellion and contumacy against the manifest will of God can beget only mischief and misery. We are not called upon to alter the governmental course of God's dealings with the world, but to serve Him in the circumstances in which we are found. From the political evolution of events flowing from the pride of man's first disobedience, and issuing in the final judgment of all his designs, we are delivered, to find the path of life in humble submission to the will of God. This is a lesson the Christian has to learn, as well as the gospel of the forgiveness of sins; a lesson, too,

more difficult to learn, as it involves a broader outlook on the ways of God.

It is a vast mistake to suppose that the Christian has nothing to do with politics. The Apostle Paul did not think so when he said, "Our citizenship—more properly, our complete system of politics, our commonwealth—*πολίτευμα*—has its existence in the heavens, from whence we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour" (Phil. 3. 20). With the politics of this world, begun, continued, and ended without God, we have nothing to do. "Let the potsherd of the earth strive with the potsherd of the earth." Our hope is in Christ, at His appearing and His kingdom, when He will take up the reins of government, and put right what now is wrong. These were the politics of Abraham, who "rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it and was glad"; for "he looked for a city, *α πόλις*, that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God," and of all such it is written that, "God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city"; and it is that which determines the character of the Christian's politics.

A city is a large town in which the amenities of life are regulated by a governing body. To be versed in politics is to be intelligent in the order and administration that make for the comfort and happiness of society. Looked at in its highest sense, it is the supreme science in the constitution of ordered blessing, social, national, or universal, temporal or eternal. It is the goal of hope in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21.); the outcome of wisdom in a world of bliss (Prov. 8.); whereas, "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city" (Eccl. 10. 15). It is plainly a higher object of research than the mere personal question of individual blessing.

The Christian's hope is "in Christ," outside the fruitless strife involved in the politics of this world. Accordingly, instead of the restless spirit of opposition,

Verse 1.—Titus was to put them in mind to be subject to the ruling powers, and ready to every good work,

Verse 2.—To avoid in word, or deed, an evil or contentious spirit; but to be mild and meek toward all.

Verse 3.—By that word "put them in mind" in contrast with the "severe rebuke" of chapter 1. 13, it would seem as though an introspective recollection of his own former ways in violent opposition to the truth (Acts 8. 3; 9. 1, 2) was now operating in him this milder form of speech. For, he says, *we* were once *ourselves* senseless, disobedient, wandering in the deceitful ways of error, slaves to divers lusts and pleasures, leading a life in malice and envy, hateful in our own ways, and stirring up hatred all around. The contemplation of all this, as he sums it up briefly in 1 Timothy 1. 13-14 as regards himself, is enough to cast him upon the pure mercy of God, of which, as these passages show us, he had the most lively sense; and which, while in nowise enfeebling the word of righteousness in its own place, made his heart tender in dealing with others, who were "out of the way."

Verse 4.—How infinitely opposite from our ways are the spirit and ways of God toward us. The antithesis is striking between what we were once, *ποτε*, (ver. 3), and what "God our Saviour" showed Himself to be towards us then, *ότε*, (ver. 4), just as we were, without one redeeming feature in us to deserve or call forth "His kindness and His love to man."

Χρηστότης, His kindness, His goodness, in contrast to our badness, *κακία* (ver. 3); and His love to man, philanthropy, *φιλανθρωπία*, in contrast to our selfish, hateful conduct to one another. This word occurs again (Acts 28. 2), "the

barbarians showed us no little kindness"; and again (Acts 27. 3), "Julius treated Paul kindly." It is not the same thing as the love of God, *ἀγάπη*, in other scriptures; nor is it intended to set it forth, though it may lead on to it.

This is what appears now; it is the "Epiphany" of His grace (cf. 2 Tim. 1. 10; Tit. 2. 11; 3. 4). What will shine out by and by is the Epiphany of His glory! (cf. 2 Thess. 2. 8; 1 Tim. 6. 14; 2 Tim. 4. 1, 8).

Verse 5.—In chapter 2. 11, where the effects of the gospel are in question he speaks of "grace"; here, where the subject is what "we ourselves were," he is more reflective and attributes all to "mercy."

Mercy is the pity of the great Creator God for all the creatures of His hand. Infinite in power, in greatness, and alone in self-sufficiency, He can but look with pity, i.e. with a corresponding feeling, on all His works. The creature is wholly at His charges; can render Him no help; can afford Him nothing; cannot sustain itself. The mercy of God is purely sovereign. It begins with creation, and continues for ever, and over all His works (Pss. 136.; 145.).

It is then His mercy that is the instigating cause of our salvation—"not by works of righteousness that we have done"—and it is effected by "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

In contrast with the word mercy, "grace"—the favour of God, the positive pleasure, the delight He has in bestowing freely of His wealth on the objects of His choice and of His purpose (cf. Eph. 1. 6). Mercy is connected with the need of our state in weakness; grace with the need of His heart in love.

Regeneration, *παλιγγενεσία*, must not

be confounded with the new birth, ἀνωθεν, or ἀναγεννάω (John 3.; 1 Peter 1. 23). The word occurs only here and in Matthew 19. 28. In both places it refers to a fresh outward status, or position, whether of the coming kingdom, or the Christian's position in this world now in view of it. But in neither case does it involve, as does the new birth, a new vital state subjectively. The subjective state may or may not correspond to it. The laver, or bath of regeneration refers figuratively to baptism, as it was represented before in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3. 21), and the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10. 2). In both cases the change was an outward one of *position*, as implied also in John 1. 25; but no change of *state* was involved, as in the new birth.

But in order to accomplish the purpose of God in the gospel, power must be added to this new position, so that the Christian may occupy it worthily. Land without resources would be useless to the occupier; and so he adds, "the renewing of the Holy Spirit," i.e. the power of Christian life (Rom. 8. 10). In John 20 the risen Jesus breathes on the disciples the spirit of life and relationship with God the Father; but they had to wait for Pentecost to be "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24. 49; Acts 2.).

Baptism is, then, an external change of position; the new birth is an internal, vital change of state. The former introduces into new privileges and responsibilities; the latter is the production, by the breath of the Spirit, of a new nature, vitally; and the operative power of this new nature is the personal power of the Spirit Himself.

This is all represented by the day of Pentecost, extended subsequently to the Gentiles (Acts 10. 47; 19. 4-6), which, as the earnest in the present time of the more complete fulfilment of Joel 2. 28, etc., in the latter times, gives its distinctive character to Christianity to-day. It is indicative of the mercy and the grace that brings salvation to fallen man, putting him in a fresh place of

privilege and blessing, and providing him "richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" with everything needed to sustain him, from the first step of his Christian course, wherein he is "justified from all things," "freely by His grace," until he is finally crowned with the guerdon of eternal life (cf. Jude 21).

Verse 8.—Here comes, as one might say, an "obiter dictum," a passing remark of the Apostle, but one pregnant with great importance. He desires, with all the force of his will, βούλομαι, that Titus should "insist on it through and through,"—let there be no misapprehension about it,—that those who have believed in God should set their mind purposefully to stand out boldly in the maintenance of good works. These things are not only beautiful and becoming in themselves, they are likewise profitable to men, and good interest accrues from the investment. Hear the Master's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And again, "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The motive of the Christian's life is love; but no man is actuated by love alone; this is the prerogative of God, for "God is love"; and reward is held out to him accordingly for encouragement.

Verse 9.—On the other hand, "unprofitable and vain" are these foolish and unpractical controversial questions, which are useless and endless (1 Tim. 1. 4), and result only in mischief and heresy. They are baits of the enemy. Whatever is ensnared by them is ruined. He must avoid them, keep clear of them altogether, at all cost.

Verses 10, 11.—These and such like things are the pabulum of the heretic. Perverted in his own mind, he lives on perversion; and he sins, being all the while self-condemned.

The term heresy (*αἵρεσις* from *αἰρέω*, to choose, to draw) = a choosing, a drawing to self; hence, a party. It is applied both to the Sadducees (Acts 5. 17) and to the Pharisees (Acts 15. 5; 26. 5). We find the word again in 1 Corinthians 11. 19. The Apostle hears there were schisms among them, and these must end in heresies. Hitherto they had been all together, though with certain partialities for their favourite leaders, *διχοστασίαι* (1 Cor. 3. 3). Still these partialities were unjudged and allowed (cf. Rom. 16. 17; Gal. 5. 20). He besought them that there might not be schisms as well among them, *σχίσματα* (1 Cor. 1. 10), though he feared it was so (1 Cor. 11. 18); and these in turn must end in heresies (1 Cor. 11. 19). And thus the divisions among them, hitherto more or less restrained, would become overt; each party drawing away to itself as the centre. Partialities "after the flesh," apparently so permissible, ripening into parties, schisms, as we see signaled among other evil things in Galatians 5. 19-21. This is the essence of heresy, whatever may be its professing cause.

The "divisions" in the church were not at first connected with false doctrine; they had even the names of the apostles attached to them; but later on as gnosticism spread its evil tenets, heresy came to be formally connected with it. But, while it is true that, generally speaking, heresy and unsound doctrine

go together, now, as in the beginning, a rank heretic may be perfectly sound as regards the fundamental truths of Christianity;

Verse 11.—But now, as then, he is perverted, and sins, being altogether and forcibly self-condemned; and for this reason, after proper warning, he must be left wholly to himself. To argue further with him would be useless.

Verses 12, 13.—The human touch and tender consideration in these verses is as attractive as the sternness of apostolic authority before was needed.

Verse 14.—"Let ours," i.e. our brethren (cf. Acts 4. 23). The Christian has "his own company" outside the world. In the highest sense the Lord says of His own, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world." Here the Cretan Christians are instructed to be forward in good works of every necessary kind, in whatever way called for, so as not to be fruitless. Faith and sound doctrine are good in themselves, but without bearing practical fruit they are worthless (John 15. 6; Heb. 6. 7, 8).

Verse 15.—The courtesy of Christianity is as characteristic as its higher hopes. "Greet them that love us in the faith," makes faith the test of the only love that was worthy of the name; and it implies the energy as well as the profession of it.

The true grace of God, already set forth, be with you all.

The Shepherd of the Sheep.

The Good Shepherd (*that laid down His life for the sheep*): John 10. 11.

The Great Shepherd (*that was brought again from the dead*): Hebrews 13. 20.

The One Shepherd (*that gathers in one the flock of God*): John 10. 16.

The Chief Shepherd (*that shall appear again with His rewards*): 1 Peter 5. 4.

The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls: 1 Peter 2. 25.

Jehovah's Shepherd (*that shall gather Israel*): Zechariah 13. 7; Ezekiel 24. 33.

"A Prince and a Saviour."

The Prince of Life (*whom God hath raised from the dead*): Acts 3. 15.

A Prince and a Saviour (*to give repentance and remission of sins*): Acts 5. 31.

The Prince of Peace: Isaiah 9. 6.

The Prince of the Kings of the earth: Revelation 1. 5.

The Lord's Way in the Relationships of Life.

(JAMES MCBROOM)

THE Lord Jesus put His own exquisite touch upon every detail of life and perfectly adjusted, as it were, by the balances of the Sanctuary every existing relationship.

Family Relationships.

His mother's desire that He should distinguish Himself, and the wish of His brethren that He should make a public display, were each perfectly met in the full intelligence that the time for display had not come, that He must first be the sufferer, and in His death lay a basis of glory transcending all power of human thought.

Governmental Authority.

When the Pharisees and Herodians joined together to ensnare Him on the tribute question, the simplicity of His answer showed them at once their proper place in regard to "the powers that be," and at the same time pressed home upon them the claims of God.

The Claims of Israel.

The claims of the Jews as the covenant people were fully and clearly upheld when He said to the Gentile woman, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to dogs" (Matt. 15.). He was there as "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. 15. 8). But if the state of those people was such that they were incapable of appropriating the goodness of God come to them in their own Messiah, that same goodness would overflow every dispensational barrier to meet

the need of those who had no claim upon Him.

The Law.

Stern religionists sought to tie His hands from doing good by the Sabbath question, and when they could not succeed held a council to destroy Him; but the grace of Christ overcame every legal barrier in the scene of man's need. The mercy that was in Him could not be restrained. When the question of the temple tribute arose (Matt. 17.) He paid it so as to give no offence, though as the Son of the great King He was under no obligation to do so. He met the claim for both Himself and His servant, but in such a way that His creatorial power and glory shone out. He was the Lord of the temple for which the tribute was paid; that was a great truth that Peter, zealous for His master's honour, had to learn.

The State of Society.

When one came to Him and said, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," He answered, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you" (Luke 12. 13, 14). And this may seem a difficulty to some, but the more we look at it the more shall we see His amazing perfection. The state of society was very far from what God intended it to be, but He will not take the place of Cæsar, and put it right. He had not come to patch up the old garment, but to go to the cross, where He was to die, that in resurrection He might establish a new order of society entirely, in which every moral and social question should be established according to God's own thoughts.

Consider Him.

He was Obedient (Phil. 2. 8).
 „ Meek and lowly (Matt. 11. 29).
 „ Tempted (Heb. 4. 15).
 „ Despised and rejected (Is. 53. 3).
 „ Wounded and bruised (Is. 53. 5).

He is Merciful (Heb. 2. 17).
 „ Faithful (Heb. 2. 17).
 „ Able to succour (Heb. 2. 18).
 „ Exalted (Acts 2. 33).
 „ Crowned with glory and honour
 „ (Heb. 2. 9).

Pre-eminence.—No. 2.

(HENRY J. VINE).

“He Humbled Himself.”

THE personal greatness and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ rejoices the heart of the true believer; and His official greatness and glory is necessarily of deep interest to him, as well as a source of important instruction in the things that truly matter. But when the heart dwells upon the love which brought Him into this world, upon His humiliation, upon His down-stooping even to death, the one who knows that he is redeemed by His precious blood bows down His soul before His Saviour and Lord and is filled with worship and adoration. It is this manifestation of divine love in God's Son that touches the heart.

Equal with the Father, the Son shared in the glory of the Godhead with Him. He it was who came down into this world to be the Servant of the divine pleasure. He emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant; humbling Himself, He did the will of God in unswerving obedience: even to death itself, and that death, the shameful death of the cross. What obedience! What humility! What grace! Shall we not say, What divinity? “Wherefore,” we are told, “God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Phil. 2. 9, 10). How could it be otherwise, than that He should be so honoured? He must in all things be pre-eminent.

It was in His unparalleled down-coming that His love was fully told out, and the greater we see and know Him to be, the greater and more wonderful will *the love of such an One* appear to our hearts. The marvel of it is that HE should have come down into this world to make us His, that HE should have died for us. It is amazing to us, but it also went up as a sweet savour to God, as we read, “Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice

to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph. 5. 2). His heart was set upon us; Christ loved the assembly and gave Himself for it (25). How deeply must He love us! His death proclaims this: “Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us.”

The love of God, too, is commended to us in that death: “God commends His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5. 8). What wealth is brought to us by the down-coming of Christ! “Herein as to us has been manifested the love of God, that God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through Him*. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins.” The power and divinity of God is proclaimed in creation, but the love of God could not be known through it. His love could only be told out in His beloved Son who died for us at Calvary, it is in Him and there that we perceive it. And that love of God is now in Christ Jesus our Lord, ascended to the right hand of God on high (Rom. 8. 39); and nothing can separate us from it.

Then there is *the love of Jesus for us personally*. I never knew a saint who cultivated the sense of this personal love who did not prosper in his soul, but I have seen those who have made much of *our affection for Christ* get astray both in spirit and conversation. For true prosperity of soul we must be able to say with Paul, “I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given Himself for me” (Gal. 2. 20, N.T.). It is the constant appreciation of His changeless love which produces love in our hearts for Him. The former and not the latter must be pre-eminent. “We love because He first loved us.” This appreciation of the love of Jesus for him is specially noticeable in John the Apostle. He often speaks of the disciple whom

Jesus loved, not of the disciple that loved Jesus; though that was true. And as if feeling it more intensely when he went to the grave of Jesus, he speaks of himself as the disciple whom Jesus "*dearly loved*," using a stronger word than usual (John 20. 2). The constant cultivation of this in our hearts by the Spirit of God, remembering the glory of the One who so loved us, will result in true prosperity for God's glory.

First in all Things.

As we said, the important matter of universal pre-eminence has been settled. In perfect righteousness, and in divine wisdom, the first place in all things is Christ's. It has been the Godhead pleasure so to fix permanently the pre-eminent place; and in view of this, "in Him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of His cross" (Col. 1. 19, 20, N.T.). And every heart that knows Him says with gladness, He is worthy to be pre-eminent in all things!

He took the very lowest place. In all His solitary perfectness He stooped to the deepest depths. He felt the awfulness of sin and suffering, of sorrow and shame, and of Satan's oppressive power, as none other could. But in His humiliation He glorified God and finished the work He came to do. Now raised to the highest place, He is exalted above all. "But that He ascended, what is it but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4. 9, 10, N.T.). He who stooped to the deepest depths is now exalted in the highest heights! Again we say, He is worthy! Most meet it is that this should be so.

It is divinely decreed, "That all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 23). The Holy Spirit adds a very solemn word for

the multitude of religionists who do not honour the Son. "He that honour-eth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." In the First Epistle of John, a final and awful word is given by God as to those who think they can know Him apart from Christ. "Whoever denies the Son has not the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father also" (2. 23, N.T.). In the next letter it is said, "Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God. He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son" (9. N.T.). As far back as the second Psalm, men are told to "*kiss the Son, lest He be angry*."

