

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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“For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled
in Heaven.”—*Psalms cxix. 89.*

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Scripture Truth.

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"Speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4. 15).

No. 1

"AND IN THE GARDEN—A SEPULCHRE."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden ; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they JESUS" (John 19. 41).

A GARDEN! We all like a garden ; it means to us the fair sunlight or the restful shade ; it means beauty and fragrance and colour, and the song of birds, and the joy and ease of life. But in the garden a tomb ! Ah ! that is another matter. At the thought of a tomb we rise up as though fearing the attack of an unseen foe, the air grows cold, the music dies, and life droops. We love a garden, but not a tomb, for the tomb means—What does it mean ? If your heart can tell you, then you know, but if it cannot, you do not. But suppose your heart could tell you all that it was possible for a human heart to know of the defeat and humiliation, the disappointment and loss, and sadness and tears that the tomb in the garden means, the full truth of it would still remain untold, for God alone knows it and He tells it in His own way.

But why should a tomb force itself into the same sentence as a garden ? Cannot we have a garden without a tomb ? May we not exult in a garden without a tomb near by to cast its shadow on our joy ? No, we cannot, they are brought together in God's Word with a purpose, and they cannot be divorced in this earthly life. The garden first and then the tomb, thus is the story told, and how many have heard it and learnt it in bitter woe, and have seen how soon the garden can shrivel and shrink and all its beauty disappear, while the tomb spreads wide its base and rears its monstrous head, until naught save itself is seen in earth or sky.

It is not a tomb and then a garden ; that is not the order here. It is the habit of civilized man to plant a garden round a tomb. Sentiment demands it, and the heart cries out for a garment with which to cover naked death, and chooses flowers ; and they spring and bloom as a tribute—yes, and perhaps in defiance, in feeble and futile defiance of the tomb. But it is not that, it is beauty yielding to corruption, joy ending in sorrow, day fading into night, life closing in death. In the garden a tomb.

But why is it so ? There was once a garden that God planted "eastward in Eden ; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And 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 in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden"—and there was no tomb there. But that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, entered that enclosure of life, and secured the ear of the man's wife and stirred the ambitions of the man, and they thought that the devil's lie was better than God's truth, and with the hands that God had made the gate was opened wide for the destroyer, and "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom 5. 12). And since that day the tomb has been with us. No matter how full of promise and hope and prophecy a garden may have been,

the tomb was there, for sin was there, and death came in with sin and will not retire so long as sin remains. That is why.

It is remarkable that God started man upon his career in a garden. Not in primordial slime as a wriggling maggot, or in the virgin forest as a chattering ape, as the scientists (?) would teach us—men who have grown wise in their own conceits, but are fools, blindly fighting against God's own account of things—but in a garden, a scene of ordered beauty and delights, planned and planted by God's own hand. In that garden he stood erect, for "God hath made man upright," created in the image and likeness of God, and there was nothing lacking in his fair surroundings to complete his joy, and no tomb was there to cause him grief. So satisfied should he have been with the bounty of his God, that the tempter would have shrunk abashed from the fulness of his gratitude. But it was not so, his glorious heritage did not content him, he craved for that which God had withheld, and through that uncurbed desire he fell. Thus death passed upon him, and as no tomb could be in the garden where grew the tree of life, he was banished from it, a sinful and dying man, his only prospect on earth a tomb. Such was man's brief history in God's garden without a tomb.

He carried out of that earthly paradise, however, a craving for beautiful surroundings, and has laboured incessantly to secure them; but if God's garden did not satisfy him, it is certain that his own cannot, and in his own garden there is always the tomb to mock his best endeavours. And is there no hope? Shall the tomb for ever triumph? Let us see.

Among the writers of the New Testament John is the only one who speaks of a garden. He is always great on environment; the setting is necessary in his Gospel to bring out either the full beauty or the stark nakedness of the deeds he records. So he speaks

of a garden, and with it he shows us a *traitor*, a *cross*, and a *tomb*. I confess that when I first saw the garden, as John shows it to us, it startled me. The purpose of John's Gospel is to present the great fact that God has come down to men. In it we learn that **THE WORD** was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And can it be possible that when He came, so suitably to the deep need of men, and entered into man's garden, that He was confronted by the traitor, and condemned to a cross and a tomb? Yes, so it was, men had nothing better than that for Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John 1. 10); and when men saw Him they hated Him without a cause.

The traitor's kiss ranks as the most dastardly deed ever perpetrated beneath the heavens, and the name of Judas is universally execrated, but what of those who gave him the money, who bribed him to betray his Master into their murderous hands? They were the chief priests, the teachers of morality and religion, the cultivation of what is best in man was supposed to be in their hands, and they should have driven the covetous wretch from their presence with scorn when he made his base proposals, but they did not; they had determined to rid themselves of Jesus, there was no place for Him in their scheme of things, and they were glad to have the traitor as a confederate in their crime, for they were as base as he. So the Lord of glory was betrayed in a garden, not in the bleak wilderness, where the wild beasts were, and where He had hungered for forty days before His conflict with the devil, but in the garden, in a spot that had been tamed and cultivated by man's labour. Thither He had resorted with His disciples for prayer, and it was there that His quietude—for the agony was past—was rudely broken by the advent of the soldiers led by the traitor.

But that was only the beginning of

the treachery and insult, and unparalleled cruelty that He had to suffer. Who can describe the road that He trod from the garden to the high priest's house, and from there to the court of Pilate, mocked by Jew and Gentile, beaten, spit upon, scourged, crowned with thorns and condemned to die, until at last, with a cross upon His shoulders He reached the garden again? The garden of the cross may not have been the garden of the betrayal, but this we know, for the Scripture tells us, that "in the place where He was crucified there was a garden" (John 19. 41).

Raised above every plant and tree in that garden was the "plant of renown," the Son of God nailed to a cross, and in the presence of it we bow; we bow our heads with shame for the sin of man, we bow our hearts with adoration for the love of God: man's sin and God's love, they met in that cross, and it was the proof and the measure of both. It may have seemed to us when first we thought of it, that God did a harsh thing when he drove the man and his wife from Eden for one act of disobedience; but Golgotha clearly declares what lay in that act. It was a blow aimed at the supremacy of God, an act of rebellion against His throne, a challenge to His majesty, and last but not least, a refusal to believe His goodness and love. From the time of the fall onward the chief aim of man was to cultivate his own powers; to make himself independent of God, and to make things pleasant for himself at a distance from God. Alas, he was cultivating an evil nature, and the test of it came when the Son of God came into the world. Then it was manifested what sort of fruit his garden had produced; then it was fully revealed that hatred of God lay at the very root of his nature; a hatred so fierce and intractable that all the grace that was in Jesus failed to abate it. Nothing would satisfy it but the murder of the One who was the Word become flesh, and that murder was of the most deliberate and calculated kind. Not

only must the greatest physical suffering be inflicted on the Object of their hatred, but His every sensibility must be outraged and His character defamed for all time. So He was numbered with the transgressors, laughed to scorn by those who beheld His suffering and shame, and given a felon's death. It was not in the uncultivated and wild part of the earth, in the habitations of cruelty, where the naked savage lived his ignorant and degraded life that this sin of mankind was consummated. No, it was "the princes of this world" that "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2. 8)—"In the place where He was crucified there was a garden."

If that climax of all sin had been the only side of the cross, there would have been no hope. But God's love was there, and God's love was greater than man's sin. If the cross is dark with the blackness of man's hatred, it is bright with the glory of God's love, and through it He commends that love towards us, for while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4. 10). Raised up there upon the cross, Jesus was the bread of life, which if a man eat he shall live for ever. And that cross which on man's part was only hatred and murder, has become a new and living way by which sinful men may enter into everlasting blessing; it is the door into a heavenly paradise where death can never come. Thus did grace much more abound where sin abounded.

Now the malice of men would have pursued the Lord beyond death, for "they appointed His grave with the wicked," as Isaiah 53. 9 should read. They had prepared a rough hole near the cross in which to cast His body with those of the thieves who had also died there; but God intervened and "He was with the rich in His death." In the garden there was "a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."

It was a new tomb ; we must lay the emphasis upon this. There had never been a tomb like it before, if we judge it by what was laid in it, and by what came out of it. To that hour the grave had stood first in the list of those things that are never satisfied. It had never cried, "It is enough." And with one exception, when it had bowed to the authority of the living Lord, it held its prey with relentless power. There had ever been a natural affinity between the tomb and what it held, for God had said, "Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return." But in this new tomb there was no such affinity. The death of Jesus was voluntary. He died for the sake of His flock. No man had taken His life from Him, He had laid it down of Himself. He had the power both to lay it down and to take it again. He was the Holy One of God and could see no corruption ; death had no claim upon Him, and so the tomb could not hold Him. The grave had never received such an occupant to its close embrace before ; it had triumphed hitherto, but now there had entered into it the One who was to break its power for ever.

There seemed to be an eagerness on the part of the Jews to be rid of His body, for they begged Pilate that it, with those of the thieves, might be taken away, and Pilate seems to have been relieved when Joseph besought him that he might have it, for he readily gave consent, and the world rejoiced when the tomb closed upon Jesus. But what a wonderful Seed was sown in that tomb in the garden with the tears and lamentations of Joseph and the women ! And how wonderful was the springing up of that Seed on the resurrection morning ! Ah, then was the day of victory, the beginning of a new creation.

The garden had been the scene of man's treachery and shame, of Satan's long mastery over man and the length to which he could drive him, and of the power of the grave. It was now the scene of God's victory, sorrow had

given place to joy, the night had vanished before the morning light, death had given place to life, for as by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection from the dead, and the joy of heaven found expression in the angel's words, "Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen." "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." An empty tomb at last ! The pledge and token of victory over it for all who are Christ's ; for Christ is the firstfruits ; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming.

The faith of the believer links him up with God's victory, and that vacant new tomb in the garden has changed everything for him, for he possesses a life in the risen Christ that death cannot destroy ; and his hopes and joys are no longer resting in a garden, the beauty of which is all spoiled by death and the grave, but he looks on to the time when he will "eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2. 7). And if he falls asleep through Jesus, he does so in the sure hope that his body, sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption ; sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory ; sown in weakness, shall be raised in power. But while such a glorious hope is certain for the Christian if he dies, it is not certain that he will die, for, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting ? O Grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to

God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 51-57).

It is the light of that world into which death can never enter, that, shining into the heart of the believer, enables him to turn his back upon the earth and lay hold on eternal life. And while he does not feel the less that death is here, it holds no terror for him since his Lord both died and rose again. He may sorrow, but not as those who have no hope, and his hope maketh not ashamed, for it is as an anchor both sure and steadfast which

holds his soul amid the storms and stress of life, if I may for the moment pass from a garden in which the tomb is to the sea where tempests rage. It is a blessed hope. "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. WHEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS" (1 Thess. 4. 16-18).

THE SHEPHERD'S CARE.

(F. L. HARRIS.)

Read John 21. 15-17; Acts 20. 28, 29; 1 Peter 5. 1-4; Ezekiel 34. 1-12;
John 10. 1-21, 24-30.

PERHAPS no character in which the Lord comes before us in the Scriptures more endears Him to the heart of the believer than that of the Shepherd. The grace and tenderness which the relationship itself involves, His devotedness even unto death, and constant care towards those whom He tends in that relationship, present the Lord in a way that touches the deepest and tenderest chords of redeemed hearts.

What our Great Shepherd does for His sheep is largely enumerated in the 23rd Psalm, but since the *first* mention of a thing in Scripture gives a clue to its character and meaning, we learn very early that, however really David might apprehend Jehovah as his Shepherd, as expressed in that exquisite psalm, the full revelation of what the relationship involved awaited the advent of Him of whom Jacob spoke, in blessing Joseph, as "The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (Gen. 49. 24).

First, it is well to note that everything is done by the Shepherd. The one thing the sheep do is to follow. Herein lies the appropriateness of this

character which the Lord takes—appropriateness to Himself as the One who took up the whole case of His people, who came uncalled, who sought and bought, who feeds and cares for, and who is in one sense *carrying* His sheep (Luke 15.), and in another *leading* them home.

Let us then hear His voice in John 10. It is significant that it is in John's Gospel our blessed Lord is so fully brought before us as the Shepherd. It is the Jehovah of whom David wrote, when he said "Jehovah is my Shepherd"—God manifest in flesh—whom we find here. It is God come down to earth in the Person of Jesus. In Him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He has come down to seek the sheep who have gone astray. How far astray must those sheep have wandered to need *such* seeking as this chapter unfolds to our worshipping hearts!

And first, then, we find the Son of God entering by the door into the sheepfold. The Gospel of John takes this as an accomplished fact. The Lord's baptism is not recorded; He had,

before John's testimony to Him begins (Chapter I. 15), sought the few faithful ones in the Jewish fold by identifying Himself with them in Jordan, in "fulfilling all righteousness," and was thereupon owned as the Beloved of the Father, in whom all His delight was found.

But He entered thus, only to lead out those He found in that fold into the blessed liberty of grace—to lead them into green pastures such as they had not dreamed of, and to rest by waters of quietness and peace, which it had not entered into their hearts to conceive. But for all this He Himself must be the door.

He had come that the sheep might have life and have it more abundantly. He had wonderful thoughts for them when He left His eternal glory for the barren wastes of this world to seek them and to save. The "thief," whose lie our first parent listened to in Eden, and who has all the ages down sought to thwart the thoughts of God in blessing to His people, had only been bent on destroying, but this blessed Shepherd—the Son of God, manifested to destroy the works of the devil—had come to give life in abundance. But before His sheep could possess this life, the Good Shepherd must give His life for them.

He had told the heavenly secret to Nicodemus, when He said, "even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; and now, "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Ah, He was no hireling, the sheep were His, and He came to tread the desert waste and the rocky paths right to where they lay in their desperate need, straying and lost. How true the lines:—

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the
Lord passed through
Ere He found the sheep which was lost."

Yes, the sheep were His. But further there was Divine concert in this seeking of the lost, for "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep." It was the Father's desire that these sheep should be found, and who was to do it? Who, save the Son of His bosom, could accomplish this desire? And the Son in full harmony with the longing of the Father's heart, and the secret thoughts of His love, hastened in the fulness of time to fulfil and gratify them.

How blessed for us to ponder this perfect communion of purpose between the Father and Son! "They went both of them together" (Gen. 22.): to know that we, His sheep, were the subjects of heavenly counsels in the past eternity, and that for blessing unspeakable. And this brings us to that most precious unfolding of the heart of Jesus, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." With what heavenly sweetness does this *must*, this necessity of love, fall on our ears! In the third chapter we have on two occasions the *must* of our need, but here we have the *must* of the Shepherd's need.

And who are those other sheep so necessary to the heart of Jesus? Poor sinners of the Gentiles—those described in Ephesians II. as "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Oh, the grace of the Good Shepherd to seek for such as we! Oh, the marvel of it that we should be needful to *Him*, as those whom He *must* seek, and that by the way of Calvary! Blessed indeed it is for us to know this, and blessed to know that in His thus seeking His sheep, the Son has called forth afresh and in a new way the love of His Father.

How strong must have been the desire of the heart of the Father for the saving and bringing of the sheep,

that could lead Him to give the Son of His love, even to death, on their account; and to love that Son in this special way for becoming the righteous channel of His yearnings towards them, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life that I may take it again. . . . I have power to lay it down and power to take it again, this commandment have I received of my Father."

These blessed words of Jesus falling on unregenerate ears only called forth the comment, "He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye Him?"

Why hear ye Him? Oh, His words thrill our very inmost soul. They tell heavenly secrets beyond mortal ken. They bring us into the presence of God—the presence of infinite love. Why hear we Him? His words are life and joy and peace. We join with those who said, "These are *not* the words of Him that hath a devil"—they are words of God incarnate—speaking as never man spake"

But Jesus has yet more to tell of His sheep. He takes occasion in rebuking His enemies to proclaim another of the secrets of heaven. His sheep were given Him by the Father, and the life abundantly He gives them is eternal, not only in duration, but in character. He looks beyond the cross here. As the Good Shepherd He died for the sheep. As the Great Shepherd He holds them secure in His hand of almighty power, and they shall never perish. Moreover, they are in His Father's hand. He and His Father are one.

He has taken His life again in a new way, and in that risen life He holds His sheep in His hand, and they are held in Divine concert of power and unity of love, for speaking of them He says: "And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine" (John 17. 10). Oh, the wonders of those communings with the Father concerning the poor needy sheep whom the Shepherd was

leaving behind Him in this wilderness world! On these were and are centred the interests of God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

But now the Great Shepherd is in the glory, and there are under-shepherds here in the day of His absence. We turn to that scene on the lake-shore, where the Lord in tenderness and perfect faithfulness probes Peter to the heart, restores him to his place amongst the disciples, and gives him his work. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs." "Simon, son of Jonas, Hast thou affection for Me?" "Yea, Lord Thou knowest that I have affection for Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My Sheep." Thus, in restoring Peter to his office publicly, the Great Shepherd confides to him the lambs and sheep for whom He had suffered and died—the objects of His own precious and eternal love. Peter was to feed them, and for this his qualification was his love to the Great Shepherd. This alone fits the under-shepherd for his service. Love to the Shepherd must needs connect itself with the Shepherd's love for the sheep. The true under-shepherd looks on them in the light of the Shepherd's regard for them, and measures his own care for the sheep by the love of the Shepherd for them; then, how can he cease to care?

Moreover, the sheep are the "Flock of God." "Take heed . . . unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the assembly of God, which He hath purchased with the blood of His own" (Acts 20. 28, N.Tr.). "Feed the flock of God. . . . And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5. 2-4).

Here the flock and the assembly of God are identified, and the Holy Ghost as the true Vicar of Christ on

earth appoints the under-shepherds. The flock has been purchased at infinite cost: "The blood of His own." They belong to God, and are dear to Him as the price He paid for them. The under-shepherds are to value them accordingly, and, as God's assembly, the sheep themselves are to catch the spirit, and exercise the care of the Shepherd and of God, in their regard and care for each other.

But the shepherds have a special place. What a place of privilege to be in any wise entrusted with the sheep of Christ—the flock of God! What a responsibility! As we have seen, love to the Lord is the great qualification for the work of the shepherd. This alone can sustain him, this alone supplies the true motive and spirit of service. Even Moses broke down when he looked at the people of God in their actual state, and exclaimed, "Hear now, ye rebels!" and in consequence never entered Canaan.

The Lord's people have to be looked at through the Lord's eyes, and felt for through the Lord's heart. It is clear that only thus can any shepherd them for Him, for the under-shepherd must be a reproduction in measure of the Great Shepherd, or He belies Him, as did Moses on that occasion. Oh, the watchfulness required! Oh, the grace needed for this! Only in communion with the Master can the trust possibly be fulfilled.

The Lord is the great Gatherer of His sheep. Alas, how often the under-shepherds are the servants of the "wolf"! For all scattering of the flock is the wolf's work, in whatever guise he may come. The Good Shepherd died to gather His sheep in one—He prayed that they might be one. He will eventually gather His flock in one. Surely every under-shepherd should catch His spirit, and be guided by His desire now! Should not this be the consuming desire and earnest effort of every saint now, and specially of those who are in any degree in the

place of shepherds or guides to the flock?

Verily, the Great Shepherd takes account of these, "My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill; yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. . . . Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I am against the shepherds; and I will require My flock at their hand. . . . For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd . . . so will I seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezekiel 34. 1-12).

Here we have the direct and solemn challenge of the Chief Shepherd. The under-shepherds had not searched out nor sought for His sheep, which had been "driven away," and He was at issue with them. "Behold, I am against the shepherds." How solemn indeed! What scatterings there have been for many long centuries! How have the sheep of Christ been scattered and driven away by such as profess to act in the name of the Shepherd! Many "cloudy and dark days" have the people of God known in their wilderness history—days when the storms of persecution broke upon them and scattered the flock—days, too, when the clouds of internal strife gathered darkly, and many were "driven away."

Have we not in our day had some experience of these? Have we not had a guilty part in them? Have some of us not been driven away, and only then found out that it needed this discipline to bring us into sympathy with others so driven, and to teach us to turn once again to our Gracious Shepherd, and to look to Him alone as our Leader and Sufficiency?

But if we find ourselves so following the Shepherd, and in true sympathy

with His heart's desire, we shall not rest content with following alone. The Lord's complaint as to the under-shepherds of old is that, "They did neither search out nor seek those who had been driven away." The Lord's flock to-day is His Assembly, as we have seen, and while the under-shepherds are addressed in the Scriptures quoted, it is abundantly clear throughout the Scriptures that every saint is expected to be in sympathy with the Great Shepherd in His desire that His flock may be one—to catch His spirit, be in touch with His blessed heart, and actively engaged in the fulfilling of His longings.

No true-hearted saint, therefore, will rest till the Lord's desire is accomplished, but will endeavour as far as possible to realize it even now. He will be in sympathy with every godly effort to "Search out and seek for those who have been driven away," his soul pressed with the conviction of what they are to Christ, and the fact that they are *His* stimulating his heart and efforts. Love to the Shepherd, and the love of the Shepherd for His sheep compelling and directing his endeavours towards them.

Oh, for more of the infinite love of the Good Shepherd! Oh, for constant touch with *His* heart!—for abiding communion with Him in His longings towards and care for His beloved flock! Oh, for gathering power in our efforts to realize His desire!

He will accomplish, blessed be His Name, He will accomplish at length what we may fail to do here. He will undo all the work of the "wolf." He will gather *all* His own when He comes; when, indeed, there shall be, not only by hidden bond of union, but in outward display, "*One flock and One Shepherd.*"

Meantime, till He come, let our hearts go out in the breath of His possessions. "Little" the flock of Christ is in comparison with the

"world" around it, but we can rejoice together that the Great Shepherd looks down upon His own in almost every part of the earth—amid the icy wastes of the Arctic regions; on the barren shores of Greenland and Labrador; the vast tracts of North and South America; among the dark races of Africa and Polynesia; the dusky peoples of India and adjacent lands; the yellow millions of China and Japan; over Russian Steppes and Siberian Plains as well as amid the nations of Europe; and on the many islands of the sea, both beneath Polar Star and Southern Cross. Christ's sheep, the flock of God, in all these lands and places claim our interest *because they belong to Him.*

Soon He will come to close their wilderness history, and blessed will be His reward to all who have cared for the objects of His love—the sheep of His pasture. Then, soon again He will come to gather His Jewish flock, and Ezekiel 34. will be fulfilled. Then "He will feed His flock like a Shepherd, He will gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom," and they shall never be scattered more. The green pastures and the still waters shall be their constant and undisturbed enjoyment.

The saved of the nations will also be numbered amongst His sheep, and among the flock of God, for of them it is written, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7. 16, 17).

May our blessed Lord enlarge and strengthen in each of us the sympathies of His great love for His people, that we may more actively be *with Him* in the patient activities of that love towards them all.

"GOD IS LIGHT."

(P. COCKBURN.)

WE may assume that no word in human speech could have better expressed to our creature minds the absolute purity of the nature of the blessed God. In the physical universe, of which our little world forms so infinitesimal a part, there is nothing so pure and searching as light.

When the primeval mists darkened the face of the mighty deep, the first recorded movement of a creator God is the sending forth of that wondrous command: "Let there be light: and there was light"; and since that moment He has suffered no cataclysm to intervene to rob us of its brightness. But alas! if there has been no mighty convulsion in Nature, there has occurred, through man's disobedience, a tremendous upheaval in the moral universe. Whether Satan actually was responsible for the chaos which rendered the earth "without form and void," we cannot tell. Certain it is that he is the author of the moral ruin of man, who is now "void" of any desire for the knowledge or light of God.

In the Book of Job the question had been asked: "Where is the way where light dwelleth?" The incarnation of the Son of God has answered it. He was the True Light, which, on coming into the world, lit up every man. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The same blessed One whose voice in the beginning had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, comes now into the midst of His rebellious creatures, seeking to reconcile them to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. But men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil, and the light which should have meant life to them became their condemnation. It is a deeply solemn thought that if men will love darkness now, it will become their portion for ever. He

who through grace comes to the light now possesses in his soul the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "Truly the light is sweet."

Creation in all its apparently illimitable expanse and beauty demonstrated God's eternal power and Divinity, but Incarnation has made known His heart. In no other way could the eternal and ineffable secrets of God's nature have been displayed before guilty and ruined creatures, else Deity had remained for ever in unapproachable light, and we in impenetrable darkness. To bring us into the light of life, Jesus must die; the Son of Man must be lifted up. In order that sin in the flesh might be condemned, God had to send His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The absolute holiness of His nature has been fully told at the cross, and the blessed One who hung there has gone back where He was before, but now as first-born among many brethren. Those who were once "children of wrath" are now made "partakers of the Divine nature." They walk in the light as He is in the light, and enjoy sweet and blessed communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. And not only so, but they have fellowship one with another, where otherwise each would seek his own things. The holy love of God effaces in our souls the obnoxious egotism of the world. We become imitators of God as beloved children, and for us the darkness is passing and the true light now shines.

There can be no darkness where God is, and even now He dwells in, and walks with, His people. The light of heaven streams down upon them from a glorified Christ, and the path they tread becomes each day brighter and brighter as they wend their way, painfully it may be, onward towards

the perfect day. For the redeemed, the dusty highway of this world loses itself in the brightness of the City which has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to lighten it, for the

glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.

"Till then 'tis the path Thou hast trod,
Our delight and our comfort shall be ;
We're content with Thy staff and Thy rod,
Till with Thee all Thy glory we see."

"WHEREFORE THEN DIDST THOU NOT OBEY?"

(F. B. HOLE.)

AS another year of our pilgrimage reaches its end, and we stand on the threshold of a new year, we are deeply conscious that the need of a reviving in the whole church of God is as great as ever. Our hearts rejoice in all that God has done and is doing, we gratefully acknowledge His mercy which still is converting and saving souls out of the world which steadily marches forward to judgment, yet we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the love of many Christians waxes cold, that much sinful lethargy exists amongst them, and that there is frequently much ignorance of the Word of God, and, what is worse, often a deplorable spirit of indifference and even open disobedience to the plain injunctions of Scripture. The church of God particularly needs a revival which shall take the practical form of a great awakening to *simple-hearted obedience to the Word of God*.

Naturally we are all of us adepts at finding out plausible reasons why we may ignore the commands of Scripture, not one of which will prove to be valid when the hour of testing comes. Scripture must of course be read in a spirit of prayerful subjection, so that we may each become "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2. 15); then having intelligently ascertained the mind of God nothing is needed but simple obedience. There is nothing more damaging to spiritual prosperity, or disastrous in its final results, than disobedience to the Word of God.

If we turn to the Old Testament, that faithful mirror of the human heart, that wonderful instruction book which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, we shall find forcible illustrations of this.

Take first of all the case of King Saul. Here you have a man of splendid physical proportions who began his reign well. Elevated to the throne quite suddenly, he displayed both modesty and generosity in no small degree in the opening months, and yet only two years of his reign had passed before we find him a rejected man. Why was this? The answer is, in one word—*disobedience*.

Having gathered the people together to fight the Philistines, Saul desired to approach God by way of sacrifice so that His blessing might be upon their enterprise, and Samuel the prophet had made a definite arrangement to meet him at Gilgal for that purpose after seven days. Now what happened was this: "He tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered a burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. . . . And Samuel said, What hast thou done?" (1 Sam. 13. 8-11). Saul made his excuses: it seemed to him a politic

thing to do in view of the people's tendency to scatter ; moreover, he had done it reluctantly ; " I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering " (verse 12) were his words. Samuel's answer was, " Thou hast done foolishly : thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God. . . . Now thy kingdom shall not continue " (verses 13, 14).

But why had Saul acted thus ? What had possessed him ? Did he say within his heart something like this : " After all, that seven day appointment was only an arrangement that Samuel made ; he may have forgotten it, or he may have been mistaken " ? Perhaps he did. But stay ! Samuel's arrangement was not everything. Long before his day just such a contingency had been anticipated and the Divine instructions were : " Thou shalt come . . . unto the judge that shall be in those days . . . thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left " (Deut. 17. 8-12). Moreover, in the same chapter it was enacted that the future king of Israel should familiarize himself with the instructions of the law by writing out for himself a special copy to be kept continually by him ; so that he had no excuse for ignorance. Samuel was, without a doubt, the judge raised up of God for his days, and the Word of God enjoined implicit obedience to his instructions

Saul disobeyed. He was swayed by what appeared to him to be expedient, and he treated the Word of God, through Samuel, as only Samuel's opinion.

This act of disobedience, bad as it was, was soon followed by a worse. Disobedience to the Word of God is a habit that grows upon one. A few years later we have God sending Saul a special word, through Samuel, as to the destruction of the Amalekites. Chapter 15. records how he partially carried out the instructions, and then

elected to use his own discretion as to certain details, preferring his own opinion to the Word of God. Without a question the Modernist of to-day would altogether agree with Saul. To his way of thinking the Divine instructions were the product of a barbaric age, and Saul's action represented the dawning of higher ethical ideas. God, however, knew what He was doing when He ordered their entire extermination. It was a sanitary measure of a spiritual sort. Their sins were pestilential, and they were to be stamped out like a pestilence. Saul, however, had no scruples such as those of the Modernist ; his excuses for his disobedience were not based on ethical grounds, they were of a more subtle order. He would like to preserve the best of the belongings of the Amalekites for himself, and would do so under cover of devoting them to the service of God.

Disobedience which springs from carelessness or indifference is bad ; that which is sheer wilfulness is worse. Worst of all is that which while springing from wilfulness yet arrays itself in a cloak of pretended piety and zeal for the interests of the Lord. It was that of which Saul was now guilty, and hence the strong and drastic way in which God met it through the lips of Samuel, saying, " Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord ? . . . Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king " (1 Sam. 15. 19-23).

Was Saul tempted to think of the instructions as to Amalek as being merely an expression of Samuel's opinion ? We know not : but if he did he had absolutely no ground for so thinking. It was unquestionably the Word of God, for there staring him in the face were the Divine instructions of Deuteronomy 25. 17-19 ; the very

remembrance of Amalek was to be blotted out from under heaven. His presumptuous disobedience resulted in his ruin and death.

Let us now turn from Saul to Solomon. How very different the circumstances! The former was in the position of a petty king struggling to maintain his feet. The latter was firmly established in his kingdom as the fruit of the faithfulness and obedience of his father David. He was an overlord to the kings of the surrounding nations, prosperous and marvelously blessed of God, with every inducement to continue in a path of obedience. Yet in spite of all this, and of the special wisdom with which he was endowed, he was guilty of most flagrant disobedience to the plain commands of God as recorded in the books of Moses: consequently he grievously damaged himself, and also sowed the seeds of the total ruin of his once splendid kingdom.

In the early part of 1 Kings 10, we have the incident of the Queen of Sheba and her visit. In reading it we get an idea of the extraordinary greatness and magnificence of Solomon's court and kingdom. The enquiring Queen of the south had her breath completely taken away, "there was no more spirit in her." In the latter part of the chapter many further details are given, which impress us yet more with the splendour of those days when all the vessels of the king's house were of gold and none were of silver, for silver was then in Jerusalem as stones; "it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."

Yet towards the end of this striking chapter, wherein success is piled upon success and magnificence upon magnificence, a few remarks are quietly made which tell their own tale to the thoughtful reader. We begin to be suspicious, and when we turn to chapter 11, and note the significant "But" with which that chapter opens, our suspicions are turned into a sad certainty that something is seriously amiss.

First of all then, we notice that all this magnificent accumulation of gold and silver and ivory, of articles of value and objects of art and vertu, descending even to apes and peacocks, was all collected for his own pleasure and gratification. He was the centre around which all revolved. How different he was to his father in this. David truly collected immense stores of gold and other forms of wealth as the result of his victorious campaigns, but in his case Jehovah, as identified with His temple, was the Centre to which all was gathered. If David received large sums into his privy purse, as unquestionably he did, he still kept Jehovah's interests before him. He could say, "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold . . . and the silver . . . and all manner of precious stones. . . . Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, even three thousand talents of gold. . . ." (1 Chron. 29. 2-5). Further, having enumerated all these things, he gladly confessed, "Of Thine own have we given Thee," thus showing that he fully recognized that all belonged to God and that he was but a steward of all that which had been entrusted to his hand. Solomon was quite on different lines. All that he got he heaped up for his own benefit.

Secondly, we notice in the end of the chapter in 1 Kings that Solomon went largely in for horses. He "gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen." This is emphasized by repetition a couple of verses further on, where it is said, "And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt." This is the more noticeable inasmuch as up to this point there is hardly any mention of the horse in connection with the history of Israel. The ass we

often read of, and also the mule; Absalom, the son of David, the king, only rode upon a mule, it will be remembered, and the ox seems to have been the beast of burden. It was not, of course, surprising that Solomon sent to Egypt for horses, for he had already obtained his queen from there, and she naturally would desire to have the very superior animal to which she had been accustomed.

Thirdly, we come to that very significant "But" with which chapter 11 opens. "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go into them, neither shall they come in unto you." Here we have mentioned a matter in which he most grievously sinned. Not only was there polygamy of a very extravagant and outrageous sort, but there was, as pointed out, the breaking of the commandment which forbade intermarriage with the surrounding nations, lest the infection of their idolatry should spread amongst the tribes of Israel. This commandment applied to the people universally, and Solomon might have known, therefore, that as the leader of and example to the people, it applied fully to himself.

But there was more than this. Solomon was not left to draw inferences from the Word of God, however obvious and unquestionable those inferences were. In Deuteronomy 17., to which we have already referred, there lay clearly before him the most positive and clear commands from God on all the three points we have just noticed.

In verses 14 and 15 of that chapter it is foretold that a day would come when, settled into their own land, Israel would desire a king and propose to set one over themselves, and in view of that eventuality certain instruc-

tions are given. The Lord said, "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (verses 16, 17). In the days of Moses, the great lawgiver, the all-seeing eye of God had traversed the centuries, and He foresaw the future kings of Israel and their special dangers, and He provided the needful warning in His Word, and also the antidote by ordering that the future king should write his own copy of the law, and have it always with him so as to read therein all the days of his life, and so turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left. (See verses 18-20.)

Yet, as far as Solomon was concerned, these commandments might as well never have been written. Precisely what had been forbidden, that he did! It is hardly possible that he was ignorant of what God had said. It is far more likely that he had arguments in his mind and reasons which he considered excellent, quite sufficient in fact to authorize him to treat the ancient Word through Moses as a dead letter. Had not the times changed? Had not military tactics advanced since the days of Moses, so that the horse which formerly had been a luxury had now become a necessity?—and so on. It matters little, however, just what specious excuses Solomon had in his mind. The fact remains: he met the plain directions of God's Word with flat denial and disobedience, and thereby he started rolling a snowball of destruction which did not stop until it had become an avalanche of judgment which swept Israel away.

When first we put together Deuteronomy 17. and 1 Kings 10. and 11. we confess we were astounded. Such a deliberate infraction of Scripture on the

part of an otherwise wise man, like Solomon, seemed almost incredible. Many of our readers, perhaps, have a similar feeling on having their attention called to it in this paper. We must confess, however, that to-day we contemplate it without any surprise whatever. We know a little more of the insubject folly of our own hearts, and we have observed, too, a little of the free and easy way in which professed Christians, and even real ones, treat the injunctions of the Word of God. Apparently they are to be obeyed or not obeyed at their own discretion, for they are far from trembling at the Word of God.

How lightly, alas! do many young believers brush aside that solemn New Testament injunction, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6. 14-18), and contract a marriage—the most pronounced and enduring yoke known amongst mankind—with an unconverted partner. How often do Christians entangle themselves in a yoke of business partnership with unconverted men. How often do they entangle themselves in all kinds of trade and business and social alliances in order to further their own interests or to escape reproach and persecution.

How slowly, if at all, does many a Christian obey the instructions of the Word of God as to what the believer shall do when evil of a fundamental sort has entered and permeated the mass. This question was raised early in the Church's history through the false teachings of Hymenæus and Philetus, and answered in Paul's second letter to Timothy. The instructions are, to purge oneself from these vessels to dishonour. This assumes that it is no longer possible to purge them out as old leaven according to 1 Corinthians 5. If this were universally observed and obeyed by all believers who are sound in, and true to, the faith, God would be honoured in His Word. But no, alas! multitudes of them find plenty of reasons, to their minds quite

cogent enough, for staying where they are, and contenting themselves with protests and attempts at improving the existing corruption. If only every true believer cleared himself from all complicity with false and apostate teachings, and extricated himself from all corrupt and merely human systems, in obedience to the Word, what a revival there would be!

A third striking illustration of our theme occurs almost immediately after the days of Solomon. In 1 Kings 13. we have the incident of the man of God out of Judah who went by command of the Lord to prophesy against the altar at Bethel which Jeroboam had made. He courageously executed his mission in every point, save one. He had received very strict instructions not to identify himself in any way with the people or the place against which his prophecy was directed, there was not to be the smallest fellowship between them. "Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest," was the Word. This Word he disobeyed.

In one respect, however, he differed from the other cases we have considered. With them the disobedience was of an open and deliberate kind, with him it was not. He was decoyed into it after obeying at first. Remarkably enough, his punishment seemed far more drastic, and certainly was far more immediate, than in the case of the other two. This was doubtless because as a prophet and a man of God he was in closer contact with God than the others, and to whom much is given in the way of privilege of them more is required.

The first thing that this prophet had to face was *the world's violence*. "Lay hold on him," shouted the angry king. This did not deflect him from the path of obedience nor terrify him, and soon the king's spirit was subdued and he was glad to receive healing at the prophet's hands.

Immediately after the prophet was

tested by *the world's patronage*. "Come home with me, and refresh thyself," was now the king's invitation. The prophet now had the opportunity of being the world's honoured guest; a far more serious temptation. Yet he firmly withstood it.

A little later, when the prophet had started back another way, in accordance with the Word of the Lord, the old prophet of Bethel came upon the scenes with his invitation, "Come home with me and eat bread." Here he was tested by *religious associations*, which are far more dangerous. How difficult to refuse the kindly invitation of one's fellow-prophet; yet he did it.

This, however, was immediately followed by a wicked act of *religious imitation*. The old prophet paraded before him the fact that he, too, held the prophet's office, and then he claimed a special revelation through an angel which had the effect of completely nullifying the original instructions under which he acted, and bidding him do the very thing he had been told not to do. "Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him." Before this deceit the man of God fell.

Oh, why did he listen! Surely a few moments reflection would have sufficed to put him on his guard. Does God usually fail to foresee the end from the beginning, and consequently have to countermand His instructions before His enterprises are finished? If originally God gave him his instructions *direct*, would He now fail to inform him *direct* of further instructions, and notify instead someone who had no part in the matter? It was easy and pleasant, however, to acquiesce. He did so, and disobeyed.

What a powerful voice all this has for us. The servant of God to-day may on occasions be called to go into

strange places to render a word of testimony to His Lord, and thus find himself in unusual surroundings, yet he must be very careful as to his associations, and see that he fulfils the Divine Word, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5. 11). To have fellowship is to become compromised oneself.

To entangle us the adversary will spare no devices. If one does not succeed he will try another, as we see in the case of the man of God. Some of us fall easily before the frowns of the world, or its smiles; others are not so easily caught, and religious enticements are brought into play. It is a sad reflection that for this dirty work no tool comes so readily to the devil's hand as a false professor of religion or a true child of God terribly backslidden. The old prophet of Bethel may have been one or the other; which we cannot determine.

The sum of the whole matter is this: there is nothing so good and safe and pleasing to God as full and unquestioning obedience to His Word. All necessary instructions for the man of God are found in it, as 2 Timothy 3. 16, 17 affirms; therefore we may disobey by *going beyond it*, just as we may by falling short of it. We may easily become a little fanciful and think we are maintaining the testimony, or honouring the Lord, when we are only straining at gnats, to end by swallowing the camel of definite disobedience to what the Word of God does most plainly say.

Let us then accept the Old Testament warnings with searchings of heart, and so be made wise unto salvation from the sin of disobedience to the Word of God. The Lord has said, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and *trembleth at My Word*" (Isa. 66. 2).

A LETTER ON NEW BIRTH AND ETERNAL LIFE.

(W. H. WESTCOTT.)

Written May 23rd, 1923.

HAVING been asked to jot down a few considerations as to the difference between New Birth and Eternal Life, may I say that it is of the utmost importance that we should all be saved from looking to man. In the things of God, neither can we accept untruth that a good man says because it is he that says it, nor can we reject a true thing because we think he is a bad man that says it. A good man like Job has to confess in self-judgment that he had spoken things that he understood not, and a bad man like Balaam was forced to say true things in spite of himself, by the power of God.

You to whom I am writing are not of those who believe that there is any good in the natural man as born of Adam fallen, either in his heart or his brain or his hand, that can commend him to God. From the moment that he was fallen Adam was incapable of producing by natural generation an unfallen being. In Adam, *all die*. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

So that from the outset, any soul really accepted of God was the work of God and not the work of man. And in this connection we are forced to own that—the natural birth not qualifying a man to receive the things of God—the new birth has always been a *necessity*.

But while man in the flesh was under probation the time had not come to *state* this. You will find several things which have always been true, not presented as doctrine in the Old Testament. Take, for example, the natural relationship of *marriage* and the inviolability of the marriage tie. "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives." Christ

adds, "I say unto you," etc. (Matt. 19.). Take the question of *how a man is to be justified* and accounted righteous (Rom. 4.). While man—Israel—was under probation, he was told to keep the law, observe the rite of circumcision, etc. But Abraham and David were reckoned righteous by *faith without works*. Take *faith* as the principle by which saints have always walked (Heb. 11.). Hebrews were always brought up surrounded by promises which related to the earth, and things that were seen; yet *faith* was the principle according to which they lived.

And so as to new birth. It would have nullified man's testing in the flesh to be told from the outset, "Ye must be born again." And I may add that even when—in the first three Gospels—Christ is presented in the light of the great Test for man, new birth is not spoken of. But in John's Gospel, where from the outset Christ's rejection is assumed (John 1. 10, 11), you find at once the statement that those who received Him had to be born of God to do so. Hence it is brought in with tremendous emphasis in the case of Nicodemus, who, although born of Adam, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on the natural line as a Jew, was told, "Marvel not that I say unto thee, *ye* [emphatic] must be born again." There is no seeing nor entering into the kingdom of God without it. And what was said to the *ye* of verse 7, is stated universally of *man* in verses 3 and 5.

So that there has always been the new birth, although the doctrine of it is unfolded only in the New Testament. Afterwards Peter, James, and John all speak of it, each in his own line; and all these, men of whom Paul said, they

seemed to be pillars. Paul himself does not exactly formulate the doctrine, though he teaches in searching detail that in me—that is, in my flesh—good does not dwell, and that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is neither subject to the law of God, nor can be, so that those in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 7. and 8.). In his teaching he brings in the Spirit, and life in the Spirit, for liberty, relationship, and support while we are on earth.

Further, we may say surely that God has always had eternal life in view, as Psalm 133. and Daniel 12. clearly show, for Israel and millennial blessing; and as Romans 6. and Titus 1. show in a general way. The latter passage has importance as showing that eternal life is connected with the purpose of God; but that as to the preaching of it, this was only manifested later, in apostolic ministry.

To sum up thus far, we can see then that new birth has always been a necessity, and that in producing by His own sovereign power the new birth, God has always had eternal life in view for those who are subjects of the new birth. And hence we are safe in saying that in the fulness of times, *all* who have been the subjects of God's purpose will possess eternal life, whatever the form may be that God has determined for each family in blessing. This I may refer to in a moment.

Let us now distinguish between new birth and that which, to our poor human judgment, may sometimes *appear* to be new birth. As to new birth, the *nature* which goes along with the *being* is determined by its moral parentage. God is the Author of it, and the Word and the Spirit the Seed and the Agency used (John 1. 13; 3. 6; 1 Pet. 1. 23). It is therefore spiritual, morally of God, and so Divine and incorruptible. It is instinct with the love of holiness, with the fear of God, the hatred of sin for its own sake, and it clings to God. One is not here speaking of these things being intelligently grasped or under-

stood by a new-born soul, but of the nature in itself. Further, wherever it is found it is imperishable, and incorruptible. It may be obscured or hindered in a man by bad teaching, and want of the Gospel; and there may be great delays in his entrance upon the blessing which God wishes and purposes that he shall fully enjoy, owing to his frequent allowance of the carnal Adam nature which God has judicially set aside for him in the death of Christ; but if born again at all he is sure of being in his place in God's counsel as though every thing were already fulfilled (Rom. 11. 29).

But we speak above of one truly born again. God is God, and we are men. God never makes mistakes; we often, too often, do. "The Lord knoweth them that are His"—this is Scripture. We sometimes *think* that people are His—but our thinking is *not* Scripture. I may see tears, I may hear groans and cries, I may even see a fairly long-continued profession of acceptance of Christ, and *think* that a man is born again. But my thoughts are—let me repeat—not Scripture. The Word of God itself teaches me that good seed may drop into stony ground, and gives as its own explanation that some may hear the Word and anon with joy receive it. We may be deceived into counting these promising "cases of blessing," only to discover with bitterness the "afterward" of Mark 4. 16-17, and that they had no root in themselves. A sailor in a storm, a soldier on a battlefield, a civilian in sudden peril, may all cry and appear in earnest; and one may add, an impressionable nature in a "revival," or under the influence of a touching or thrilling song, may appear to us to be converted to God, yet be a mere flash in the pan. The reality of new birth is proved by its continuance (Heb. 3., 6., 10.; Col. 1. 23; Jude 4, 12, 13). We may be deceived by appearances; God never is. New birth is God's own work, and will eventuate in the accomplishment of God's purpose.

Now, when an ordinary human child is born, the nature is in any and every case the same, i.e., it is the Adam nature. As to its environment or development, you may have Jew, Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free—these form the environment into which the nature grows. Also you may have the sailor life, the soldier life, the civilian life; you may have city life, and country life, and so on—all as the event may work out. We can see then even in everyday happenings that while the birth is everywhere the same, and we can say of every person born in the ordinary way, He is alive; yet we can rightly speak of different spheres of life into which the birth is the introduction. It is in this sense that we can rightly speak of distinguishing between new birth and eternal life. That every new-born soul has life goes without saying. But that every new-born soul has life in exactly the same sense of the word, and with identical features of life, is not true; for eternal life for Old Testament saints, or for Israel in the millennium, is widely different from eternal life for the Christian. The latter is a saint united to a *rejected* and heavenly Christ in this present dispensation. Israel in the millennium (and even such Gentiles as will be blessed through Israel) will be associated with Christ *accepted* here, Christ identified with earth though manifested from heaven. Hence *our* blessings are heavenly, *theirs* are to be earthly. *Our* conversation is in heaven, and our life is hid with Christ in God; *Christ in heaven* is our life. Their centre will be on earth, even *the Lord in connection with Zion*, for *there* the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Our life as Christians will develop along the lines of sonship with the Father and heavenly associations; their life will be connected with earthly associations with the Messiahship of the Son of God. We have access within the veil in the company of our great High Priest; they will be blessed outside when the Priest comes out. Many and great are the divergences

between eternal life as they will know it and as Christians are to know it; this cannot be gainsaid. Hence to speak of new birth and eternal life as mere phrases always intended to convey the same thing is very misleading.

Further, the more we examine the Word of God, the more we are led to see and understand that new birth is the sovereign act of God in the history of a soul, sovereign as the wind which comes we know not whence, and goes we know not whither. Some sovereign communication from God is applied by the Holy Ghost in sovereign power, and the subject finds himself possessed of new-born interest he knows not how nor why. He finds sin distasteful where it was tasty before. He discovers a strange drawing after God and a longing for holiness hitherto unknown. He finds a new instinct for prayer, and inquiry after truth, unaccountably real. He may not be able to analyse for himself the aspirations and affections begotten in his soul. He may as yet know nothing of redemption, or justification, or forgiveness of his sins. But the instincts of a new life are asserting themselves, the product of this sovereign act of God. These desires, these movements, can find their only solution in Christ; but as yet it is possible he knows little or nothing of Christ. Like Old Testament believers who in places are seen with cravings and longings unfulfilled, our new-born soul may not yet have met with Christ, in whom every question is answered and every fear removed. He is as yet the seeker, and his seeking—bound as it is to be answered by the grace of God—is not yet ended in rest in Christ.

But in the same Word of God we discover that the known possession of eternal life is the accompaniment of *receiving testimony* as to Christ. New birth is God's sovereign act, and nowhere does Scripture say, He that believeth shall be born again. To say this would be to take the new birth out of the place in which God has set it,

and to make faith in the Gospel antecedent to the new birth. The new birth is an operation in which God is first; for no one can be a co-operator in his own birth. The old Adam does not produce faith, or else those that are in the flesh could please God. It is when sovereign power has broken into our dark night and implanted a new principle of being never there before, that our awakenings and longings, our grief over sin, our breathings after God, can be met, and met only, in Christ. Hence in John 3., where this subject is treated, the Lord Himself when speaking of new birth speaks not of faith. It is only when He presents Himself as lifted up, the Subject of testimony, that He speaks of faith in Himself and eternal life. Nothing of this was presented in the Old Testament as a present blessing. For the Old Testament saint, born again as he undoubtedly was, eternal life was only a promise, and a promise connected with blessing on earth. This blessing, and even the full forgiveness of sins, was to be connected with the fulfilment of the promise of the Messiah. The fear of death was still there, no one was in a position at that time to say that he had eternal life. It is the coming of Christ that has brought life and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel.

It is in the Gospel of John that the present possession of eternal life is so much referred to. And Christ's rejection on earth being anticipatively considered from the very first chapter, eternal life is presented as being secured for God and for the believer in the person of the Son. Hence the oft-repeated statement, "He that believeth . . . hath everlasting life"; and, "He that seeth the Son and believeth upon Him hath everlasting life." The Son was here as the gift of God's love, and in order that the purpose of God for man might be brought to pass. But in order that the love of God might be fully revealed and the whole sentence of death on the first and guilty order of man be carried out and thus annulled

for men, He laid down His life as Man after the flesh; then rose again after a new order to which death can never attach, in which He can share with His brethren both His position as a Man before God, and as a Son with His Father (John 20.). Let it be remembered that according to the Gospel itself, its own testimony, "these are written that ye may believe that JESUS is the Christ, the Son of God, and, that believing ye may have life in His name." The possession of life (and the known possession of it) flows from faith in testimony.

We may often see signs of new birth, and in our minds be confident that the person or persons are subjects of the working of the grace of God; but neither we nor they could rightly assert that they have eternal life apart from definite faith in the Son.

But the rejection of Christ, and our peculiar lot as believers upon Him in the time of His rejection, gives *for us* a remarkable and unique character to life, eternal life. Actually we are associated with Him *where He is*, and the Spirit is given from Him as ascended to the Father, in order to lead Christians into the joy of present knowledge of the Father; severing us from the world, delivering us from sin, and the power of the devil, in order that we may take up the privilege of present communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This is unfolded in John's epistle. Moreover, where eternal life is possessed, there are certain features delineated in the epistle by which it may be known. Possessors of eternal life keep His commandments (1 John 2. 3-4), they love their brother (verses 9-11), they practise righteousness (verse 29). Obedience, love, righteousness are evidences on the subjective side of the possession of eternal life. If these things be not there, no credit can be given to a man's profession of possessing eternal life. We do not see the heart certainly; we can only see the life. But inasmuch as these are accompaniments of the life, we

cannot be assured of the life if we see not the accompaniments. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

Eternal life is, however, not only a life which yields certain evident features among men. It is a life which has its own sphere of enjoyments and relationships; and for us has its home—not in Zion, nor in national or social pleasures on earth, but—in the scenes where JESUS now is, and in the nearness of a known and loved relationship with the Father. It, therefore, accepts separation from the world as deliverance from a scene wholly contrary to both Father and Son, and finds more pleasure in Their society than in the midst of earth's fairest attractions or delights. It is "*eternal life* in order that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent."

In our case, then, new birth is followed by faith in Christ and the knowledge of eternal life is ours in the Son—not in Adam; it is evidenced by obedience, love, and righteousness down here on earth, along with deliverance from the world and sin (or lawlessness); it finds its home above where the Son as Man has gone; it cultivates heavenly affections and intercourse, and discovers by the Spirit given to us, quite a new world of blessing outside of what is visible to the natural man, most wondrously attractive because we are even now made conversant with God's purposes as to Christ, all to be fulfilled in the age to come.

In the case of the Old Testament believers, new birth was followed by faith in the one True God, and promises as to earthly blessing and eternal life in its earthly form. They knew not the plenary and eternal forgiveness of sins, they had not access to the Father of glory in the manner we have, they knew not the full love of God now

revealed by the subsequent coming of the Son.

In the case of millennial saints, new birth will be followed by faith in God, and in Jesus as Messiah; they will see Him revealed in glory and will believe on Him because they see Him. They will enjoy His Kingdom rule, and the blessings of earth which His Kingdom will bring in. Enemies on earth will be subdued; peace and plenty will be enjoyed; righteousness, peace, and joy which are always the result of the establishment of the Kingdom of God (and which are *now* ours by the Holy Ghost) will be the blessed atmosphere around them in the world, as well as the internal product by God's work in their own hearts. Yet even there and then they will not have the access to God which we have; priests and Levites will again represent them as of old in Temple service. Outward inducements to evil will be absent; Satan will be bound; and what was in a measure true in Solomon's day, "neither adversary nor evil occurrent," will be much more truly said of the millennial reign of our Lord.

So that while in every case new birth is a necessity, the eternal life which will be, or is, enjoyed varies in its character and form according to the dispensation in which the believer is found—Old Testament, Church dispensation (of Christ's rejection), or millennium. Hence it seems of great importance for us to distinguish in our minds between that new birth, which is the beginning of all God's work in the redemption circles, and the various forms of eternal life into which the subjects of the new birth in the various dispensations are to be introduced.

Eternal life for the Old Testament believers, and eternal life for the millennial saints, is to be distinguished and to be most urgently distinguished from eternal life in its present features for the Christian. It has been truly remarked that there will not be two Adams in heaven. All who are blessed

on the ground of redemption will have life in Christ, and in Christ the last Adam alone; yet the earthly blessing which will constitute eternal life for earthly saints is one thing; and the

heavenly blessing which will constitute eternal life for us is another. We must distinguish things that differ.

I hope this will help you.

REQUEST FOR LIGHT.

(J. BOYD.)

TO Thee, O Lord, we lift the voice,
On Thee our souls rely;
Thou to the objects of Thy choice
No good thing wilt deny.

Thou who hast died to set us free
From the oppressor strong,
That to Thy pleasure we might be
Lights through this darkness long,
Wilt not to our request for light
Turn a regardless ear;
Trackless our way, dark this blind
night,
Venomed the atmosphere.

Our feeble feet have weary grown,
The path that Thine have pressed
We trembling tread, despised and lone
The highway into rest.

Yet, Lord, the trials of the way,
Through Thy compassions kind,
Bring our proud spirits under sway
To Thine unerring mind.

And thus the highway to the goal,
Shining upon our hearts,

Instruction for the thoughtful soul
Through grace Divine imparts.