How natural do those precious words of the Holy Spirit sound in the circumcised ears of true believers: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath *given all things* into His hand." The assembly, which is His body and His bride, rejoices in the place of exaltation, in which she knows Him, and where she is united to Him, as "*the Head over all things*"; and looking on to the day when He shall take up everything publicly in great glory, she delights to think of Him as "the established *Heir of all things*." Nor will He take up that public place of power and glory apart from His work on the cross, for it was there "*He tasted death for everything*" (Heb. 2. 10, N.T.). Indeed, it is on the ground of that death, and because of the blood of the cross, that He will righteously "*reconcile all things*" to the Godhead fulness that dwells in Him. Moreover, in permanency, vitality, and stability, "*all things subsist together by Him*"; and in the fulness of times, when He heads up all in heaven and in earth, He will administratively "*uphold all things by the word of His own power*" (Heb. 1. 3). In His divine dignity, as well as in the matter of time, "*He is before all things*." And the purpose of His present exaltation above all heavens, we are told, is, "that He might *fill all things*." Only one who knows and understands the warp and woof of everything, from the greatest to

the smallest detail, could possess the capability for this. He alone has the intelligence of everything in the universe, and omniscience, and wisdom and power to handle all in divine perfection. "*By Him were created all things.*"

In this is *enfolded* the divine secret, for it was none less than the Creator who came in incarnation as "First-born of all creation"; just as in redemption and reconciliation is *unfolded* that same secret, for in resurrection He is "First-born from among the dead, that He might have the first place in all things." Yes, it was the Creator Son who came into the creation as Man; who has settled eternally the sin question for God's glory and our blessing. In Him all fulness dwells, and He is pre-eminent in all things. *All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily; and, miracle of grace! in that same One we are also filled full!* (Col. 2. 9).

Something of the magnitude and majesty of the place of pre-eminence in which Christ is set according to the pleasure of the Godhead may be grasped, as we ponder these words: "All things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether they be thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities, all things have been created *by Him and for Him*" (Col. 1. 16).

In a ninefold way, we see in Scripture the universe, the all-things (*ta-panta*), related to our Lord Jesus Christ as the pre-eminent One.

1. *As the Father's gift to Him* (John 3. 35; 13, 3).
2. *As the exalted Head over all* (Eph. 1. 22).
3. *As the established Heir of all* (Heb. 1. 2).
4. *As having tasted death for everything* (Heb. 2. 9).
5. *As the Reconciler of all things* (Col. 1. 20).
6. *As the One by whom all vitally subsists* (Col. 1. 17).
7. *As the upholder of all administratively* (Heb. 1. 3).

8. *As the One who is before all things* (Col. 1. 17).

9. *As the One who is to fill all things* (Eph. 4. 10).

To these most marvellous facts must be added one other, which is explanatory of all the rest; the fact in which, as we have said, was *enfolded* the divine secret; the fact which, though thus added to the others, must nevertheless necessarily stand alone in its own transcendence and majesty:—

He is Creator of all Things.

This does not entirely comport with the so-called "Apostles' Creed"; but it is what God Himself tells us in John 1., Colossians 1., and Hebrews 1. concerning the Son. When the Godhead said, Let Us make, He it was who became the active Agent in creation, according to the council of the Holy Trinity; just as afterwards He wrought out the wonderful work of redemption according to divine purpose. All things are "*by*" Him: all things are "*for*" Him (Col. 1. 16). He is both the Creator and the Object of all things created, for the glory and pleasure of the fulness of the Godhead which dwells in Him. And when His whole work is done, and all things are reconciled to the Godhead fulness by Him, through the blood of His cross, then shall that blessed result be reached:

*"Joyful all the wide creation
Rests in undisturbed repose,
Blest in Jesu's full salvation,
Sorrow now nor thralldom knows."*

As a "figure of Him that was to come," Adam might stand as the head of a race; and as heading up everything in a redeemed nation, Moses and Aaron might be the political and religious centres in Israel; as head of a glorious administration, brought about through the warrior-work of David, Solomon in all his wisdom might rule in Israel; and as the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar might shine in the kingdom and in the limited dominion bestowed upon him by God: but all these must fail and fade away,

giving place to Him who is Head over all permanently. A mighty prophet might stir the people with his words to seek God for a time; but that Prophet alone, who is also the Priest and King, the Son of God, could speak the vital words which should put men eternally right with God.

Alexander the Great might seek world-wide power (as well as divine honours); but it was not his. Nor could Cyrus nor Cæsar obtain and maintain it; for it was not theirs! Much less could the meteor-like Napoleon grasp and hold the sceptre of the world; because it was not his! Equally doomed to failure are the frantic and frightful efforts of a recent power, which is outside the prophetic sphere in which it has pleased God to fix the earthly centre of rule. The world empire is not theirs! No; it belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor will things be rectified till He publicly takes world-wide kingdom and dominion. World-wide! did we say? Nay; His sway must be creation-wide! Then shall all the saved be blessed in Him, and every one shall bless God in His holy Name.

We cannot close without one more word as to this pre-eminent One, whose grace led Him to stoop even to the feet of His loved ones, in view of their having part with Him in His glory. I am referring to that memorable scene when He washed the feet of His disciples on the night of His betrayal; when the Son of the Father, "*knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands,*" rose from supper, laid aside His garments, took a towel, girded Himself, and washed the feet of those whom He loved as His own. This gracious and significant act on the part

of our blessed Lord, done in the consciousness that all things were His, was in view of their having "*part with Him,*" as He said. Peter would have withstood such grace; but it was necessary for the end in view. He said to the Father, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them." This He would have us enter into now; to have part with Him, before we are actually glorified with Him.

Therefore He, the Son of the Father's love, the pre-eminent One, stooped down to wash their feet! What astonishing grace! Can it be that He loves us so? He, the great and glorious Heir of all things, stoops to the feet of His own, that they may have part with Him! The graciousness of it excels the expression of words. We can but wonder and adore before Him, our blessed Lord.

Listen! He speaks! He knows our danger. He loves us. What does He say?

"WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET."

"I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE."

"THE SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS LORD."

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

Yes; as He loved John; as He loved earnest and true-hearted Peter, who was about to deny Him, under Satan's sifting, with cursing and swearing; as He loved all His own; in view of their having part with Him; thus are we to love one another. It is this which will bear the most eloquent witness to the world, as He said: "By this shall all men know that ye are disciples of Mine, if ye have love amongst yourselves."

How Faith Shows Itself.

IN times of difficulty, faith does not show itself in the magnificence of the results, but in love for God's work, however little it may be, and in the perseverance with which it is carried on through all the difficulties belonging to this state of weakness, for that with which faith is occupied is the city of God, and the work of God, and these things have always the same value, whatever may be the circumstances in which they are found. (J.N.D.)

The Function of Prayer.

"The weapons of our warfare are . . . mighty to the pulling down of strongholds"
(2 Cor. 10. 4).
"Praying always . . . in the Spirit . . . and watching thereunto . . . with all
perseverance" (Eph. 6. 18).

The following paper is taken from the Monthly Missionary Letter (August issue) sent out by Dr. Northcote Deck, Aola, Solomon Islands. The importance of the subject and the force with which it is treated are our reasons for putting it before our readers.

The Artillery of Prayer.

IN the recent fighting in France a strong position had to be taken. The enemy's lines were so defended by trenches, parapets, and barbed wire, that any assault, however determined, by whatever number of men, must have failed. However brave the attackers might have been, not a man would have reached the enemy's trenches alive. It was, in fact, quite impossible for the place to be taken by infantry assault. But the attacking general had collected large numbers of the most powerful artillery, firing the most powerfully explosive shells. With this excessive strength of massed artillery a continuous fire was kept up for over five hours on the one objective till the trenches were blown in, palisades thrown down, and wire entanglements blown to pieces.

Then, when the artillery had done its work, the waiting troops were at last able to go up "every man straight before him," and, with comparatively little loss, to capture the position. What had been absolutely impossible to them before had been made possible by the sustained fire of the artillery.

I believe this is a most accurate and instructive picture of spiritual warfare. There are positions of the adversary that cannot be stormed or starved. There are defences that are impregnable. There are obstructions which effectually bar the progress of the most devoted members of God's great missionary army. Before such can possibly succeed there is necessary the sustained and continuous fire of the artillery of prayer. Nothing else will take its place. Nothing will avail until it has done its work. The sooner this is recognised, the sooner we shall learn to put first things first.

Too often, in the absence of prevailing prayer, the assault has to be made without, and precious lives are sacrificed, time is lost, and all efforts are in vain; not because God is unfaithful, or the servant is not devoted, but because the artillery of prayer has been lacking, and no breach has been made in the enemy's defences.

This holy war is a war of munitions, and of these there has been at times a tragical shortage. "To your tents, O Israel!" has too often been sounded in the church's ears, while the cry of the great Captain of our salvation still rings out: "YE THAT ARE THE LORD'S REMEMBRANCERS, TAKE YE NO REST, AND GIVE HIM NO REST" (Is. 62. 6, R.V.).

We must have recourse to prayer. That is the only weapon which may prevail. *It seems to me that the failure of an attack is often more reflection on the intercessors than on the attackers.* The sooner we realize the all-important function of prayer the sooner we shall learn to put first things first, and to be resolved that in our lives, at least, nothing shall be allowed to usurp its place; and that we will not allow ourselves to be so cumbered with other clamant duties that prayer is crowded out.

The Honourable Company of the Intercessors.

In England there is an historic body of men known as the Honourable Artillery Company. Positions in this brigade have long been greatly coveted and hard to obtain. For their function is the all-important one of breaking down the enemy's defences. They have

their counterpart in God's great army of occupation, which contains a body of saints who have an equally important and essential function to perform. These might well be called the Honourable Company of the Intercessors. Their numbers, alas! are far too small, their ranks too thin. This service, in spite of its honour, is little sought after. For the great bulk of God's children are so short-sighted—indeed, so blind to spiritual warfare—that they cannot follow the flight of the projectiles of prayer, nor realize the effect they produce.

Yet God will give the sight of the seer to those who desire it, that at last we may realize the function and the urgency of prevailing prayer. This work of breaking down the walls and effecting a breach has got to be done. It is going to be done. But is it going to be done by you? All cannot be great preachers or teachers. *But I do not see anything in God's Word that would prevent the humblest saint from becoming a great intercessor.* Praying may be hidden service, yet it is none the less honourable. It is a service, too, with which many might be trusted, for it does not expose us to the deadly chill of popularity and applause. How often we ask for power from God that we might do greater things, when He would rather give us weakness, that we might do better things! Recruits for this service are needed; never so much as to-day!

Speaking as a learner to other learners, the best way to become a true intercessor, to learn to really pray, is to do it; to make a definite and sober beginning. We need not be so much concerned at first about knowing how to pray. We need to be intensely concerned about giving God a chance to teach us how to pray. Being then convinced that prayer is the greatest essential to holy living and effective ministry, it is wise to decide that by His grace we will devote a certain definite time each day to waiting on God in intercession. As a writer has said: "God's acquaintance is not learned by pop calls." Time is needed. Through-

out the Word of God the greatest emphasis is laid upon waiting. There is something peculiarly healthful to the soul, and effective with God, in waiting.

If we are too busy to wait, then we must at once abandon the most effective service of the soul for God. Such waiting is toilsome at first, but soon becomes a pleasure. In carrying out such a decision to wait upon God in prayer, a clock is of the greatest practical assistance. It is not usually mentioned in manuals of devotion. Yet, having it as a witness that we have fulfilled with Him the covenanted hour or hours, immensely strengthens one's resolve to continue and extend the time, while praying aloud is the best corrective for wandering thoughts.

The one paramount essential, however, to power in prayer, is, of course, and must always be, the enduement of the Spirit. He must be in charge. He must be not Guest, but Guide; be not on the threshold, but on the throne. With His enabling, we shall have repeated the experience of the disciples—"When they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Then, indeed, will our weapons become mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, for He is the first pre-requisite to power in prayer.

"And Watching Thereunto."

In inciting our converts round the Islands to persistent prayer, I have often used the illustration of a yam garden. How does a native grow yams? Does he take a bagful and roam through the forest pushing in one here, one there, in any nook or corner he may find, never to know where they are planted, never to return to tend them and watch their growth; never at the last to gather them and feast his heart upon them? Surely reaping no resulting fruit, he would soon tire of planting yams. Yet that is just how many children of God sow where they never reap, make a duty of what might be a joy, and soon tire of praying.

They stand up with petitions so vague and indefinite that they could not recognise the answer were it given. Or they plant a prayer for some definite object, and straightway go away and forget all about it; so that like the yam planted and abandoned in the forest, it is never reaped by the sower, it never gladdens his heart and impels him to further planting. No, I have never seen natives plant yams like that. They are too practical. Yet I have heard many pray like that.

A native grows yams to obtain the fruit. He chooses the place with care, clears it, and plants his yams with skill. He marks it off with fences, that he may know his own yams. Day by day he visits them and tends them. The first green sprout of promise gladdens his heart, and incites him to further care and loving attention. He gathers his harvest, and, encouraged by the fruit of his toil, never fails to go on planting and reaping. That, too, is the way of fruitful prayer, above all, to be definite. To choose the subjects of our prayer with care, waiting upon God to guide our minds to ask for those very things He wishes to give, and then to record the prayers that we may never forget. Such a book of prayers, in which answers may be recorded as well, immensely strengthens faith and keeps the soul definite and expectant. Seven subjects of prayer, thus carried through to fruition, are more incentive to go on praying, than seven hundred begun and abandoned. *It is the derelict prayers of the saints that discredit the power of intercession.*

Pessimists in Prayer.

But many of God's people are pessimists in prayer. A pessimist is one who habitually looks on the dark side of things, who counts the discouragements, and discounts the deliverances. Applied to human affairs, it is excused that "if you expect little you will not be disappointed."

But such a state of mind, such an outlook and expectation applied to

earthly things, is apt to become habitual, and unconsciously become our attitude towards spiritual things as well. Thus there is adopted a God-dishonouring attitude that undermines the expectations of faith and causes prayer with many of God's children to become a power unavailed of.

God has no use for pessimists in prayer. "Ye have not because ye ask not" is the Spirit's explanation of the usual poverty of soul. "Expect great things from God and you will get them." Surely, then, seeing we have the resources of the Saviour on which to draw, we may safely be the most habitual optimists in prayer. For abiding in Him, being led out by Him in intercession, we shall *not* be confounded.

"With Perseverance."

Yet, on the other hand, some prayers, like some plants, mature slowly. At times the husbandman needs "long patience." The most precious fruits of intercession must often be attended "with perseverance."

In the Islands we have a class of native dogs that suffer from chronic starvation. As might be expected, they have little spirit, so that when they take hold of anything it does not need much to drive them off and to discourage them. They have often afforded an apt illustration for our converts, of the way many men take hold in prayer. And I have told them how bulldogs, when they catch hold, will die almost before they let go. Many a time since then, a native, ever quick at parable, has prayed: "Oh, Lord, make us bulldogs in prayer!" Such, indeed, are the intercessors who are needed in the church to-day. Men who will cry with the Psalmist: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Men who will set their faces to pray on with unwavering faith for years, in quiet confidence that what God has laid upon their hearts to ask, that He is certain in the end to give, when patience has had her perfect work. *Bulldogs in prayer! How many of us could be described like that?*

Answers to Prayer.

Sinmoo's Conversion.

WE have lately seen in Malaita, Solomon Islands, a striking example of the power of focused prayer. Last year the story was told of how a little band of Christians was evicted from Cherith, near Nongasila, and how God opened a refuge for them at Gwo Busu. An old fighting chief, Sinmoo, was led to adopt the teacher as his son, and to live in and protect the newly-formed Christian village. But the old man's face remained heavy; there was no answering light in his eyes when the Master was mentioned. For his heart remained dark and unopened to the Saviour. Many, indeed, have heard of him. Many must have prayed for him. Often we have tried to make clear the way of salvation, to tell him of the peace he was rejecting. We did not then know that his was a notable case, and that the chiefs around kept urging him to die as he had lived, a worshipper of the akalos, that he might come back with them to haunt the place of their forefathers. We have been much troubled at the delay, for he is an old man on the verge of the grave, and our only resource has been in prayer. At length, on the last visit round Malaita, after two years, the prayers of the saints finally prevailed, and in the midst of a simple gospel-meeting, without waiting for the close, the old man stood up and cried out loudly that he wished to "trust." And so he did that day, with his wife, son, grandson, and five others, to our great joy.

Fatana'asi.

Here, for instance, is a specially gracious answer to prayer that exceeded all our expectations. It concerns Fatana'asi, a little salt-water girl of sixteen, on the mangrove-island of Mo, in Port Adam. She first heard the gospel in the little church that crowns the hill on the mainland opposite, where a Christian family lived. After learning

there for a time she was allowed by her heathen parents to come away for two years to One Pusu, where she became a bright little Christian, with a life full of promise. But her future troubled the child and us. Was she to go back to living alone among the heathen at Mo? What prospect was that for a child's tender faith? When she returned from One Pusu we were able to arrange for her to stay for a time with the Christians on the hill. But she was needed to work for her mother, and gradually her visits home became longer, as the child's joy became dimmed and her hopes diminished in that heathen atmosphere.

Her parents then attempted to marry her to a heathen man. When next the ship arrived the child took refuge on board, and asked to be taken away. We did take her some miles up the coast, but on praying over the matter, felt that we must return her, as, though the girl was old enough to choose for herself, we could not get the mother's consent. I must confess we felt very hopeless as we sailed away, leaving a little solitary figure on the shore, for there seemed no way out. But we did hold on in prayer, and when the news reached One Pusu the girls there took hold in prayer in earnest.

Six months went by, and we have just seen her again. It has been no vain thing to trust, no waste of time to pray. Fatana'asi came off to the ship from the same island, clothed, and clean, and with beaming face. The heathen marriage is given up, and she has been allowed and enabled to teach four women and children, night and morning, about the Way of Life. So the Saviour would not allow us to take this jewel of His out of its setting, but has made her to shine for Him even where she is. What pessimist would have believed that such a child could grow and thrive and witness for the Master in such surroundings? May God make optimists of us all!

(From Dr. N. Deck's Missionary Letter.)

The Door of Salvation.

(J. T. MAWSON).

I HAVE heard of a dream that a man had. It was night, and a great storm raged fiercely about him, and he had neither home nor shelter. Presently he saw a light shining in the darkness, and struggling against the tempest he reached the door from which it shone, only to find that that light spelt in letters of fire the stern and forbidding word **JUSTICE** over the portal within which he had hoped to rest. Now he was not just, but unjust, a guilty, godless sinner, so that there was no welcome at that door for him, and he shrank from it in terror, for the storm outside was less to be feared than the justice within. He found another door standing open, but its name was **TRUTH**, and from this also he turned, for he felt that truth could only convict and condemn him. From still another door there radiated a light, but it was the light of **HOLINESS**, and he was sure that there could be neither shelter nor blessing inside that door for so vile a wretch as he, and so he turned away into the night and the storm a hopeless man. Then upon his weary eyes there shone another light, and he stumbled on towards it, fell almost fainting before it, but found a hand stretched out to save him and to draw him across the threshold that the light illuminated, and he found himself within the house of **MERCY**.