And to pursue that path aright
All heavenly grace we need,
And must, lest we lack needful light,
To Thy sure Word take heed.

Then give us perfect confidence
In Thy most perfect Word,
And let Thy living voice from thence
Within our souls be heard.

Let not our faltering footsteps shun
The journey of the soul,
Nor let us halt, till we have won
The empyrean goal.

With mercy and with grace combined
Our fainting spirits meet,
And let us on our journey find
The impress of Thy feet.

Search us, and know our inmost hearts,
Our souls illuminate,
And lead us by Thy love apart
From byways maculate.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Wilful Sin.

Kindly give an explanation of Hebrews 10. 26-29. There are some who have got the idea into their minds, wrongly I believe, that this Scripture is specially applicable to themselves.—LONDON.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews abounds in solemn warnings, and if we turn to chapters 3. and 4. we gain an idea of what was in the mind of the Spirit of God who inspired them. "Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the

end. Wherefore . . . take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (verses 6-12). We have omitted the parenthetical passage which is placed in brackets in our authorized Bible, and thus the sense becomes clearer.

The "if" shows that there was in the

mind of the writer an element of doubt and fear as to the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote. The words "*an evil heart of unbelief*" show what he feared. It was not weakness, nor the supervening of a season of coldness and backsliding merely, but *unbelief*—just absence of faith. Of this their fathers, nationally redeemed out of Egypt, were a sad example. They fell in the wilderness because they had no faith. "So we see that they could not enter in because of *unbelief*" (verse 19). Then we have the words, "*in departing from the living God*," which indicate the result and end of an evil heart of unbelief. There being no faith, there is no vital link with God. The heart being evil, it naturally shrinks from God who is light. Hence in the end such an one departs. If a Hebrew, he would naturally turn back to his ancient religion; but that was now a dead thing since Christ had been rejected, —a shell without a kernel. To apostatize from Christianity to Judaism would be to depart from the living God to a religion of dead forms and ceremonies.

In chapter 6. the same matter comes up. What is alluded to is not just ordinary backsliding but apostasy, that peculiar and aggravated backsliding of which a Jew who once professed Christianity would be guilty if he proved himself to have never had within him the root of the matter, by forsaking it and getting himself reinstated amongst his Jewish brethren by "crucifying to himself the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame" (see verse 6).

In chapter 10. again the warning appears, and such apostasy is called

sinning wilfully. In chapter 9. and the earlier part of 10. the excellence of the one offering of Christ has been the theme as contrasted with the inefficacious sacrifices offered under the law. The sacrifice of Christ is once and for ever. Perfection and finality are reached, and hence there being now a full remission of sins and iniquities, "there is no more offering for sin" (10. 18).

In the light of this, wilful and deliberate apostasy is seen to be absolutely fatal. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment." The apostate rejects the only possible source of blessing, as verse 29 so graphically depicts, and there is nothing further to come but judgment. He is like a captain of a sinking boat who deliberately scuttles the only lifeboat they possess.

Some to-day may be guilty of this wilful and fatal sin, but never those who are concerned and troubled about the passage.

The fact that some do get troubled and exercised when they read these words, fearful lest they have committed the sin, infers, we judge, that they are not established in the grace of God. What probably will help them more than clear expositions of the passages that alarm them is a fresh unfolding to their souls of the groundwork of the Gospel. Once let them see the righteousness of God set forth and established in the death of Christ and know themselves justified in the risen Christ, and these passages would cease to alarm them. Rather they would be able to welcome them as salutary warnings.

"Thy Fellows."

Are the "fellows" mentioned in Ps. 45. 7 and Heb. 1. 9, angels, or the remnant of Israel?

Is it according to Scripture to speak of angels as co-administrators with Christ in His coming glory, an idea presumably founded on John 1. 51?

What is the relationship expressed by the word *chaber* in Ps. 45. 7, and *metochos* in Heb. 1. 9?

A strange, and apparently unscriptural, idea is held by some as to the relative place of angels in the coming glory of Christ. We shall be glad to hear from you on this subject.—
ALBACETE.

THE "fellows" of Psalm 45. are, we believe, the godly remnant of Israel, as you say. This Scripture is quoted in Hebrews 1. 9, only in that epistle the

word widens out to embrace Christians. Chapter 3. 14 says, "For *we* are made *partakers* of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the

end." The word "partakers" there is *metochos* just as in 1. 9. The existing godly remnant of Israel had been incorporated in the church by the time the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. There is no thought of angels being the fellows, the word to them is, "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1. 6). They do not stand at His side as His "fellows," or "partakers" in His glory; they bow in worship before Him only as His servants (chapter 1. 14).

The relationship expressed by *chaber* in the Psalm, translated into *metochos* in the Greek of Hebrews, is that of a companion, one who has a share and a part in a thing.

It would not be Scriptural to speak of

angels as co-administrators with Christ in the coming kingdom, for it would expressly contradict Hebrews 2. 5. *Man* is to administrate in the coming age. The MAN of God's appointment, Christ Jesus, will be supreme, and the saints—also men—will reign with Him. Indeed "we shall judge angels" (1 Cor. 6. 3). The fact is angels were made to serve, and the highest of those blessed beings will find his joy in keeping his first estate and serving to eternity. Of all God's creatures that we have any knowledge of, *man* is the only one made to rule. When man was created the Divine word was, "Let them have dominion" (Gen. 1. 26). The original dominion was a very limited one. Redemption lifts men who are the subject of it into something much larger. Such is the wonder of grace!

The Apostles.

Is one justified in saying that there were more than twelve apostles in the New Testament in the light of Luke 6. 13 and John 6. 70 and Revelation 21. 14? If not, who was the chosen one to fill the place of Judas Iscariot? Was Matthias or Paul the Lord's choice?—ULSTER.

THERE were of course only twelve apostles appointed by the Lord when on earth. The Scriptures you name are perfectly clear as to this. Subsequently Matthias "was numbered with the eleven apostles" (Acts 1. 26). Later still, however, not only Paul but also Barnabas are called apostles—"which when the apostles, Barnabas and Saul, heard, etc." (Acts 14. 14). So it is equally clear that more than twelve are named

in various books of the New Testament.

We see no reason to question that the Lord ratified the decision by lot, recorded in Acts 1. It took place before the Spirit was given. It was sanctified by the Word of God (verse 20) and prayer (verse 24). Further, Paul expressly speaks of himself as "one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15. 8) as far as apostleship was concerned, showing that he did not reckon himself among the twelve.

Is science *semper idem*? Does it never change? The history of science is strewn with wrecks of discarded theories and hypotheses. Who knows what changes to-morrow will bring? Biblical believers have never been compelled to turn so many somersaults. Basically they have had all along the unchanging truth of the unchanging Christ and the infallible Word of God.

"THE FAITHFUL WITNESS."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Christ in the Book of the Revelation. No. 1.

Notes of Addresses given in Sydney, N.S.W.

IT is of the utmost importance that we should see the place that Christ has in Scripture, for we cannot rightly understand any portion of God's Word unless we see the part Christ has in it, for Christ is the subject of all Scripture. Some study prophecy, in order to become acquainted with coming events. You may study prophecy with that end in view and be as dry in your soul as the desert. You may know all prophecy and be able to explain every mystery in Scripture, and yet be as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal"; but if Christ gets His place in your heart, you will read the Scriptures in order to learn of Him, then every part of it, the Revelation included, will yield its blessing to you, and you will be in the midst of your fellows for the glory of God and their blessing.

The Holy Ghost has come to show us things to come, but the things to come that He will show us are all in relation to Christ, they are His things. He is the theme of these things and the end of them, and happy shall we be if we keep that before us.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is presented first in Revelation in a threefold character; the Faithful Witness, the First-born from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. In that threefold presentation we see Him in the past, in the present, and in the future in regard to the earth. He has been here, He is not here, He is coming back again. That is the testimony of the Lord, of which we are not to be ashamed.

THE FAITHFUL WITNESS.

It should be a great comfort to every Christian to know that God has had a Faithful Witness in this world. We are all of us very conscious of our own

unfaithfulness. The nearer we draw to God the more conscious we become of it, but the more we rejoice in the Faithful Witness. All God's witnesses, from the very beginning of time down to this present, have been more or less unfaithful. They witnessed for God according to the grace He gave them, but not one of them could claim perfection, except this one blessed Man, Christ Jesus, and He is the Faithful Witness. It was when He was here in the midst of men that He was the Faithful Witness. He came from God to speak the things that He knew and to bear witness to the things that He had seen, as He said to Nicodemus in the 3rd chapter of John. The things that He heard were the Father's words; the things that He had seen were what God Himself is. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He made known in absolute completeness what God is, and maintained in word and deed what was due to God. We read the greatness of God's power in the mighty and countless constellations that He has created, but if we want to know His heart and nature, we turn to the lowly Nazarene, despised and rejected of men. He was a Faithful Witness to that, completely, absolutely, and always. He declared before men what God is, and He lived as a Man in the full blessedness of that which He declared; He had no resources as a Man outside the God whom He revealed.

It was so from the very beginning of His life. He says in the 22nd Psalm, "I was cast upon thee from the womb; Thou art my God from my mother's belly," and His first recorded words are these—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" And the curtain drops at that moment upon

His life at Nazareth, and we see no more of Him until He reaches His 30th birthday, and then we learn what sort of a life He had lived behind that veil, for as He came forth into public ministry, the heavens were opened and a voice from the excellent glory declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom is all My delight." So that for thirty years God had been able to look down upon Him, and in His every thought and word and deed He had found fullest delight. Does it not fill your heart with praise to know that God has found full delight in one Person here below, and that that Person is your Saviour?

I will read a few verses to illustrate His faithful witnessing. Luke 4. verses 16-19: "*And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, 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.*" He was anointed of the Lord for that mission; to bear witness to absolute grace. He came to make known a God that people did not know nor understand; He came to show what God could be to men, and that when He came near to them He came near to them in infinite blessing. So He read from the Old Testament Scriptures, but His witness to those people of Nazareth was a faithful witness. How popular He might have been that day if He had witnessed to one part of the truth only. They marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of His lips. If He had not been a Faithful Witness they would have made Him king, but He did not stop short of the full truth, He goes on to show them

that the grace of God flowed out to the undeserving, to those who had neither merit in themselves nor claim upon God; that it could not be bounded by the limits of the nation of Israel; that it would burst every bound and flow out to the Gentiles, and that they whom the Jews despised would receive it even if Israel rejected it: and when they heard His faithful witness they took Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built to cast Him down headlong. His faithful witness not only manifested what God is, but brought to light what man is. He was the One who did both, for the simple reason that He was the light, and the qualities of that light are these, it reveals the sinfulness of men, and yet it shines for their blessing, for God's grace is more than equal to the uttermost need that ever man had.

We see it in the 8th chapter of John. In that chapter He speaks of Himself as the Light of the world. There was a guilty woman brought into His presence, and her sin is laid bare before the Lord. His enemies thought they had got the Lord in a trap. If He did not sanction her being stoned, why, then, He did not uphold the law of Moses; if He did sanction her being stoned, He was no Saviour. His answer was direct, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," and He stooped down and wrote on the ground. The Son of God stooped to write in the dust of death the wonderful story of the love of God. If those Pharisees had understood they would have laid themselves in the dust at His feet and confessed their guilt, but they would not do that. Proud religionists they were! Self-righteous Pharisees! They go out one by one, from the presence of the Faithful Witness, refusing the light because it exposed them, and leaving the poor sinner alone with Jesus. He was the Law-giver, and the Law that they had invoked drove them out, but He had come as the Saviour, and grace that they despised drew her in. And

He says, "Neither do I condemn thee." The light that detected the sin in the self-righteous Pharisees, protected the sinner who remained in His blessed presence, and there we find Him, the Faithful Witness, manifesting what God really is as a Saviour-God.

This witnessing roused up the hatred of the hearts of men, and they plotted to destroy Him, and at length the time came when their plot developed and came to pass, and we find Him led with a rabble at His heels to Calvary's Cross, crucified there as a malefactor by those to whom He came to show the grace of God. They would not have the Faithful Witness. Did the devil hope to extinguish that wonderful light when those dark waves of hatred beat upon Him there? If so, how terribly disappointed he must have been, for when men had done their worst, then we hear the Faithful Witness speaking. His voice rises above all the devil-lashed frenzy of His foes, and we hear Him saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Even in the presence of the supreme hatred of men we find Him still manifesting what God is, still letting the light of infinite grace shine forth, still showing how invincible is the goodness of God and how forbearing is His mercy, and because of His faithful witness He died.

We shall come in a moment to another side of His death, to the most important side of it, that side that has to do with the expiation of our sin, but He not only died to expiate our sins, He died as the Faithful Witness. Men crucified Him because of His faithfulness to God.

That is a wonderful passage in the 50th chapter of Isaiah. His Divine glory is brought before us. He speaks of Himself as the One whose arm is not shortened, whose hand is not weakened; He speaks of Himself as the One who stretches the curtain of night across the heavens and hushes the world to

sleep, and then He says, "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learner that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary; He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learner." There we have the Faithful Witness, being awakened every morning by His Father's voice, receiving from His Father's lips His instructions for the day, going forth to fulfil those commands, no more and no less, faithfully witnessing for God in speaking words in season to them that are weary, and returning when the day was done to commune with His Father about it all.

What is the next thing? "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting." The Faithful Witness was put to shame. The Man whom God delights to honour was treated with the utmost insult. They spat in His face, because He remained faithful to God. They crucified Him, because they would not have the light that He brought into this world. The first part of our witnessing to Him is that He has been here, and the second, He is not here. Why is He not here? Because men crucified Him. The Spirit of God is here now, and the 16th chapter of John tells us the very presence of the Spirit of God here in this world convicts the world of sin. That does not mean the Spirit of God is going about convicting individual sinners and making them repent and come to Christ. He is doing that, but the 16th of John does not mean that. It means that the Spirit is in the world because Christ is not, and He is not here because the world rejected Him, and that proves that the world is under sin. The rejection of Christ is the world's crowning sin, and the presence of the Spirit bears witness to that. Sin dominates the world, and the only way to get from under the power of sin is to come to the feet of Jesus, and own Him as Lord, and when you come

there you come under His dominion and are no longer under the dominion of sin.

THE FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD.

He is not here. Where is He? He is risen, the First-born from the dead. Peter's witness in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, to the Jews, was twofold. He pressed upon them again and again, "He went about doing good, but ye crucified Him." That is your guilt. But "God hath raised Him from the dead." That is God's seal upon His faithful life of witnessing. In that same wonderful 50th chapter of Isaiah, which I have quoted, it says, "He is near that justifieth Me." Who has justified Him? God.

The chief Priests and the Scribes and Pharisees thought they could keep Him in the sepulchre. They remembered that He had spoken of rising again from the dead. It was very remarkable they should have remembered it when the disciples had forgotten it. So they went to Pilate and asked his help. Pilate said, "Ye have a watch; go your way, make it as *sure as ye can*." It seems to me there was a certain irony in that. So they sent a guard and sealed the stone, and I suppose the soldiers would be instructed as to how to deal with the rabble of Galilean fishermen if they came to rob the sepulchre. They were not told how to deal with an earthquake or an angel from heaven! The fishermen did not come, but the angel did, and the earthquake, and those Roman veterans for very fear fell down as dead men. What had happened? God had intervened; God had justified His Faithful Witness. God was FIRST at the sepulchre, and the stone was rolled away from the tomb, not to let Christ out but to let us look in.

He is the First-born from the dead; that means that others are to share His triumph. All they that sleep in

Jesus will come out of their sepulchres according to the same blessed pattern. and we who are alive and remain at His coming shall be changed. We are looking for our Saviour, "Who shall change these bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like unto His own glorious body according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." He is the victorious One; He has come out of the grave. God has triumphed over all the power of death and the devil in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection is God's answer to His faithfulness here upon the earth, and is also God's great victory over death. He is the First-born from the dead, and when He comes to take up things for God in this world, He will take them up in the power of resurrection, and in such a way that no voice in the universe will challenge His right to do it. The voice of death is silent; death challenges the work of every other man, but He has overthrown the power of death; He is the Victor, and He has taken us up in resurrection power to share His victory with us. Never doubt the ability of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep you. You may be a very weak Christian; the more you feel it the better, for then you will rely upon His strength the more, and He is able to keep all whom He saves.

THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.

That is future; He is not yet manifested as the Prince of the kings of the earth; He has no place in their counsels. Yet He is behind the scenes, and He makes the wrath of man to praise Him. All power has been put into His blessed hands, and so we take courage, though we see the tides of evil gathering force and threatening to overwhelm everything that makes for righteousness in the world. Our Lord is on the throne and He can say to these wild waves, "Thus far thou shalt come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed"; and He will restrain them until He takes His

household out of the world. The day is coming when He is to be manifested as the Prince of the kings of the earth. That will be a wonderful day, and when that day comes all the kings of the earth will have to take their instructions from Him. He will not need a Cabinet to advise Him, for Isaiah 11. will be fulfilled in Him. *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots : and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord ; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord : and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears : but 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. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins "* (verses 1-5).

All the wisdom of God is in Him, and the kings of the earth will look to Him for direction, and in looking to Him for direction they will rule under Him in righteousness. God has spoken of Him, as we read in Psalm 89., as His First-born, higher than the kings of the earth. Oh ! that the kings and rulers of the earth would recognize that to-day ; there will be no peace until they do. He is to have universal supremacy. For every insult He will receive an answer in glory ; for every sorrow He will have a joy. God will see to it that His Faithful Witness is rightly compensated, and in that day of His compensation all those who have sought in their measure to be faithful to Him will share His glory. He will say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," so that when God brings forth His Faithful Witness crowned with many crowns, He will see to it that all those who sought to

be faithful to Him will be crowned as well. But they will cast their crowns before Him, for He alone is worthy to wear the crowns.

When He is presented as the Faithful Witness, the First-born from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth, there is an interruption. What was being declared is interrupted by a burst of adoration from the heart of the Church. Like a patriotic audience that bursts into applause as the orator describes the glory of the king, so the heart of the Church cannot be restrained at the Name of Jesus. She must sing aloud His worth. "To Him who loves us, and has 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 the might to the ages of ages. Amen" (N. Tr.).

In the 2nd and 3rd chapters we read of a great deal of failure on the part of those who profess the name of Christ, and as we go on reading through the book of the Revelation, we find that the apostate Church develops at last into the great whore, and comes under God's unsparing judgment. The Church is fast going to apostasy to-day, —the outward profession, I mean, not the body of Christ, not that which is real. But at the beginning of the Book that sets forth failure, failure, failure—failure amongst those who are real as well as amongst those who are false—it is blessed to find that He loves us. His love is our refuge and our joy. Our failure has not changed Him one bit. We confess our failure, we say, in the words of the hymn :—

"Yet, Lord, alas, what weakness
Within myself I find,
No infant's changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind.

"And yet Thy love's unchanging
And doth recall my heart,
To joy in all the sweetness
The peace its beams impart."

He loves us just as much to-day, in spite of our backslidings, as He did

when first we came to His blessed feet, or when He was extended on the Cross for us; His love abides the same.

If we are to measure the greatness of it, it must not be by our experience of it; we must go back to the Cross, and so we read, "Unto Him that loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." He paid the mighty price Himself, and the price was His own blood. O wonderful Saviour! Wonderful love! And He has not only removed our sins by His own blood, but He has made us a kingdom. That means He has brought us under God's dominion. It is no longer our desire to do our own wills like the world, rushing here and there seeking to please ourselves, but He has made us a kingdom, we are brought now under the dominion of grace, for grace reigns. And He has made us priests unto His God and Father. We have access to the presence of God Himself. So completely has the blood cleansed away the sins that we can stand in the very glory of God. We who were once saturated from the crown of our heads to the soles of our feet with iniquity are brought by our wonderful Saviour, who loves us, into the Holiest of all, and that is our place to-day.

After this interruption on the part of the Church, the proclamation of His glories is continued, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." It is a popular error that by the preaching of the Gospel, the world will get better and better, and thus will be prepared for the kingdom of the Lord. If the world is a converted world when the Lord comes, why should all kindreds of the earth wail because of Him? It would surely be glad to see Him, and would receive Him with acclamation. Why do they wail because of Him? Because they are not ready for Him. He will come as a thief in the night to

the world. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."

What a day it will be for the world when He comes. The Church will have gone before that day. He may come for it to-night, but the world will not see Him when He comes for His Church. The last time the world saw Him was when He died on a malefactor's Cross. The next time the world sees Him will be when He comes in the clouds of glory with myriads of holy ones with Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Those who pierced Him, the Jews, will look on Him, and when they see those nail-torn hands and feet, and learn that He was wounded for their transgressions, they will begin to mourn, and the sight of Him will result in conversion, and no doubt some of the distant nations who have never heard of Him will join in that great repentance. The great majority will wail in terror at the sight of Him, and because of their sins and long rejection of His grace, His judgment will come upon them. I want to press this solemnly upon us here to-night; we either belong to the Church that sings her glad songs in His praise, or we belong to the world that will wail at the sight of Him. If you belong to the world come out of it, come to His blessed feet and join with us in the song of praise to His name.

Does anyone say, "We know that these things are written in the Scriptures, but then is He able to carry them out?" or, think, "It seems an extraordinary thing to say that this world that has been building up its political and social life all these centuries, and which, as we hope, has advanced and advanced, will, in a moment, at the coming of the Lord, collapse and come under the judgment of God." Well, the Lord pledges His own Divine eternal Being on this. He says, "Even so, Amen." The "Even so, Amen," of the 7th verse belongs to the 8th verse. It is, "Yea, yea, Amen, I am Alpha and

Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." It is the everlasting, self-existent, omnipotent God, who speaks. All will have to do with Him. The Scribes and Pharisees did not realize that when they despised and rejected Him; poor Pilate, in that brief hour of his power, did not realize that. He saw only a weak Jew at his bar, mocked and hated by the people. But all will awake to the fact that Jesus is the

everlasting God, the Almighty, and the men who scorned Him will be compelled to confess Him, and so will you. Would it not be wise for every one to have to do with Him in this day of grace? I beg of you, I urge you, if any of you in this audience are still unconverted, have to do with this Person to-night. "Kiss the Son lest He be angry and thou perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

WHAT IS MODERNISM?

(F. L. HARRIS.)

MODERNISM is simply *Infidelity*,—a systematized attack on every truth of Scripture, subtle and Satanic.

It is the old paganism revived. It is the (fancied) wisdom of man setting up gods according to his own ideas, and worshipping them, to the dethronement of the Triune God, in all three Persons.

God has revealed Himself in His Word and pre-eminently in and by His Son, and the Holy Spirit is on earth to-day to be the power of reception and communication of that revelation. Well, when that revelation of God—the true God—is set aside, denied indeed, what is there left? Nothing but the old state of paganism.

When this denial occurs in those professing Christianity it means *apostasy*. Solemn word!! Terrible state!

I say that only the old state of paganism is left. This is unwittingly confessed by these modernists in their creed as regards comparative religions. They tell us that by "a large and free study of other religions" (i.e., Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism,

Mohammedanism, and what not) is given a broad and Divine conception of how God has revealed Himself in the past to children of all ages and climes.

That is, they adopt paganism, while they apostatize from Christianity.

They may not worship gods made by their own *hands*, but they *do* worship gods set up by their own *minds*, and since man of himself can never rise higher than himself, they are worshipping their own ideals, just as the heathen have ever done, and God—the Living God, and His Christ in their eternal Godhead and revelation in Manhood—they entirely discard, though they may allow their own false conception of these Divine Beings a place in their theology.

Modernism in its essence and result is infidelity and paganism—the apostasy of 2 Thess. 2. 3, begun. The spirit and aim of it we find given in Psa. 2. 1-3 "Let us break their [God's and His Christ's] bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

For us believers it is the signal that the coming of the Lord is very near

THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

(H. J. VINE.)

SOME time ago a strange-looking preacher was seen and heard in a city market place. He stood on the spot where the glad Gospel of God's Son had won many a triumph, and taken many a trophy from the slavery of sin and Satan—trophies that still tell by life and lip of the forgiving and preserving grace of God. And now this preacher of strange manner and appearance, opened his mouth to proclaim that he had adopted new views, and that he no longer held the old truth of the Gospel which he once *professed*, saying that only a few insignificant people believe in the atonement, and in the inspiration of the Bible, since the New Theology has come to the front. Well, if it be so, it were far better to follow the Son of God in the company of his unlettered but true disciples, few though they were, than be found with the sceptical Sadducees, and Pharisees of learning and letters, who sought His overthrow. Far better to be found firm and steadfast in the faith, than wandering away with the popular apostasy long foretold in the Word of God!

We do not stay to speak of the evident barrenness of modern theology; it is known well enough by those who are of the faith of God's elect. But the fight of faith still remains for such in the presence of the subtle and sinful working of the mind of man against the faith itself. This working will go on with ever-increasing energy, till the apostasy of which God has forewarned us takes place. To close our eyes to this, is to shut out of our minds the God-given warning, which He knew was necessary for us to receive.

Let us, however, look a little at the faith itself, which is all-important, and at some of the different attitudes towards it, by taking up some of the Scriptures that speak of it. The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ draws nigh, and the great question is, How

do we stand in relation to the faith? Not, How do we stand in relation to a sect, or a school, or a party?

What is the faith? It is the whole body of truth revealed by God at the beginning; that which was given of God once for all to the saints (Jude 3). As coming from its Divine source, it is (1) *God's revelation*; as finding expression in Christ and in the Scriptures, it is (2) *the truth*; as a present unseen system in which believers are to stand fast, it is called (3) *the faith*; "The faith of God's elect" (Titus 1. 1).

To some who had become sectarian, and who questioned whether Christ spake in the Apostle Paul, though they had been converted through his preaching, he wrote, "Examine your own selves *if ye be in the faith*; prove your own selves." A very healthy word indeed, even for to-day! Men may cry out for something new, and more advanced; but the real remain in that which God gave to the apostles at the start. They know that everlasting blessedness and glory with Christ await those who "*abide in the faith*" (Col. 1. 23, N.Tr.). One says: "We must move on with the new light." Another: "We are looking now for a very new theology." And yet another: "The twentieth century advanced thought is the thing." But unmoved, the faith of the real rests in God's perfect revelation: they abide in the faith once given.

We must not think, however, that this abiding is a sleepy affair. Very real indeed are the peace, and the rest, and the joy, that those know who abide in the faith grounded and firm. Nevertheless wakefulness and watchfulness must mark them. To become formal and lifeless is fatal, even though a name to live remains (see Rev. 3. 1). The fact is, the lethal current of unreality rushes against the truth with rising force, gathering fresh energy and increased intensity from every

check this mysterious working receives ; this "mystery of lawlessness" which seeks to sap the foundations of the "mystery of the faith," as God has told us. Therefore those who have truly received Christ Jesus the Lord need to be exhorted now, as others did at the beginning : "Walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and *stablished in the faith*, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2. 7). And again : "Watch ye, *stand fast in the faith*, quit you like men, be strong!" (1 Cor. 16. 13).

Of course, there are always the weaker and the stronger in the faith ; but those who are strong are to be considerate for the weak, and not simply please themselves, but seek to please others for their good. And instead of raising unessential questions, it is distinctly said : "Him that is *weak in the faith* receive ye" (Rom. 14. 1). He is in the faith, and that is the one essential matter. It is in this that we are to be established. It is in this we are to be solicitous for one another's edification. It is in this we are to stand fast. Merely saying : "I hold the faith," is not satisfactory. We need to be rooted and founded in it. We must pray. We must have to do with God. The Scriptures given by the Spirit must be read in the power of the Spirit ungrieved, that we may be complete in all the Will of God.

1. IT HAS BEEN REVEALED. This revelation, however, was not fully made till after our Lord Jesus Christ had secured eternal redemption for us by His work on the Cross, and had ascended as Man to God's right hand. Before He came, the law had been given at Sinai, with its system of outward observances, amidst displays of might and majesty which impressed both sight and sense. How different with the faith ! Speaking of the past system in contrast to the present revelation, the apostle said to the Galatians, who were getting back to the bondage of the old and losing the liberty of the new : "Before faith came

we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (3. 23). Along with that came the freedom of sonship before God, as well as forgiveness and justification and a heavenly inheritance. Therefore he wrote further : "Faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor ; for ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus" (3. 25, 26, N.Tr.). No appalling sight meets the eye ! No mighty thunders strike the ear ! No smoking mountain, as if on fire, that might be touched ! But God was manifested in a meek and lowly Man, now exalted to heavenly glory, and the faith is revealed and expressed in the Spirit's vital words. It is complete, there is nothing more to be added. Indeed, the topstone of that revelation was specially given for us Gentile believers, to the same apostle : "Given to *me* towards *you*," he wrote, "that by revelation the mystery has been made known to me" (Eph. 3. 3, N.Tr.) ; and, "the dispensation of God which is given me towards you to *complete the Word of God*, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to His saints (Col. 1. 25, 26, N.Tr.). What profound depths and what unscaled heights are to be explored in this Divine revelation, given that the Word of God might be complete ! Our apprehension of it may indeed be feeble, but there is nothing lacking in the revelation itself. What grace Divine to give it to us !

2. THE TRUTH EXPRESSES IT. That which in itself is true is expressed by the truth. The faith has been revealed, and the truth expresses that revelation. "The faith" and "the truth" are expressions often found in juxtaposition. If men depart from the faith, they turn away from the truth. Believers are to be "*sound in the faith*," not giving heed to "Jewish fables and commandments of men, that *turn from the truth*" (Titus 1. 14). The house of God, which embraces all true believers in Christ in the world,

is the depository of the truth, as the assembly of the living God. The truth is put there; and it is "the pillar and base of the truth." The assembly witnesses to the truth which God has given to her; not to herself, for that would be the negation of true piety. Christ, who is the truth personally, is to be enshrined in her heart by faith. He expresses the true God. She is to express Him. We are told that the mystery of piety is great. "God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in the Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations, has been believed on in the world, has been received up in glory. But the Spirit speaks expressly, that in latter times some shall *apostatize from the faith*," and these are at once contrasted with those "who are faithful and *know the truth*" (1 Tim. 3. 16; 4. 1-3, N.Tr.). If two men are named as having got astray as to *the truth*, then they "overthrow *the faith* of some" (2 Tim. 2. 18). The truth is that in which we are to walk. Its teaching is according to piety. Its words are sound, and it produces practical results for God's glory. Where this is refused, and disputes, and "envy, strife, injurious words, evil suspicions," and such things are characteristic, then they are "destitute of the truth" (1 Tim. 6. 5). And just as it is "the faith" which becomes the final test, so we are told, that those who are left to perish after Christ has taken the assembly from the earth, are those who received not "the love of the truth" (2 Thess. 2. 10). How important it is then that we should "believe the truth" love it, and practise it. The Spirit of truth is the power given for this, thanks be to our God and Father.

3. "THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT." We are told that Paul was a servant of God, and an apostle of Christ according to this; also according to the "knowledge of the truth which is according to piety" (Titus 1. 1, N.Tr.). He held his service and his apostleship according to the faith.

This was important in his eyes. He likewise tells us that the service of the gifts given by the ascended Christ, is in view of all the saints coming to "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4. 13). Some may ask us, What is *your* faith in contrast to the faith of someone else? But he tells us, There is "*one faith*." There are many religions, many superstitions, but only one faith given from God. In contrast to the outward observances of Judaism, "God's dispensation" is "in faith" (1 Tim. 1. 4, N.Tr.). This embraces a wonderful system of unparalleled importance, and we are to "further" it in every way possible. Therefore we see in this first letter to Timothy specially, what a tremendous test it becomes to those who profess the name of Christ. In chapter 1. 19, some make shipwreck as to it. Those who serve are to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (3. 9); and consequently they will obtain much boldness in the faith (verse 13). The apostasy is from the faith (4. 1). Timothy himself is nourished with the words of the faith (verse 6). If anyone does not provide for his own, he practically denies the faith (5. 8). Those who are gripped by the love of money pierce themselves through with many sorrows as they aspire after it and wander from the faith (6. 10). Therefore, Timothy, the child of Paul in the faith, is exhorted to "strive earnestly in the good conflict of the faith" (12. N.Tr.), and his last word in this letter to him is: "Keep the entrusted deposit, avoiding profane, vain babblings, and oppositions of false-named knowledge, of which some, having made profession, have *missed the faith*. Grace be with thee."

FINALLY. How encouraging and stimulating it is to turn to what the champion of the faith tells us concerning himself in relation to it, as he is faced by the inrushing tides of opposition and corruption. Before he lays aside his well-worn weapon, this warrior of the Lord, this faithful

minister of Christ, writes his last letter to his child in the faith, and says: "*I have kept the faith.*"

The last epistle in the Bible exhorts us to set ourselves definitely for the faith once given, in view of rising apostasy. Jude does not urge us to contend *against* the evil. That cannot be stayed. He tells us to earnestly contend *for* the positive faith in its primitive perfection. Many are wasting their time and energy in vainly fighting the evil, instead of fighting the fight of the faith; trying to put right that which cannot be rectified, instead of maintaining the good. They misread the word in Jude, who exhorts those who are called of God and beloved in God the Father, to "*earnestly contend for the faith which*

was once delivered unto the saints" (3.).

Dissoluteness and corruption were increasing, and would continue to do so. Only when the judgment of God fell upon the wicked at the coming of the Lord would the evil be stayed. Therefore, he continues, "*But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*" (20. 21, N.Tr.). Very soon now He will take us out of the presence of the corruption and of the apostasy altogether, and put us in the presence of the glory with exceeding joy. To Him be "glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever. Amen."

ATONEMENT.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

POPULAR writers of modernistic taint are fond of explaining the word atonement as *at-one-ment*. The rough idea is that two people are at variance, explanations are made, differences of judgment are adjusted, and the two at variance are brought into accord. This, or an explanation on these lines, evacuates the word atonement, of every atom of its proper meaning. It does not even leave it an empty shell with the kernel abstracted; it simply annihilates the word and substitutes another—though spelt the same—with a meaning entirely, fundamentally and radically different.

It is hard to decide whether theologians who thus explain the word are extremely careless and ignorant on a point of vital importance, or are wilfully guilty of deliberate deception. In either case the result of their propaganda is the same, like poison it has fatal results—fatal not merely for time, but for eternity, fatal in its consequences to the soul.

The word atonement in our English Bible is the translation of a Hebrew

word. If the Hebrew word meant *at-one-ment*, as popularly explained, then the word in our English Bible would be *at-one-ment*.

Seeing that these theologians are, in the main, college-bred men with initials after their names, such as M.A., B.D., D.D., we can scarcely count them as unfamiliar with legitimate critical methods. To make a play on an English word, and thus ignore the meaning of the word in the original of which it is a translation is not legitimate exegesis. What then is the meaning of the word, atonement, as derived from the Hebrew word? The Hebrew word is *Kaphar*, and means to *cover*.

In matters of every-day life, these theologians use the word in a right sense. They never dream of *at-one-ment* in the affairs of this life. For instance, a man is hanged for murder, and they say that he atoned for his offence, when the sentence of the law was carried out. In the eyes of the law capital punishment *covers* the crime of murder. A man has slandered another and the court orders a

fine of £1000, and they say the slanderer has atoned for his offence, when he made an ample apology and paid over the fine.

It is noticeable that the word *atonement* is altogether an Old Testament word. Romans 5. 11, is the only place in the Authorized Version of the New Testament where the word is given, but the margin of our Bibles gives the true meaning, "reconciliation"; so that in truth the word never occurs in the New Testament. But atonement—the thing itself—is ONLY in the New Testament. In the Old Testament we get the word continually, *but always in connection WITH THE TYPES*. The types were unfulfilled had we not the thing itself in the New Testament.

Let us look at the types a little, and see how the anti-type answers to them—many types, but only one anti-type.

The first occurrence is found in Gen. 3. 21: "Unto Adam and also to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and *clothed* [covered] them." When our first parents fell and got a conscience as to their fallen condition, they sought to cover themselves with fig-leaf aprons. They tried *at-one-ment*, but it did not succeed. How did the Lord God cover them? He had passed the sentence of death on them for their sin. *Death ALONE then could meet their case*. It is an affecting thought that the first death that occurred when the fall came in, was not that of the sinner who deserved it, but that of the sacrifice, whereby the *covering* was obtained.

Does the type not point on to the atoning death of the Lord Jesus? The covering could only be procured through *death*. It is evident that the only One who could die in atonement for others must be One on whom death had no claim, or else He could not have offered His life a ransom for others. There is absolutely only One who could answer to this, even our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

The next instance in Scripture is that of Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives. They were *covered* in the ark. The waters of judgment fell upon the ark, but being covered within, not one drop touched its inmates. When Noah was instructed: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch" (Gen. 6. 14), we get the idea of covering, indeed the very word used for atonement—*Kaphar*—is used in this connection. It is significant that the unbelievers were covered by the waters of judgment, but there was no atonement in that covering. The word *hell* comes from a root meaning to cover, but it conveys the thought of the unbeliever covered, put out of God's sight, as eternally obnoxious to Him.

The next instance we would refer to is the well-known incident of Balaam being hired to curse the children of Israel. Why could Balaam not curse God's people? the secret is found in Numbers 24. 2: "And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel abiding in his tents [covered] according to their tribes." Again: "How goodly are thy tents [covered], O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel" (verse 5). The people, stiffnecked and rebellious in all conscience, were yet covered (in type), and as such Balaam, the false prophet, had against his will to utter truth, as he had received commandment to bless: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Numbers 23. 21).

How these modernists can teach what they do and yet profess to expound the Bible baffles comprehension.

How plain are the words: "It is THE BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17. 11). Let the modernist read the instructions for the great day of atonement as given in Leviticus 16. He will see that atonement is connected with SACRIFICE,

BLOOD-SHEDDING, DEATH. We find the sin-offering connected with atonement; the burnt-offering connected with atonement. And when we come to the New Testament, where the word does not once occur, but where the thing itself alone occurs, we read: "Whom [Christ] God hath set forth to be a propitiation [*literally*, mercy-seat] through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3. 25). Now in the type atonement is connected with both the mercy-seat and the brazen altar—the mercy-seat setting forth the great truth of propitiation; the brazen altar that of substitution.

The mercy-seat or propitiatory sets forth in type the settlement of the whole question of sin for God's glory according to God's holiness, thus setting Him free in righteousness to offer salvation to "whosoever will"; whilst the brazen altar sets forth substitution, that is, the repentant sinner claiming by faith forgiveness and salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus. *Blood* was poured out at the bottom of the brazen altar, and *blood* was sprinkled on the mercy-seat. Now we get all this in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In that death lies all our hope. Make light of that and Christianity ceases to be.

Is it propitiation? We read: "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2. 2). A sacrifice has been made of such value as to satisfy God about the whole question of sin, so that He can offer forgiveness to every repentant, believing sinner. It must be so: God can only make that offer *righteously*. How infinite is the sacrifice of Christ! What scope! No wonder the inspired writer breaks forth: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4. 10).

Is it substitution? We read: "Who [Christ] was delivered for *our* offences, and was raised again for *our*

justification" (Rom. 4. 25). And, again: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24). True, the actual word, substitution, does not occur in the Scriptures, but the thing is there, plainly enough, as each Christian knows experimentally, and he can testify to its truth.

What rest of soul it is, first to grasp, as one did, the substitutionary aspect of the death of Christ, and know in one's own soul, on the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, that one's own sins have been forgiven:

*"Forgiven, forgotten and cleansed,
and gone,
My sins are remembered no more."*

Secondly, to see the wonderful aspect of propitiation and to realize the magnificence of that work on the Cross that has settled the whole question of sin: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 39). "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).

In short, this "*at-one-ment*" theory, wrapped up in whatever pious phrases you like, presented with glowing eloquence it may be, is of the devil. The worst kiss in the history of the world is that of Judas. Alas! how many modernists are giving the Judas-kiss to Christ to-day. Their doctrines appeal to man in the flesh and are popular with the unthinking crowd, but they are damnable heresies, doing unutterable havoc in Christendom at this hour.

Let us Christians then preach and teach the Bible atonement with all the zeal and fervour that we can, holding to it as our own salvation, presenting it to others as their only hope, as indeed it is.

May God honour His own blessed truth more and more in your soul and mine for His Name's sake.

OBEYING THE TRUTH.

(F. B. HOLE.)

IN the Old Testament, obedience necessarily has a very prominent place. The law of Moses had been presented to Israel as the basis of their relationship with God, and obedience was what it demanded. Life was conditioned upon obedience since the word was, "This do, and thou shalt live." The New Testament records the introduction of grace and truth by Jesus Christ, and the establishment of a new order of things on that basis.

This does not, however, mean that obedience is superseded as being no longer necessary: we find, on the contrary, that obedience is prominent just as before. What it does mean is that obedience changes its character. Legal obedience is one thing; the obedience which grace enjoins and produces is quite another. The former means the carrying out of the obligation imposed in order that one might thereby live and continue in the favour of God. The latter means a deliverance effected by God, a new relationship established, a new nature produced, with obedience as the happy fruit of this; and that obedience, not as of a servant with a master merely, but as a son with a father, taking its character from the obedience of Christ. We are "Elect . . . unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 2), that is, to obey as Christ obeyed.

Obedience lies right at the beginning of the Christian's history. He believes the Gospel; but faith, if it is real, eventuates in obedience, and hence Scripture also speaks of obeying the Gospel. The Apostle Paul tells us he "received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His Name" (Rom. 1. 5); and in the Acts we read of those who were "obedient to the faith" (6. 7). "The faith" is that whole body of truth which has been revealed in connection

with the Lord Jesus Christ, but which has not yet been established in any visible or public way. It is "the truth," but inasmuch as at present it can only be apprehended by faith it is "the faith." That faith is now being heralded among the nations, and from amongst them a people for His Name is being gathered out; they are manifested by yielding the obedience of faith to "the faith" when they hear it.

The Gospel is, of course, the foundation. The Epistle to the Romans does not, however, close without a mention of that which was, in Paul's ministry, the top-stone. He desired that the saints should be established not only "according to my Gospel" but also "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (16. 25, 26). Thus, whether it be the foundation or the top-stone of that which the Apostle Paul was called to minister, all was presented to faith, and further, all that was so presented to, and received by, faith was to be expressed in obedience.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle twice uses an expression which we must note. He says: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not *obey the truth*?" (3. 1); and again, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you that ye should not *obey the truth*?" (5. 7). In the former passage the words "that ye should not obey the truth" are by many omitted as lacking in authority, but there is no question about the latter passage. Evidently, then, truth is made known to us not merely that we may be sure as to what is reality and be able to distinguish it for our own soul's good

from what is merely outward appearance and vain show, but also that the realities which the truth presents may govern our lives in actual present practice, that we may give some actual expression to those realities while as yet the world is imposed upon by unrealities.

Have we given sufficient weight to this? We venture to say that there are not a few Christians who are quite aware that in the New Testament, as in the Old, there are many plain injunctions and commands, many clearly formulated statements of the will of God for His saints, disobedience to which can only involve them in spiritual loss and confusion, who yet hardly recognize that all the truth revealed in the New Testament, whether it concerns the individual saint, his privileges and the relationships in which he is set, or whether the church of God as a corporate body, makes its demand upon their obedience. It makes its demand indeed upon each saint individually in either case, for in the latter each saint is an integral part of the church, a stone in the building, a member of Christ's body, and no amount of failure or break-up in the visible body of Christians absolves the individual member of the body from walking in obedience to the whole truth that concerns the church.

Turn again, however, to the two passages in Galatians and observe more particularly the context of the former. This may help us to see more clearly just what the apostle meant in that instance by obeying the truth. The outburst, "O foolish Galatians," sprang from the depth of his love and concern on their behalf, but it was prompted by the inspired recapitulation of the truth of the Cross of Christ in its practical bearings, which he had just penned.

In chapter 2, verses 11 to 21, we are given a little bit of history concerning Peter's visit to Antioch. Owing to the fear of man, in the persons of certain

brethren of strong Jewish tendencies from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew and separated himself from the Gentile believers. This was "not according to the truth of the Gospel" and hence was strongly resisted by Paul.

The uninstructed onlookers of those days might have asked with a measure of surprise, "What has the Gospel got to do with such a question as whether or no Jewish believers should eat with Gentile believers?" It had, indeed, everything to do with it, as Paul proceeded to show with unanswerable logic. He simply expounded afresh, step by step, what the truth of the Gospel really is.

Let us formulate a few items of that truth which lie on the surface of this Scripture:—

1. Whether "Jews by nature" or "sinners of the Gentiles," none of us has any standing before God on the ground of "the works of the law," that is to say, we all alike are sinners, coming short of God's glory. There is really no difference.

2. Whether Jew or Gentile, having believed in Jesus Christ, we are justified by the faith of Christ.

3. That justification has a righteous basis inasmuch as the believing sinner, be he Jew or Gentile, has died—"crucified with Christ."

4. He has died under the law's sentence, but as dying "through the law," he has died "to the law"—i.e., from under the whole legal system—that he might "live unto God."

5. He lives to God not in the life of the first Adam but in the life of Christ, which is so really his that Christ lives in him and shines before his soul as the object of his faith.

Here, then, we have "the truth of the Gospel" to which Paul alludes in verse 5, of our chapter. It was that which had cost him much conflict. It led to his journey to Jerusalem, as

recorded in Acts 15., that he might boldly face the men whose teachings imperilled it, as also it led to his conflict with Peter at Antioch as recorded here. The truth of the Gospel is that man, whether Jew or Gentile, has no righteous standing before God, is in fact totally condemned; and that the Cross of Christ is the definite legal execution of that condemnation and the bearing of the curse which the law had pronounced; and that the believer, now cleared by death from the condemnation and from the law system which pronounced it, lives in the life of the risen Christ unto God, controlled and governed now, not by the demands and regulations of the law, but by "the faith of the Son of God," i.e., the Son of God made a living, bright reality to the soul by faith. Of this new life, love is the motive force, the compelling power, for the Son of God, it says, "loved me, and gave Himself for me."

With this truth of the Gospel, Peter at Antioch was plainly inconsistent. He does not appear to have at all denied it in his teaching. Theoretically he admitted its truth, but his action in withdrawing from the Gentile believers, and no longer eating with them, was disobedience to the truth. It practically erected again the "middle wall of partition" which the Cross had demolished; it inferred that believing Jews still lived in the life of Judaism, and believing Gentiles in the life of Gentiledom, instead of both now being in the life of Christ.

Peter's deviation from the truth of the Gospel in this practical way might seem on the surface to be but a small thing; it had nevertheless a very serious side, and this the Apostle Paul makes manifest in the last verse of the chapter. Having defined his own position which was in strict accord with the truth of the Gospel, he said: "I do not frustrate the grace of God." The emphasis is evidently to be laid on the "I"—"It is not I who am frustrating the grace of God"—the

inference being that it was Peter and those influenced by him who were committing themselves to this sorry work. The grace of God had brought both Jews and Gentiles together in this new and exalted privilege and they were frustrating this in practice by separating them! Moreover, they were in principle going back to law, and if one goes back to it *at all*, one goes back to it *for all*; and to go back to it for righteousness means that Christ has died "in vain" or "for nothing."

"Christ has died for nothing" (N. Tr.). His toil, His sorrows, His death under judgment, as a sacrifice for sin, *all* for nothing, inasmuch as after all righteousness can come by the law. God takes a most toilsome and expensive way to accomplish a certain result, and lo! *man* can achieve the same result in a much simpler way. Then the death of Christ is simply a tragic blunder!

What a fearful conclusion to reach! But Paul is simply carrying the meaning of Peter's action to its logical end. No wonder he turns to the Galatians with such an appeal. Jesus Christ crucified, had been most evidently set forth, as before their very eyes, and here were they too, disobeying the truth; accepting the truth of the Cross in theory, and denying it in practice.

The Galatian error is not extinct: rather it flourishes exceedingly. We need not be of those who boast the Cross and lift it high as a symbol in their services, and wear it upon their persons, while maintaining as a principle a Jewish order of things and alliance with the world, to be involved in this error. It creeps in far more subtly. Easier still is it to be inconsistent in practice with the truth of the Cross even though avoiding the exact form of inconsistency seen in the Galatians. How easy to maintain *theologically* the Cross as the moral judgment of men after the flesh, and of man's world, and yet in practice

to allow and foster in large measure both one and the other !

But we have referred to this passage in Galatians 2. and 3. firstly to establish the principle that *truth, all truth*, demands *obedience*, just as surely as definitely formulated commandments or instructions do ; and secondly, to illustrate *how* obedience is yielded to the truth of God, *the way* in which it can be rendered. Once let us grasp these two things and we shall see how all that which is presented to us in Scripture as truth in the abstract, is to be obeyed, by being translated into concrete form and shape in the lives of Christians, whether individually or collectively.

As to what is individual in its nature, no great difficulty exists. The path of obedience is comparatively simple. All that hinders us is lack of exercise as to what is the will of the Lord as revealed in Scripture, and lack of that spirit of devotion and love and simple-hearted subjection which sets aside our own wills in favour of the will of the Lord.

That which concerns us collectively as belonging to the church of God, as members of the body of Christ, is not so simple, inasmuch as here we are each but a part of a whole, and that whole, viewed as a public body, is in a state of failure and consequent ruin, shattered externally into hundreds of fragments. As a result a very complicated situation exists. The truth as to the church of God in its corporate capacity as revealed in Scripture shines as clearly as it did in the first century when the Pauline epistles were written ; but the present state of affairs in the midst of which we Christians of to-day are responsible to act in obedience to that truth as found in Scripture, renders much prayerful exercise upon our part necessary, lest we fail in its application ; lest in translating one part of the truth into practice we miss by reason of modern complications the proper translation of another part of the truth which is of equal importance.

Many of our readers, we fear, have given but little consideration, if any, to this side of things. Some have never yet sat down, Bible in hand, to discover what is the truth as to the church of God, its calling, character, privileges, responsibilities, and destiny.

Others, again, may have some idea of these things, but they relegate what they know to an impractical region, a region of pure theory as far as the present is concerned, by speaking of the "invisible church," the "mystical body." The Scriptural truth of the church is to them of this mystical and invisible order, to be turned to account doubtless in the coming age, but of no practical use to-day. Hence no question of obedience to it arises in their minds. They keep it, so to speak, pigeon-holed in one compartment of their minds whilst many other compartments are occupied with the details of the troubles and struggles occasioned by the broken and unscriptural disorder of the so-called "churches," and the rapid progress of the apostasy in their systems. With all the evil and drift and apostasy they perhaps manfully struggle, doing their best to stem the tide and maintain the truths of the Gospel.

We rejoice in every faithful effort on behalf of the truth and heartily give thanks unto God. Yet should we ourselves be lacking in faithfulness to the light of the Word of God, if we did not point out once again that contending against error and evil is at best but negative, and that what is far more potent and specially approved of God is obedience to His Word. To-day, as ever, in the confusion which marks the church, simple obedience to the truth concerning the church as unfolded in Scripture, is what will please Him. It is more really efficacious in its practical results than the performing of great exploits could ever be, especially if those exploits are in any way divorced from the knowledge of and obedience to the Word.

As to all this we can adopt the

words of the wise in Proverbs 4. 24, 25, and say: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee"—at the truth of God as

we have it in Scripture. Then, "Ponder the path of thy feet"—that it may be in accordance with that truth—"and let all thy ways be established."

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. 1. Loved and Hated (Genesis 37. 1-11).

TO all who love the Lord Jesus Christ there is an abiding charm in the histories of the Old Testament saints, for therein can be traced bright unfoldings of the glories and excellencies of Christ. Such fore-shadowings of things to come are doubtless hidden to the natural man, but plainly discerned by those who, through the Spirit, seek "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Of all Old Testament histories none presents a richer or more distinct picture of Christ than the touching story of Joseph. Other lives may give in greater detail personal experiences, and human failure, teaching many a wholesome lesson; but as the story of Joseph is unfolded we feel that the Spirit of God ever keeps in view the display of the glory of Christ, and all that pertains to the weakness and failure of a man of like passions with ourselves has little or no place. And yet, however rich the picture, we soon recognize that the life of no single saint could adequately set forth the fulness of Christ. In common with Joseph, other saints of God, as Isaac in his day, and David and Solomon in a later day, have their tale to tell concerning the glories of Christ. Moreover, there is no mere repetition, each has some special glory to disclose. Isaac tells of the sufferings and *affections* of Christ whereby He gains His bride: David of His sufferings and *victories* whereby He gains His kingdom: Joseph of His sufferings and *supremacy* by which He administers His kingdom.

Solomon takes us a step further and unfolds the *glories* of His kingdom when He is supreme.

The story opens with Joseph, as a lad of seventeen, feeding the flock with his brethren and "doing service" (as it should be read) "with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah." He who will yet be supreme must first be a servant. The place of supremacy is only reached by the path of service, according to the word of the Lord: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20. 26, 27). And, as ever, the Lord Himself is the perfect example of His own teaching, for He can say, "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22. 27). And because He "took upon Him the form of a servant . . . and became obedient unto . . . the Cross," "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name." Thus at once in this history we see that shadowing forth of One that is greater than Joseph.

But there are other ways in which the opening history of Joseph will speak of Christ. Like Moses and David of a later date, Joseph is a leader of sheep before He becomes a leader of men. For forty years Moses must be content to lead a flock of sheep at the back of the desert before he becomes the leader of God's people through the desert. And of David, is it not written that Jehovah, "chose . . . His servant and took him from

the sheepfolds . . . He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance" (Psa. 78. 70, 71)? Thus not only in the fact of service but in the manner of service these saints of old prefigure the great Shepherd of the sheep.

But service with his brethren does not necessarily imply fellowship with their evil. As the obedient servant he is very near them; as a man of integrity he is entirely apart from them. His service brought him into the company of others, his character made him a man apart from others, his very presence exposing their wickedness, so that he can but bring to his father "their evil report." And thus it was with Christ the perfect Saviour; His grace brought Him very near to us in all our need, His holiness kept Him entirely apart from all our sin. Our desperate needs, and His infinite grace, made Him a Servant ever moving amidst the needy crowds, and yet withal, our sin and His holiness made Him a lonely Stranger in the land; as one has said, "though forced, by the quality of the scene around him, to be a lonely One, yet was He drawn forth by the need and sorrow of it to be the active One." As the perfect Servant He was accessible to all, as a holy Man He was apart from all. His service of love took Him into many a needy home, His holiness left Him without a home.