That was the dream, and it has been used as an illustration of the gospel, and has passed current as a very good illustration of the gospel too; but I want to say plainly and emphatically that it is not a true illustration of it, that instead of illustrating "THE GOSPEL OF GOD CONCERNING HIS SON" it falsifies it, utterly and miserably. Let us suppose that things are as the dream put them, that the guilty man is harboured in the house of mercy; but justice has claims upon him and he has sinned against truth and holiness. Can they allow their claims to be flouted and the man to escape the

judgment he deserves? Impossible. These great attributes of God must be maintained unsullied whatever else may happen. Then suppose they seek the door of mercy and demand, as they must, the extradition of the guilty man that had taken refuge there, can mercy refuse their righteous demand? If it does, then there is conflict between mercy and justice; yet if it yields the man whom it has commiserated to his just deserts it is itself saddened and defeated. This is the dilemma into which such a mis-presentation of the gospel throws us.

Thank God the true gospel involves us in no such difficulty. It tells us that there is one door of refuge, and it stands wide open for all, and from it there shines into the darkness a light—kindly, attractive and inviting; and the goodness of God is abroad in the night and the storm to lead weary wanderers to its friendly threshold. It is the door of mercy, truly, but justice, truth, and holiness are also inscribed upon it, and they join with mercy in welcoming the sinner to rest and peace.

The gospel tells that "mercy and truth are met together"; it declares "God's righteousness that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The gospel makes plain that every attribute of God is for the sinner who draws near, nay that God Himself is for us, and that without sacrificing His glory in one iota. Mercy and truth, righteousness and grace, justice and love—all these, impossible of reconciliation by any means known to men, are upheld and proclaimed in the gospel of Christ to the glory of God and the blessing of men.

But only through the cross of Christ could this be; it was there and by it that all came into full evidence, and was told out as one harmonious whole—God's full character revealed.

"And in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save: yet righteous be."

It was there that the dread demands of justice against sinful men were revealed, and it was there that those demands were fully satisfied by Him who, according to the unmeasured grace of God, was "delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification."

"Stern Justice can demand no more
And Mercy can dispense her store."

Mercy can do this righteously, in full accord with the eternal justice of God, so that never for ever can the blessing that mercy bestows upon the sinner who believes be taken from him.

It is the knowledge of this gospel that gives stability to the soul and lasting peace to the conscience; it is when this is known that we are able to advance thankfully and without fear into those deeper things that may be known by the Holy Ghost by all those who are in Christ Jesus; but until this is known there is neither peace nor progress.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, **EVEN SO MIGHT GRACE REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BY JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD**" (Rom. 5. 21).

Are You Really Trusting?

A. J. POLLOCK.

VAST numbers of Christians are being tried as they never were before. As I write, many are in the fighting line, whilst mothers, wives, sisters, children, sit at home worn with anxious suspense as they realize their loved ones are in constant danger.

Besides all this, Christians in London and district, and on the east coast of England are within the danger zone. Many known to the writer have witnessed the recent raids and testify to their terrifying nature.

Now such a time as this is a testing-time and brings out whether we are really trusting in the Lord's care or not. In times of peace and quiet we can talk about the Lord's care, a Father's watchful love, and think we realize it, but when the test comes it proves the quality of our faith in God.

Two Christian women were talking together. One said to the other, "I have got a very comforting text, which helps me much:

"*'What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee'* (Ps. 56. 3)."

The other Christian replied, "I have got a better text than that:

"*'I will trust, and not be afraid'* (Isa. 12. 2)."

Well, we would not compare one

text with another where all are from God's Word, and the expression of His people's confidence in Him, and as such comforting. There is the infirmity of human nature, and in this our great High Priest has sympathy, and no one need chide himself or herself if a certain amount of fear and apprehension possess the heart during those times of stress, if only in the fear there is a turning to the Lord to find a refuge in Him. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." Happy man, happy woman, who has this experience; happier still if this leads to a deeper acquaintance with God so that in quiet confidence in Him they can really say, "I will trust and not be afraid." For let us remember that it is also written, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will surely garrison that heart and mind that is careful for nothing, but which in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving makes its requests known unto God (Phil. 4. 6, 7).

As our great High Priest, our risen Lord bears our names on His shoulders of power, and in His heart of love. He represents us on high, ministering sympathy, succour, and help, and He is sufficient for all circumstances.

Studies in the Psalms—Fourth Book.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Psalms 97.—101.

PSALM 97. takes up the glad tidings that Jehovah is King from Psalm 93. 1, repeated as testimony to the nations in Psalm 96. 10. Now the actual fact is celebrated with its glorious results. Satan's rule is for ever past; the earth, with the multitude of the isles—all the Gentile nations—is called to rejoice. Yet the Psalm does not give us the full revelation of God that Christ has brought, but His government in this world, hence clouds and darkness surround Him, as at Sinai, a fire consumes His enemies, "the earth saw and trembled." A true understanding of the difference between this and the New Testament should lead us to value more deeply our present portion, "the darkness is passing away and the true light *now* shines." We thus learn what may appear strange to many, that the kingdom and glory, with its reign of righteousness, will not reveal God, as we should know Him now, in the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Rightly may we pray "Thy kingdom come," because the power of Jehovah's throne is absolutely necessary for the overthrow of Satan's dominion and the rebellion in this world; but not thus is grace learned, for it is the glory of the gospel of the present time to proclaim that grace reigns unto eternal life, but not without a righteous basis, the sinner's judgment having fallen on the holy Victim, so that sins are not now imputed.

In our Psalm the heavens declare God's righteousness (ver. 6); no doubt this is the righteousness which will bring all things on earth into consistency with itself. (Now righteousness is declared in heaven in the glorified Saviour, and presently the saints will be the exhibition of it there—2 Cor. 5. 21.) Upon this the worshippers of idols are ashamed, and as Isaiah tells us, will cast the wretched images, their own handiwork, to the moles and to the bats.

It is often thought that verse 7 is quoted in Hebrews 1. 6, but the citation there is word for word from the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 32. 43, and it seems better to understand the "gods" not as angels but as the heathen deities, again referred to in verse 9: these are really according to 1 Corinthians 10. 20. demons, who will one day under divine compulsion bow to the Name of Jesus and own Him Lord (Phil. 2. 10). But the Psalm is linked with another part of the same verse in Deuteronomy; there the nations are exhorted to rejoice with His people, so in verse 8, Zion and the daughters of Judah join the gladness of the Gentiles of verse 1, as they hear the glorious tidings (even the feet of the bearers are said to be beautiful when on such a mission) "thy God reigneth" (Isa. 52. 7), and see all opposing forces broken before His might. At this time of crisis, Jehovah calls for decision for His cause (cf. Judges 5. 23), so all who love Him are exhorted to hate evil; these find protection under His power, and for them light springs up in the path as they tread it (is this not always so?), joy too fills their hearts. Thus righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost are found when we are in moral correspondence with the kingdom then as now.

PSALM 98.—Here the Spirit calls for a new song not from the Gentiles, as in Psalm 96., but from restored Israel. To the nations has Jehovah in His ways with the Jews manifested His righteousness and His salvation (a connection often found in the last part of Isaiah), as also His mercy and His faithfulness. Of this renewal of blessing to the once despised and hated Jews the nations become the happy and unjealous witnesses. They sing the praise of God with all varieties of musical instruments, used not now to beguile the weariness of a city of Cain (Gen. 4. 21), but consecrated to the service of the Most High.

The last three verses are the same as in Psalm 96., except that the heavens are not summoned to rejoice; perhaps this is because a further stage has been reached in the kingdom glories and the victory of heavenly power has rendered the two spheres of heaven and earth one in mind.

PSALM 99., like 93. and 97., is introduced by the glad tidings, "Jehovah reigneth." The glory which had left the temple, as described in Ezekiel, chapters 10., 11., has returned by the way of the East (Ezek. 43. 2), and Jehovah occupies as of old His place between the Cherubim, and is great in Zion. Following this His holiness is specially announced in verses 3, 5, and 9. We find the same sequence in Ezekiel 43.; as soon as the glory returns to its accustomed place and the once empty shrine is invested with the dignity of the house of God, "the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold this is the law of the house." This holiness, inexorable in taking vengeance on evil doings (ver. 8), should not discourage saints in the new day, now dawning, from calling on the Name of the Lord, for all those so doing will be saved (Joel 2. 32). The same simple gospel truth is applied to the present time in Romans 10. 13.

Verse 6 of our Psalm shows how Moses, Aaron, and Samuel experienced Jehovah's delivering power in their day. He had in mercy answered the priestly intercession of Moses (Ex. 32.-34.), and that of Aaron in Numbers 16. 48, as also the prayer of Samuel in 1 Samuel 7. 9. This favour, together with the holy government which took vengeance on the doings of the people, form, as has been truly remarked, "the two hinges of all God's ways—grace and the ear of goodness to the cry of the meek and needy, and government as holy and true." Therefore the last verse exhorts, "Exalt Jehovah our God and worship at His holy hill, for Jehovah our God is holy." The three-fold statement of holiness in this Psalm should be considered in connection with

the last verse of Psalm 93., in order that we may have a deeper sense of what is suited to God now as at all times.

PSALM 100. The central verse supplies the key to all this scene of joy and praise. The Spirit in Israel calls on all the earth to welcome Jehovah with the shout due to a king (Num. 23. 21). With gladness should He be served and His presence sought with a song. Jehovah and His people, the sheep of His pasture, are no longer separated by sin; taught of His Spirit they welcome representatives of the Gentile nations to share their own worship (see Isa. 66. 21). May we not learn from this how the true evangelical spirit has superseded the religious pride and Pharisaic leaven which has so characterized the Jewish leaders in the past. Finding their own need of mercy and learning that the mercy of Jehovah is for ever, they delight in its going out and embracing those they formerly despised.

PSALM 101. Accepting David as the author according to the title, we may be sure from the contents of the Psalm, that it was written in the early part of his reign, before the failure and sin of later years had so grievously stained the character of his throne. The whole Psalm is the declaration of the principles on which his government will proceed, but which he never himself fully practised; they remain therefore to be fulfilled by the Messiah in His future kingdom and form a suitable conclusion to the preceding kingdom Psalms; although it should be stated that many expositors have taken this Psalm as the commencement of a new section.

In the first three verses, the writer lays down the regulations for his own guidance; these he purposes to carry out, and conscious of his own uprightness, prays that Jehovah will come to him; this is probably a reference to the desire of David that the ark should be transferred to Mount Zion. In verses 4-8 we find the two great principles

always proper to the kingdom of God; first the uncompromising refusal of evil associations and then the whole-hearted fellowship with the faithful and those who walk in a perfect way.

In applying this instruction to the present condition of the kingdom, we have to inquire where the power for dealing with evil is to be found. We know that at the beginning it was in a special way committed to Peter (Matt. 16. 19); but the same terms are employed in Matthew 18. 18 in giving to the church in any locality authority to act for the maintenance of holiness in connection with the Name of the Lord. If the saints responsible in any matter requiring discipline are in moral correspondence with the Name to which they are gathered, holiness will be promoted, but when through the predominance of evil in the assembly its exclusion becomes impossible, we find in 2 Timothy 2. 19 and following verses directions for the individual believer, so that the Holy

Name he bears may not be connected with what is contrary to it. But this line of conduct enjoined is not intended to leave any in isolation, for we are told to follow righteousness, etc., with those calling on the Lord's Name out of a pure heart. We are thus delivered from the terrible snare of the self-importance of a sanctimonious isolation and are cast upon the guidance of the Spirit to walk with the undefiled in the way, using all diligence to keep the Spirit's unity, not one of our own making.

If this teaching is spiritually understood and faithfully followed, it will not lead to the forming of a new sect, but really further the administration of God, which is in faith (1 Tim. 1. 4, R.V.). It seems interesting and important to call attention to the uniformity of conduct taught in connection with God's kingdom, whether in the times of David and the future kingdom of Messiah as also in our own day when the kingdom is in mystery.

The Atheist.

AN animalcule in my blood
Rose up against me as I dreamed,
He was so tiny as he stood,
You had not heard him, though he screamed.

He cried "There is no Man!"
And thumped the table with his fist,
Then died—his day was scarce a span,—
That microscopic atheist.

Yet all the while his little soul
Within what he denied did live,—
Poor part, how could he know the whole?
And yet he was so positive!

And all the while he thus blasphemed
My (solar) system went its round,
My heart beat on, my head still dreamed,—
But my poor atheist was drowned.

Richard Le Gallienne.

A Day of Violence.

(JAMES C. TRENCH).

Thoughts suggested by a Study of the Prophecy of Habakkuk.

THE book begins abruptly without preface or introduction, and goes straight to the point—a very important point too, and one which presents difficulties to thoughtful minds to-day.

Briefly expressed it is: Why does God apparently look on unmoved at the wickedness that exists in those regions of the earth which have been exceptionally favoured by Him?

“The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out to Thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost Thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me, and there are that raise up strife and contention” (chap. i. 1-3).

The prophet had been crying for long to God about the state of Judah. Some hundred years before his time, Israel (the ten tribes) had been removed from their land, and carried away captive into Assyria in consequence of their sinful and idolatrous condition. Now Judah (the two tribes) were in a worse state than Israel had been, maintaining their profession of Jehovah's name, yet sunk in idolatrous worship and wickedness. The prophet's soul was stirred to its depths, as he beheld all the “violence,” “iniquity,” “grievance,” “spoiling,” “strife,” and “contention” within the little kingdom during Jehoiakim's reign (610-599 B.C.), and he complains that God would not hear when he cried to Him, nor would He save. Also that the law was slacked, that judgment did not go forth, that the righteous were overborne by the wicked, and that there was the open prostitution of justice, for that “wrong judgment proceedeth.”

Habakkuk was mistaken in thinking that he was not heard—for God *did* hear, although the prophet was right in saying that God did not *save* the nation from internal corruption and decay;

the fact being that the state of things spiritually in Judah was beyond remedy (see 2 Chron. 36. 1). Josiah had been a true servant of God, and there had been a bright, if brief, revival during the thirty-one years of his reign, but his sons and grandson—Jehoahaz (reigned three months), Jehoiakim (reigned eleven years), Jehoiachin (grandson, reigned three months and ten days), and Zedekiah (reigned eleven years)—who in turn came to the throne were each in succession worse than his predecessor, and, at last, God had to “remove the diadem, and take off the crown” from Zedekiah's head, abolish the kingdom, and employ the Chaldeans to carry the nation captive into Babylon; God declaring “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until HE come whose right it is, and I will give it to HIM.” (Ezek. 21. 27).

This terrible termination to the Jewish kingdom took place 588 B.C., probably about ten years after Habakkuk had passed away.

God did hear His servant's cry, and He answered him in the following terms:—

“Behold ye among the heathen, and regard and wonder marvellously, for I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe though it be told you; for, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs” (chap. i. 5-6).

And then follows a description of these Chaldeans, “terrible,” “dreadful,” “fierce,” their cavalry “shall come from far and spread themselves,” “they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat,” “they shall come up all for violence,” “they shall scoff at kings,” “they shall laugh at every stronghold. . . .” “Then shall his (Nebuchadnezzar's) mind change and

he shall pass over and offend, imputing his power unto his god."

This was Jehovah's reply. He would bring up the Chaldeans as His scourge for Judah to punish the nation. Whereupon Habakkuk speaks again to the Lord and says, very truly discerning Jehovah's object, "*Thou hast ordained them for judgment; O mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction*" (chap. 1. 12).

But this raises another difficulty, and Habakkuk is not yet satisfied. He gives expression to what troubles him in the form of a question: "*Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth those that are more righteous than he?*" (chap. 1. 13).

This was a very natural trouble. Why should God use the wicked Chaldeans, who were worse than Judah, as the latter's scourge? And Habakkuk then sets forth to the Lord some of the Chaldeans' enormities, in order to have this serious problem solved. But evidently in the consciousness of his own ignorance and of the wisdom and righteousness of God, he ceases his complaint against the Chaldeans, and says:

"*I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved*" (chap. 2. 1).

Blessed attitude for him in his day and for us in ours to take before God!

Let us consider what has been before us, in relation to the state of affairs in our own day, for while it is true that God acts differently in different dispensations, yet His *government* always proceeds along the same lines, and on the same principles. God's government of the earth on Zedekiah's dethronement passed out of the hands of Judah into the hands of the Gentiles, where it has remained ever since by God's decree. For when Judah was visited by Jehovah Himself coming into the world in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and salvation nationally was held forth

to it, the representatives of that nation deliberately rejected the Messiah and crucified Him.

Since that date they have been cast off, and "the times of the Gentiles" are still proceeding, during which period God is calling out the church—constituted of believers from both Jews and Gentiles, and formed by the Holy Ghost into one body. The church has, however, like everything else God set up in the earth, utterly broken down in man's hands, and what is called Christendom is the result to-day—having a form of godliness but denying the power of it. The professing church has taken the world's platform, and largely apostatized from the truth; every blasphemy is taught within its boundaries, God's Word is profaned, Christ's Person is denied, and His second coming scoffed at.

Many like Habakkuk have cried to God about this, but there is no improvement, and the question arises, Why does not God hear and answer? Those who study their Bibles must soon discover that there is no remedy. God has said, "Men shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3. 13). The gospel was never intended to convert the world as it is, but to take out of it a people for Christ's Name (Acts 15. 14; Gal. 1. 4), before judgment should descend upon it for the rejection of God's Son.

Still, it is very blessed to be able to cry to God, and He does hear prayer, and the prayers of His saints are as sweet odours to Him, and He knows best how to answer them. And may not the present violence and trouble in Europe, which is professedly Christian, be allowed by God for "judgment" and "correction," and as a rebuke to the abounding infidelity, apostasy, and profanation of God's most sacred things, coupled with boastfulness as to wealth, culture, civilization, power, and progress? Christians, too, will do well to consider their ways, and see what God has to say to *them* through all that is taking place. Yes, this is a time in which we all must stand upon our

watch tower and see what He has to say to us.