If, however, the character of Joseph set him apart from his brethren, the love of his father gave him a distinguished place above his brethren, for we read, "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children." Moreover, Israel bears witness to this place of distinction by clothing Joseph with a coat of many colours—a public testimony to the delight of the father in his son. At once our thoughts travel from Joseph to Christ and the unique place He ever had in the Father's affections, and the Father's pleasure in bearing witness to His delight in His Son. The very chapter that tells us,

"God so loved the world," also tells us that "the Father loveth the Son." A measure is given to the love of God for the world, infinite though it be, but no measure is, or can be, given for the Father's love to the Son. The announcement stands in all its majestic dignity. "The Father loveth the Son," and faith delights to accept it, and love delights to dwell on the Father's thoughts of the Son, though the mind fails to grasp its immensity. But if the Father can furnish no measure for this love, He can indeed bear witness to His love for the Son. And this He has done, and will yet do, in very glorious fashion, as the opened heavens again and again declare. May we not say that Joseph's coat of many colours, the public testimony of his father's love, has its bright counterpart in the opened heavens of the New Testament? Never are the heavens opened apart from Christ, and when opened ever to bear some fresh witness to the Father's delight in the all-varied graces of the Son. No sooner has Christ taken His place on earth as the servant of Jehovah than at once "the heavens were opened unto Him" that the host of heaven might look down on a Man on earth of whom the Father can say: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 16, 17). A little later and again the heavens are opened, that a man on earth may look up and bear witness to "the Son of Man" in heaven (Acts 7. 55, 56). Again, the day is not far distant when the heavens will be opened to let the Son of Man come forth in glory as the victorious "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19. 11-16). Having come forth as King of kings the heavens will again be opened that ascending and descending angels may bear witness to the Son of Man reigning in glory on the earth (John 1. 51).

May we not say on these bright occasions we see Christ invested with the coat of many colours? In other words, we see in the opened heavens

the Father's delight in Christ as His beloved Son in humiliation, as the Son of Man in heavenly glory, and as the King of kings and Lord of lords, coming forth to reign on earth as Son of Man in supreme power and glory.

Furthermore, the One who is loved by the Father, and marked out as the special object of His delight, is the One who is destined to universal supremacy. This great truth is brought before us in Joseph's dreams, both setting forth the destined supremacy of Joseph. One dream might have sufficed to foretell the glories of Joseph, but would be wholly inadequate to shadow forth the glories of Christ. For His supremacy will have a twofold character. He will yet be supreme on earth, and many a glowing passage tells of this earthly glory, notably the Psalm wherein we read: "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under His feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth!" The dream of the sheaves making obeisance to Joseph's sheaf may well speak of this excellent supremacy over all the earth which Christ is destined to wield. Yet this first dream fails to set forth the supremacy of Christ in all its vast extent, for He is destined not only to be supreme on earth, but to hold universal sway over heaven and earth. The Father, according to His good pleasure, has purposed in the fulness of times to head up, "all things in Christ, both which are *in heaven and which are on earth*" (Eph. 1. 9, 10). And may not this second dream speak of this heavenly supremacy by presenting heavenly bodies—the sun, the moon, and the stars, making obeisance to Joseph? The two dreams thus set forth the supremacy of Christ over things on earth and things in heaven to the remotest bounds of the created universe.

Thus the Spirit of God delights to exalt Christ by presenting His universal supremacy as the leading thought in the history of Joseph. And as we ponder the story we do well to keep this great truth in view. There is, indeed, the path of suffering by which the place of pre-eminence is reached: there are the graces and excellencies of character that the sufferings call forth, as well as the heartlessness of his own and the evil and indifference of the world. Those and kindred truths, full of instruction for our souls, will pass before us, but all is subordinate to the great end of setting before us the universal supremacy of Christ, the perfect way in which He uses this supremacy, and the rich blessing that flows to all who whole-heartedly submit to His supremacy.

Returning to the history of Joseph, we are at once faced with the darker side of the story. If Joseph has a unique place in his father's affections, and if he is destined in the counsels of God to the place of supremacy, he will, in the meantime, have to face the hatred of his brethren. This must be so if, in any measure, his story is to shadow forth that far greater hatred which Christ was called to endure at the hands of men. Nothing is more solemn than the fact that the One whom God has destined to the place of universal dominion is the only one that is hated by every natural heart. Why does the natural heart bear such hatred to Christ? Was there any cause of hatred in Him? Surely not, for in Christ there was an entire absence of the cruelty and violence, the lust and covetousness, the pride and arrogance, the meanness and selfishness, which in other men give such occasion for hatred. In Him there was everything to call forth love. While others went about doing evil, He "went about doing good" (Acts 10. 38). Man's mouth may be full of cursing and bitterness, but at least man must bear witness to "the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4. 22).

And yet in spite of His acts of love, and His words of grace, they rewarded Him evil for good, and hatred for His love (Psa. 109. 5). Truly He could say, "they hated me without a cause." Alas! plenty of cause of hatred, but no cause *in Him*. No cause in man to call forth Christ's love, and no cause in Christ to call forth man's hatred. But why should the evil heart of man hate the One whose whole life was spent in showing love to man? Let Joseph's history supply the answer. Why, we may ask, was Joseph hated by his brethren? Was he not in their company as one that served? Truly, but they were evil and hence, however desirable *his service* might be, *his presence* exposed their evil, and thus called forth their hatred. And for a like cause, and in far deeper measure, the world hated Christ, as He could say, "Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (John 7. 7).

Moreover, there were other causes for the hatred of Joseph's brethren. When they "saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." And so with Christ, confessing His unique place with the Father, he can say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5. 17). Immediately the hatred of the Jews is called forth and "they sought the more to kill Him," and at once the Lord declares that "the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things." The Beloved of the Father is hated by man.

Further, the dreams that speak of Joseph's future supremacy are a fresh motive for the envy and hatred of the brethren. He had been a witness *against them* of their evil, now he is a *witness to them* of his future glory. They will suffer neither one nor the other. Even so the Lord witnessed against the evil of the world, and bore witness to His

coming glories, to find, like Joseph, that He drew upon Himself the hatred of the world. Before the assembled leaders of Jerusalem the Lord speaks of His coming glories: "Hereafter," He can say, "shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power," a confession that is followed by a furious outburst of hatred, priests and elders uniting to spit in the face of the Son of God.

Lastly, the brethren of Joseph hated him for his words. As we read: "they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words." Nor was it otherwise with the Lord. Men heard the words of Him that spake as never man spake, and some, indeed, believed; but "many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?" Christ is hated because He exposed men's evil; because He declared the Father's love; because He foretold His coming exaltation, and because of His words. And the hatred could not be hid. Of old the brethren of Joseph "hated him and *could not speak peaceably unto him*." Their hearts could not hold their hatred. The hatred could not be hid. So too Christ is still the object of a hatred that men cannot conceal, try as they will. A constant stream of abuse of His Name, denial of His Person, and refusal of His work, issues from apostate pulpits, and an infidel press, often masquerading under the cloak of religion. It is still His professed brethren that cannot speak peaceably of Him. But let us never forget that behind all the "hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" there are the "ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." The evil lives of Joseph's brethren were behind the hatred in their hearts, and the evil words of their lips. It is so to-day, the ungodly deeds in men's lives lead to the "hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 15).

MATTHEW, THE PUBLICAN.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

THERE can be no doubt that, in the heart of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is an earnest desire, implanted by the Holy Spirit, to serve the One who, at infinite cost, has made them "His own." It is equally true that *all* God's children are privileged to glorify Him in some happy service for His Name. See, among many kindred Scriptures: 1 Cor. 7. 22; Col. 3. 23, 24; 1 Thess. 1. 9; Heb. 9. 14; 12. 28. It is thus the new nature finds ways and means of expressing itself, and if the indwelling Spirit is ungrieved and unhindered from our side, He will not fail to engage our hearts with a triumphant Christ at God's right hand, and also mark out the path for our feet until the journey is ended.

It is most helpful, and instructive for our souls, to study the pathway of our blessed Lord in His passage through a hostile world. How very feebly, at the best, can our minds enter into the greatness of it; the mighty love and wisdom that lay behind it; the marvellous thoughts and purposes of God that were hidden in its depths; and the deep compassions of the Father's heart, telling themselves out in the life, and words, and acts of the One who came into this world in lowly guise, to make known the heart of a Saviour-God to Adam's fallen race. We see Him with His humble band of followers, passing from village to village, from city to city, mingling with the poor and needy, the sorrow-stricken and sin-laden; by the wayside, in the fields and lanes; on the shores of the Galilean lake; in a little fishing-boat on its waters, where, wearied with incessant toil, He seeks a brief repose upon its rude deck; wayworn and thirsty at Sychar's well, under the heat of the noonday sun; healing the lepers, casting out demons, giving sight to the blind, unstopping deaf ears, and causing

the widow's heart to sing for joy. Like "the tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season," *His leaf was always green*: all He did was in season; whether, in holy zeal, to denounce the desecrators of the Temple; or to speak words of peace and forgiveness to a broken-hearted sinner of the city in Simon the Pharisee's house. He knew the right moment to expose the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, and when to take the little children in His arms and bless them. "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38).

Need we wonder that Matthew, the Publican, was ready to abandon *all* at the call of such a glorious Person; that he esteemed it the greatest honour of his life? Matthew, or Levi, as he is elsewhere named, was a tax gatherer, or collector, of the Roman tribute in Capernaum. These persons were held in great disrepute by the Jews; so much so, that the name of "Publicans and sinners" was a common term of reproach and contempt; yet it was from among such that God was pleased to select a vessel for the heralding forth of the kingly glories of Israel's long-promised Messiah, and David's Royal Son; the One in whom all the promises to God's earthly people were centred.

In chapter 9. of the Gospel which bears his name, Matthew modestly tells us that: "As Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom; and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him." In the next chapter, where he is seen as one of the chosen apostles of the Lord, he calls himself Matthew, the Publican, possibly having adopted a common usage of that day in changing his name from Levi to Matthew, when he

gave up his secular occupation, and became an apostle. It is very noticeable, that, in his Gospel, he is most reticent about himself; two or three brief verses being all that refer to him personally in the twenty-eight chapters. With such a God-given theme Matthew had no thought nor pen to employ upon that which merely concerned himself. Like the Lord's great forerunner, he was glad to retire into the shade, if he could only be an honoured instrument, in God's hand, of bringing Christ into prominence (see John 3. 29, 30). He was, moreover, devoid of that false shame which would have made him hide his having been engaged in a calling which was looked upon by the Jews as disreputable.

The Gospel of Matthew, consistent with its primary import, as presenting the kingly glories of Christ, etc., teems with quotations from the Old Testament; no less than sixty-five times it is cited from. Eight times Christ is spoken of as "Son of David"; and the phrase: "The Kingdom of Heaven," is used thirty-three times. But we would remark, in passing, that while mainly Jewish in its character, it reaches *far beyond* Israel's earthly hopes and expectations.

We turn now to Luke 5. 27-29, where we read: "After these things He went forth, and saw a publican named Levi sitting at the receipt of custom, and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him. And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house, and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them." Luke, who was a physician, a man of culture, a close companion of the Apostle Paul, and the historian of the Book of Acts, here informs us that Levi, or Matthew, made a *great* feast for the Lord, and that there was a *great company*, invited to partake of it. He is the only man who is spoken of in Scripture as having this honour. It was a *great entertainment* (N. Tr.), and

it was in Matthew's *own house*. If we think, for a moment, of the Saviour's pathway, from the beginning of His public testimony, and onwards—the hatred, the hostility, the enmity, the persecution, the rage of man led on by Satan, to which His Holy Son was daily subjected—surely the scene in Matthew the Publican's house that day, would gladden the heart of the blessed God Himself. Yes, the Father took care that His Beloved One should have His "green spots," even in the scene of His rejection. Without doubt, there would be a well-spread table, befitting such a Guest, but that which would yield the greatest joy to the Saviour's heart would be the affection that lay underneath, and prompted it, as well as the character of the guests selected to share it with Him—Publicans and sinners—a *great feast*, therefore, in a *double* sense.

The Gospel of Matthew, in its compass, as already hinted, goes far beyond the range of Israelitish blessing, marvellous as that surely is. Chosen by the Lord as one of His apostles, he had learnt some of His deep secrets; who, and what He was as the eternal Son; the only One who could make the Father known, and unfold the hidden counsels of His bosom; the only One who could give abiding rest to the weary and heavy-laden children of men (see Matt. 11. 27, 28). Matthew tells us of "the treasure hid in the field"; "the merchantman and the Pearl"; all bearing witness to the greatness of His Person, and the love of His heart (see chapter 13. 44-46). Then there is the revelation of the assembly in chapter 16. 18, and the Lord's presence guaranteed to the "two or three" gathered together in the Lord's name in chapter 18. 20; whilst the closing scenes, amidst the gloom of Calvary, and the resurrection morn, are given by Matthew with much tender and touching detail.

Should these few simple comments on Matthew, the Publican, awaken an

echo in some hearts, the question may be asked, Is it possible for us, who live in the closing moments of the assembly's history upon earth, to make, like Matthew of old, "a great feast" for the Lord? We may reply by asking, Is He not still, as then, despised, rejected, and disallowed of men? The world's united verdict, "Not this man but Barabbas," boldly announced at Calvary, still stands unrepealed, and its hostile attitude is still maintained.

Are we prepared to run the gauntlet of our fellow-creature's scorn, his sneers, his contempt, his criticism, his unsparing boycott; and whole-heartedly identify ourselves with Christ and His interests? It will mean reproach, shame, persecution, suffering, loss. Be it so; let us covet the honour. The early disciples departed from the pre-

sence of the persecuting council, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name" (Acts 5. 41).

Although our lot is cast in days of higher privilege, we can well afford to take a lesson from Matthew, the Publican. "He, being dead, yet speaketh." Yes, we can make a "great feast" for the Lord, but it is *only* as He holds the citadel of our affections, *only* as we present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12. 1). As we think of our privileges, the possibilities open to us, and the worthiness of the One to whom we owe our all, and whose face we so soon shall see, may our hearts be stimulated and encouraged to put ourselves entirely at His disposal until He comes.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

The Cloud and the Sea.

In 1 Corinthians 10, 1 and 2 we read of "the cloud" and "the sea" and of being "baptized unto Moses." Is there any distinction to be made between the cloud and the sea, and is the reference here only to the teaching of baptism?—CREWE.

THE cloud was the symbol of the presence of Jehovah, the sea was the symbol of death, for water is to man the death-element, just as air is his life-element. So evidently there is a clear distinction between them.

Still in the type of Exodus 14., to which 1 Corinthians 10. refers, they both appear to be combined. Verse 1 says "all our fathers were *under* the cloud, and all passed *through* the sea." Verse 2 adds that they "were all baptized . . . *in the cloud and in the sea*"—and this does not signify two baptisms, but one. The two together completed one baptism. The cloud overshadowed them, for they were under it, the sea surrounded them. Under the cloud and in the sea they were submerged, out of sight, *buried* in fact.

Now burial is just that which baptism stands for. "We are buried with Him [Christ] by baptism unto death" (Rom. 6. 4). "Buried with Him in baptism"

(Col. 2. 12). This burial of Israel was in view of their emerging upon the further shore of the sea in liberty just as we Christians to-day are baptized in view of "newness of life" (Rom. 6. 4). Israel was "baptized unto Moses as their leader and head just as we are baptized unto Christ—"baptized in the name of the LORD Jesus" (Acts 19. 5).

The reference here is just to baptism, we believe. Verses 3 and 4 of the chapter seem to be worded so as to bring to mind the Lord's supper; and the argument of the apostle is that the Israelites of old were fortified, so to speak, by the two ordinances and yet "with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." And these things were examples for us. The Christian to-day may be one externally only, without any inward reality. Such will eternally perish, even though they are "fortified with all the rites of the church."

"THEY DEPARTED QUICKLY . . . AND DID RUN."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word" (Matthew 28. 8).

CHOOSE what cemetery you will, and standing at the gate of it, observe the folk who come to render their tribute of love to the lately buried dead. There is an eagerness, a determination in the way they come; the heart of them seems to beat more quickly as they approach the sacred spot and to impart its haste to their feet. They come to the grave almost as to a longed-for tryst where waits for them an ardent lover, but they do not so depart. Observe them as they leave the flowered plot. Their heads are bowed and their steps are leaden and slow, for they have received no response to the cry of the heart that aches within their breasts, though they have lingered lovingly and long beside the grave—the silent grave; and chilled and comfortless they are returning to face afresh the silence and the void of a desolated house—a house that is no longer a home. Account for it as we may, people who mourn do not run quickly from a grave, they go to it quickly, with earnest and uplifted heads, but they depart as though they carried a heavy load and were very tired; and because this is so it will be worth our while to ask why these women departed quickly and did run from this special grave of which the Gospels tell.

Never had brighter hopes been buried in any grave than in the grave of Jesus, and never had hearts been more bereft than the hearts of those women who shuddered in their sorrow as the great stone rolled slowly to its place at the door of that tomb, and shut from their tear-dimmed vision the body of their Lord. The night that followed that last Passover feast was a woeful night for them and for all who loved the Hope of Israel, a night unrelieved by any solace from without or faith from

within, for having lost their Lord they had lost their all. Yet there was one thing that kept their broken hearts from refusing to perform their office: they would go on the first day of the week and anoint His body. His kingship had been rejected by the Jews; His claim to it was the charge upon which Pilate had condemned Him to the cross; the multitude had gone to their homes saying He was no king at all or He would have saved Himself; but to these women he was King, and more; and though He had lost the kingdom, yet He should lie in His tomb as a King if they could make it possible. By some means or other they would force their way into that sealed and guarded grave and fill it with the fragrance of the spices that they had prepared, and with the sweeter fragrance of their love; this should be their last tribute to Him and then they would return—yes, but how, and where, and to what?

With great impatience they endured those laggard Sabbath hours, and with eager haste they carried forth their precious ointment when the morrow after the Sabbath dawned. Nothing could hold them from their purpose; upon Him they must lavish these perfumes, long treasured for themselves, for "they loved Him more than they loved their own beauty," as a famous writer has said, and what more could be said of woman than that? Mark tells us that they reached the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. Were they blind to the golden glow of that wondrous morning? It is more than likely, for a grave was their goal, and to pour their best upon the dead their purpose; this was the only balm they knew for their death-stricken and hopeless hearts; and what charm could

sunrise have for such as they? But what a sunrise that must have been, though their eyes did not see it!

Let no man tell me that that day dawned as other days, and that all nature did not exult in that great hour. There must have been a triumph and a fragrance in it that never dawn had known before. If when He died—He, the Creator, clothed in human flesh—the sun drew a veil across His face, and all nature robed herself in sable garments, and the earth trembled to her very heart with horror at the deed that men had wrought, there must have been a corresponding joy when the conquering heel of life was placed upon the neck of death, and the shame of the cross was answered by an empty tomb. "*He is risen.*" The glad news had sung its triumphant music to the ends of creation, and "the sun, moon and stars," "the mountains and hills, and fruit trees and cedars," the heavens and the earth were the glorious orchestra that accompanied the angel's proclamation.

They were slow, those women; in spite of their eagerness to be there they were too late to see the great event that has made that day to be the day of days; yet they were quicker than the men that had followed Jesus, for their love was truer, more ardent, and less selfish, and so they were the first to hear the blessed news, and it was fitting that it should be so. Faith and hope would have freed them from the legal bondage of the Sabbath and would have lit the darkness of the night for them and have brought them to that grave at even an earlier hour; as it was they came with eyes almost closed with weeping and with hearts dulled with despair. But when they reached the sacred spot what wonders greeted them. The stone was gone, and instead of Roman soldiers, brutal men who would have found a wretched joy in casting insults at them, they found a heavenly guard in possession, a messenger from God in white apparel. Heaven was not in mourning; its messenger wore the

garments of victory and joy, and only waited for human ears to listen to his story. And these women were the first to hear it, and as they heard, the silent chords in their hearts awoke to song, and they turned their backs upon the grave, and forgot their spices and themselves, and with fear and great joy did run to tell the tidings. Blessed women, they were the first of ransomed sinners to be swept by the rapture of the resurrection triumph, the first of that countless host whose singing shall be sweeter and more joyous and more prolonged than any raised by sun and moon and stars, or even angels.

We know not whether those women were young or old, but we know that the fact of resurrection drove the darkness from their hearts and made them rejoice in the glory of the day that had dawned; and the strength of that new day was theirs, so that no matter how old in years they were, or weary with weeping they had been, their feet were fleet now to share their joy with others. They ran because the grave was empty, its victory was gone, they would see their Lord again. That was the secret, and that is a secret shared now by all whose faith has laid hold of the risen Christ. This changes everything and drives away despair, and makes us sing "Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a change the knowledge of Christ risen from the dead makes; Him, who is more to us than father and mother, husband, wife or child—our life, our joy, our all. What rest there is when we can say, "I am His, and He is mine." The nearest earthly tie cannot yield this rest; in all earthly love there is the fear of loss, and the more tender and precious the tie the greater is the agony of that fear, and when fear enters, rest departs. But in our union with Christ risen there is no such fear. No power this bond can sever. For death itself, the great dissolver, has been dissolved by Him, and we can say, "Who shall separate us from the

love of Christ?" If we live He is with us, if we die we are with Him. In life and in death we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us. We know Him as a victorious and living Man. He is not a memory, but a reality.

It is more than likely that most of us have some precious relics that in some sort of way keep memory alive, and move the heart and moisten the eye, but how unsatisfying they are; they do not avail to bring back "the touch of the vanished hand, or the sound of the voice that is still." But it is not so with Christ. He is not dead; He lives. Peter is dead, Paul is dead, many whom we loved are dead, and communion with the dead, whether saints or sinners, is a hellish delusion; but

Christ is not dead; He lives victorious over death, and communion with Him is a blessed reality by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is true that we have the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper that remind us of what He was—*once dead for us*; but we remember what He was in the joy of what He is, for when we thus remember what He was, He Himself is there.

So we can run; vigour, spiritual vigour, may mark us even unto old age. We can run with our backs on the grave and our faces alight with the glory that shines before us, and as we run we can cheer our brethren by the joyous tidings, "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED."

CHRIST: THE MYSTERY OF HIS PERSON.

(H. P. BARKER.)

FROM the earliest days of Christianity speculation has been busy with this holy and transcendent theme. In some cases no doubt it has sprung from real love to Christ, and a desire to know all that can be known about Him. But in many cases it is to be feared that mere curiosity, or a desire for philosophical definition, has led to an intrusion of the human mind into a region where everything is beyond it. And such intrusion is profane, even when it does not develop into blasphemy.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that "no man knoweth the Son." The statement is absolute, and is not parallel with what is said in the same verse (Matt. 11. 27) as to not knowing the Father. The latter statement is qualified; the former is not. We read "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." These qualifying words do not accompany the statement as to not knowing the Son.

No man is capable of comprehending the mystery of His Person. It is beyond the range of the loftiest understanding. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father."

We shall do well, then, to resist the temptation to speculate, and confine our thoughts to that which Scripture teaches us.

We learn therefrom that the Lord Jesus, in His essential Being, is unchangeably the same. In the yesterday of the eternity that is past; in the to-day of time as we know it; in the to-morrow of the eternity yet to come, He is the unchanging One. The heavens and the earth shall perish; "they shall be changed: but Thou art THE SAME" (Heb. 1. 12).

Hence everything predicated as to the Person of Christ (using the term "Person" in the sense of "essential Being"), if it be true, must be *eternally* true. The formula "God and Man, one

Christ" cannot therefore be accepted as setting forth the whole truth, for it was not true of Him before His incarnation. It is true of Him as to what He became; it is not true of Him as to what He eternally and essentially is. This He never ceased to be, even when "the Word was made flesh." He brought all His Divine attributes with Him into manhood. Though really and truly a Man, He remained really and truly God.

Was He then *omnipotent* in the days of His flesh? For omnipotence is surely one of the essential attributes of Deity. The evidence of it is abundant. Take, for instance, the one miracle which is recorded in all four Gospels: that of feeding the five thousand. The multiplication of the loaves and fishes was really an act of creation. It is true that He looked up to heaven, as He took the materials and blessed them (Matt. 14. 19). But this was not to seek power that He did not Himself possess. On another occasion when He displayed His power (at the raising of Lazarus), the Lord lets us know why He appealed to His Father. It was not because of need on His part, but because of the people that stood by (John 11. 42).

What, then, is meant by the statement recorded in John 5. 19: "The Son can do nothing of Himself"? Would it not seem from this that He had voluntarily laid aside the Divine attribute of omnipotence?

By no means. Let us endeavour to grasp the real significance of this amazing declaration. We quote the words of another* :—

"Our Lord, when first charged with self-deification, responds in perhaps the profoundest chapter in the Bible on His Godhead.

" ' Verily, verily, I say unto you '—for

* "The Godhead of Jesus." By D. M. Panton. Chas. J. Thynne & Jarvis Ltd. Price 6d. A pamphlet well worth reading.

it is a matter of pure revelation, at which we could arrive in no other way—' what things soever the Father doeth, *these* '—not similar works, but *these*—' the Son doeth *in like manner* '—identically; ' for the Father showeth Him ALL THINGS that Himself doeth ' (John 5. 19). Now ponder what this means. To creation's utmost bound, in the Godhead's most distant and most secret operations and counsels, the Son knows what the Godhead is doing; knows, not by communication, but by consciousness; He knows *what* the Father does, and therefore *all* that the Father does—' the Father showeth Him ALL THINGS that Himself doeth ' : therefore His mind must be co-extensive with the mind of God, and His knowledge must be as vast as omniscience. But the statement is profounder still. Far more startling than that He *knows* all that the Godhead does, He *does* it all; ' what things soever the Father doeth, *these* THE SON ALSO DOETH *in like manner* ' ; with the same authority and wisdom, with the same energy and effect : that is, He is not only master of all the secrets of God, but wielder of all the processes of God : all creations, all laws, all forces, all powers, He handles with a mastery as irresistible and as omnipotent. And the reason He Himself gives of this is overwhelming. ' The Son *can* do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing ' : cannot—not through imperfection of power, nor merely through equality of holiness, *but because of identity of nature*. He *cannot* do otherwise. So stupendous an assertion was never equalled or transcended by mortal lips."

It is indeed abundantly clear from this and other passages that in His miracles the Son did not step outside the unity of the Godhead, nor work independently. The Father wrought the works, as well as the Son (John 14. 10); as also the Spirit (Matt. 12. 28). In Him dwelt all the fulness, and in Him bodily dwells all the fulness of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—still (Col. 1. 19; 2. 9).

And yet He is the Son, and is not the Father nor the Spirit. But how can this be? We know not. We cannot explain. The mystery is far beyond

our finite power of understanding. But we can believe, and worship.

What of His *omniscience*? The question is not of our raising. It has been asked how, in the face of Mark 13. 32, can the omniscience of the Son in incarnation be maintained? It has been suggested that He voluntarily curtailed His knowledge, and that even in resurrection He has not resumed it.

But think what this implies. It is to the Son (because He is also Son of Man) that the work of future judgment is committed (John 5. 22, 27). Could such a work be undertaken by One whose knowledge of men and things falls short of omniscience?

"The assertion involves things unimaginable, that are required in a universal judge" (we quote Mr. Panton again). "A personal knowledge of the untold myriads of mankind, multiplied by all the ages of human history; a minute acquaintance with the infinite variety of their circumstances, their opportunities, their characters; a faultless insight into secret motives and passions that never rose to the eye of man; a perfect mastery of the Law of God, by which to judge the worlds, with the scales held in perfect equipoise by One who has to be a Judge of *judges*; the awful sentences involved, of everlasting joy or everlasting fire, with no court of appeal above Him, and no cases reserved."

And was this dread omniscience, this infinite knowledge of all secret things, the attribute of the Son of God in the days of His earthly sojourn? If so, how can we explain the fact that He Himself spoke of something—a future date—which no man knoweth, "no, not the angels which are in heaven, **NEITHER THE SON**, but the Father."

Only Mark records this utterance, and his Gospel is that of the perfect Servant, and "the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." This fact must not be dismissed as irrelevant. Yet we are faced, not merely with the

fact that Mark (and he only) has recorded the utterance, but with the fact that years before the words were recorded the statement was made by the Lord Himself. That fact remains, no matter who is inspired to narrate it.