But why should God use *an evil* power to correct evil? This was what puzzled Habakkuk. For reply, might we not profitably consider how God used Satan to correct Job, and sent Paul a messenger from that evil one to buffet him lest he should be puffed up, by reason of the abundance of the revelations given to him when caught up to the third heaven?

“The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the *basest* of men.”

Mark, not the best, but the “*basest*” of men (Dan. 4. 17).

The fact of God's using an evil person or power as His scourge is no proof whatever that He is pleased with that person, no more than that He was pleased with Satan when He used him in the case of Job or Paul, or with Nebuchadnezzar, whose grievous sin was that, though “God had given him a kingdom, power, strength, and glory,” he attributed all his successes to his false god, and so God had to judge him in turn.

Habakkuk went to his watch tower about this trouble and waited on God, and in time he received God's answer. “And the Lord answered me and said, *Write the vision and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth.*” (Not, observe in passing, as generally quoted, that he that runs may read, just the reverse is what God says.) “*For the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, BUT THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH.*”

And then is given in the rest of the chapter the announcement of the judgment of God on the Chaldeans (Babylon) in the form of a parable put as it were in the mouth of the nations despoiled and conquered by them.

Five woes are pronounced upon it: (1)

for greed and cruelty; (2) for covetousness and exaltation; (3) for bloodshed and iniquity; (4) for corruption and violence; (5) for idolatry. In short, God's answer to the prophet's surprise that He should use such a power as Babylon to punish Judah, was that God would in turn judge Babylon. No doubt the judgment here foretold on Babylon, and long since executed, foreshadows the judgment to be carried out “at the end” (chap. 2. 3) on the Gentile powers by the Lord in person, when Israel shall be finally delivered from all oppression and acknowledge Him as their Lord and King. Meanwhile the just shall live by his faith (chap. 2. 4).

The effect produced on the prophet is immediate. He breaks forth in prayer, making two requests that God would revive His work in the midst of the years, and that in wrath He would remember mercy. These are petitions that we at the present moment may earnestly and continually make to our God and Father, so that out of all the sorrow and suffering on every side, great good may result to the souls of many, and glory to His blessed Name.

Then we have in vision God coming forth in His power and glory for the salvation of His people by the crushing of all opposition, depicted in language the magnificence of which is in keeping with the greatness and grandeur of the occasion; Habakkuk's soul in presence of such glory is filled with a sense of his own unworthiness and corruption, but with a more powerful impression than ever of God's love and faithfulness.

There comes up before his mind's eye, however, a terrible view of all the desolation which the inevitable chastisement of the guilty would entail, the battered houses, the blighted homes, the wasted crops and fruits, and the disappearance of the herds and flocks, until there was little of anything left in the land. How does he feel in regard to all this? Let him tell us.

“*Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the*

labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD GOD is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

Beautiful is it thus to trace the exercises of this godly soul, devoted as he was to Jehovah's interests and service, and feeling the sad condition of things

in communion with God. And having his faith strengthened so that he is prepared to face anything, feeling sure that if all creature hopes and possessions fail God can never fail to fulfil all His good word, so we have him ascending to greater altitudes in his soul's exercises, walking on his high places, singing to the God of his salvation.

Truly God knows how to make the trials and pressures of His people contribute to their souls' blessing. May it be so at the present time.

Answers to Correspondents.

The Prodigal.

J. B. H.—To interpret the parable of the prodigal (Luke 15.) as setting forth the return of a backsliding child of God is to spoil it altogether. It, along with the two which precede it, the three being in reality one parable, was the Lord's answer to the Pharisees and Scribes when they murmured because He received sinners and ate with them. It was as though He said to them in that wonderful parable, Why do you murmur because I receive sinners and eat with them? This is exactly what God finds His delight in doing. I am only manifesting My Father's grace.

In Luke's Gospel man's descent is traced right back to God from whom he first had being—"Adam which is of God" (chap. 3. 38). In this sense he could be spoken of as the son of God, but, as the parable shows, he has wandered from God, though richly endowed by Him, and has spent all his living—every power and blessing with which God endowed him—upon himself without reference to God the giver, and is a "sinner," "lost" and

"dead." But Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost (chap. 19.) and to call sinners to repentance (chap 5.). And in this wonderful fifteenth chapter we see the Triune God all active in the blessing of man. The Shepherd (our Lord Jesus) seeks and finds the sheep. The woman (figurative of the Spirit) searches for the lost piece of silver. The Father runs to meet the prodigal. The activities of God towards men are set forth in this threefold way, and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one *sinner* that repenteth." Finally the wanderer returns, the lost is found, and the dead is alive again, and is set anew in relationship with God in a new way, and entirely of grace, so that he wanders no more.

The elder brother was no doubt the Jews whom these murmurers represented, and who stood in a certain outward relationship with God, but who proved by their very murmurings that they did not know the God whose children they professed to be.

To the ardent soul who would excel in prayer, pessimism is a state of mind that needs to be consciously and constantly guarded against, even as constantly we need to enlarge our expectations by recording and recalling God's deliverances in the past.

These Testing Times.

(J. T. MAWSON).

VICTORIES that history acclaim, and that make names which live upon the lips of men for centuries are not gained upon beds of sloth and in easy circumstances, but amid appalling privations and stern realities that put to the test the mettle, and nerve, and sinew of the warrior. Neither does faith flourish and win its triumph in times of material prosperity, such times cause it to become shrivelled and flaccid; but in the rough days of trial and stress, it revives, and thrives, and grows strong and valorous. May these testing times rekindle the faith of the saints of God in Himself, so that "GOD IS" may become the supreme factor in their lives.

We Shrink from Trials.

We shrink from trials and difficulties, it is natural to do so, for they are not "joyous but grievous"; and yet we need not, for **AFTERWARD** they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby (Heb. 12. 11). They are wise who look on to the **AFTERWARD**—the result of the trial. This result does not hang in the balance, as may the result of some great battle that rages for hours and days; it is assured to us; we only stand to gain if we are exercised by the trial. Then let faith rear its head in the storm, let it lay hold upon God with strong grip. Let it speak out with confident voice, and say, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him," assured that if that be the end of the trial it shall be well, for He doeth all things well. And to have "died in faith" like those great souls in God's "Roll of Honour" in Hebrews 11. is better than to live without purpose and "die without mercy."

Things Could Not Continue as

They were.

If we carefully consider things we shall see that they could not have continued as they were. The iniquity of Sodom, which was "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness"

(Ezek. 16. 49), prevailed in these "civilised" countries of Europe, and the church had largely fallen under their seductive spell. Christians caught by the spirit of the times have followed eagerly the prizes that the world had to offer, and it has laid a heavy toll upon them, so that spiritual life has become much weakened, faith has declined, the Lord's work has languished, and His interests have been neglected. He loved His saints too much to permit such a condition of things to continue, and, we doubt not, that, for the sake of His saints, as well as in mercy to the world at large, He has permitted the awful calamity of this European war to come upon us, so that—seeing that all these material things, which appeal so strongly to the senses, must perish—our faith might be quickened, and we might find God to be better than possessions, and look with a truer earnestness onward to that new heaven and new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell.

Days of Ease are Not the Best for us.

Let us clearly understand that days of ease are not the best for us, and we shall be greatly helped. David's chequered career yields striking proof of this. When his prosperity had reached its flood-tide, he forgot the God whose goodness had followed him all the days of his life, and he could not rest though he lay upon a curtain-hung couch in a great palace. There his unsatisfied heart and restless eye led him into that foul sin that stained his name, and makes the enemies of the Lord blaspheme even unto this day. But in the darkest hour of this strange history, when his traitor son pursued him for his blood, and his only bed was the cold earth on the hill-side, he could sing: "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill, Selah. *I laid me down and slept*; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of

ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about" (Ps. 3. 3-6). Prosperity and the palace, with forgetfulness of God, gave birth to sin. Adversity, with the Lord at hand, yielded the Psalm that sings its music to our souls even in these testing times.

Christians Must Not Expect to Escape from Sorrow.

God can deliver from trouble His people who trust Him; He can cover them in the day of battle, and preserve them from the terror by night; and He will do these things for them when it is for their greatest good that He should; so that they may always commend themselves and all that are theirs to His wise and tender mercies. Yet the Christian ought not to hope to escape the sorrow and suffering through which others are passing; it would be unwarrantable selfishness and sheer weakness to expect to do so. The sword is as likely to bereave the Christian home of a beloved son as any other, and the house that is sanctified by prayer has no immunity from the bomb that falleth in the darkness, except, as we have said, God sees that their preservation from these things will be for their greatest good. Then what advantage has the Christian over the one who knows not God? His advantage lies in the fact that he knows God—God behind the sorrow, God over it, God in it, and God abiding in all His infinite wisdom and love when the sorrow is past and gone. And faith in God—who is not only the Almighty but the God of all comfort—lifts the Christian out of all depression and enables him, instead of attempting to escape sorrow, to share the sorrows of others, and to suffer instead of them if needs be. With this knowledge the Christian is the man to brighten the corner in which he is set and to convey hope and comfort to the despairing and distressed.

The Testing Time is a Sifting Time.

There is more comfort in the Scriptures than ever we have drawn from

them, or ever shall. They are like the boundless ocean, while our need is like the bucket that is dropped into it. Take such a passage as this, "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, **YET SHALL NOT THE LEAST GRAIN FALL UPON THE EARTH**" (Amos 9. 9).

The words have special reference to the sons of Jacob, but they declare a great principle in the ways of God with His saints, and His never-failing care of His work in them in all dispensations, and they are written for our learning and comfort.

The true saints of God are the wheat, fair and priceless in His estimation, and it is necessary that they should be put into the sieve, that they might be ridded of the chaff, set free from all refuse forever. Yet in the sifting not a grain shall be lost. God Himself will take care of even "the least." What comfort there is in that!

The New Testament word is tribulation = *tribulare*—to rub out corn. The *tribulum* was a wooden instrument fitted with iron spikes for rubbing out corn. And though tribulation cannot be anything but grievous to nature, yet we shall glory in it if God's purpose in it lays hold upon us (Rom. 5. 3).

The sifting may come in various ways. In Peter's case Satan was permitted to use the sieve, and in it the adversary hoped to destroy him, but the result of the sifting was that he was freed from the chaff of self-confidence and boasting. A blessed result! The wheat remained uninjured. His faith did not fail (Luke 22. 32). But whether the sifting comes directly from Satan, or through the circumstances of these sad times through which we are passing—circumstances of sickness, pain, anxiety, bereavement, hunger, nakedness, peril or sword—"GOD IS FAITHFUL, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, **THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT**" (1 Cor. 10. 13).

Paul's Optimism.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

WARM-HEARTED, hopeful, exultant servant of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was! He could anticipate no defeat, nor view things apart from the triumphant and superabounding grace of God.

"I know," he wrote to the Romans, "that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ"—the fulness of it.

Fulness of blessing was his own personal and constant enjoyment. He had to complain of no leanness, nor sterility, nor lack of the dews of heaven. In him the spring of water within sprang up to everlasting life, and flowed out of a heart filled to the full. He reckoned on that overflow spreading itself to others wherever he went.

Thus he was persuaded that Rome should share in the blessing. This was no problem in his mind. It was a settled certainty with him, that, as surely as he preached Christ so surely would the blessing flow.

To him it was a matter of impossibility that the word of God should return void of blessing. The opposite was inconceivable. It had done so much for himself, and was so surpassingly sweet to his own soul, that, granted only that he were in Rome, he would be in the full power of that blessing.

This is the proper spirit for every servant of the same Master, no matter where he goes in this thrice holy and most precious service. If the spring within is in vigour the result will be felt.

But, was his optimism not misplaced? Did he enter the imperial city as a Dictator?

No, he came thither bound hand and foot—a prisoner! Did circumstances so untoward and unexpected damp his ardour or depress his spirit? Though bound was he without divine help?

Was God above these fetters? He was!

Prisons are no hindrance to the grace of God, and prisoners of Christ have been His choice and chosen liberators. Witness Bunyan of Bedford, and Rutherford of Aberdeen. Indeed the only occasion on which we read that Paul himself sang was when in the jail of Philippi! Wonderful victory! Then did not Paul preach in Rome? Well, he did so. He preached for a whole day from morning to evening, as we read in the close of the Acts. The result of this essay was disappointing, no doubt, because unbelief, alas, prevailed in the hearts of the greater part of his hearers. But what of that? Not even an apostle can convert others to God, for that sacred work is His. All that man can do is faithfully to preach the word in the hope of divine operation; but the breath of life is that of the Spirit of God.

Then, wherein was the optimism of the Apostle justified?

In these "prison-epistles," as they are called—these wonderful letters to Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, which have fed the church of God, beyond all measure, for these two thousand years of her chequered history.

They contain "the fulness of the blessing of Christ" (R.V.) not merely "of the gospel," as meeting the spiritual need of the sinner, but of Christ Himself, in the highest glory of His person, and the infinite value of His work.

In Ephesians there is given us the mystery of Christ and the church; in Philippians the display of a life which has Christ for its perfect pattern; and in Colossians the personal glory of Him in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

No marvel that, possessing such a treasure, and being charged with such a ministry, he should be full of the highest optimism, and count unhesitatingly on living and glorious effects through his service.

The Rapture and the Appearing, or Sovereignty and Responsibility.

(H. J. VINE).

1 Thessalonians 1. 9-10, 4. 14-end; 2 Thessalonians 1. 10; Colossians 3. 4.

OUR subject is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the two principal stages of His coming, which are termed the Rapture and the Appearing. By the *Rapture* we mean the translation to heaven of all who belong to Christ, and this we know as taught by Scripture will take place when He comes in the air, as we have read in 1 Thessalonians 4., to take all those who believe on Him to be with Him and like Him for ever. The *Appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ will be when He appears to the world in the greatness of His glory to establish His kingdom on the earth. The *Rapture* will be an act of pure sovereign grace, but connected with the *Appearing* is our responsibility as the Lord's servants below. We shall have our place in the kingdom glory of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the way we have lived and walked in this world. So in connection with the kingdom and glory you have an expression that could not be used in connection with the Rapture: "That you may be counted worthy of the kingdom and glory." As to the Rapture we know that that is not a question at all of our worthiness, but it is all the result of the Lord's own grace and love for us, and His desire to have us with Him and like Him for His own pleasure.

Now in the first scripture (1 Thess. 1. 9-10) we find there are three things that mark those that are to have part in the great glory that is involved in our Lord Jesus Christ's second coming. The first is they are *converted*. The second thing is that *they serve the Lord*, and the third that *they wait for His coming*. If you have never been converted, you must begin there. You must be converted to God. The gospel has been sent to you for this purpose, it opens people's eyes, that they may turn from darkness to

light, from the power of Satan to God; and the moment they turn to Him they get the forgiveness of their sins—blessed be God—and an inheritance in the heavens through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Being converted, the next thing is we serve the living and true God. You may be religious and do so-called Christian work, but it is worse than useless if you are unconverted. We must turn to God first, and then we can serve the living and true God.

The next thing is we wait for His Son from heaven. I have no doubt that takes in the whole thing, not only the Rapture, but the whole thought of the Lord's coming, both to catch us up to be with Him and then to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Christ is coming to set up His kingdom. He will bring to pass the time that Isaiah spoke of, when men will give up all their strifes, and beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and peace will flood the earth.

Now in 1 Thessalonians 4. we have a special revelation as to how the Lord will bring all that about. How is He going to bring out those who are to share in that glory? How is the royal family of heaven going to take up their place with Christ in glory for the ordering and government of the earth? Paul gets a special revelation as to that. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, there is this we may be sure of, that those who sleep in Jesus, as well as those who are alive and remain, when Christ comes in His glory, He will bring with Him. That will come to pass in this way, the saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Before we come *with Him* we shall be caught up *to Him*. That is the reve-

lation that is specially made known in the fourth chapter, it is "*the word of the Lord*" concerning the catching up of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The revelation of the Rapture in Thessalonians 4. was not made known until the assembly was formed on the earth. There was no church—no assembly of Christ as we have it—in the Old Testament. The foundation of the church is built upon the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. The assembly had no previous existence.

Sovereignty.

The Lord said in Matthew 16., "I am going to do something." And also in John 14., "I am going to do something." And again in 1 Thessalonians 4. he has told us of something that HE is going to do. He said, "I will build My assembly." He had asked the question, "Whom do ye say that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him, "You are a blessed (happy) man, Peter. The Father has made that known to you." May this get into the souls of all here to-night. "Upon this Rock," Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, "I will build My church," "My assembly." He does not ask you to build it. He said, "I will do it." It is on Him of whom confession is made by Peter—on Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God, revealed to us by the Father. He did not say, "I will build the assembly on the revelation of the assembly." Do not think men are going to get into the assembly even by studying assembly principles. Have you got Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God? Can you say, "He is precious to me"? It was the Father who made Him precious to you, and you to whom the Father has made Him precious are a stone for the building, just as Peter was. The Son of the living God is the foundation, with all the force and energy of divine life in Himself.

Now, then, we who have got Jesus, and own Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, we are by His own work put into that assembly, His assembly, and the gates of hades cannot prevail against it. Their schemes and counsels and espionage are powerless.

Again, in effect, He said, "I go to the Father, and in His house there is plenty of room. I will prepare a place for you, that where I am you may be also." Doubtless His going there as Man prepared the place. Now, mark, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there YE may be also." He does it all. Let our hearts rest in the perfection of the love, and in the perfection of the work of Christ; not only in His wonderful work on the cross, but in His present work in building the assembly, and in nourishing and cherishing it, and also in the fact that He will come again, and receive us to Himself. Why? Because He loves us. He loves us so much that He not only joyfully gave all that He had in order to buy the field for the treasure that was in it (Matt. 13. 44), but such was His love that He must give Himself for us. Oh, how He must have loved us! And He says, "I am going to get the answer to all that I have gone through for you. I am going to answer my own heart's desires by presenting you to Myself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." And He reminds us of these things. Why? That they might be a word of encouragement to us in these trying times. He nourishes our affections, and cherishes us by telling us of His love for the assembly, of which we are a part.