Can we explain it? In its entirety, we cannot.

"He is waiting," says J. N. Darby,* "for that solemn moment when Jehovah will make all His enemies as a footstool under His feet (Ps. 110. 1). Until that moment arrives, kept as a secret in the depth of the Divine counsels, He is sitting on the 'right hand of the Majesty on high' (Heb. 1. 3). It is perhaps for this reason that it is said in Mark 13. that the Son Himself knoweth not the day nor the hour, because He Himself was the object of this decree of Jehovah. He will receive everything from the hand of God, as man and servant, as also God has now highly exalted Him (Phil. 2. 9). Speaking as a prophet, Christ announced His coming as the terrible judgment which was to fall upon an unbelieving nation; but the counsel of God as to this judgment, or at least as to the moment of its approach, was contained in those words, 'Sit Thou at My right hand *until* . . .' Christ as a servant waited (as always, and this was His perfection) upon the will of His Father, and to receive the kingdom when the Father would have it so. It is worthy of remark that Ps. 110. and Mark 13. refer to exactly the same subject."

This explanation does not, we admit, remove the difficulty entirely. J. N. Darby offered it with a reservation. Where such a very efficient expositor as he can only say "perhaps" when suggesting an explanation, the difficulty of the passage becomes manifest. We may not be able to understand it or explain it; but we are sure that it in no wise militates against the truth that He who walked among men in meekness and humility was, all the while, the omnipotent and omniscient God.

* "Collected Writings," Volume ii, pp. 430, 431.

As to *omnipresence*, another attribute of Deity, of course this cannot be predicated of the body which the Lord took. Of a certain place it could be said, "He is not here" (Matt. 28. 6). But as one of the Persons in the eternal unity of the Godhead this attribute must also be claimed for Him. We cannot, however, quote John 3. 13 in support of this. For it is by no means certain that the words were spoken by the Lord, or that they refer to Him when on earth. The whole verse is probably the parenthetical comment of the inspired evangelist, and refers to the present place of exaltation occupied by the Lord in heaven.

But the wonderful statement of Matt. 18. 20 seems to be much to the point. Who but One who is omnipresent could undertake to be in the midst wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name? Whether under the burning sun of the tropics or amid the frosts of the far north; whether in an upper room in a crowded city or in a spacious chamber in some mountain village, and in thousands of places at the same time, there the Lord is to be found in the midst of His gathered twos and threes—not bodily, but personally; not the Holy Spirit, but the Christ who died for us, and who spoke the words of which so many of His loved ones have proved the truth.

Then of what did He empty Himself (Phil. 2. 7, R.V.)? For the Kenosis is a great truth, from the consideration of which we must not be driven because of the false and Christ-dishonouring theories that are current concerning it. He emptied Himself of *the circumstances of Deity*. He exchanged the FORM of God for the FORM of a servant. Further, we may say that while retaining all the attributes of Deity, He laid aside the

habitual use of some of them, and wrought, for the most part, not by the exercise of His own essential power, but as any prophet of God might do, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He "emptied Himself, not of His plenitude, but of His altitude; not of the Divine prerogatives, but of their exercise: He laid aside the inconceivable dignity of the Godhead. For what happened? When our Lord appeared among men, He appeared not as God in His glory, but as a man clothed in flesh. . . . Yet it is most startling to observe that our Lord could re-assume the 'form' which He had laid aside at any moment that He chose. Instead of forcing conviction about His Godhead by its glorious manifestation at all times, He allowed the truth to dawn quietly by the Perfect Man revealing occasional, but unmistakable, flashes of Deity. The fed five thousand; Lazarus summoned from the tomb; the trodden water; the band in Gethsemane prostrate at a word; the sudden glory on the Mount:—the Godhead of the Lord was unchanged and unchangeable. He gave up, not the prerogatives of God, but the habitual use of them; He emptied Himself, not of Deity, but of the form of Deity."*

What, then, shall be our attitude when we are faced with speculations and questions as to the Person of Christ? We must not attempt to meet speculation with counter-speculation. Nor should we consent to bandy words in debate upon such a theme. Let us turn to the Scriptures again, and meditate upon the great passages that set forth the greatness and glory of Christ until they become instinct with new life and force. And then let us get to our knees, and say with Thomas when the last shred of doubt was torn from his soul: "My Lord and my God!" We cannot but wonder; but let wonder voice itself in worship.

* "The Godhead of Jesus," pp. 20, 21.

COMFORT, HOPE AND PEACE.

(F. L. FRENCH.)

THE Epistle of Paul to the Romans is a most orderly and Divinely arranged discourse. It has been well called "the greatest piece of logic in the English language." After his introduction in chapter 1. 1 to 17, the apostle takes up man's condition down to 3. 20, and shows by example and argument that we are all guilty, helpless sinners, with our mouths shut in the presence of God, and unable to lift a finger for our own justification.

Then he brings out not only the grace but the righteousness of God, in freely justifying, apart from the works of the law, the sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was delivered for our sins, and raised again for our justification (4. 25).

Next he proceeds to show (5. 12 to 8. 29) our deliverance from sin and from the law, and our liberty to serve God in the Spirit; and after proving God's uprightness in showing mercy to the Gentiles, which was *seemingly* contrary to the promises made to Israel, (the fulfilment of which promises is now in abeyance because of their unbelief and rejection of their foretold Messiah), we have, in chapters 12. to 16., instructions as to the practical walk and conduct of those who have been justified before God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are now to justify themselves before men by a godly life and walk.

In these chapters there is set a very high standard of Christian walk and conduct, whether in relation to those in the Assembly of God, or those outside. We are instructed as to our dealings in business and social life; as to our conduct towards governments and established powers, and as to our service in the Kingdom of God.

Of course these chapters relating to practical walk and conduct come fit-

tingly after our establishment in righteousness before God. We must be justified before God by faith before we can be justified before men by our works. We must *live* before we can *do*. As we read over these chapters we wonder who can attain to such a standard of conduct, and realize that there must be a power beyond ourselves to enable us in any way to answer to what the Spirit of God here sets before us.

And this power we have in God Himself, as chapter 15. shows. So the apostle reminds us that God is with us and for us. We have Him set before us as the

God of patience and consolation
(verse 5).

God of hope (verse 13).

God of peace (verse 33).

First, then, He is

THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND CONSOLATION.

In passing through this world which knows not God, one who belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, and is separated unto God, must meet with opposition and trial. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," "In the world ye shall have tribulation," said our blessed Lord (John 15. 20; 16. 33).

God is "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1. 3, 4). Then in our Lord Jesus Christ there is consolation, and comfort of love and yearnings of mercies for His people (see Phil. 2. 1), and He has prayed the Father to give us in His absence, another Comforter, the "Paraclete"—"One called alongside to help," the Holy Spirit, "who

abides with us for ever" (John 14. 16); and the Spirit dwells within the child of God making known through the Scriptures the comfort which leads us to patient endurance: to bring to our hearts and minds the "comfort of love and the bowels of mercies" which are in God's blessed Son towards His people.

What a wonderful expression is "*The comfort of love*"! Involuntarily we think of a mother; how in love she comforts the babe on her bosom. We think of a loving wife consoling her husband in his trials and struggles. We think of the support of a dear friend to whom we always turn in any time of difficulty. But add together all the love and consolations of mother, wife or friend and they fall infinitely below "the comfort of love" which our Lord Jesus Christ gives to every one of us who turns to Him. Thus our God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—unites in being to us the God of consolation. This leads to patience in tribulation. Our God is patient with us in our failures and sins, and the knowledge of His comfort and consolation in our trials, leads to patience and endurance on our part. The word "patience" here has the force of "cheerful and hopeful endurance."

In carrying out the practical exhortation of these chapters which are before us, we have need to possess our souls in patience (Luke 21. 19). For in the midst of a hostile world, the pilgrim is bound to meet opposition and tribulation. But if patience has her perfect work the tribulation which works patience—cheerful, hopeful endurance—will lead on to experience, and experience to hope, which maketh not ashamed (see Rom. 5. 3, 4), and thus we are enabled to walk as here set forth, and to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12. 1). If we are looking away from all else unto Jesus; if our hearts are filled with His consolation and the comfort of His love, we surely can run with patience through the hostile world.

May the Lord direct our hearts "into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ" (2 Thess. 3. 5, N. Tr.).

Then seek to please Him, whatso'er He bids thee,

Whether to do, to suffer, or lie still;
'Twill matter little by what path He led us,
If in it all we sought to do His will.

In verse 13 of our chapter we have the
GOD OF HOPE.

The world hated our Lord Jesus Christ and cast Him out. It will have no place in its scheme for one who is faithful to his Lord. This world and all that is in it is heading for God's righteous judgments. Therefore a Christian does not fix his hopes on this world or its schemes.

We look beyond this world, with joyful anticipation, content to let its things go by, because we have a better and an enduring substance in heaven. Our hope is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, Jesus" (Heb. 6. 19, 20).

Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, great as they were; for "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11. 26). His hopes were set on brighter things beyond.

The God of Hope fills us with all joy and peace in *believing*. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as we contemplate all that we have in Him, blessed as we are with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. We anticipate with joy the exceeding riches of God's grace which He will show us in the ages to come. And as we are taught by the Holy Spirit, and believe what He sets before us in God's Word, there is abounding hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Christian who sets his hopes on worldly things is not only bound to lose them ultimately but he loses also his present enjoyment of heavenly things, for God will not permit His

child to be happy in the things belonging to a scene where His own dear Son was cruelly put to death. But as we find all our expectations in God, He does not disappoint us, but as the God of Hope fills us with ALL joy and peace. We are blessed now and hereafter.

So the Lord Jesus Christ is our blessed Hope. We are to live in daily expectation of His coming, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. When we believe God we have the things hoped for, substantiated; we have the evidence of the unseen things (see Heb. 11. 1). God is the God of hope as well as the God of patience and consolation, and by faith the unseen and eternal things become to us realities, to be entered into and enjoyed now, and the blessed hope of coming glories so fills the vision as to make the toils of the way nothing.

At the end of our chapter we read of the

GOD OF PEACE.

Men to-day are wildly seeking peace. They desire peace in the industrial world, in the religious world, in the political world. But they are not finding it. They are seeking it wildly because they do not take into account the sin and wickedness of the human heart, and because in all their efforts they leave out Him who alone can give it—the Prince of Peace. They are saying "Peace, and Safety," when destruction is before them.

Peace, rest, ease, security, concord are found alone in Him who is the God of Peace. We have turmoil and strife and struggle in this world which is away from God, due to the works of the evil one, but "the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16. 20); realizing this by faith, we enter even now into the enjoyment of our rest. Sin in our life mars our peace of mind and heart, so the apostle prays "the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly" and pre-

serve you (1 Thess. 5. 23); and, again, "The God of Peace, . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will" (Heb. 13. 20, 21). This brings peace of mind to the Lord's people.

The Bible speaks of peace in two ways—Peace *with* God, and the peace *of* God. We have peace with God through the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has made peace through the blood of His cross, and the moment we believe on Him as our Saviour, peace is made for us individually—"Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 1).

As we enter into and realize this the peace of God fills the heart. The believer in Jesus not only has peace *with* God but he has the peace *of* God in his heart. "Be careful for nothing" the apostle urges (Phil. 4. 6, 7), i.e., we are not to be full of care as to anything; "but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep [or sentinel] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." As one has said—

"Careful for nothing
Prayerful in everything
Thankful for anything,"

should be the normal attitude of him who has peace with God and has entered into intimate relationship with the God of Peace. No matter how serious a problem confronts him he is to take no anxious thought concerning it. On the contrary he brings everything to God in prayer, and when God gives the answer, he giveth God thanks. If we live such a normal Christian life, the peace of God, like a sentinel guarding a fortress, keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

"Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round,
On Jesus' bosom nought but calm is found."

Therefore, while these last chapters

of Romans set before the child of God a very exalted line of conduct and life, God is with us in energizing power. If our hearts and minds are set on Him,

He will give us the power to walk in His way.

May obedience to these instructions mark every one of us.

GODLINESS.

(F. B. HOLE.)

WHEN the Apostle Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, there were very ominous signs appearing in the church of God, and his mind was seriously disturbed as he contemplated them. A lot of foolish ideas were gaining currency; there was much unprofitable talk, and men were turning aside into all kinds of side issues. Leaving the main line of God's truth, they were getting into little sidings of their own that lead nowhere, and to nothing but endless questions and disputes.

In the first place there were the would-be law teachers at work. All who fell under their influence were diverted to "fables and endless genealogies." Chapters 1. and 4. allude to this particular evil. In it we see an outbreak of "the leaven of the Pharisees" of which the Lord warned His disciples. To-day it is perpetuated in the semi-Jewish and ritualistic line of things, which in its full-blown Romish form is simply full of grotesque fables and of the endless genealogies necessary to build up their "apostolic succession" theories.

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In the second place there were "men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth." They were teaching otherwise than the apostle, as chapter 6. 3-10 shows. They, too, had their questions and strifes of words based upon the idea that "gain is godliness," i.e., that gain is the end or object of godliness. Those who fell under their influence would be set upon riches and consequently fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. Here, then, was an outbreak of "the leaven of

Herod": a deliberate attempt to make Christianity a matter of worldly profit. To-day the leaven of Herod works energetically. Many there be who, though quite ready to denounce the suggestion that *personal* or *private* gain is the end of godliness, would enthusiastically applaud the idea that **SOCIAL** gain is the end of godliness. "Other-worldliness" they detest. "This-worldliness" they delight in. To them, a more comfortable and easier world, based upon better social conditions with universal peace is the whole substance of religion.

In the third place there were some turning aside to "the oppositions of science falsely so-called," as mentioned in the two closing verses of the epistle. "Profane and vain babblings" were the product of this departure also. This third form of evil does not appear to have at that time assumed such dimensions at Ephesus as the other two, and hence there is only a brief allusion to it. Still it was there; and in it we discern an outbreak of "the leaven of the Sadducees," the assumption that man's mind, man's reasoning faculties are the ultimate court of appeal in every question.

When men thus practically deify that "science" which is the product of their own observations and reasonings, they quickly become the sport of the devil with his much higher order of intelligence and vaster stores of knowledge accumulated over thousands of years. Consequently their boasted science becomes "science, falsely so-called." This evil has to-day grown to gigantic proportions. We hope that every one of our readers, the young

Christians amongst them especially, will diligently mark all that is implied in this one and only mention of "science" in the New Testament.

In the presence of these dangers the apostle was led to write to Timothy of the church as "the house of God . . . the pillar and ground of the truth" (3. 16). He points out what should characterize the house of God, if it is to be worthy of the God who indwells it by His Spirit.

Grace is the portal, the door of entrance into it, as seen in chapter 1. On entering, it is found to be "an house of prayer for all nations," as the opening verses of chapter 2. indicate. It bears an evangelical character, and both the men and the women composing it are to comport themselves with godliness. Especial care is to be taken that all who hold office in it are marked by a character that is a reflection of God Himself, as we see in chapter 3. In that house speaks the Spirit, who indwells it, as chapter 4. shows. In the apostles' day He spoke by way of revelation and inspiration as unfolded in 1 Corinthians 2. Now that the apostles are gone and the canon of Scripture is closed, He still speaks through the inspired communications He originally gave, and all we need is to have ears to hear. In the rest of chapter 4., together with chapters 5. and 6. we have the Spirit's warnings and instructions in detail. His voice orders the house of God, that all its furniture, so to speak, may be worthy of God, whose house it is.

Now all through one word is very prominent — GODLINESS. In one word, *this* is what should mark those who are of God's house, and *this* is what serves as an antidote to the evils which are pointed out.

Godliness, or piety, is the fruit of living and moving with God before the soul. It brings God into everything, so that everything is regulated in relation to God, and hence God-likeness

is stamped upon those who are godly. To live a life of self-consciousness is to be *selfish*. The world-conscious man is bound to be *worldly*. The one who is dominated by God-consciousness, so that the thought of God and of His will enters into every question, and everything is viewed in relation to Him, is *godly*. The man of selfishness and of worldliness fits neatly enough into the world system. Godliness alone befits the house of God. All else is a misfit there.

Godliness is greatly at a discount to-day, a discount which seems to increase with every year that passes. In our school days it was hardly possible to fling a greater insult at a boy's head than to call him "pious." Since then the false-named "science" which aims at eliminating all idea of God, accounting for everything by "nature" plus human agencies, has increased by leaps and bounds. As far as man's vain thinkings and talkings are concerned, God is politely bowed out of His own universe, the sphere of religion included. Instead of God being brought into everything, which is the way of godliness, He is excluded from everything, and hence ungodliness or impiety has increased by leaps and bounds also.

The younger generation of Christians are perhaps hardly aware of the pace at which things have been moving, as they have not the length of outlook which enables them to judge of it. It would be safe to affirm, we believe, that not for 200 years has the public profession of Christianity in Britain been marked by such impiety. The ground that was gained through the series of gracious revivals that commenced with Wesley and Whitfield has been all lost, and perhaps more than lost, during the past thirty or forty years, until a pagan or semi-pagan frame of mind has been produced in the masses of the people.

In the presence of this the promotion of godliness amongst the followers of

the Lord has become a prime necessity. Nothing would have a profounder effect than a revival of downright old-fashioned scriptural godliness. Those who are of God's household would then stand out, wearing the livery that becomes them, clear and distinct in the midst of an ungodly world. It would involve increased persecution for them (see 2 Tim. 3. 12), but the testimony of the Lord would be greatly honoured.

Now godliness rests upon a certain basis, hence the apostle writes of "the mystery" or "the secret" of godliness. Piety is a beautiful flower which has its roots hidden beneath the soil, and those roots are its "mystery." "Without controversy [or 'confessedly'] great is the mystery of godliness"—and there follows that remarkable passage which summarizes in a few crisp sentences the great facts connected with the manifestation of God in Christ. The passage begins with God manifested in the flesh and ends with His being received up into glory as Man. Here are found the secret roots of all true godliness. There is no godliness but that which springs from faith in God so revealed.

A certain class of person is fond of pointing out some professed unbeliever, who is yet a straightforward clean-living man of the world, such as are occasionally to be found, and proclaiming him to be more godly than the average believer. The fact is, he is not *godly* at all! Naturally amiable, generous, straightforward, of correct behaviour he may be, but that is all. The knowledge of God, as He has revealed Himself in Christ, is the only possible source of godliness. It is its producing cause, and the more the believer grows in the knowledge of God the more will godliness mark him.

If chapter 3. 16 gives us the roots of godliness the whole epistle in its many instructions shows us its many-hued flowers. The praying men lifting up holy hands, the women in modest deportment and apparel, as indicated

in chapter 2.; the bishops and deacons in chapter 3., with their sobriety, vigilance and self restraint; the men who labour and trust in the living God becoming an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, as in chapter 4.; the "widows indeed" of chapter 5.; the servants and masters, the rich men who trust not in uncertain riches but in the living God, and hence who are rich in good works and ready to distribute, as in chapter 6.—all these set before us godliness in its beautiful features as it is worked out in practice.

What do we know of these things? Does the uprising generation of young believers promise to blossom forth into men of holiness and prayer, and women of discretion and modest dress? Are the older believers setting an example in this direction? We ask these questions with anxiety and concern.

In 1 Tim. 4. 7-10 Paul sounds out the praises of godliness. It has promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come, and hence is profitable to all things. This is declared to be a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, as much as is the saying that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The godly man trusts in the living God as verse 10 indicates, and thereby brings Him into everything, even the smallest details of his life.

Now this is a thing in which we are to exercise ourselves. Bodily exercise profits for a little while, the spiritual exercise which results in godliness abides in its healthful effects for eternity. The young people who wish to be in first-rate physical trim willingly submit to a whole round of exercises. They rise early and get to work with their exerciser. The apostle urges us to be at least as much in earnest in our spiritual exercises as they are in their physical. Let us **EXERCISE** ourselves *unto godliness*.

Does anyone ask how this may be

done? Read the rest of chapter 4. Having exhorted Timothy to godliness the apostle indicates how it may be promoted. "Give attendance," he says, "to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Till Paul came Timothy was to give himself to the public reading of the inspired writings with the exhortation and teaching which would flow from this. But then how should he publicly read and discourse upon what he had not first privately read and studied for himself? The greater includes the less. Many of us may not be called to the public reading of God's Word, but we all are to the private reading of it, and this is a prime method of promoting godliness.

Meditation is mentioned in verse 15. We must assimilate what we read. We are not nourished by what we *eat*, but by what we *digest*. When we so meditate as to give ourselves wholly to the things of God, then our profiting begins to appear to all. We grow in

the ways of godliness. Thus it is we take heed to ourselves, and save from ungodliness not only ourselves, but others.

Oh! for a revival of godliness. May God Himself raise up Christian young men and women by the thousand, who in this godless, because God-excluding, age, are not ashamed to be peculiar and bring God into all the details of life here, not ashamed to walk in His fear and own Him by a simple trust, happy to walk in the light of what He is, as revealed in Christ. To this end may He be pleased to revive amongst us all, the young especially, a thirst for His Word, which may result in a far keener interest in the Scriptures and their systematic and prayerful study, and which may lead us to EXERCISE OURSELVES in order to get time for this reading and meditation. Lastly may He be pleased to use these few remarks, and the pages of this magazine generally, to promote all this, to His glory!

"CONTINUE."

(H. J. VINE.)

Jottings from an address on John 15. 9-12.

A SERVANT of Christ, who is now with the Lord, once remarked, "Abide in the love of Christ! That will constrain you to live to His glory as nothing else can." Yes, the secret lies there, in continuing in *His love*, and that is vastly different from occupation with *our love* to Him. The oft repeated exhortation to "love Christ"—to "have affection for Him,"—has turned souls in upon themselves, and hindered their joy and progress in Christ. It is to be noticed that the Spirit encourages us in Christ's love, and it is thus that love to Him is increased, but He never exhorts the members of Christ's body to love Him. It is His love which begets love in their hearts. Law demanded love, but failed to produce it. The triumphant banner of Divine love, lifted high in resurrection by the Son of God, who died for us and rose

again, tells of a victory gained in this respect when all else failed—"His banner over me was love."

To "abide in Christ" and "to continue in His love" (John 15. 9) are necessary words, to be heeded by us in these days of doctrinal departure from the truth and ecclesiastical departure from the order of the house of God; hastening on, as they do, the apostasy expressly foretold in the Word of God. We cannot put right what is going wrong, but those who are saved by grace and sealed by the Spirit can abide in Christ and in His love. There are other instructions also given to the redeemed, but as continuing in these, the others will be fulfilled also. We are told to continue in the *faith*, to continue in the *grace of God*, to continue in *prayer*, to continue in

what we have learned, to continue in the goodness of God; and, since the grace of God has justified us freely through the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and since it now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Him, the question is raised in Romans 6. 1, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "Far be the thought," for with the One who loves us we have died to sin, and that love which led Him to die for us constrains us to live to Him, who died and rose again, to Him who is now at the right hand of God.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

It is in His love we are exhorted to continue in John 15. 9. It is a present and victorious love! He loved us, when upon the cross He suffered for our many sins, but He loves us still exalted upon the throne where our sins are remembered no more. If we think of those who are saved in a *collective* sense, the verse referred to tells us that He loves us even as the Father loves Him; and again we read, "Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them to the end" (13. 1); also, "Christ loved us and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5. 1). It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that those who respond to His word and continue in His great love for them instinctively assemble together according to God's word. That keeps them bright and happy in the things of God! I could soon put a fire out without a bucket of water! just by taking that glowing coal, putting it by itself, and then another, and so on. The fire will quickly go out then! We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as is the custom of some; but so much the more as Christ's coming draws nigh are we to get together.

There is also the *corporate* sense in which Christ's love is ours; that which He has for the assembly as His body and His bride. The surpassing preciousness of this is often foreshadowed in the

Old Testament, but the Spirit of God tells us that it held back nothing so that we might become His—not even Himself; for Christ loved the Assembly and gave Himself for it. (See Eph. 5. 25–32.) This special and peculiar love then is also our present portion, this which is abiding and unchanging, in which we are to continue as those who form part of His body and His bride.

Then the *individual* aspect of the love of Christ is also made known to the believer, making him sing with gladness as its sweetness fills his rejoicing heart,

"Oh, Jesus, Lord, who loved me
like to Thee?"

(That hymn was written thus in the singular, but was altered for assembly use to the plural.) And as he looks on to the glorious goal to which his Saviour is bringing him, on the ground of His atoning sufferings at Calvary, the grateful song continues and exclaims,

"Myself the prize and travail of Thy
soul!"

Yes, the love of Christ for each one individually is a fact to be cherished in the heart with holy confidence. We must not lose the sense of His love for us each one individually. It was what John rested in at all times; for he opens his Gospel by showing us the Son in the bosom of the Father (1. 18), he afterwards shows us in chapter 13. a disciple in the bosom of the Son, and speaks of himself as the "disciple whom *Jesus loved*." He does not style himself "The disciple who *loved Jesus*!" No, he abides in the joy that Jesus loves him. How different, as we have said, to speaking of loving Christ, or having affection for Christ. No, it is in the love of Jesus he finds strength and cheer. Paul, too, approximates closely to John when he says, "The Son of God . . . loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. 2. 20). That is the constraining power in which we are to continue, always remembering whose

love it is : the love of no less a Person than the great and glorious Son of God "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen" (Rom. 9. 5, N.Tr.). The more we learn of His greatness and glory, the more will His love be enhanced to our adoring hearts, as we think of such an One stooping to suffering, shame and death to make us His for ever.

It may help us in this important matter if we inquire, Can anyone tell *the measure* of His love? Yes, if they can measure the Father's love for the Son; for He says, "As the Father hath loved Me so have I loved you." That is the measure. It is a measureless measure. It is infinite like Himself.

Can anyone show *the manifestation* of His great love for us? The Spirit of God has done so. Look at the cross of Calvary! See the Son of God, our precious Saviour, hanging there!—"While we were yet sinners Christ died for us."—He gave Himself for us.—"Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us" (1 John 3. 16, N.Tr.).—There we see the full manifestation of the love of Christ. What more could it do to make its fulness known to our hearts?

What, it may be asked, is *the motive* of such love as has been made known to us? There can be but one answer to the question—*Love!* It found its motive in itself. He loved because He loved. This is indicated in the words of Deuteronomy 7. 7, "The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you" for any merit or greatness beyond others, "but because the Lord loved you." God is love, and His love has been set upon us in Christ Jesus, and nothing can separate us from it. Not only was there no merit or worthiness in us to call out His love, but we were lost sinners. Yet He loved us because He loved us. His love found its motive in itself, and when He has us around Him in the home prepared, then His love shall be satisfied.

We may well say, "It is good for us

to be here!" and the Lord Jesus has said, "*Continue* ye in My love." Even though it cannot be measured, we may know the love of Christ which nevertheless passes knowledge (Eph. 3. 19), and we can behold with worshipping hearts the manifestation of it at the cross, rejoicing that its motive is found in itself and not in us, magnifying, however, the perfection and glory of it in that such undone sinners as ourselves should be its objects. Eternal glory to His holy Name!

"His faithfulness, for ever sure,
For endless ages shall endure;
His love's unchangeably the same,
And as enduring as His Name."

To continue here, then, is to be our present portion, even as He has said to us. It is one thing to be exhorted to "*continue*" in a vague sort of way, but it is quite another to be encouraged to continue as something positive, something definite, and that is what the Lord does when He tells us to continue in His love.

FULL JOY.

Nor can the sufferings of this present time rob us of the blessedness of our present portion as we abide in this. When Paul found himself in tribulation, distress, persecution and other trials, he asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and the answer shows that He knew not only could nothing sever us from it, but that "*in these things*" we are victorious, yea, and *more* than that, for it says, "In all these things we are *more* than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8. 37). Yes, having joy and satisfaction amidst the sufferings we are more than conquerors "*in*" them all, not by being taken out of them.

The Lord Jesus continued in His Father's love even when sorest trials pressed upon Him. He remained as ever in the bosom of the Father. So He said to us, "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15. 10, 11). Nothing moved Him from His sweet retreat. Nothing could rob Him of the Father's love. He kept His Father's commandments, and as we answer to those He has given to us we shall continue in His love. We shall find in them instruction which preserves us, paths in which our steps may securely tread, channels for the new nature, which every true child of God possesses, to flow freely in. His commandments are not grievous to such, but become the means of keeping us in fulness of joy, with His own joy too remaining in us, as He said.

I remember a saint being in such a state of depression through severe trial, that she thought God did not love her. I asked her if she knew anyone who had lived in this world whom God loved, and loved with an infinite love. "Oh, yes," she replied, "The Lord Jesus." Then, I asked, "Did any other suffer as He suffered?" "No," she answered. "And yet," I said, "He was loved perfectly, and so are you." At all times and under all circumstances we are to continue in His love, brethren, and then, with His joy in us, our joy will indeed be full.

When John and Peter received word from Mary Magdalene of the empty tomb, John uses the very strongest word to express Christ's love for Him—the disciple whom Jesus "*dearly loved*,"—and he outran Peter, reaching the sepulchre, where their beloved Lord had lain, first. Does not this indicate that the sense of Christ's love in our hearts will make us run well in the ways that are pleasing to God? The Lord also uses the strong word for love when He speaks of His Father's love to us, as He says, "The Father Himself dearly loves you because ye have dearly loved Me and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16. 27). In chapter 17. we read of the Son saying to His Father, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (22). How

vast! How infinite! And yet it is assuredly true.

The Son of the Father loves us, the Father Himself loves us, and though we are not exhorted in the New Testament to love the Father or the Son, nevertheless the Lord says to us—after speaking of His own love in which we are to continue—"This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you" (John 15. 12). We are exhorted to this because it is necessary for us. Divine love produces love, and it is the desire of our Lord Jesus Christ that love should flow freely from our hearts to one another, so He has given us a commandment as to it lest anything should be allowed to check its activities. "*Philadelphia*" means love of the brethren—"we know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14),—to Philadelphia Christ says, "I have loved thee," and we love because He first loved us (1 John 4. 19). Divine Love produces love—love to Him and love one to another—and secures response to that word, "Let brotherly love continue."

Is there any limitation given, any measure set to the love wherewith we are to love one another? Well, He says, "As I have loved you." That is a measureless measure as we have already shown, for He loves us as the Father loves Him, and we are to love after that manner and character—as He has loved us! Yet, He has not spoken of something which is altogether beyond us, for it is the outcome of keeping His commandments, continuing in His love, having His joy in us and our joy full. True was the word of the servant of Christ which we cited at the beginning, "Abide in the love of Christ! that will constrain you to live to His glory as nothing else can." And to that word we may add, "In fulness of joy!" May continuance mark us then, remembering His words, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*"

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. 2. Rejected and Sold. (Genesis 37. 12-36)

JACOB may have special affection for his son Joseph, nevertheless his other sons have a real place in his affections, and Joseph is to become the witness of the father's love to the brethren. Accordingly Jacob desires that Joseph shall leave the home in the vale of Hebron and journey to distant Shechem, there, as the sent one of the father, to inquire of his brethren's welfare and bring Jacob word again. Joseph on his part is ready to obey, though he has experienced the hatred of his brethren. Jacob's request meets with Joseph's immediate response, "Here am I." So we read Israel "sent him out of the vale of Hebron" and Joseph "came to Shechem."

In this journey is there not a foreshadowing of that far greater journey undertaken by the Son of God when, leaving the Father's home of light and love, He came into this world of death and darkness, well knowing the evil into which He came. And yet He turned not back, even as at the cross we read, "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him went forth" (John 18. 4). If the love of the Father would send Him, then the love of the Son is ready to do the Father's bidding. "Lo, I come to do Thy will O God." He comes as the sent One of the Father to declare the Father's love.

Moreover, Joseph's touching story foreshadows what manner of reception the world has given to the sent One of the Father. Having no heart for their father, these men of evil ways have no eyes to discern the sent one of his love. For them Joseph is only a dreamer whose dreams they would fain frustrate by conspiring to slay him. Even so of Christ, His people said, "This is the heir, come let us kill Him." And how eager man is to express his

hatred. "When they saw him afar off . . . they conspired against him to slay him." But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways. If it is a question of the Son of the Father's love drawing near to men, then indeed He will be rejected while yet afar off. But if it is a question of a sinner being drawn to the Father, then we read while "yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him."

The evil heart of man is marked by corruption and violence. Not only are the brethren ready to rid themselves of Joseph by violent acts, but they were prepared to cover their violence by corrupt and lying words. "Let us slay him" they say, "and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him." Violence and corruption are the outstanding marks of fallen man. Moreover man is shameless in his violence and corruption. He is not simply overcome by some sudden temptation; but, as with Joseph's brethren, they can deliberately plan their violent act and corrupt lies. Man had not progressed far on his downward course before "the earth was filled with violence" and "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Desperate indeed are the efforts man has made to keep "violence" in check, and to cover his "corruption" with a veneer of civilization. But in spite of laws and treaties, moral training and codes of honour, and notwithstanding prisons and reformatories, violence and corruption are rampant in every part of the earth.

Furthermore, nothing brings man's evil into evidence like the presence of goodness. It was the presence of Joseph that called forth the violence and corruption of his brethren; even

as the presence of perfect goodness in the Person of the Son of God became the occasion of the most furious outburst of man's evil. At His birth the enmity of man is ready to kill the child Jesus, and to cover its murderous intent with lying words (Matt. 2. 8, 16). But at the cross goodness is displayed as nowhere else only to call forth the greatest expression of man's evil that the world has ever seen. There goodness rises to its supreme height, and evil sinks to unutterable depths. As one has truly written of the cross, it is the display of "hatred against God and good . . . the truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee; the priests, set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence; the judge, washing his hands of condemned innocence; goodness absolutely alone, and the world—all men—enmity, universal enmity against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness; perfect love, jealous hatred."

And yet man vainly imagines that corruption and violence will prosper, even as the brethren of Joseph, having counselled to slay their brother, and designed to cover their act with lying, can with the utmost confidence say, "We shall see what will become of his dreams." They will indeed see. And alas for the rejecters of Christ, they too will see, for is it not written, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him"?

Perfect goodness brings out the universal guilt of men, but though all are guilty, there are different measures of guilt, and of this the Judge of all the earth will take account in due time, rendering to one few stripes, and to another many stripes. And of these different degrees of guilt we have intimations in the story of Joseph. All the brethren were guilty, but not in the same degree. Reuben, though unstable, and morally corrupt as we know

from his history (Gen. 35. 22; 49. 3, 4), was not necessarily cruel. In common with his brethren he has wronged Joseph, and individually he has wronged his father, but all human affection is not extinguished in his heart. He would fain spare Joseph's life, and his father's feelings. Judah, too, may be covetous, but he also has some compunction as to laying hands upon his brother. And these differences we see in the way men treat the Christ of God. All verily are guilty, but there are degrees of guilt. Herod, vile and pleasure-loving man that he was, would mock the Lord and set Him at nought, but he finds nothing worthy of death in Him. Pilate will go further than Herod, and yield up Christ to the murderous hatred of the Jews; but he has no personal enmity, and will at least make some feeble effort to preserve from death One that he knows to be innocent. But of the Jews Peter has to say, "Ye delivered [Him] up and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when He was determined to let Him go . . . and killed the Prince of life" (Acts 3. 13-15).

And still there are the pleasure-lovers, strangers to all religious convictions, who have no good word for Christ and yet will not oppose. But there are others yet more guilty concerning Christ. They profess to admire His moral excellencies, Pilate-like they find no fault in Him; yet to retain their popularity with the world, they stifle their convictions, decide against Christ, and range themselves with that thrice-guilty class whose active enmity never ceases to attack His glorious Person and trample under foot His precious blood. There are the careless and indifferent, there are the fearful and fainthearted, and there are the furious haters—open and avowed enemies of Christ. But all unite in the rejection of Christ.

Thus it was in Joseph's history. His brethren stripped him of his coat of many colours and cast him into a pit. The father had distinguished him by a

coat of many colours, the brethren degrade him by stripping him. So on many an illustrious occasion when Christ is distinguished above all others by some special display of Divine power, wisdom, and grace, man will at once strip him of His coat of many colours and seek to degrade Him to the level of a mere man, by asking, "Is not this the carpenter's son," or "Is not this the carpenter?" And, as in the case of Joseph, the stripping was only the prelude to the pit, so with Christ, the rejection of every witness to His glory, led man at last with wicked hands to deliver Him to death.

Yet, as ever, how significant the difference between the type and the anti-type. Isaac in his day very blessedly brings the death of Christ before us. He may indeed be bound upon the altar, Abraham may stretch forth his hand and take the knife to slay his son, but at once the angel is present to stay his hand. Joseph may again take up the story of the cross, as his brethren cast him into the pit, but for him "the pit was empty, there was no water in it." How different the cross of Christ. The same God at whose bidding "Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son," can now say "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My fellow," and though twelve legions of angels await His commands, yet not one is bidden to hold back the sword of judgment. It is no empty pit into which he must go. He can say, "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves" (Psa. 88. 6, 7).

Another has remarked that Joseph, as Isaac in the earlier scene, was delivered *from death*, but with Christ nothing but deliverance *out of death* could be His lot. And deeply instructive is this distinction. All the after blessings that flow from the exalted Joseph are dispensed by one who has been delivered *from death*. But if the

exalted Christ is to be a Dispenser of blessing He must first go into death and be delivered out of death. The natural and temporal blessings dispensed by Joseph did not call for actual death, but the spiritual and eternal blessings that Christ bestows can only be obtained at the cost of His death. If death is the holy judgment of God upon fallen man, that judgment must be met before blessing can be bestowed.

Further, it is instructive to remember that while the sufferings of Isaac and Joseph both point to the cross, yet each portray a different aspect of that great mystery. Isaac goes up to the mount to be offered up. Joseph goes down to the pit. And the mount and the pit each have their special significance. The mount will speak of the glory of the Person offered up. The pit will tell of the misery and degradation of those for whom he is offered up. Thus at the offering up of Isaac the message to Abraham is, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest." All speaks of the glory and unique position of the one who is offered up. He is the son, and more, the only son, and yet more he is the promised heir, Isaac, and the beloved of his father. But when Joseph goes down to the pit, while it is true his moral excellence cannot be hid, yet it is not his personal glory that is prominent but rather the evil and corruption of those who surround Joseph. If at last his brethren are to be brought into blessing and share in the glory of Joseph, then indeed Joseph must take their place of distance and degradation as set forth in the pit. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and "except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone."

Having cast Joseph into the pit, his brethren "sat down to eat bread." Nor was it otherwise at the cross. The presence of Joseph only serves to bring out the evil of his brethren, just as the cross becomes the occasion to expose

the depth of corruption in the heart of man. The leaders of Israel yield up the true Passover Lamb to death, and calmly sit down to eat the passover feast—an evil and adulterous generation, like the adulterous woman of Proverbs, of whom it is written, “She eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith I have done no wickedness.”

Moreover, the circumstances draw forth further depths of evil in these brethren. The company of merchantmen on their way to Egypt at once suggest to Judah the opportunity of making profit out of their brother. Why not sell Joseph and make a little money? If they are not going to gratify their hatred by killing Joseph, why not gratify their covetousness by selling Joseph? Hence they give their brother up to the Gentiles, and give themselves up to money making. And what Judah did a thousand years before Christ came, His descendants have done for nearly two thousand years since His rejection. At the cross the Jews abandoned their Messiah to the Gentiles and ever since they have abandoned themselves to the worship of mammon. “Profit” is the word that governed the action of Joseph’s brethren. Judah asks the question, “What profit is it if we slay our brother?” This is the great question for the covetous heart. Not “Is it right?” or “Is it wrong?” but “What profit is it?” And “profit” has governed the policy of the Jew throughout the long centuries since that sad day when their Messiah was sold for thirty pieces of silver.

Thus Joseph passes into the land of the Gentiles and is “brought” into Egypt. Egypt was ever a snare to Abraham, and his sojourn in Egypt brought him only sorrow and shame. With Joseph, however, it brought blessing and glory. Why this difference? Is it not that in Abraham’s case he “went down into Egypt to sojourn there” (12. 10); but Joseph was “brought” into Egypt. One went

there in unbelief and self-will. The other was brought there according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

The closing scene of the chapter further displays the heartlessness and hypocrisy of the brethren as well as the feebleness of Jacob. Having practised a heartless piece of deceit upon their father, which plunges the old man into the deepest sorrow, these hypocrites gather round to comfort him. While none can excuse the wickedness of his sons, yet we cannot but see in this scene that Jacob is only reaping what he had already sown. Thirty years before Jacob had deceived his father with “the skins of the kids of goats”; and now after long years, he himself is deceived by his sons with “a kid of the goats.” There is no more inexorable law in the government of God than that which declares “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” There may be long years between the sowing and the reaping, but at last the reaping time comes. The mills of God grind slow, but they grind exceeding small.

We need hardly wonder that Jacob “refused to be comforted” by such comforters, but in the presence of, what to him was the actual death of his son, his faith seems to have grown exceeding dim. How different the behaviour of David in the presence of the death of his son. Jacob says, “I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning”; but of David we read he “arose . . . and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped.” Both men are in the presence of the death of a child, but one says “I will go down into the grave mourning,” the other “I will go up to the house of the Lord and worship.” Yet both were true saints, but one looked no further than death and the grave, the other looked beyond death to resurrection. Jacob says, “I will go down into the grave unto my son.” And David says, “I will go to him,” but no word about the grave. He looked beyond death, and

beyond the grave, into a scene where there is "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying nor pain," and into

that deathless scene, says David, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Samuel 12. 19-23).

THE PRAYER MEETING.

(J. SIME.)

WE need to pray for the Prayer Meeting, to go to it, and go to pray. We need to withstand languor and lassitude—the present priestly grace of Christ can lift us above every incubus. If you want to send the meeting to sleep, whisper and mumble indistinctly with your face buried in your hands. Such prayer is unrighteous, because it raises the flesh in others straining to hear, as it tires and wearies them. Pray briefly—consider the young and the weak. Be definite and brief. Luke 11. 5 was both. "Friend, lend me three loaves." Think how cruel it is to wander from Dan to Beersheba and back again, wearying people already weary with the day's toil. G. V. Wigram once said to a brother "You prayed me into a holy frame of mind, and then prayed me out of it again."

The longest audible prayer in the New Testament is the 17th of John, the sublime address of the Son to the Father, it probably occupied five minutes. Avoid all criticism—if I feel in a critical spirit while another prays, my own spirit is out of touch with the mind of God. Keep clear of theological prayers. J. N. Darby once said, these are "real iniquity." If we pray to show off our knowledge, we do not PRAY TO GOD.

Keep your eyes closed while another is praying—but don't sleep. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, He will yet come in and set things right. To pray at people is very wicked, for we pretend we are "Praying to God" whereas we are "Preaching at Men."

When the Prayer Meeting is over,

refrain from gossip and scandal, as you would from poison. Remember the Prayer Meeting is the pulse of the Assembly. To have twenty saints at the breaking of bread with orthodoxy at blood heat, and five or six at the Prayer Meeting with prayer at zero, surely indicates something wrong with the vitality of the body.

Ponder your reasons for absence. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1. 14). Sisters are "joints of supply" to the body, though not given audible expression, and can add their "Amen" to petitions offered.

Prayers should be petitions, not orations. God does not need us to explain principles to Him nor give Him a large amount of information. Expressed need and expected blessing, expressed weakness and expected power, should be our thoughts of the place where prayer is wont to be made.

We speak plainly, because we feel the need of great plainness of speech. Long prayers and long pauses kill the desires of many earnest hearts. Let us ask only for what we want, and wait and watch for what we ask. Long desultory preaching prayers are perfectly intolerable and tiresome—they weary, grieve and irritate instead of refreshing, comforting, and strengthening. A healthy, happy, earnest, diligent soul will always be found at the Prayer Meeting. If I designedly absent myself from the Prayer Meeting, I am in a bad state of soul.

We call on all to look this question straight in the face, to look to God about it, to pray for the Prayer Meeting, and judge themselves.

DEATH.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

"*MARVEL of a tribe is the white tribe,*" exclaimed a dusky chieftain, "*but one thing they lack—the solving of the death puzzle.*"

It is an ancient Eastern Book which alone furnishes the answer. Before ever a death occurred in the world, God made it plain what its nature would be. It is the fruit of man's disobedience, the direct inevitable result of his fall. God in His wisdom had given every tree in the Garden of Eden to our first parents, but in mercy forbade them to eat of one tree—the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God had plainly said, "Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2. 17).

We all know the story. Disobedience entailed death. Death was no puzzle at the first. But man threw off the knowledge of God and lost the light God had given him, and he has consequently been left groping in the dark.

But even his gropings show how conscience works. Superstition and speculation are rife in the depths of the African forest as to the meaning of death. The first of the black man's names for death are—

The Secret.

The Puzzle.

But they have other titles. They call death "the stripper," and so they well may. How foolish men are to seek to clothe themselves with that which in a few days death will strip off, and *forget eternity!*

They call death "the arrival." Wonderful title, showing that the uneducated, degraded savage has a sense, not that death is the *end* of everything, but that it is a *beginning*. True, it is the end of a very short span of life down here, but it is the beginning of a stupendous eternity. It is indeed "the arrival," but of what?

It is called "the perfect educator," and who can teach like death? When it comes it puts this life in a truer perspective, and shrivels up all things that do not truly matter.

It is likewise called "the wages." It is wonderful how conscience asserts itself. Far beyond many in these western lands of enlightenment are these dusky sons of the east and south.

What euphemistic names are given to death. We hear them all around us. "The debt of nature." What an evasion! What a subterfuge! What a deceit! A lie of the first water! This phrase would cast death upon God as His original design for man. The phrase is a libel upon God, and a deceit calculated to lull man's conscience into a false security.

The spiritist, pluming himself upon ideas infinitely superior to the worn-out creeds of the Christian religion, as he deems them, calls death "a new birth," "a passing over." A new birth, forsooth! Decay, decrepitude, death are, on the face of it, emphatically not a new birth. And yet with such sophistries men will go gaily forward to the inevitable.

The Christian Scientist will tell you that there is no such thing as death—that it is only imagination. Strange that no Christian Scientist, from Mrs. Eddy downwards, can curb his imagination sufficiently for even one to evade the great reality!

No, the poor savage thinks more truly than that. It is where the light of Christianity has shone that men apostatize and embrace errors which even the heathen have too much sense to adopt.

Yes, it is that old eastern Book that **ALONE** in all the literature of the world tells the truth about this great phenomenon. We read—

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6. 23).

The savage yet again calls death "the chastiser," "the revealer," "the joiner." All these titles evoke thought. "The joiner." Yes, the sinner will be joined at death to his sins and their consequences. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (1 Tim. 5. 24).

But what is death for the Christian? "Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid" (1 Tim. 5. 25). The Apostle Paul calls death "the gain." He says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1. 21).

Thank God, THE DEATH—the death of our Lord Jesus Christ has put a different complexion upon things. Death is ours, is the triumphant cry of the apostle (1 Cor. 3. 22). "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15. 26). One of the sublimest, most thrilling statements as

to the Christian's eternal state is, "There shall be no more death" (Rev. 21. 4). The dead in Christ are going to be raised, the bodies of the living saints when He comes will be quickened.

No more does the Christian fear death as he looks into the empty tomb of the Son of God, and sees how He has conquered death. Wise are we when we look death in the face and take its true measure.

What an awful catastrophe for the unbeliever: he too will be raised, but for the *second* death. But for the Christian, death is indeed ours, won to be our servant at the Father's bidding through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Still we wait, not for death but for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can sing:—

"O Lord 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of th' archangel! oh, voice of the Lord;
Blessèd hope! blessèd rest of my soul!"

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Israel of God.

If a Jew be walking according to the "rule" in Galatians 6. 16, can he rightly be included in the "as many as" on which the peace and mercy rest? As there are no two sections of people in new creation, but all one in Christ Jesus, who are "the Israel of God" on which the peace and mercy also rests?—EAST DULWICH.

THE words "this rule" refer to "new creature," or more accurately the "new creation" mentioned at the close of the previous verse. The Galatians had slipped into the error of regarding the law as their rule of life whereas the rule of the Christian's life is new creation. This being so, it is clear that no Jew if he still remains a Jew religiously can by any possibility walk according to "this rule." If converted and a Christian he may of course do so.

Israel after the flesh had circumcision as their distinguishing mark, and circumcision had been pressed on the

Galatians by Judaizing teachers, and hence has a considerable place of prominence in this Epistle. The apostle uses the term "the Israel of God," we gather, to indicate the true Israel whose circumcision is of the heart, "in the spirit and not in the letter" as Romans 2. 29 says. According to the Old Testament Israel as a nation stood in the favour of God, and peace and mercy rested on them if they obeyed. Here it is to rest on the true Israel whom God owned.

It is true as you observe that in the present dispensation this true Israel is found incorporated into the Church of

God. The apostle specifies them separately, we judge, to emphasize that the national Israel with its circumcision is not now owned of God.

In the next dispensation the Israel of God will stand out a class by themselves, the Church having been translated at the close of the present period.

It is possible, of course, that in the expression the apostle had in his mind

that in a certain sense to-day the Christians, as such, whether formerly Jews or Gentiles, may be so designated; as he himself wrote to the Philippians, "Beware of the concision [the Judaizing teachers]. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (3. 2, 3), but we hardly think this is the primary thought of the passage.

Acts 10. 35.

Kindly explain the verse, "But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10. 35). There has been controversy as to the fact of Cornelius being devout, one who feared God and his righteousness accepted, apart from his being saved.—COXHOE.

THE difficulty which so many feel as to the case of Cornelius is occasioned, we believe, mainly by a failure to grasp the transitional character of the age in which he lived. The dim light of Judaism was being displaced by the full light of the Gospel, and the barriers of the law system were breaking down in the presence of the liberty of the Gospel.

Cornelius, though a Roman, was a Jewish proselyte. He had abandoned idolatry and "prayed to God alway," coupling with his prayers the fear of God and almsgiving. Evidently then he was a centurion marked by *faith*, as much as was the centurion of Matthew 8. He was not a mere outward religionist but a truly born-again soul, still he did not, as yet, know the Gospel.

Peter, on the other hand, if he followed his natural inclinations formed by his Jewish upbringing, would have practically forbidden him the Gospel. Hence the special way in which the Lord dealt with His servant, and disarmed his prejudices by the vision of the sheet from heaven.

In verses 34 and 35 of Acts 10., Peter openly acknowledges that he has learnt the lesson. He perceived that God now put no difference between Jew and Gentile, and that if a man were found in any nation fearing God and working righteousness, God would have respect to that man.

From other Scriptures we know that man in his unregenerate condition neither knows God, pleases God, nor even seeks

after God, for these things a man must be born again, whether he may live in Old Testament or in New Testament times. Salvation, however, goes further than new birth, and is connected with the Gospel, hence Cornelius needed to hear words whereby he and his house should be saved. Faith, as we have said, was already there, as evidenced also by Cornelius saying, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God," and the moment the full Gospel message was heard it was believed. No sooner had the words recorded in verse 43 left Peter's lips than they were embraced by the expectant faith of Cornelius, and this belief of the Gospel of salvation was sealed by God with the gift of the Spirit according to Ephesians 1. 13.

We must remember, of course, that "salvation" is a word of very full import as used in the New Testament. If we whittle away its force until in our minds it becomes merely synonymous with "deliverance from hell" we are at once plunged into difficulties over such a case as that of Cornelius—devout, God-fearing, born again, yet not saved.

While the transitional period lasted cases such as this were common—Acts 19. 1-7 furnishes us with another example. When once it was over, such cases became rare. To-day, if men talk of getting acceptance with God by working righteousness, it is nearly always a case of rejecting the Gospel in order to maintain their own fancied righteousness, and they themselves will be rejected of God.

"ONE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN." (J. T. MAWSON.)

Notes of Addresses in Sydney, N.S.W., on "Christ in the Revelation," No. 2.

(Read Revelation 1. 9-20.)

[T was in a new, and to him an exceedingly strange character, that John beheld His Lord on this Lord's day in Patmos. He had known Him as the Man of Sorrows, weeping with the afflicted, tenderly pleading with the sinful, and speaking words of comfort to the penitent. He had known Him in such blessed accessibility of grace that not a soul, that had any need, feared to come to Him. He had seen the children come eagerly, with glad laughter in their hearts and mouths, to nestle in His enfolding arms with a confidence that even a mother's could not have given. He had seen lepers come, loathsome creatures, offending his eye with their distorted bodies, and polluting the air with their corruption, and he had seen his Master, instead of turning from them with disgust, look upon them with great compassion and touch them with healing power. He had seen wonderful things, and heard words even more wonderful than the works; and the words he had heard and the works he had seen had alike taught him that His Lord was meek and lowly in heart; that He was full of grace and truth; that His delight was to minister to others, to bind up the brokenhearted and to put Himself at the disposal of all. He had learnt that the tenderest heart in the universe beat in the bosom of Jesus, and he had found rest in the hour of his greatest bewilderment in laying his head upon that bosom.

The last time that John had seen his Lord was as he stood with the eleven at Bethany and watched Him, as with hands uplifted in benediction He was parted from them as He went up into heaven. John had not forgotten that face and those hands—pierced

hands; and to see Him again as he had seen Him then was John's great hope.

"But I shall see her again, *just as she was*, shan't I?" sobbed a little girl to me, as I endeavoured to explain to her that her darling mother had gone to rest with the Saviour, and that she would see her again, brighter and more beautiful than ever she had known her on earth. The change of which I spoke made no appeal to her; "I want her *just as she was*" was her only desire and prayer. And may not "the disciple whom Jesus loved" have had that one desire filling his heart on this Lord's day of which he tells? He was in the Spirit, musing, doubtless, upon all that he had learnt of the tenderness and grace of His Lord, and longing to see Him just as He had known Him.

And so he shall, and so shall we all; just as He was in the tenderness and grace of His heart, unchanged as to all that attractability that made Him everything to John and to us! Yes even though eternal glories dwell fitly on His brow we shall know Him as He was in all that made Him JESUS to us, for that must abide. At the end of the Book He assures our hearts of this by saying, "I, JESUS." He would not have us forget that He is Jesus amid all the glories yet to be; nor could we, for glories such as those of which the Revelation speaks will come and go, and be superseded by others throughout the ages of the ages, but Jesus will remain "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

John was startled from his musings by a voice like a trumpet; it was not the voice of a lover wooing with gentle words, nor of a comforter soothing a troubled heart, but of a commander

calling His army to attention. It was an alarm to arouse the sleepers ; a call to action ringing out insistently for the ears of the indifferent. The Lord's rights had been refused by Israel and the world and the churches were becoming careless as to them. They were letting their Lord and His interests fall into a minor place in their selfish love of ease, and that early defection has developed into an awful corruption in the midst of which we live to-day. Where can we look for whole-hearted devotion to the Lord ? Many bodies we see, all professing His name, but where amongst them is there faithfulness to the Person, work and word of the Lord ? Rich and increased in goods, and boastful of their gifts and powers and influence are many of them, but the Lord is outside of them, and the treachery that marks them is as black as the kiss of Judas. Hence we still need to hear the voice like a trumpet, we all need it, lest we sleep as do others, and become indifferent to the claims of our Lord. May we have ears that can hear it, and hearts and consciences to respond to it. This was the voice that commanded Joshua, saying, "Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face ? Israel hath sinned."