Then, as we said, we have that special revelation as to the manner of His coming *for* His own. He will come into the air. We shall meet Him in that particular point in the universe. He will leave that place where He now is, in the glory, and come to the border of this world's atmosphere. He will come with what is there termed in military language "*a commanding*

shout”—a shout for the assembling of those that are His. Yes, He will come with a shout! The Apostle speaks of “*the patience of Christ*” in 2 Thessalonians 3. For a long time He has waited! Throughout all this period of grace His rights in this world have been refused Him. Think of His patience—nearly two thousand years! How great is His long-suffering! The Apostle desired that the Lord would direct our hearts into the patience of the Christ. Yet some of us wish the Lord would come to-night, so that we might get out of this poor world. How impatient we get; but look how patient He has been. When the moment of His patience is ended, that military shout will be heard. He will step from the throne. He will come into the air, and His shout will call His hosts together. The archangel will take up the command, and pass it along the ranks. The “*archangel’s voice*” will be heard, and everything will be cleared out of the way that this mighty host—the dead in Christ and the living saints—may have a free passage right up through the air to meet their blessed Lord. Hallelujah! Then there is “*the trump of God.*” That trump of God will sound, but I do not believe the unconverted will hear these things—the shout, the voice, the trump.

Notwithstanding all the questioning to-day as to the secret rapture, I fall back upon it with greater confidence than ever. The world “*knew not,*” we are told, even when Noah went into the ark before the flood. And I can give you another reason for holding it to be the truth. There was a time when you sat in a gospel meeting, and the Word was preached in the power of the Spirit of God. The Lord spoke to *you* perhaps. No one else heard that voice. Or it may be you were alone when your soul was reached by that life-giving touch that brought you consciously to trust in Jesus. You heard the voice of the Son of God, as it says, “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” And you heard it

for yourself, and no one else knew what had happened. So when Jesus comes His voice will be heard by those who have ears to hear, and by no one else. Thank God, in the twinkling of an eye we shall be caught up. The dead in Christ get the first touch. Then we which are alive and remain get the next touch, but altogether we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The change will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15. 52). The scientists used to say that before you can see the twinkle of an eye there must be at least a thousand twinkles! How, then, can the thing be done? The other day some soldiers were in charge of a gun in the north of France. Suddenly a great German shell burst right amongst them. It put the gun out of action, but when the explosion was over they looked round, and though every man standing there was unhurt, one man was missing. “Where is he?” one asked, but to this day they have not found even a button off his coat. In the twinkling of an eye he was gone. If man’s ingenuity can produce a power that can destroy men in the twinkling of an eye, do you think the blessed Lord who made all things cannot take us away in the twinkling of an eye? Of course He can!

Responsibility.

“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with Him.*” We are first taken up *to Him*, and then we shall come out *with Him*. I am not going into the judgment side of His coming to-night. I know He will break up the present system of the nations, and establish a new system with Israel restored to the Lord as the centre. I want to speak of Him now as coming out in all His blessedness, when He comes down like showers on the new-mown grass, after the scythe of judgment has done its work. He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. He will have you and me

with Him. He is going to have all His own there, so that when He shines out in His glory He may be glorified in them. We are going, if you like, to help to put things right. You cannot do it now. Men are trying to break militarism, but the Bible tells us of a worse and a blasphemous militarism that will follow this one. The Roman Empire will be revived with an imperial military head, full of blasphemy (Rev. 13.). Things cannot be put right till Jesus comes. But when He comes He will do it. I said the other day they would shut up the great gun works. "No," said a converted pitman, "they will not. They will turn the same works into a place for making implements to till the land. They will still make use of the works." "Oh," I replied, "all right. You mean they will be done with making instruments of destruction, and they will make implements of peace and prosperity, using the iron for the purpose for which God gave it."

Now before that time comes there is an important moment embraced in that short word "NOW." Sometimes you think, "If I could live over last week again I would do things very differently." You cannot alter the past. "To-morrow," you say, "I intend to be really here for Christ." You are not sure you will have to-morrow. It is always *the present* that you have. You can turn a meeting like this to good account by using your ears in a right way, judging what is said, not waiting for everything to be elucidated so that you will have no need of exercise. You want something to exercise your moral discernment upon. If everything is watered down for you you will never develop your spiritual teeth. You want to be making good use of your time. Do not take everything for granted that a speaker says. Always be testing and trying things in the presence of God, that you might get what God has got for your soul, so that if the Lord leaves you here, you might come out in this life to serve the Lord faithfully.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. This is a blessed reality. Take it home to your heart, and be prepared to take up the present path. Be out and out for Christ. Be devoted to Him as were the three mighty men to David. One day he breathed out a desire to drink of the water of a well of Bethlehem. They caught the breathings of his heart, and they made their way through the host of the Philistines, and brought him to drink. Do not you know, notwithstanding all the power of the Philistines to-day, that you may bring something that is pleasurable to Jesus? If you are near enough to the Lord that you catch the desires of His heart, you may; and if it does cost you a little trouble and a little difficulty, still it gives pleasure to Him. Let us remember this, that when we get to glory, we shall not have the chance of doing what we can do now. The little moment of suffering service will be over, and then we shall reign with Him. Christ shall come to be glorified in us, but we want Him to be glorified in us now. He is going to be by and by. He is going to be "wondered at," as the word "admired" is rightly translated, in all them that believe (2 Thess. 1. 10). In that day when He shines out, and when His bride (the assembly) comes out as the city with twelve gates, she will light up the nations. It says, "The nations shall walk by its light." He will be wondered at, my brother, in you! Wondered at as you shine out with Him!—one of those gems lit up to reflect the glory of God to the nations. When the One who is our life is manifested, we shall be manifested with Him. You say, "Will all this terrible state of hostility cease then?" Thank God, it will. Christ will regulate the nations. All will be ordered in perfection, and then peace shall flow over the earth, and righteousness shall obtain from pole to pole, and joy shall fill every heart. I know that we have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ever now, but it will be established publicly then. All shall know the Lord. No man

will need to get hold of another then and say, "Come to a gospel meeting and get converted." All will know the Lord from the least to the greatest. Such will be the effect of the New Covenant established with Judah and Israel. Their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. He will appear, and you and I will appear with Him. The heavenly city shall shine down her beautiful rays of guidance for the earth. No, the Kaiser is not going to be the world emperor—Jesus is. You and I are going to share with Him, to take part with Him in His great and glorious administration. Brother, you are in for greater things than the Cabinet at Westminster! Wake up to it! Seek to walk worthy of it! You are converted with an end in view! We suffer with Christ now: we shall reign with Him then. We shall appear in glory with Christ. What a prospect!

I remember the first time I saw one of those electric signs. I came out into one of the streets one night, and I saw a letter light up on a building. I thought that was a strange thing, and while I was looking at it another letter lit up, until at last the shining sign all lit up was there before me, telling me the name of the firm that ran a huge business establishment in the city. God comes and He touches you, and He touches me, and lights us with the knowledge of Christ, and so His work goes on, but soon He will have the

whole lit up with divine light. He will put us all up there with His beloved Son, and then we shall shine out as the divine sign in surpassing splendour, having the glory of God. What will be seen? Just one word expresses it—"CHRIST." When Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory, and right through the universe He will be glorified and wondered at in all of us who have believed.

May God give us to wake up a little more to these great and glorious things; and in the meantime, the little NOW, to be behaving in such a way that we may be counted worthy of the glory. I know the blessed Lord is wonderfully gracious, and He will have a place for every one of us in that glory, but I see some dear brethren going on faithfully following the Lord—perhaps not making any big show, but I believe they are piling it up up there, where Christ is. Some one says, "Might it not make us a little selfish if we went in for that?" No. I remember a brother saying to us, "Go in for as many crowns as you can get"; and then he added this, "That you may cast them all at the feet of Jesus." The more you can get the more you will have for His praise and glory. The result, we are told, will "be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love: on whom (though) not now looking but believing ye exult with joy unspeakable and filled with the glory" (1 Peter 1. 7, 8, N.T.).

Power and Prayer.

ALL God's giants have been weak men, who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them.

Those prayers only will be answered which are in harmony with the revealed will of God. . . . Unless the Word of God is abiding in us, how can we be sure that our petitions are in harmony with His will?

One only Rock, one only Salvation, one only Defence is ours, and just in proportion as anything else is substituted will there be weakness and failure and loss. Power with God will be the gauge of real power with men. (J. Hudson Taylor.)

“My Well-beloved Epænetus.”

(H. P. BARKER).

“Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ” (Rom. 16. 5).

“Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints” (1 Cor. 16. 15).

IS there not a seeming discrepancy between these two passages of Scripture? How could Epænetus have been the firstfruits of Achaia when that same fact is affirmed as to the house of Stephanas?

We may be sure that the discrepancy is a *seeming* one only. There are no contradictory statements in the Word of God. That which may appear to be one often contains helpful instruction, to which attention is called by the very fact of there being a difficulty in the interpretation of the passage.

Probably the explanation of the two statements contrasted at the beginning of this article is that while the family of Stephanas was the first *family* in Achaia to be brought to the Lord, Epænetus was the first individual, the first member of the family, to receive the gospel.

If this suggestion be correct, Epænetus was greatly honoured. It is always a great honour to be the first in a family to be saved, and to be the means of bringing the gospel to the rest of the household and of leading them to Christ. In the case of this particular household, the example and testimony of Epænetus seem to have been richly blessed, for they “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints”; they laid themselves out to serve in every possible way those who were dear to the heart of Christ. No wonder that the Apostle calls him “my well-beloved Epænetus.”

From that day to this many an Epænetus has been reached by the grace of God and then used as a channel of blessing to the other members of the family to which he belongs. A large number of instances might be given. Let one suffice.

A native Christian in Paraguay was used to the conversion of a young man

named Constantino. On his return to the village where he lived, he immediately began to speak to his parents and sisters about their need of salvation. They were bigoted Roman Catholics. His father would never leave home without his rosary, and his sisters had many images to which they prayed.

The father was the first one to believe the glad tidings introduced into the house by Constantino. When saved, he visited his neighbours and put the truth before them, and prayed, and sang with them his favourite hymn, a Spanish translation of

“I hear Thy welcome voice.”

The mother soon after believed, though in a half-and-half way, so that she did not get the full assurance of salvation for a while. The sisters were not long in following in the footsteps of their parents and brother. They, too, accepted the Saviour and began to speak of Him to their friends. This brought reproach and suffering upon them; but they continued testifying and were soon gladdened by seeing others blessed in the same way.

The old mother was not long before she reached the end of her journey. Before she passed away she was enabled to put her full confidence in Christ and His finished work, and died rejoicing in the knowledge that she was going to be with Him. The hymns and preaching at her funeral were a further means of testimony to the villagers which God was graciously pleased to bless to at least one soul, a young man.

Finally, the little Christian family opened their house for the preaching of the gospel. Constantino himself was the speaker, in the Guarani language.

Whereunto will this thing grow? Who can tell? That Christian household is like a focus of light in the midst

of that dark neighbourhood. And it has come about, in the mercy of God, through *one* member of the family being first brought to Him, and he proving faithful and used of God as a channel of blessing to the others. Truly this Paraguayan Constantino is a "well-beloved Epænetus."

These lines are written for the encouragement of any who may be, thus

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—Some authorities read "*firstfruits of Asia*" in Romans *avi. 5*. This is probably correct. But the above paper is based on the reading of the version of the Scriptures in common use.

Christian Unity.

"FOR THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER, BUT MANY. IF THE FOOT SHALL SAY, BECAUSE I AM NOT THE HAND, I AM NOT OF THE BODY; IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? AND IF THE EAR SHALL SAY, BECAUSE I AM NOT THE EYE, I AM NOT OF THE BODY; IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WERE THE HEARING? IF THE WHOLE WERE HEARING, WHERE WERE THE SMELLING? BUT NOW HATH GOD SET THE MEMBERS EVERY ONE OF THEM IN THE BODY, AS IT HATH PLEASSED HIM. AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WERE THE BODY? BUT NOW ARE THEY MANY MEMBERS, YET BUT ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY UNTO THE HAND, I HAVE NO NEED OF THEE: NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU. NAY, MUCH MORE THOSE MEMBERS OF THE

far, the *only* ones in their family converted. Be of good cheer, dear brother or sister! With God's help, a great honour may be yours; the honour of bringing your dear ones to the Saviour. Seek His face, earnestly and importunately, about it. And it may be that in the day of reward, the words of commendation which the Lord will have for Epænetus, and such as he, will be spoken also to YOU!

BODY, WHICH SEEM TO BE MORE FEEBLE, ARE NECESSARY: AND THOSE MEMBERS OF THE BODY, WHICH WE THINK TO BE LESS HONOURABLE, UPON THESE WE BESTOW MORE ABUNDANT HONOUR; AND OUR UNCOMELY PARTS HAVE MORE ABUNDANT COMELINESS. FOR OUR COMELY PARTS HAVE NO NEED: BUT GOD HATH TEMPERED THE BODY TOGETHER, HAVING GIVEN MORE ABUNDANT HONOUR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKED: THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY; BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE ONE FOR ANOTHER. AND WHETHER ONE MEMBER SUFFER, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR ONE MEMBER BE HONOURED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT. NOW YE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR" (1 Cor. 12. 14-27).

"Take Heed what ye Hear."

We would not purchase our food stuffs from a dealer whom we knew was guilty of adulterating them, for we have a care for the physical health of ourselves and our families. Let us be more watchful still over the health of our souls and refuse to receive spiritual ministry from any tainted source. And

every man, whether he be pope, bishop, priest, or preacher, who would displace Christ from the pre-eminent place in all things that God has given Him, is doing incalculable mischief to souls; his words are tainted words, they are from Satan's laboratory, and not from the fountain of the water of life.

Samson's Riddle.

(E. Cross).

Judges 14.

JOSEPHUS, in his division of the O.T. scriptures into twenty-two books, corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, classifies Judges and Ruth as one book, and we may deal with them accordingly as the continuation of the same story, from the entry of the children of Israel into the promised land and their futile attempts to drive out the Canaanites, to the birth of David, by whom the conquest of the land was finally accomplished. The Book of Judges records the failure of the children of Israel in this respect, from the outset, and their increasing degeneracy until it reached its climax in the open establishment of idolatry by the Danites at Laish, as we read: "And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh" (Judges 18. 30, 31). [The name of Manasseh here was substituted for that of Moses, probably to save the honour of Moses, Var. Bible, *in l.*] The conduct of the Danites as against God was only equalled by that of the Benjamites as against their brethren (Judges 19. 20); and the whole story winds up with the oft-repeated statement, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes." There remains then only the return of Naomi from Moab, with Ruth and her devoted heart; and in due time David (Ruth 4. 22); and then again David's Son and Lord (Matt. 22. 45).

Samson = like the sun. There are different words in Hebrew for the sun. One of them, Shemesh = the distant one. From this Samson is apparently derived. The sun is first seen as he "begins" to rise above the horizon, rising higher and higher until he rides in the zenith

of his meridian glory. And if Samson "begins" to deliver Israel (Judges 13. 5, 25), David, too, in the zenith of his power, can use the same figure and speak of the "light of the morning when the sun rises; a morning without clouds, as the tender grass out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (2 Sam. 23. 4). The story is one in the mind of the Spirit, however apparently disjointed the portions that go to make it up.

Samson was the last of the judges raised up for the deliverance of Israel. The period of his activity seems to foreshadow the closing days of Christendom, prior to the coming of Christ to take "the throne of David" and deliver His people from the bondage in which they have been so long held, as spoken of in many scriptures in the N.T. In this way the birth of Christ is announced by the angel to Mary: "Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus . . . and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." And Zacharias prophesies of Him: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David . . . that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." See also Acts 2. 29-36; 13. 22-34; Romans 1. 3; Revelation 22. 16.

The work of the judge does not represent the direct work of Christ personally; but rather the work of the Holy Spirit founded on what Christ has done, and acting through human agency. This accounts for the fact that the work is frequently marred through the failure of the instrument. It accounts likewise for the frequency of the expression, "The Spirit of the Lord came on Othniel" (Judges 3. 10); on Gideon (6. 34); on Jephtha (11. 29); and on

Samson, four times (13. 25; 14. 6, 19; 15. 14). It represents the action of the Spirit to-day during the absence of Christ until His coming again.

The history of the judges is the history of periodic and partial deliverances. At no time was the deliverance complete. The people through forsaking the Lord brought themselves into "distress," and "the Lord raised them up judges, who delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them. Yet they would not hearken to their judges, but turned quickly away . . . and the Lord was with the judge, and delivered Israel; but when the judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, and ceased not from their own doings and their stubborn way" (Judges 2.). It is in the latter end of these times that Samson comes upon the scene. And it is to be noted that while in other instances it is said "the land had rest" for many years (chap. 3. 11, 30; 5. 31), in the time of their first deliverances, it is not so said of Samson, nor does he appear to have effected much practical deliverance for the people at all; although personally his name stands proverbially for the "strong man," and one might accordingly have expected more from him. His history may be divided into three parts: the period of his power, of his declension, and of his partial recovery.

A riddle (chidah, from Chüd, to knot, to twist)=an intricate, parabolic puzzle, an enigma, giving an answer that creates wonder, or surprise, by the unexpectedness of its hidden meaning. So Ezekiel 17. 2. In a bad sense it means cunning, trickery, fraud (Dan. 8. 23). Samson's whole career was a riddle. Who can solve it?

The children of Israel were in subjection to the Philistines for forty years. There seemed no sign of deliverance. Manoah (=rest) had no children. His wife was barren. The case was hopeless. An angel of the Lord comes to the woman with the promise of a son.

He was to be reared a Nazarite; and he was to "begin" to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines (Judges 13. 5, 25). David was to take up the final challenge of the "champion" for liberty, or bondage (1 Sam. 17. 9, 46-51). The earnest of this Samson gave when he slew the lion, type again of the death of Christ, whereby He annulled him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, for the deliverance of those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14).

The angel's name was "Secret" (in the margin "Wonderful," Isa. 9. 6), and he thus points to the true Nazarite, the Virgin's Son, Immanuel (Isa. 7. 14), according to the word of the prophet: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9. 6). This is the fulfilment of the great design, of which Samson was the beginning; while this again foreshadows a still vaster and more wonderful, because a universal and eternal kingdom (cf. Ps. 45. ; 145. ; Heb. 1. 8 ; 1 Cor. 15. 24-28).

"The Messiah may have an earthly throne, which also is not taken from Him, but which ceases by His taking possession of an eternal throne; but He has a throne, which is for ever and ever." (J. N. D., Synopsis on Heb. 1.)

Now if the Spirit of the Lord "begins" to move Samson to deliver Israel, where will that movement of the Spirit end? Here is a riddle worth the solving.

And Samson saw a woman of the Philistines, and he said to his father and mother, "Get her for me to wife." This was a strange request for these orthodox and pious Jews. Could he not find a wife among his own people? It was to them a riddle indeed, for

“they knew not that it was of the Lord that he sought occasion against the Philistines to destroy them.”

“And, behold, a young lion roared against Samson, and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid; and he had nothing in his hand.” It was like David, when with a sling and with a stone he slew the Philistine, and it points to the greater victory of the cross. There the Victor had nothing in His hands but the nails wherewith He was pierced—there the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, prevailed to open the book of God’s counsels for the government of the world; and a great riddle it was not to John only, but to the whole universe as well, when in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, with seven horns and seven eyes, clothed with all the insignia of power and wisdom. Hence He “begins” to take up the primal questions of government below, to be extended, with the co-operation of the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, in the New Jerusalem, in the administration of the vast universe of bliss, for ever and ever (Rev. 21.).

And “Samson put forth a riddle to his companions”; and every verse from verse 12 to verse 19 refers to the “riddle.” The riddle is the principal thing; therefore be sure and understand the riddle. “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.”

They cannot solve the riddle. And yet, at all costs, they must get the solution of it, even though they burn both the woman and her father’s house with fire. Finally they succeed; and now they have got the phraseology of the gospel riddle. But it were better for them if they had not got it, for it cost them in the glib and meaningless use of the term, so far as its true spiritual meaning went, the death of thirty of their people. As much “clothing” as they got out of it, so many “lives” they lost.

Verse 20. But Samson’s wife was given to his companion—as we would say, his “best man”; a very loose and licentious piece of business. After a time Samson visited his wife with a kid, i.e. with a common token of affection, but “her father would not suffer him to go in.” They had never tasted of the honey; they had only heard of it by name. Better for them had they never heard of it (2 Peter 2. 21); for now Samson holds himself free to “do them a displeasure.” And he does it with a vengeance; for, with his three hundred foxes and their firebrands, he burns up all their staple food, exterminates their joys, and destroys their luxuries. German “kultur” doubtless does not exhaust the type, but it surely goes a long way to evidence the sweeping judgments of God on an apostate Christendom.

Chapter 15. 6. The Philistines then “came up and burnt her and her father with fire.” Notice the retribution for her own false act (chap. 14. 15).

Verse 7. But not satisfied with this, Samson has yet to be avenged on them after his own fashion: “And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter”; and he left them.

The words of the Lord to the Jews of His day were solemn (Matt. 12. 31–37). To speak against Him was serious, but pardonable; “but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in the age to come.” Compare again Hebrews 6. and 10., where apostasy from the fundamental truths of Christianity leaves nothing “but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

God and the War.

(JAMES BOYD).

THE present prolonged and ruthless strife on the Continent of Europe is making manifest the thoughts of the hearts of many regarding the intervention of God in human affairs, especially with relation to the interest He is supposed to take in the government of the world. Does He at all concern Himself with the things that transpire upon the earth? Is it true that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without Him? Is it a fact that the very hairs upon the heads of His people are all numbered? Can it be really so that He keeps a record of the deeds of men, and that He will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether it be good or bad? Can we believe that not only the act, but the thought that prompted the act, will be taken account of in the day of judgment? Is there to be a day of judgment at all? Or has He framed the universe, and set it in motion, to run according to laws that must inevitably lead to certain disaster? Is He experimenting in some special way with this planet, and the beings that inhabit it, not knowing what may be the ultimate issue of the experiment? Will these things result in good to all? Will they go on for ever as they move at present? Or will everyone some day arise up and cut the throat of his neighbour, so that the whole population of the world will fall down together, every one of them a murdered murderer? Is there a God at all?

Not one of these questions could by any possibility arise in the heart that in simple faith takes the Holy Scriptures as God's revelation to His people, even though the slaughter of human beings, at present taking place so close to the peaceful shores of these islands, were twice as great as it is. War is always a cruel thing, and hateful to all who love God, and hateful also to Him who has said: "Blessed are the *peacemakers*; for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5. 9); and He is "*the God of peace*" (Rom. 16. 20).

His children also are exhorted to pray for kings and for all that rule in this world, that we may be able to live quiet and *peaceable* lives in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim. 2. 2). But when the world rejected the only One who could make wars to cease (Ps. 46. 9) it drove the possibility of peace from the earth, until the time appointed for His intervention in power, when He will "scatter the people that delight in war" (Ps. 68. 30), and bring in a reign of peace. Then "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2. 3, 4). Until then, as far as the kings of the earth are concerned, the word is: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him" (Ezek. 21. 26, 27).

The crown is Christ's: it is His by right, and He shall have it, in spite of the hostility of this evil world, and in spite of all the powers of the infernal forces. But until He gets it, crowns must be cast down into the dust, kingdoms overthrown, nations found tearing one another to pieces, multitudes sweating in the munition factories, and continents constantly being cast into the melting pot.

And until that day there shall be no improvement in the relation of kingdoms, one to the other. The *entente* allies are fighting against militarism, and expecting to crush that spirit in the German nation, but instead of producing this result, every nation will find that, to safeguard its own interests, it will have to nourish and stimulate that very spirit

in its own people; and every individual in every kingdom upon earth will find it to be a necessity that he should take his place among the fighting forces of his country. This war is frightful to contemplate, but it is not even "the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24. 8). Worse is coming.

Men ask, "Why does not God stop this war?" "Why does He allow this cruel strife and bloodshed to continue?" But were He to put the question to all as to how they would desire it to be settled, I do not doubt that each of the nations engaged in combat would only desire to have it brought to a conclusion in the way of victory for its armies. Each nation is only desirous for the intervention of God in its own behalf. None of them desires the war to be brought to an end by its defeat. It is not only the Germans that desire to have "*Gott mit uns*," but all the others desire the same for themselves. That is to say, all want the thing settled in their own way; and if God is not going to settle it in that way, they would prefer Him to keep out of it altogether.

To speak candidly, I should be very sorry to see the British nation defeated and brought under the power of any other country. But that is because of the peace and tranquillity that the people of God have enjoyed under that flag. Comparatively speaking (for we can speak in no other way in an evil world), there have been just laws, judges of integrity, merciful administrators, throughout these islands, and we owe it all to the goodness of God. Under the British flag the child of God has hitherto been able to serve the Lord without coming into conflict with the powers that be: I could not say so much about any other kingdom in this world. Therefore my sympathies are with the British nation.

The persecution of the children of God has taken place in this land before now, and it will take place again; and for this we must be prepared; but whether it will be much in this dispensation, that is, before He removes

His church to heaven, I cannot say; but I can see things moving in a direction that is certain to bring it about; and things move very fast in these days. Of course I mean persecution in the sense of imprisonment and death, not the kind of persecution to which all that will live godly in Christ Jesus are always exposed, even where, as far as the law of the land goes, liberty of conscience is allowed.

The normal circumstances of the children of God in this world are those of persecution. Our Lord told His disciples that their pathway to glory must be lined with the hatred of the world; and the fact of the world in these lands having put on the outward garb of Christian profession has not changed its heart toward the children of God. It is the same old God-hating and Christ-persecuting world as it was when "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the LORD, and against His anointed" (Ps. 2. 2; Acts 4. 24-27), and it will not change its character until the day He comes upon it in judgment. But we cannot be too thankful for the tranquillity enjoyed by the people of God in this favoured British nation.

We must also keep in mind, if we are to have right thoughts about all that is going on at present, that the prophets of both the Old and New Testaments set before us the history of the powers that be, during the "times of the Gentiles," under the symbols of wild beasts, creatures without any intelligent link with God. We cannot be surprised, therefore, to find them continually snarling at one another and tearing one another to pieces. If there is peace at times it comes about by the overruling hand of God, for the normal state of things in a world like this is cruel war and bloodshed.

But the question will be asked again, "Why does not God stop this war?" Perhaps this question might be better answered if we ask another, "Why should He stop it?" He sent His Son nigh two thousand years ago, that He

might be presented to man in His true character, that His devil-deceived creature might get to know Him, and that He might have His rightful place in the heart and mind of Adam's poor misguided race. At the commencement of His ministry He sets forth the nature of His mission in those wonderful words taken from the prophecy of Isaiah, which relates to Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and the heavenly host at His birth proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 4. 18; 2. 14). Scriptures like these set before us the intention of God in sending His Son into the world, as well as does the whole character of His subsequent ministry; "Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38). But man's reply to this in the person of the Jew was a gibbet, and in the Gentile, to whom government was committed by God, and to whom God had given the sword, was such thorough acquiescence that he became the instrument of Jewish hatred, and murdered Him in whose favour his verdict had been given: "I find in Him no fault at all" (John 18. 38).

And after such a manifest and infamous exhibition of rebellion against God, and refusal of His gracious intervention on man's behalf, people wonder that God does not stop these wars, and give us good times, so that the covetous and godless desires of the human heart may be practised without fear of chastisement. People resent His interference with respect to the prosecution of their ungodly lusts, but cry out for His intervention, so that they may be delivered from the pains and penalties that result from the course they have so determinedly pursued.

Christ is "*the salvation of God*" (Luke 2. 30; Acts 28. 28), and there is none other; and if men will not have Him they must go on with their wars and all the terrible consequences resulting therefrom; they cannot compel God to travel in the direction which they are pleased to indicate, they must be prepared to follow in the way in which He is pleased to take, or suffer the consequences. And God's way is Christ, and without His presence on earth there cannot be permanent peace.

But wherefore ask, "Why does not God stop this war?" Rather ask why does He not stop all wars; and why does He not stop all the evils to which flesh is heir? "Why," says some poor broken-hearted woman, "was my boy, or my brother, or my husband stabbed through the heart with a German bayonet?" But the same question is also wrung from the broken heart of a poor German woman; and God is not indifferent to the sorrows of His poor afflicted creatures, whoever they may be. And may not some other poor woman be asking why her boy, who was the darling object of her heart, has been suffocated by the terrible diphtheritic membrane, or why her husband's lungs were torn to pieces by the bacillus tuberculosis, or why her brother's body was burned to a cinder in the last railway disaster, or by means of a fireball from the thunder-cloud?

Where did that "HELL" that everyone who has been at the front in Flanders says he has seen spring from? It did not spring up out of the ground, neither did it fall down out of heaven. Where, then, had it its origin? It had its origin in the corrupt, selfish, covetous heart of man. James says, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain" (4. 1, 2). This is the secret of all contention, such as is going on in this war, and in the heart of man this "*Hell*" has most surely originated, and on some head, or heads, will the hand of God fall with

terrific force some day. But that day has not come yet, and that is one reason why He has not shown His hand in connection with it, on one side or on the other.

That He is not indifferent to the wickedness that has brought it about, nor to the sorrows of His suffering creatures, Calvary is the mighty and overpowering witness, against which nothing that would charge Him with indifference could stand one moment, for there the love of God to His poor sinful creature was exhibited in a way that out-distances all that He has ever done in the past, and all that He could yet do in the future. In that lonely Sufferer amid the darkness of cloud-mantled Golgotha I see the veil of the temple in which God was enshrined rent in twain from top to bottom, and the heart of the Creator brought to light in such a way, that were that "hell" at the front of the battlefield ten thousand times hotter and blacker and bloodier than it is, I could say, and would say with boldness, GOD IS LOVE.

But His gospel is in this world, not to establish men in it, but to deliver man out of it, and to give him a new place in heaven with Christ, in all the relationships in which He stands to God and the Father, and in all the eternal favour and love of which He is the alone worthy Object.

For the soul that casts himself upon Christ as the Saviour of sinners all is well, whether he die upon the battlefield or upon his own bed; but for the man that rejects Him, wherever he die, it were better for him had he never been born. On the battlefield the potsherds are striving with the potsherds of the earth, but the man that rejects the Saviour declares war upon the living God; and the issue of that battle is not difficult to forecast.

The widow, the fatherless, the broken-hearted, the crippled, and all who suffer, will have the compassion of a Saviour-God, whether they know anything about it or not, for He is the Saviour of all men, though in a special way of them that believe (1 Tim. 4. 10), and what a joy it is to the servant of the Lord to lead some of those poor sorrowing mortals to the knowledge of Him of whom they have such hard thoughts, when if they only knew Him their cup would run over with unspeakable joy.

May the Lord in His infinite mercy be pleased to bring this awful conflict to a speedy termination, and in the meantime may He use it to wake up the consciences of many to their utterly ruined condition and to their need of a Saviour. Amen.

God's Organism or Man's Organizations ?

"There is one body and one Spirit" (Eph. 4. 4).

THERE is one living organism, so constituted by the one Holy Spirit of God, who indwells the members of that vital system. It is the one body which is inclusive of every true believer in Christ, the living Head of the assembly. It is not a mere *organization*: it is a vital *organism*. Reputable or disreputable religionists may be held together by strong organizers, or by an agreed upon organization: that, however, of which we speak is a vital system, an organism of living indefectible members, moved by one Spirit; and the glorious Head is Christ Himself, "from whom

the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love" (Eph. 4. 16, N.T.). How encouraging and assuring is this unalterable truth to the true heart which holds fast to the one Head of the assembly. What a travesty of the truth—nay, what offensive unfaithfulness is seen in the petty parties, or larger religious organizations, formed by men at variance with the revealed mind of God. (H.J.V.).

“Every Cloud has its Silver Lining.”

(A. J. POLLOCK).

WHETHER this is always true may be a question. But when we come to the dark clouds of God's providential dealings *the believer* can unhesitatingly say they always have *golden linings*.

1915.

The blood-red sun of the old year is sinking behind murky war clouds. Europe is one vast field of blood. Whether in connection with the loss of life, or the expenditure of treasure, men have been forced to think in colossal figures.

Sorrows and atrocities unnumbered have been witnessed during this present year. No heart is large enough to adequately sympathize with even a tithe of what has taken place. Not only soldiers slain by the tens of thousands on land, sailors drowned by the thousand at sea, sore bereavement rolled in upon wives, parents, children, and others, but the butchery of the Armenian people, the holocaust of the Belgian nation, and the awful sorrows of the Polish people are staggering beyond imagination. Is God unmindful? Is He deaf? Has He forgotten to be righteous? Such questions are being asked on every hand.

And 1916!

What of the coming year? Does it contain anything hopeful for any one of us? Will the setting sun of 1915 be succeeded with any happy portent by the rising sun of 1916? Is there any comfort for the Christian? We cannot tell as far as *human* events are concerned.

But dark as the cloud is, it has for the believer its *golden lining*. Turning to the dark side first, we are convinced from our knowledge of divine principles that God is chastising the nations. They have turned their back upon Him, and they have to learn the solemn lesson

that man without God cannot be happy. Man left to himself, refusing to be guided by light from above, must destroy himself, and it is just this spectacle that we are witnessing to-day. And yet, thank God, amidst all this welter of blood, we find God working, and many are being eternally saved at this time, though the nations as a whole seem to grow harder and more indifferent.

But even in this the *golden lining* is seen, inasmuch that we perceive that God's government is true to the divine principles laid down in His Holy Word, and that it is working out its true ends, viz. the removal of evil and the triumph of good.

So divinely instructed in the ways of God's government are the people in Revelation 19. 1-4 that we read:—

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

“For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged this great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

“And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

“And the four-and-twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.”

How instructive it is to see this outburst of worship, even in connection with the falling of severe judgments. The way the descriptions of judgment and praise are mingled is most interesting and instructive. God's judgments sore now, sorer then, are right and true, and in this we can rest content. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18. 25).

Will Things Get Better ?

Looked at as a whole, viewed essentially and in its true perspective, Scripture is plain. Things are to wax worse and worse. Pressure of every kind will increase. Anarchy in the world and apostasy in the church are coming in fast. Is there no *golden lining* in all this ? There is.

We are more apprehensive of the future of the world than the gloomiest pessimist, but we are assured of a brightness and peace in the world more glowing by far than any picture painted by the most prodigal of optimists. How is this ? We take our stand on the word of God. We read there of the awful judgments that are to fall on this guilty world, but we likewise read that they are a means to a glorious end. Yes, Christ is coming to usher in His beneficent reign over the earth as Son of Man. He comes as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings. He comes to give this warring earth peace. His glory shall be His gentleness.

The Present Portion of the Christian.

Amid all the terrible state of things at the present, we may well ask, What is the Christian's portion ? One thing is certain, they cannot escape the trials and tribulations common to men. If heavy taxation, for instance, must rest upon the nation, the Christian must, perforce, have his share in this. Are prices high ? They affect the Christian and the worldling alike. Is conscription to be the order of the day ? It will affect believer and unbeliever alike.

But what is the *golden lining* on the other side of the dark cloud ?

It consists of DIVINE FACTS, the contemplation of which will comfort our hearts.

God and His Care for His Own.

The first fact we may briefly consider is one of great comfort and consolation to the believer's heart. We know GOD and His care for His own. How

sweet it is if we can *really* take up the language of Scripture:—

“ We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour [literally PRESERVER as to temporal things] of all men, **SPECIALLY** of those that believe ” (1 Tim. 4. 10).

How happy it is to be assured that God is “ *the LIVING God.* ” He, who made the eye, can see; He, who made the ear, can hear; He, who made the heart, can love; He, who is our Father, cares for His children.

How many instances illustrating this crowd in upon the memory. Old Dick Peden, the Covenanter, was pursued by Claverhouse's dragoons. The aged Christian fled up the heather-covered hill, but at every step his feeble limbs told him that the dragoons on their powerful horses would soon overtake him. He turned to prayer, and on his knees—for flight was useless—he cried to God to put the shadow of His protecting wing over him for Christ's sake. As he prayed the Scotch mist rolled down the hillside, and completely hid Peden, and thus he escaped.

Are we wondering how rising prices are to be met, and how increased taxation is to be faced ? Let us trust God. Paul, with a confidence begotten of knowledge and experience, could triumphantly exclaim, “ *My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus* ” (Phil. 4. 19). What triumph there is in the use of the personal pronoun “ *my.* ” What a wonderful measure of supply ! Who can fail in comfort with such precious promises given !

Elijah of old was fed by the ravens, the greediest of birds. And when the brook Cherith dried up, God's care was still as powerful as ever. He raised up a poor, indigent widow to care for His servant, and performed a daily miracle to accomplish it.

Nor was Elijah alone in that day cared for, for we read of Obadiah feeding with bread and water one hundred prophets by fifties in a cave.

The three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den, are striking instances of God's care and power.

In the New Testament we read of Peter released from prison, and of Paul, standing on the deck of the vessel, when "no small tempest" lay upon the voyagers, being able to say, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve" (Acts 27. 23). How full of encouragement is Holy Scripture!

God's Cheer for His People.

Terrible judgments are about to be poured out upon this world—so terrible as to make the heart quail, even in the reading of them. How cheering it is to have the prospect of being soon caught up to be for ever with the Lord. *The Church will NOT go through the Great Tribulation.* One verse of Scripture proves this in the most convincing of language. The Lord says to His own:—

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3. 10).

The Lord has given to us the word of His patience, that is the truth as to His coming for His people, and instructions how to patiently wait for His coming. Added to this He promises to His people that they shall be kept from (*literally*, out of) the hour of the fast-approaching world-wide tribulation which shall try all earth-dwellers.

Mark the exactitude of the language. It is not merely that the saints are to be kept out of the temptation, but out of "THE HOUR" of temptation. And seeing the tribulation is to be world-wide, and no part of the world's population will escape it, there is only one way this Scripture can be satisfactorily fulfilled, and that is by the Lord's people being removed by the summoning shout of the Lord (see 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). There is no way of being kept out of *the hour*, save by being taken out of

time and being placed *in eternity*. There is no way of escaping the world-wide tribulation, save by being removed from the sphere of it, that is the whole world.

So we get in the next verse a promise and an exhortation, which suit us admirably at this present time:

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 11).

Revelation 3. 10, 11, most conclusively proves the believer will not go through the great tribulation, but may expect the Lord at any moment. How cheering! What a *golden* lining we have to our dark cloud!

Meanwhile!

Yes, meanwhile, and how short a space of time may suffice for it, for the Lord's coming is *very* near, we have God's care and the priesthood of Christ to help us through. We have God's wonderful care of which we have spoken; we have all the sympathy and succour of our Great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God; we have the throne of grace to come to for help in time of need. Our High Priest is "touched with the *feeling* of our infirmities" (Heb. 4. 15). It is not only that He *knows*. He does know, fully, completely, every anxiety, every sorrow, every pain, every bit of pressure and anguish, but He *feels*. No wonder the writer of the Hebrews can exhort:

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4. 16).

A Summary.

In short our past is met by His mercy; our present, whatever it may be, is met by His care, our future is glowing with the ineffable glory of His own presence and likeness.

Fix your mind on these three following words and feast upon them.

"SPECIALLY" (1 Tim. 4. 10).

"BOLDLY" (Heb. 4. 16).

"QUICKLY" (Rev. 3. 11).

Studies in the Psalms—Fourth Book.

(C. E. H. WARRER).

Psalms 102.—104.

THE inscription in Psalm 102. is unique; all others are either musical or historical, this is descriptive of the character of the composition which follows. In the preceding Psalms we have been viewing the glory and majesty of the King and His kingdom; we have now to look at another side, One in weakness, loneliness, and distress, crying to God to avert impending death (ver. 24). Can this be the great King? The Psalm replies to this question by showing that the One who beseeches, "Take Me not away in the midst of My days," is really Jehovah the Creator, the King and much more. We should not arrive at this interpretation apart from a reference to Hebrews 1. 10-12, where verses 25-27 of our Psalm are cited as applying to the Lord Jesus. This can be done with perfect propriety because the Psalm addresses the Creator, and we know from many passages of the New Testament that Jesus is the Creator. The solution of the difficulty is therefore found in the great truth of the Person of the Son. Gethsemane witnessed His prayer in the day of His distress. The Psalm gives one answer; another is supplied in Hebrews 5. Moreover, in Hebrews 1. 10 the title "Lord" is inserted in the epistle, although not found in the Psalm (the absence of the article in the Greek makes this equivalent to Jehovah); thus another of His glories is revealed of whom deity is affirmed in verse 8, cited from Psalm 45.

We can now look at the Psalm a little more in detail. The first two verses stand alone, an earnest appeal to be heard, especially in view of a day of distress approaching. It is death realized to be the casting away of Jehovah, under His indignation and wrath (two nouns, says Delitzsch, the strongest the Hebrew language possesses), that is before the soul of the suppliant. This verse 10 helps much in the understanding of the Psalm; Christ had been "taken

up" to be God's King, and in Him all the promises to Israel were to be fulfilled, but instead of sitting on the throne of David, He meets the indignation and wrath of God, not upon Himself personally, that is not stated, but against the nation with which He had associated Himself. To One faithful and devoted, having a perfect appreciation of the precious counsels of God, and knowing that His own death had become necessary that the glory of God in connection with the broken law should be vindicated, as well as reconciliation made for the sins of the people, these circumstances produce the deep distress of verses 3-11.

In the succeeding verses to the twenty-second a partial answer, in unfolding the purposes of God, is afforded. How great the comfort, the knowledge, of these ministers to us when from man's side all seems hopeless, we should all know. Here the Person, the time and the place are ready for deliverance, and the power of God to bring it into manifestation is alone wanting. Accordingly the prophetic spirit looks on to the time when Zion will be the centre for the worship of God to all the nations and their kings. In the meantime the true servants of Jehovah, who are in the secrets of His counsel, take pleasure in her stones and have pity on her dust. A principle of immense importance is herein disclosed, that when the purpose of God seems hopeless as to its accomplishment, those taught of the Spirit never surrender the hope connected with it, but rather as in our Psalm and Daniel-like look towards the place of the election of God and utter our prayers as aforetime (Ps. 137. 5, 6; Isa. 62. 6, 7; Dan. 6. 10).

In verses 23, 24 the Spirit of Christ returns to "His complaint before Jehovah" and now receives a full answer not only in connection with Zion but also as regards Himself.

Instructed, as we have been, by the citation in Hebrews 1. we see in the One who was taken away in the midst of His days, Jehovah the eternal Creator and the conqueror of death, and when all creation is folded up and set aside, having accomplished its purpose, HE abides the SAME. This secures the eternal blessing of His servants and their children together with the seed of these children, for His own praise and glory.

PSALM 103. The last verse of the preceding Psalm gives assurance of a perpetuity of blessing such as will only be found in the coming kingdom; the praise of those who are thus blessed is given in Psalms 103. and 104. ; these are bound together by the appeal "Bless Jehovah, O my soul," found at the beginning and the close of both these poems. The most cursory reading discovers a pathos and beauty quite peculiar: the former is a thanksgiving to Jehovah for redeeming mercies, the latter a song of praise in view of His power in creation. We find the same connection in chapters 4. and 5. of the Revelation, but in the opposite order. That the Psalm properly belongs to the future kingdom is evident from verses 3-6, for in the present dispensation the believer has no promise of the healing of all his diseases, nor that his life will be preserved from destruction, nor is he sure of deliverance from oppression, nor does he see as in verse 19 all things subject to the throne in heaven. But if we cannot apply the words to ourselves in a literal way, it is deeply important that we should catch the spirit of worship and praise they contain, so that we may, in our day, summon all within us, the inner man of God's new creation, to bless His holy Name.

In the first section, verses 1-5, it should be noticed that the blessings provided so richly do not reach beyond this life and this earth. In Christianity, blessings are spiritual and in heavenly places in Christ, and thus should lead to a higher character of worship.

We read in the Psalm of one who is pardoned, healed, redeemed from death, crowned, satisfied, and renewed according to the strength of the eagle, and we think, what more can heart desire? We too readily forget that acceptance in the Beloved, sonship, nearness in Christ in the virtue of His blood and access to the Father are ours, and of these the Psalm knows nothing. The one speaks of blessing in our circumstances here, the other tells of a life linked with Christ in His circumstances in heaven. Which do we prefer?

The second section, verses 6-18, celebrates what Jehovah is and ever has been to His saints from the days of Moses till the end of their history, when they will prove that His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. Verse 7 refers to Exodus 33. 13, and verse 8 is taken from chapter 34. 6. The ways of this mercy are touchingly described in the verses that follow, and if frail man is still as little permanent as the flower of the field, yet to those who keep the covenant Jehovah secures a lasting blessing, and we should remember that in that day the covenant will be written in their hearts.

In the last section, verses 19-22, we see the throne established in heaven and its kingdom extending to all. It is this which makes the blessing secure and draws forth the praise of heaven and earth.

PSALM 104. We have seen in considering Psalm 103. that the blessings bestowed, though coming from heaven, do not lead to heaven, but provide for the joy of the believer in his earthly connections; in Psalm 104. this sphere of blessing is viewed as created and sustained by God, for the good of His creatures, and all this becomes the theme of praise for the earthly people of God; for the Jews have their calling and enjoy their blessings in connection with the old creation. The church, on the other hand, is blessed in Christ in the heavenlies, and hence is associated

with the new creation. Another point of interest is the order of these two Psalms: thanksgiving for redemption and pardon precedes praise for creation with its wonders of mercy and wisdom, for apart from the knowledge of the reconciliation of all things by Christ in the future, creation seems an incomplete and sorrowful spectacle, not fully exhibiting God nor blessing the creature (Rom. 8. 22). Beauty there is in heaven above and in earth beneath, but death, pain, and corruption are sadly conspicuous, and as to it all God says, "I kept silence" (Ps. 50.). Presently He will speak again, "Behold, I make all things new." In that He will rest and, according to verse 31 of our Psalm, "rejoice in His works." A joy never more to be broken by sin. But whatever disappointments we may feel in the former creation it remains true that it is the witness to "His eternal power and divinity"; so the Psalm begins, "Jehovah, my God, Thou art very great." He covers Himself with light and a vesture of honour and majesty, the visible in some measure declaring the invisible. Thus God is regarded as dwelling in His own creation (cf. Heb. 3. 3, 4), and fixing His chambers (lit. upper chambers) in the waters above the firmament (Gen. 1. 7), the various atmospheric phenomena obeying Him as servants; so in verse 32, earthquakes and volcanic action are dependent on Him.

In the description of the different parts of creation, the order of the first chapter of Genesis is mainly followed. Verses 2-4 refer to the work of the first and second days. Verses 5-18 begin with the first part of the third day's work, the separation of land and water, the earth being permanently established until it has fulfilled its purpose, then, according to Psalm 102., "they shall perish." But not only is the third day's work mentioned, but God's adaptation of this creation to the needs and use of His creatures; these in Genesis 1. do

not appear until the fifth and sixth days. Thus, as Dr. Perowne remarks, we have in the Psalm not a picture of still life like that in Genesis, but a living, moving, animated scene. Similarly, when the ordering of the heavenly bodies (not their creation) is mentioned in verses 19-23, which is the work of the fourth day, they are seen to serve for the formation of the habits of the wild beasts, the fiercest of them seeking their meat from God, according to the instinct implanted in them by Him. So man goes forth to his work and labour until the evening, the artificial developments of modern life, with their night and day work, being thus clearly contrary to the mind of a merciful Creator. In verse 25 the wonders of the sea and its inhabitants are briefly introduced, and then the whole animate creation on sea and land is viewed as "waiting on Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season." Thus when the Spirit indites a hymn of creation God is seen active in the midst of what He has wrought. How different much of the science of our day which excludes Him behind the so-called laws of nature. The New Testament is very definite on this point, the Creator of the universe is the Upholder of all things by the word of His power. The addresses of Paul to his heathen audiences should also be remembered (see Acts 14. 17, and 17. 25; also 1 Tim. 6. 13; and in the Old Testament, Job 33. 4, and 34. 14, 15, may be referred to).

The Psalmist closes these exquisite verses with the ardent desire to spend his life in Jehovah's praise, realizing that such a desire will be sweet to Him. Alas! there will be those who must be for ever outside so blessed an occupation. Such will not always mar this renewed earth by a discordant note, "the wicked shall be no more." Thus all the ways of God with His creature and His creation end to His glory, and the Spirit puts a "Hallelujah" in our lips, its first occurrence in the Psalter.

Should our Faith be entirely Centred in Christ ?

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE following paragraph is taken from a statement made by the Bishop of Birmingham regarding the return of Mr. R. J. Campbell to the Anglican church.

“ A friend of mine said to me in London the other day that I was taking away a man who had a unique congregation which could not well be held together by any other personality. I am sure that is a strong argument in favour of removing Mr. Campbell from the City Temple. There is something dangerous, both to preacher and to people, in such a situation. Even our Lord Himself felt that it was expedient for Him to go away, because the Spirit had to come and show that religion should not be too much centred upon an individual.”

We have underlined the last sentence, as it is to that that we wish to call attention. With the first part of the Bishop's argument we are in hearty agreement. Even when a preacher preaches the truth of God, which Mr. Campbell has not done, there is always the danger of the people becoming more engrossed with the man than with his message, and of attention being centred upon the servant instead of upon his Master. Against this result of his ministry every true servant of God will labour and pray. There lived a quaint old preacher in Yorkshire who used to hide himself in the box-like pulpits of his day and cry, “ Not the man in the pulpit, but the Man upon the Cross! ” Good! The spirit of that preacher was right in spite of his eccentricities. John the Baptist stands out as a great example in this respect. He saw the multitude forsaking him and going after the One to whom he had borne witness on the banks of Jordan, and his glad comment was, “ This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease ” (John 3. 29, 30). Yes, the servants of

Christ must watch against the ever-present danger of the people to whom they minister leaning upon them instead of upon the Lord Himself.

But what can the Bishop mean by citing the Lord Himself as an instance of the avoidance of the danger of which he speaks? We are loath to think that he would so dishonour the Lord as to imply that it would have been wrong for the disciples to have become wholly engrossed with Him, and that to avoid this danger He felt it expedient that He should go away. But if that is what he does mean, and that is certainly what he says, it is a disgraceful thing that such an extraordinary statement should have been uttered by one professing to be a guide to other Christians. If he had read his text with its context he would have discovered that one of the chief reasons for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who could not come until the Lord Jesus had gone to the Father, was, not that they should be less engrossed with Christ, but that their faith and love and life might be altogether centred in Him, and that intelligently. Hear the Lord's own words with regard to the coming of the Holy Spirit: “ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME ” (John 15. 26). “ HE SHALL GLORIFY ME: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you ” (chap. 16. 14, 15). The Holy Ghost is here to make everything of Christ.

Satan endeavours by every means available to him to corrupt the minds of the saints of God from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11. 3), and to turn them from Him as the one Lord, who only has the right to command their

faith and dwell supremely in their hearts. For this purpose he transforms himself into an angel of light and his ministers also as ministers of righteousness. And it is not the open hostility of the unbeliever who denies Christ entirely that threatens the faith of the saints so much as the subtle suggestions on the part of those who profess to own Him, that He must not be everything to them; that something else is necessary to make their "religion" complete.

We call attention to this statement, not to occupy our readers with it, or to make the Bishop an offender for a word, and we would gladly believe that he meant other than he says; but in contrast to his statement we want to emphasize the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is everything in the true faith. He was meeker and more lowly of mind than any of His servants; He did not seek to be served by any but to serve all, and yet He ever set Himself before those who heard Him as the one test for all, and the only Blessor. He did not merely say, as, perhaps, in measure His servants can say, "I tell you the truth," but "I AM THE TRUTH" (John 14). He did not say, "Follow My words," but "FOLLOW ME." He did not say to His disciples, "What do men think of My mission?" or, "What do you think about it?" But "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" and, "But whom say ye that I am?" His challenge to His adversaries was, "What think ye of Christ?" And to the toiling multitudes He cried, not "Follow the truth," or even, "Believe My words and find rest," but, "COME UNTO ME . . . AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST." Yes, He claimed a place in the faith and thoughts and lives of men which would have been most awfully blasphemous if it had been done by Peter, or James, or John, or by any other man of Adam's countless race.

But may not all this have changed since His departure to the Father and the coming of the Holy Spirit to earth, as

the Bishop's statement seems to imply? The heart that is true to the Lord shrinks from the very suggestion, and all Scripture gives the lie to it. In THE ACTS He was the great theme of the apostles' testimony, and they declared, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (chap. 4. 12).

ROMANS tells us that the gospel of God is "concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (chap. 1. 1-3).

1 CORINTHIANS closes with the solemn words, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (chap. 16. 22).

2 CORINTHIANS reveals the fact that Satan, the god of this world, endeavours to blind the minds of men, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. And the apostles preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, in whose face there shines the glory of the knowledge of God (chap. 4. 4-6).

And so we might go throughout the Epistles and to the end of the Scriptures. From the Word the Spirit-taught reader learns that Christ is everything and in all. Every purpose of God and every true hope for man hangs upon Him. In Him the believer is blessed with every spiritual blessing, outside of Him there is nothing but darkness, and judgment, and loss. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

If ours is that religion that is "true and undefiled," our faith is centred upon Christ, He is the object of our affections, our lives are under the influence of His love, we are controlled by Him as Lord, He is our pattern for service below; we "visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction and keep ourselves unspotted from the world" because in these things His life is reproduced in us below.

Light for the Last Days.—No. 8.

(JAMES BOYD).

Notes on 2 Timothy 4.

A STILL darker picture, if darker could be, is drawn by the pen of the Apostle in this chapter. Decay had already set in upon that which bore the name of Christ, and this would increase until the final apostasy would be reached. The leprous spot was already manifesting itself, and the Apostle, taught of the Spirit of God, knew that there would be no healing or cleansing of the profession; the canker would spread until the whole mass would become a reeking ulcer compelling the righteous judgment of God, who when about to judge the world would have to begin at that which was comprehended within the limits of His house.

The Apostle does not say that men would still have a form of godliness, which they are said to have along with the corruption described in chapter 3. Chapter 4. is an advance upon the state of things described in the previous chapters. Here they will not endure sound doctrine. They prefer the speculations of the fallen human mind to the truth of God.

These fables that the Apostle speaks of are the things that have turned them away from the truth. It is just what is at work to-day. Take what is called "light reading." These books fill the libraries of Christendom. Like a plague of locusts they darken the light of heaven, and people give themselves over to such reading, as the inveterate tippler does to strong drink. And when this appetite is created—and it is created by tampering with such fictitious productions of corrupt and blighted imaginations—there is no satisfying it, but every desire for better things becomes strangled in the human soul; profitable reading is almost altogether neglected, and the Word of God might just as well be cast upon the ash heap: it is little, or never, looked at. Sound doctrine is not to the taste of the enfeebled minds of such inebriates; desire for the truth has perished in the soul, if ever it was there,

and the dreamer drifts like a helpless derelict upon a stupefactive ocean of fabulosity.

It is remarkable that there is nothing in this epistle regarding church order. All ecclesiastical teaching is in abeyance. In chapter 1. the afflictions of the gospel are avoided by the mass, who are ashamed of Paul's chain; in chapter 2. it is "profane and vain babblings" versus the truth of God; in chapter 3. it is men of corrupt minds, who instead of being lovers of God are lovers of pleasure, and who are found opposing the truth, because it is a witness against their godless ways; in chapter 4. it is the love of degenerate fiction that is the root trouble from which men who still profess the name of Christ are suffering.

And Paul is leaving behind him in this ruthless world the enfeebled profession, assaulted by the combined forces of earth and hell; and in view of this he gives his beloved child in the faith a most solemn charge to stand fast and firm amid the general decay, and to keep the testimony of God well before the souls of his hearers. He was to proclaim the Word, be it even "out of season," as men would speak, and as his own trembling heart might be ready to suggest. He was to reprove, rebuke, and encourage, and that with all long-suffering and doctrine. With him it was to be the energy of divine love in the power of the Spirit at battle with the spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places who would with *malice prepense* destroy if possible the last remnant of Christian faith upon earth.

This faith was to be fed and nourished amongst the saints, and it was also to be published abroad in the world. Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist. Love never faileth. It cannot be enfeebled by apostasy, it cannot be killed by treachery, it cannot be crushed by opposition, it cannot be frozen to death by neglect; it withstands the severest

winters, the most biting frosts, the fiercest tempests, the most destructive storms of snows and hails and rains. It has melted the hardest hearts, it has broken the most stubborn wills, it has humbled the haughtiest, subdued the most obstinate, and won the most intractable. It is omnipotent, invincible, inviolable. It is self-neglecting, self-denying, self-sacrificing. It is life-imparting, life-preserving, life-nourishing. It is infinite, changeless, eternal, divine: for GOD IS LOVE.

In the power of this love Timothy was to carry on the work of the Lord among the saints of God, and among the nations of the earth. He was to care for the people of God, and he was to preach the gospel to those still unconverted. The great Apostle of the Gentiles was about to put off his armour, and depart to be with Christ. To Timothy he looks for a continuation of that work that had been for so many years carried on by himself. He had found in his pathway of service for Christ much the same character of things that had beset the path of his Saviour: persecution from the world, desertion by his companions, carelessness regarding the interests of Christ. But he had found the Lord Himself all-sufficient. The Lord had stood by him when all had deserted him; and he had the confidence that He would still be at his side, in all the tribulations through which he might yet have to pass.

Wonderful servant of Christ! May we be found close followers of him, and of his blessed Master, until that day when the toils of the present life with all its dangers will have come to an end, and may we be ever found strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and never ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of those who are suffering for its sake.

THE FOLLOWING NOTES ON 2 TIMOTHY 2. WERE OMITTED IN A FORMER ISSUE THROUGH LACK OF SPACE.

We may expect to find in the house of God a state of things analogous to

the things which are found in a great worldly house; vessels, not only of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and between these vessels we have to distinguish, for some are to honour and others to dishonour. In the house of God these vessels are persons with whom we have to do, and we must be on this account constantly cast upon God, in order that we may be able to distinguish between the precious and the vile, refuse companionship with the latter, of whom Hymenæus and Philetus were examples, and leave ourselves in the hand of the Master as serviceable for His use, and prepared for every good work.

To go with blasphemers of Christ and corrupters of His gospel might ensure to us an easier path through this Christless world, and cause those who prefer the praise of men to the praise of God to speak of us as charitable and broad-minded, but what a dishonour to the Christ who shed His blood for our redemption, and what grief to the Spirit of God, by whom we know and enjoy all that is ours on the ground of that precious blood, and what incalculable loss and injury to our own souls, not to speak of the poltroonery and perfidy of such double-facedness! Let us in faithfulness to our Lord and Master give the corrupters of God's truth a very wide berth.

But if we are to abandon the society of evildoers, we have in this Scripture our companions marked out for us, and that in the most distinct and evident manner. We are to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. We are not to go with the wicked; we are not to reject the righteous. Let us be careful to keep this in mind. We sometimes think that we have a right to reject those who differ with us on certain points of doctrine, when not unoften there is need for readjustment on both sides of the question under dispute. But we are all naturally sectarian, masterful, opinionated, and lopsided; and not being absolutely certain that we

have the mind of God about the matter, we cannot bear to be contradicted. But if we were a little more humble-minded, and if we had the truth more in the love of God and in the power of the Spirit, we should be better fitted to set right those who oppose, even when we know that it is the truth they are opposing; for we should connect that truth with God and not with ourselves; and in His love, which would give us the needed meekness, we would seek,

not to crush our opponent, but to recover him out of the snare of the devil; knowing that he has been allowed to be taken captive by the enemy of our souls, in order that the will of God may be effected in him. Of this solemn but tender mercy of God Job is a marvellous example. What poor senseless, selfish, and conceited servants we are! No other master than the Lord Himself would have anything to do with us. Blessed for ever be His matchless grace!

The Devil's Endeavour.

THE devil's foul purpose is to make the saints of God think little of Christ by introducing some other object or purpose into their lives rather than Himself. He employs an almost infinite subtlety, and labours unceasingly to corrupt their minds so that they shall cease to be entirely centred in Him, and, alas! how often He succeeds. But they have been espoused to Christ—the one Husband—that they might be presented to Him as a chaste virgin. What other place in their affections could He occupy but the supreme place? He demands, and He has the right to demand, that they be whole-heartedly and always devoted to Him, that they should be for Himself alone. We delight in the fact that His love is tender and true, and stronger than death; but it is also an holy and a jealous love, “the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame.” He can brook no rival; indifference to Him on the part of those whom He loves not only grieves Him because of the tenderness of His love, but it moves Him to indignation, as well it might, so that as He looks upon His faithless lover with eyes of flame, He says, “I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent.” May we awaken to the need and the comeliness of personal attachment of heart to Christ and zealously repel all efforts of the enemy to seduce us from Him. (Ed.)

Nearness to Christ Preserves.

IF anyone speaks of *separation from evil*, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply only that which at all times has constituted sects and produced doctrinal heresy. *Nearness to Christ* would keep us from Sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart. Sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves.

These Testing Times (see page 354).

CHRISTIAN, whoever you are, in the sieve or under the *tribulum*, fear not but rejoice, for all the shaking and rubbing through which you are passing is only to drive away the chaff, to separate from you that which belongs to the old evil flesh or the world, that we

cling to so tenaciously at times; and God who is faithful will be with you in the process so “that you may be able to bear it.” And you have His own word to assure you that not the least grain shall fall to the earth.

Is the War Fulfilling Prophecy?

MANY earnest people are endeavouring to prove that the war is fulfilling the prophecies of the Revelation, but this we believe is a vain attempt and can only discredit the Word in the estimation of unbelievers, and do injury to themselves. The fact is that the present period is not the subject of what is properly called prophecy. It is an interval in the dealings of God with the world in which He is not publicly intervening in its affairs, but is gathering His church out of it. The great change comes in Revelation 4., where a door is opened in heaven, and John hears a voice saying, "Come up hither." The voice was, as it were, a trumpet. This is in contrast to the noise of thunder of chapter 6.; there it is the opening of the judgment seals, here it is a summons; and we believe this to set forth in figure the call of the saints of God from earth to heaven—when "the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4.). From this time onward the true church is no more seen on earth; the interval of which we have spoken has terminated, and God begins to deal with the *nations* of the world.

John was called to see "the things that must be hereafter." He had been told in chapter 1. to write "the things that are and the things that shall be hereafter." The former are the things that belong to the church's sojourn on earth, the latter are the things that cannot take place until the true church is removed to heaven.

Another thing which shows that it is here in this chapter that a change takes place in God's ways is that He is addressed as "Lord God Almighty"—Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddi—these names set forth the characters in which He had revealed Himself in relation to earth in the Old Testament; they are not the way in which He is known by us in Christianity, for now we know Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ. The family formed by this revelation must be completed and will be gathered in heaven, the Father's house on high, when God reverts to these former names and shows Himself as the Creator, the Maker of Promises to men, and the Supreme Governor over all the earth.

And lastly He is worshipped as the Creator for whose pleasure all things were made. It is evident from this that He is about to put creation in order and make it suitable for His pleasure. He is, as here presented, about to take hold of His *inheritance*, but He is not doing this now. Now He is taking hold of his *heirs*—we, who know Him as Father, who can cry, "Abba, Father," because we have received the spirit of adoption, are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. And in this present period God is gathering out of this world His heirs and preparing them for the inheritance; when they are all gathered and completed He will take hold of the inheritance and prepare it for them. We speak of the inheritance on the earthly side of it, the heavenly is already "reserved" for us (1 Peter 1. 4). And it is in connection with this that the awful events depicted in the Revelation take place. The fifth chapter gives greater emphasis to the fact that this period has closed and another opened, but more of that in another paper.

Is the Prussian War-Lord the Beast?

One reason why people are deceived into supposing that this is the great war that shall end war is that certain features of the beast of Revelation 13.—the head of the to-be-revived Roman Empire—seem to be present in Prussian militarism and its head. But this is not singular, nor is it the first time that these features have appeared. Wherever there has been great power without the guiding wisdom from on high, and ambition for world empire, they have been present. The great characteristics

of the Spanish Empire of the sixteenth century — arrogance, persecution of God's people, lust for power, and the determination to crush out or enslave all who opposed its will, are all to be fully developed in the beast. In the seventeenth century Louis the Great of France, perhaps in a lesser measure, exhibited these same features. In the nineteenth century Napoleon appeared, and though he was not a persecutor, yet he, more than any who went before him, exhibited features associated with the beast in so much that he was popularly supposed to be he; but he was not, nor is the Prussian Kaiser; indeed, his country lies outside the bounds of the Old Roman Empire over which the beast is to be head. It is interesting, and not a little remarkable, that Britain, in the providence of God, should have been the power largely responsible for the defeat of all these great forces of the past.

The fact is that the devil has always been on the look out for a man of sufficiently vast ambitions and powerful personality to whom he can give his power and energy in the hope of holding the world against God. He had the audacity to approach the Lord Himself in the wilderness with this very proposition, with what result we know. No man great enough to play the part has yet appeared, nor has the time come for God to permit him to appear, for the Holy Ghost who hinders is still here, and He will hinder till he be taken out of the way (2 Thess. 2. 7). Then Satan's plans will develop speedily and the great superman will be ready to his hand. And when he does appear the kings of Western Europe will not fight against him, but will yield homage to him, and help him in all his projects (Rev. 17. 12, 13). He will meet his terrible doom in the lake of fire (Rev. 19.) (Ed.)

Peace of Heart.

"To be carnally-minded is death" (or, more correctly, the mind of the flesh. It is the flesh in its nature and desires). If the flesh runs its course, death, the seal of condemnation, must be upon it. *"But to be spiritually-minded is life and peace."* There are two kinds of peace—peace in the conscience, and peace in the heart. This is a far higher thing than simply peace in the conscience. It is peace in the heart and affections. The affections are at rest, and then there is the steady pursuit of things for which our consciences will not accuse us, for, delighting ourselves in the Lord, there will be peace. If you are restless and discontented in your mind, you are not at peace, you are thinking about yourself: self has come in, you want something for self.

The Spirit turns the eye away from self towards the Lord. The things of the flesh are too small to fill the heart, and the heart likewise needs enlarging

to grasp the things of the Spirit; and herein is the contrast between Ecclesiastes and Canticles on this very point. In Ecclesiastes Solomon says, "There is no good thing under the sun"; "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Why so? To him, self was seeking its own satisfaction. Here, then, was no rest, no peace, it could not be otherwise, no human object could satisfy an immortal soul, nor could a dying man get rest in what he was to die out of. Yet, when thinking of himself, it was all *I, I, I, I* did it, and *I* found it vanity; but in Canticles we see all his blessedness, because he speaks of Christ being all to him there. As has been said, in Ecclesiastes the heart was too great for the object; in Canticles the object is too great for the heart.

We want a largeness of capacity for the enjoyment of God Himself: a largeness of capacity which none but God can give, and none but God can fill. Where that is, "life and peace" are.

(J.N.D.)

Correspondence.

The Character of the Commission to the Disciples in Matthew 28.

As to the commission in Matthew 28. 18, etc., I think some considerations may help you as they have helped me. It was not from heaven, but from Galilee, and does not immediately connect with heaven. It was to bring the Gentiles into connection with the remnant of the Jews on earth already recognized, not to form the elect of both into one body united to Christ in glory, as through Paul's commission. The revelation of the Trinity is not essentially and distinctively Christianity: a triune God was involved in many an Old Testament scripture, even from Genesis 1., where the plural name of God is found already with a singular verb (as nowhere when the gods of the nations are in question). But the full revelation came out on the occasion of the Son of God being manifested to Israel (Matt. 3., John 1. 31)—that is, in His place on earth, the Father seen in Him, the Spirit not given by measure to Him, all the Fulness pleased to dwell in Him.

Christianity starts with a risen and ascended Christ at God's right hand, and the mission of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Matthew 28. was from resurrection, not ascension. Paul was not sent to baptize: he accepted what he found going on, and there was no other revealed formula of baptism. God does not go back of the full revelation of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as to the name in

A Day of Violence.

Dear Mr. Editor,—On reading the article, "A Day of Violence," by Mr. James C. Trench, in the November issue of *Scripture Truth* a sentence arrested my attention very powerfully. Referring to the present calamitous European war Mr. Trench says, "Christians, too, will do well to consider their ways, and see what God has to say to *them* through all that is taking place."

which the remnant will take up the testimony to bring in the nations, when the assembly is gone: though it does not appear to me to involve for them the full intelligent relationships implied in the revelation as it affects us, which depends on testimony to make good to us such relationships.

The testimony for the remnant is the testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy, and will not, as it would seem, bring them beyond the names by which God was known in the Old Testament, as we find reproduced in the Revelation, with Jesus the rejected, suffering, and exalted Lamb superadded. They will not have gone over all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come—broken off when they were scattered from their cities the mission will be resumed when they are again in them—doubtless others will go out to the nations: though the formal bringing the nations into their own accepted place by baptism, as in Matthew 28., only belongs, I suppose, to the future of the testimony. It did not go far beyond the manifestation of such a remnant till Jerusalem was destroyed,—the work among the Gentiles being committed to Paul, who did not take Matthew 28. for his testimony. I quite think with you that the grace side of the testimony comes in with the Father, Son, and Spirit and that judgment is more connected with the Revelation side of it—"the hour of His judgment is come" (14. 7). *J. Alfred Trench.*

We are familiar with the statements as to the wickedness of the nations, and the ensuing governmental dealings with them by God. Doubtless this is all true, but I do think Mr. Trench calls attention to a side we have greatly forgotten.

In connection with it three Scriptures came to my mind.

1. "I exhort therefore, that, first of

all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2).

Most evidently we Christians are not receiving an answer to prayers offered up on the lines of this Scripture. The Christians in Germany—and there are many of them—are not leading a quiet and peaceable life. Many are forced into the firing line; many have been killed, and many of our sisters in Christ have been made widows. Christians in Belgium, in Poland, etc., are not living quiet and peaceable lives, nor in London and the East Coast of England, where death may be rained from the sky at any moment, and where all over the land death has been rolled into thousands of homes.

We, Christians, have broken down in our prayers. And are we learning our lesson? I fear not. How many homes have no family prayer! How few the numbers attending the prayer meeting! How little special intercession there is! In this connection how weighty is the article, "The Function of Prayer," in the same issue of *Scripture Truth* as Mr. Trench's timely article.

2. "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5. 13).

Salt is preservative. God's people are the salt of the earth. Doubtless, if we were more distinctly salt there would be more persecution, and we should realize the force of the beatitude, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake" (ver. 11). On the other hand, if the salt preserved its saltness, there would be a distinct effect upon the world; but instead of that Christendom is in the front rank in this terrible war; and the greatest offender in aggress-

sion and brutality is the one who the oftenest has the name of God on his lips as the One who helps him and approves of his truly frightful course. How terrible all this is!

3. "And he said, Oh! let not the Lord be angry and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten [righteous] shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (Gen. 18. 32).

How significant this is of the place a godly person has in the estimation of God. Here was this big wicked Sodom, its sins too terrible to speak about, crying aloud for vengeance from heaven, and yet if only ten godly persons had been found in that welter of sin and iniquity the guilty city would have been spared. But not ten were found, and the few in it were thrust out—four persons in all, and one perished just outside its walls, and so the city was destroyed.

Just in the same way does not this terrible visitation tell a similar tale? Is it for nothing that Christendom has jettisoned the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of the Lord Jesus, the atoning value of His precious death, the virgin birth and even in some cases the very resurrection of our Lord? Is it for nothing that we witness the entrance of a notorious denier of Christian truth into the State Church, and scarcely a protest raised, and no action following protest? Is it for nothing that a Bishop of the same church can go to the Front and tell the soldiers that their death on the battlefield will win them heaven? Oh! apostasy! apostasy!! And one feature of the hour is lack of courageous exposure of what is going on.

Broadly speaking, we see where things are travelling to, and that most rapidly, but *our* place is on our faces in intercession, and God will come in in answer to our cry. May it be intelligent and in the current of the Spirit, for never was there a more powerful call to prayer than now. *A. J. Pollock.*