The voice sounded *behind* the exiled apostle ; he was recalled from his longing for the company of the Saviour in the coming glory to consider things as they were, and would yet be in the church and in the world, and to hear the Lord's judgment as to it all.

The words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," belong to the 8th verse rather than the 11th. Still we may consider them here. The speaker is the A and the Z, the beginning and the end of all language. His voice was the first to be heard in the eternal silence. He spoke, and out of nothing the universe appeared ; by the word of His power were all things created, and by that same word they are upheld, and will be until they have served their purpose. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the founda-

tion of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish ; but Thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up and they shall be changed : but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1. 10-12). Other voices have spoken since He called the world into being ; the devil has spoken, and his words have produced a kingdom of darkness, a world of pride ; sin has spoken with a frenzied voice and built up a kingdom in rebellion against God and a world of misery ; death has spoken with the voice of a tyrant, and the whole race of men is held in fear of him, and only the intervention of the Alpha and Omega could bring release from his awful dominion.

But none of these voices spoke first and none of them shall speak last. The great Alpha is also the triumphant Omega and He must have the last word about everything ; and when the devil and sin and death have had their full say He will silence them for ever in the lake of fire, with every other voice that challenges the supremacy of God. When He shall say, "It is done," then all shall stand fast for ever according to the will of God. Brethren in Christ, Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. Consider this well, for it means everything to us. He has spoken life into our souls. He has said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life ; and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life," and no other voice, past, present, or future, can undo His Word. Consider Him well in this character and it will give stability to your faith.

John turned to behold the One whose voice had broken upon his ear with such authority, and he beheld "seven golden candlesticks ; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head

and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." The first mention of the Son of Man in the New Testament is in the Lord's own words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8. 20). And this awe-inspiring passage gives us the last. Is it possible that such lowliness and poverty could put on such majesty and power? Yes. For in both Scriptures the self-same Person is presented to us. John had known Him in His poverty and humiliation and had leaned upon His bosom then; he sees Him in His glorious majesty now and falls at His feet as one dead.

The Ancient of days and the Son of Man are one. We are here carried back to Daniel 7. where the vision of the Ancient of days is given in connection with the rising up and the destruction of the kingdom of the fourth beast, Rome, in fact, in its past and yet future forms. In this great power and the head of it, when it reappears, will be concentrated all the will of man; it will be the climax and the crown of his rebellion against God, and it will be specially energized and inspired by Satan and will make a definite attempt to banish God from the earth and hold the kingdoms of it against Christ. But the kingdoms of this world belong to Christ, and as the Son of Man He shall take them, that all people and nations and languages should serve Him. Judgment must precede the establishment of His kingdom; it will be introduced by judgments, and He it is, whom John saw, who will execute them. But He cannot judge the evil that is in the world and ignore it in the Churches; He cannot

punish the godless world and allow evil to continue unrebuked amongst those who profess His Name. Hence His words are to the Churches. His own must see Him first in all the majesty of His holiness and the greatness of His justice.

So He appears: "*Clothed with a garment down to the feet.*" He came first to earth to minister to others. He was then the Son of Man with His loins girded for service and to give His life a ransom for many: now it is not service but judgment. "*Girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*" His affections are restrained by Divine righteousness. "*His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.*" The dignity of eternity encircles the once thorn-crowned brow as a halo. "*His eyes were as a flame of fire*": to search out every evil thing, and to trace from its origin to its climax every rebellious system that has reared its head beneath the sun. "*His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace*": indicating that He will march onward in the execution of Divine righteousness against all evil, until every enemy is subdued beneath His feet. "*His voice like the sound of many waters*": the voice of majesty and authority. "*Out of His mouth goeth a two-edged sword*": His word is a life-giving word to all who believe, but it will be a word of judgment and death to all who refuse to own His claims.

No wonder that John fell as dead at His feet when He beheld His Lord in this character. But it was well for him, and it is well for us, to know something of the majesty of the One with whom we have to do. How lightly we often treat His claims. How easy it is for us to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and to lose the fear of the Lord. We need to be reminded that sin must come under His rebuke and judgment, that we may search our hearts and ways before Him. The fear of the Lord will keep our consciences active and make us very careful of our walk. Yet the Lord's appearance in

such majesty must not fill His saints with terror as it will the world. They have no need to call upon the mountains to hide them from His face as the godless will, for they know Him in another character; they know Him as the One who loved them and gave Himself for them.

How blessed is that which follows: "*He laid His right hand on me,*" says John. The hand of power was stretched forth to support him. It was laid tenderly upon him to still his terror, and the voice which he had often heard in former days thrilled his heart again as it gently bade him not to fear. The truth of His glory and His grace here revealed abide for us. He died in deepest humility to save us, He lives in glorious majesty to support us. We may rely upon Him. The hand that will wield the iron sceptre holds the weakest sheep that follows Him now; it is the hand that was pierced for them and it will never let them go. His very glory is on our behalf, and the righteousness that condemns the rebellious justifies and protects all believers.

He is the living One, who once was

dead. Why? But He is now alive for evermore. Love carried Him into death. Power has brought Him forth from the grave. What a road He has travelled to His present place in glory. How great has been His triumph. And we can triumph in His victory. And the keys of Hades and of death are in His hand. He is Master of the whole dominion of death, and as we know Him thus the fear of death is gone.

So John was raised up and commissioned to write to the churches *the things that he saw*—the glories of the Lord—His holiness, majesty and authority; "*and the things that are*"—the history of the church on earth to the coming of the Lord for the real and the rejection of the unreal. We are in the things that are, though very near to the end of them; *and the things that are to be after these*—the judgments that are to fall on the earth until the will of God is established in it, which things we have from chapter 4. onward. May we give heed to His words, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

ENOCK, THE SEVENTH FROM ADAM.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

IT has pleased God to give us a concise record of man's history, from Adam downward, so that we might get a clear and intelligent view of His ways and dealings with His responsible creatures on the earth. The Bible is God's great Picture-gallery, in which are portrayed with Divine accuracy, the gracious activities of a Saviour-God, and also the way in which man has responded to the goodness and beneficence of his Creator.

Enoch lived before the Flood; that

mighty deluge of waters which swept the earth under the judgment of God. The condition of things that then existed on the earth is described in brief, but solemn and significant language in Gen. 6. 5. This sweeping indictment was true of the Antediluvians; but we do well to remember that it applies with equal force to-day, in this enlightened, progressive, and highly cultured 20th century. God's verdict has been given. The Creator has spoken, and it is true wisdom on

the part of His creatures to acknowledge and bow to it.

The one grand outstanding fact stated about Enoch is that "He walked with God," and that, too, for 300 years and in the midst of surroundings which were anything but congenial; for corruption, violence, and ungodliness marked the days in which his lot was cast (see Gen. 6. 11-13). But not only was Enoch separate in heart and life from the Godless element around him, but he boldly bore witness to the claims of God, and foretold, in Divinely given wisdom, the judgments which would most surely oversweep a rebellious and ungodly world (see Jude 14. 15). Enoch, moreover, was a family man. He knew the cares and anxieties, as well as the privileges and responsibilities, of bringing up his children in the fear of the Lord. But who would be so well able to train and direct the members of his household as the man who, habitually, "walked with God"?

May we pause here, and challenge our hearts as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and as those of whom Scripture speaks in 2nd Tim. 1. 9: who are *saved*, and *called*, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to God's purpose given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Can it be said of us, in any measure, that *we* are walking with God? blessed as we are, with privileges, and in relationships, far, far, exceeding anything that Enoch ever knew. On the negative side, it involves a clean cut with the world in holy separation in life and ways, from its systems, its maxims, its creeds, and its associations. On the positive side, *ponder it well*, it involves communion with God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Who can fathom the height and depth, the length and breadth of an intimacy such as this? and yet it is the happy privilege of the feeblest babe in the family of God to rejoice in it from January to December.

The sense of God's matchless grace towards us, will ever keep us lowly and dependent. Enoch would have been the last to have said of himself that which the Holy Spirit has recorded of him for *our* encouragement. Scripture is silent as to the details of his private life, his testings, his trials, his persecutions, his exercises, and conflicts: but we may be sure that the enemy would bring all his artillery to bear upon such a doughty champion for God: yet, for three solid centuries, this mighty man of faith pursued his steady and triumphant course. Truly, we may well acknowledge that "wisdom's children," of a dim, past dispensation, cause us to hang our heads with shame.

Another fact recorded of Enoch is, that he was "translated." He did not, like others around him, pass through the article of death, but was taken straight to heaven without dying, reminding us of 1 Thess. 4. 16-18, when Christ shall descend into the air, and *all*, without exception, who have put their trust in Him will be translated, like Enoch from earth to heaven, to be His loved and suited companions through the ages of eternity. At any moment this event may take place, and all those who love the Lord are exhorted to "comfort one another" in view of it.

One thing more about Enoch: while he was here, standing as a faithful witness for God, he had this testimony, that "He pleased God." The joy of the Lord was his strength (see Neh. 8. 10). How comforting and blessed to have the continued consciousness of Divine approval: and this is surely the portion of all who walk with God. If God has been pleased to tell us about Enoch, and his faithful walk in a day of abounding evil, it is to encourage our hearts, and stimulate our faith, until our pilgrimage days are ended, and we find ourselves at home with Him who, at such infinite cost, has made us His own.

"THE THINGS WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE."

(F. B. HOLB.)

IN his epistle to Titus the Apostle

Paul lays great stress upon two things: firstly, upon sound doctrine; secondly, upon the conduct that befits sound doctrine. The two things are closely related to one another as cause and effect, so much so that each may be used as a kind of test to the other.

If it be a question of doctrine, then the apostle can write of "the truth which is after godliness" (1. 1); for all real "truth" has its effect and fruit in godliness, and that which has not is thereby declared to be spurious and not real. If, on the other hand, conduct be in question, then he urges, "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (2. 1); for if any line of behaviour or of speech is not in keeping with truth and sound teaching it is thereby condemned. Sound doctrine and sound conduct fit one another like a die and the impression which it leaves in the wax.

Although the epistle is a short one and is mainly occupied with instructions as to conduct, yet there is found within its three chapters a very clear summary of sound doctrine as to the work of God which lies at the foundation of all sound and godly behaviour. The range of sound doctrine is of course nothing less than the whole circle of truth, yet that part of it which concerns itself with what God has wrought in connection with our salvation has a very special bearing upon the order of life and the godliness which should mark us as Christians. In chapter 2. 11-14 we are instructed as to the appearing of grace and its effect in redemption, in chapters 3. 4-7, as to the work of mercy in washing and renewing. The former deals with the objective work, i.e., that wrought for us, yet outside us and apart from us, by Christ on the cross; the latter with

the subjective work, i.e., that wrought within us each in turn by the Spirit of God.

In the first place, then, sound doctrine sets before us the grace of God. At Crete, as in other places, were found "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision." These were full of "Jewish fables and commandments of men." Law was their theme, but law degenerated into human commandments; and they, while binding law upon other people, are stigmatized by a fine stroke of irony as unruly themselves. The grace of God has appeared.

Next, the grace of God which has appeared has brought with it salvation for all men, for the marginal reading of this passage is the better translation. Grace overleaps all boundaries. When God formulated His demands upon men He gave His law to one nation, but when He comes forth as a giving God He knows no such restriction, but addresses Himself to all. How many may receive the overtures of grace and how many reject is another matter.

Further, the grace of God has expressed itself in our Lord Jesus Christ having given Himself for us "that He might redeem us." Here we have that effectual work of grace which has placed all our relationships with God upon the footing of redemption. His object was to redeem us from all iniquity and purify us to Himself as a people for His own special possession, just as of old in the type God redeemed Israel out of Egypt, the land of darkness and bondage and idolatry, that He might purify them to Himself as His servants and witnesses.

Then also, the grace which has redeemed us teaches us, and teaches in an effectual fashion. Formerly, "the

law was our school-master," and after the fashion of school-masters it imposed upon us demands and instructions from without. Grace teaches by acting upon the heart and conscience of the one brought under its instruction. Many of us can now look back over the years to our school days, and we recognize how many of those things that we learnt—imposed upon our memories by means of books and oral instruction from without—have been long ago clean forgotten; and yet, on the other hand, how many things there were which never exactly taxed our memories, but so to speak wrote themselves on our hearts and ingrained themselves into our very characters, and these things we have not lost and never shall. After this latter fashion grace teaches.

Lastly, grace not only teaches us in regard to the present but directs our eyes to the future, so that we are "awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (N. Tr.). The grace has appeared, it redeems us and instructs us and leaves us to await the appearing of the glory, for the second coming of the Lord is an integral part of "sound doctrine."

All through this passage there has run, as a dark background, the thought of what the Cretans were by nature. The apostle quotes with approval the very uncomplimentary saying of one of their own prophets, "Cretans are always liars, evil wild beasts, lazy gluttons" (N. Tr.). The same thought, that of the moral filth and degradation in which man lies, gave rise to the passage in the third chapter. Here, however, the Apostle speaks not of the Cretans alone but links himself up with them. "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." This being so, thorough moral cleansing is our deep necessity.

This deep need has been met by the appearing of God's love to man—His

philanthropy. Not according to human works of righteousness but according to Divine mercy we have been saved, and saved, be it noted, by a work wrought in us, a work of washing and renewing. The word used here and translated "washing" is one that literally means "bath" or "laver," and the only other place where it is used in the New Testament is in Ephesians 5. 26. This is rather striking, for in Leviticus 8. 4-6 we read how Moses brought Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle, where the laver stood, and there bathed them all over; subsequently, as we know, the priests had to bathe both hands and feet in the laver every time they entered the sanctuary in the service of God. With this the twofold use of the word in the New Testament seems to correspond.

The word which is translated "regeneration" in this passage is also one which only occurs twice in the New Testament, the other occasion being in Matthew 19. 28. In Matthew it signifies that new order of things which will be established when the Lord Jesus Christ reigns, and consequently the earth is "made to bring forth in one day," and a nation—Israel—is "born at once" (Isa. 66. 8). It will be an hour of regeneration on a world-wide scale. The passage in Titus shows us that though we have not yet arrived at the hour of the regeneration as Matthew speaks of it, yet believers have been the subjects of the washing of regeneration individually; they have been the subjects of the new birth in all its cleansing power.

Connected with the new birth is the "renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." The Holy Spirit of God has to do with our new birth, for we are born of water and of the Spirit, according to John 3.; but the renewing of the Holy Ghost goes beyond this evidently, for it is connected with the reception of the Spirit, "shed on us abundantly," in accordance with the Lord's own words,

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jno. 10. 10). We have been saved from all the folly and moral filth specified in verse 3 by the washing effected by the new birth and the renewing effected by the work and indwelling of the Spirit of God. Thus saved and also "justified by His grace," according to that redemption of which the previous chapter has spoken, we are "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Putting thus these two passages together, we have a pretty full outline of what sound doctrine is as regards God's work of grace for us individually, whether we look at it objectively—the work of Christ for us, or subjectively—the work of the Spirit in us.

Now this great work of God on our behalf is made the basis of the apostle's appeal for sound and godly behaviour. Titus was to "speak the things which become sound doctrine," and enforce them upon the saints in Crete in spite of the bad national characteristics of the Cretans. It is a very common thing to-day to hear believers excusing ebullitions of temper or other outbreaks of the flesh by saying, "Oh, well, that is my make-up, that is the kind of person I am." "No doubt it is" we may well say in reply, "but then have you not been washed, and thereby been saved from these things?" Only the doctrine which keeps the washing of chapter 3. firmly linked up with the redemption of chapter 2. is really sound and conducive to godliness.

If we inquire in detail as to what are the things that become sound doctrine, the epistle itself informs us in several striking passages. First of all, there are the instructions as to the bishop (1. 6-9); then in chapter 2. 2 instructions to aged men, for by no means every elder as regards years is an elder or bishop as to office. These instructions are followed by instructions to aged women (2. 3), to young women (2. 4, 5), young men (2. 6), and

to Titus himself (2. 7, 8). Then follows a special word to servants (2. 9, 10), and finally instructions addressed generally to all the saints in chapter 3. 1, 2.

The most comprehensive summary of the things that become sound doctrine is given when the apostle addresses himself to those believers who stood lowest in the social scale—the servants. They are more particularly instructed in those things which grace teaches, "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." This present "world" or "age" is still pursuing its degraded and unsteady course, and it will not be altered until the appearing of the glory. Until then it is not God's way to alter the age but to alter the whole character of those whom He saves by grace, and leave them to pursue their course through the age upon altogether new principles, those of sobriety, righteousness and godliness.

"*Soberly.*" This word in its different forms occurs five times in our Authorized version of Titus. On one occasion it is the translation of a word which means sober in the sense of being watchful or vigilant (2. 2). The other four times the word used is one which denotes temperance, prudence and general soundness of mind. The word "sound" also occurs five times in Titus, and is the translation of a word which has the sense of "healthful," the word indeed from which we have derived our word "hygienic." The epistle to Titus might well be called the epistle of *soundness* (or, *spiritual hygiene*) and *sobriety*.

As has often been pointed out, the force of "soberly" turns in upon oneself. It does not so much define one's attitude towards God or one's neighbour as one's own personal mental poise. A sober man is one who has begun by learning his own worth, or rather total lack of worth, in the Divine presence. He has been brought

down from all those high and lofty thoughts of self, which lie at the very heart of every child of fallen Adam, and consequently God is before his soul in His true light. This being so, he has learned to estimate himself and people and things in something of their true value, and is not easily imposed upon by mere appearances. This imparts to him a solidity and weight which is the very opposite of the fickleness and instability and levity which are so natural to us all. Let us see to it that we live in the light of eternal things, we shall not then waste our lives over the passing frivolities of the hour.

"Righteously." A righteous man is one who renders what is right to all outside himself, to God first and foremost, and then to his neighbour. When the Lord Jesus gave His famous reply to the Pharisees and Herodians, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's," He was preaching practical righteousness.

The men of the world have no conception of righteousness in regard to God, but they have very keen eyes to see if the Christian renders what is right to them and to his fellow-men generally. Hence this question of practical righteousness is one of the greatest importance, for a breakdown here destroys much good—an ounce of practical unrighteousness will outweigh a whole ton of very eloquent preaching. It is also a point in which believers are, generally speaking, lamentably weak.

Except we are very prayerfully walking with God, we are very quickly and almost insensibly infected with the spirit of the age, and at the present time there is a great clamour for, and an insistence upon, one's own rights and privileges, with a corresponding determination to shirk as far as may be possible everything that savours of responsibility. To get as much as possible in return for as little as possible is all the rage. Therefore let us

Christians beware! Grace teaches us to live righteously.

It teaches the Christian master to give full and proper remuneration to those whom he employs. It teaches the tradesman to give full measure and to eschew all those little tricks of the trade whereby small illicit gains are secured. It teaches the man of large business interests to avoid anything which savours of profiteering. It teaches the workman to give steady and honest work, and not to filch away the last five or ten minutes of the day's labour for which he is paid. It teaches the one who serves in any capacity to work as conscientiously when not supervised as when under supervision—to "sweep under the mat" as well as in the most exposed and visible spot. And if any have a believing master, or conversely a believing servant, it teaches them, as 1 Timothy 6. 2 shows, not to despise them, nor to assume that because they are believers their Christianity may be taken advantage of, and less may be rendered to them than ordinarily would be the case, but rather to render to them their full dues.

"Godly." The bearing of this word is clearly in regard to God. Our business in this world is to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," and what will more effectually adorn His doctrine than the setting forth of His character in those who profess it? We may safely affirm that nothing will. If the Apostle's words to and through Titus had their proper effect, as we trust they did, and there was found in the midst of the liars, evil wild beasts and lazy gluttons of Crete, a people who were obviously and visibly purified unto God Himself for His special possession, zealous of good works, what an effect must have been produced to the glory of God.

No less effect would be produced to-day upon the men of this age if these excellent things which become sound doctrine were more fully and visibly promoted amongst us.

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. III. Suffering and Supported. (Genesis 39., 40.)

THE history of Joseph already considered presents in type the rejection of Christ by the Jew. The history that follows gives the experience of Joseph in the hands of the Egyptians, speaking to us of the rejection of Christ by the Gentiles. At the hands of his brethren Joseph is consigned to the pit. In the hands of the Gentiles he is bound in the prison. We need both pictures to adequately set forth the truth, for the coming of the Son of God into the world cannot be confined to the Jew. Truly He was sent by the Father to His own, but equally truly He came that the world through Him might be saved. Alas! He was rejected by both Jew and Gentile; "He was in the world . . . and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not" (John 1. 10, 11).

While, however, both Jew and Gentile joined in rejecting Christ, there was a difference in the way they treated Him; a difference that was foreshadowed in the history of Joseph. With the brethren the leading motive for their rejection of Joseph was envy and hatred. However, in the house of the Gentile, though we see corruption and injustice at work, and in the prison of the Gentile selfish indifference, yet in neither case was there actual enmity to Joseph. And these differences between Jew and Gentile are strikingly seen at the Cross. Gross injustice and callous indifference may mark Herod and Pontius Pilate, the representatives of the Gentiles, but envy and deadly hatred mark the Jews—such envy that it is even discerned by the Gentile, and such hatred that it blinded them to every appeal of reason, every demand of justice, and to all sense of shame.

Returning to the story of Joseph in Egypt we have other lessons to learn. Cut off from his own people, in a strange land, he becomes a slave in the house

of the Egyptian; falsely accused by a wicked woman, and under the stigma of a great sin, he is cast into prison. There treated with base ingratitude, he is left to languish, a forgotten man. Suffering dishonour upon dishonour, his path is ever downward. The clouds gather round him and his way grows darker, until apparently his sun has set in hopeless gloom.

But behind all that is apparent to nature, faith can discern the purpose of God. For we must ever remember that the leading thought in the early history of Joseph is God's settled purpose to exalt Joseph to a position of supremacy and glory. If, however, God is set upon the fulfilment of His purpose, Satan will put forth every effort to thwart God's purpose. Satan uses the wickedness of the brethren to banish Joseph from house and home; he uses Potiphar's wicked wife to bring Joseph into prison; and he uses Pharaoh's ungrateful butler to keep him there. Every step in the downward path is an apparent triumph for Satan, and would seem to make the fulfilment of God's purpose more remote. To the natural view Satan's plans appear to prosper, and God's purposes suffer apparent defeat.

Faith, however, can discern the hand of God behind the wiles of Satan. If Satan is using man to hinder God's purposes, God is using Satan to carry them out. Every kind of agent is at God's disposal. Angels and archangels, saints and sinners, the devil and his demons, all serve to carry out God's plans. The very elements—fire and hail, snow and vapours, and stormy wind—are "fulfilling His word" (Ps. 148. 8). Nor is it otherwise with the circumstances of life, as we see in the story of Joseph. The trials he passes through, the treatment at the hands of his brethren, the bondage in the house of the Egyptian, the false accusations

of Potiphar's wife, the prison of Pharaoh, and the neglect of Pharaoh's butler, are only so many stages in the path that leads to glory; as indeed his labours as a shepherd, his mission to his brethren, his services in Potiphar's house and in Pharaoh's prison are preparing for the exercise of power in the day of his glory. The sufferings and trials lead to the place of glory. The service in the trials prepares for the right use of glory.

In all this Joseph is but a type of One whose sufferings were far deeper even as His glory is far greater. He, too, in the days of His flesh was amongst us as One that serves, for He could say, "Man acquired Me as bondman from My youth" (Zech. 13. 5, N. Tr.). He, too, suffered under the false accusations of the wicked, for again He can say, "They laid to My charge things that I knew not" (Ps. 35. 11). He, too, was led to prison and to death; and in full measure He had to meet the base ingratitude of those who had received only good at His hands, so that, with a heart broken by unrequited love, He cries, "I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind" (Ps. 31. 12).

But as with Joseph in type, so with Christ the glorious Antitype, every downward step in the path of suffering was but a further stage on the way to glory. His service in the days of His flesh prepares for His rule, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The false witnesses that rose up against Him will bow down before Him when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The day is not far distant when the "poor wise Man" that no man remembered shall be "in everlasting remembrance" (Eccles. 9. 15; Ps. 112. 6). Well may we sing—

"Every mark of dark dishonour
Heaped upon the thorn-crowned brow,
All the depths of Thy heart's sorrow
Told in answering glory now."

But not only does this portion of the history of Joseph supply a beautiful

type of Christ, but it is rich with practical instruction for the saint in his individual path. First, we cannot read the story without being impressed with the fact that he was a *submissive man*. His circumstances were hard and his position trying. Cut off from his kindred, a stranger in a foreign land, he had passed from the love of his father's home to the bondage of the Egyptian's house, yet there is no repining. He harbours no bitter thoughts against his brethren, utters no complaints as to his hard lot, nor a single rebellious word against the ways of God. His spirit was kept in beautiful submission. Had not God revealed to him his high destiny?—and faith, resting in quiet confidence in God's word, looks on with clear vision to the glorious end (see 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18). Faith kept God and His word between himself and his circumstances. In the path of God's purpose he submits to God's ways. So Paul, another prisoner of the Lord in another day, in like spirit of submission, writes from his prison, "the circumstances in which I am have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel."

As a result, "the Lord was with Joseph and he was a *prosperous man*" (verse 2). The submissive man will ever be a prosperous man. Nature would say that "slavery" and "prosperity" must be an impossible combination, but if we submit to His ways, the presence of the Lord can turn days of adversity into days of prosperity. All the world would admit that Joseph was a prosperous man in the day of his exaltation, but faith sees, and God declares, that he was a prosperous man in the day of his humiliation. He will, in due time, ride prosperously as the ruler of Egypt, but first he must live prosperously as the slave of an Egyptian. The prosperity of the prison must proceed the prosperity of the palace. The trials and the sorrows, the losses and the crosses, the rough ways and the dark valleys, will all become occasions of the greatest soul prosperity

if we remember that God has a settled purpose for us in glory, and in the meantime all His ways with us are in view of His purpose for us. In the light of His purpose we shall be able to submit to His ways, and submitting we shall find the Lord with us, and if the Lord is with us we shall prosper with that prosperity that is above all—the prosperity of the soul. “Beloved,” says the aged apostle, “I wish *above all things* that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy *soul prospereth*” (3 John 2.).

Moreover, being a prosperous man Joseph became *a witness for the Lord* in the house of bondage. We read, “His master saw that the Lord was with him” (verse 3). His testimony, too, was the testimony of his life rather than his lips. Potiphar was impressed by what he “saw” rather than by what he heard. “His master *saw* that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he *did* to prosper in his hand.” Had Joseph been for ever complaining of his hard lot, or enlarging upon his high destiny, he would have been no witness for the Lord in the house of Potiphar. The Egyptian cared nothing about his past, and, even if set before him, would comprehend nothing of his future, but his daily life of whole-hearted attention to his duties Potiphar could see and appreciate. Nor is it otherwise to-day. For a Christian servant to be often grumbling at his lot before his unconverted master, and saying that the day is coming when he will judge the world and even angels, would be wholly out of place. To an unconverted master it would not only be the wildest folly but also the grossest impertinence. To speak to the world of the glorious purposes of God is only to cast pearls before swine. These are things totally beyond the comprehension of the natural man. But to see a Christian servant living a quiet, consistent, uncomplaining life, in the faithful discharge of daily duties, is indeed a true witness for the Lord, and is something that the unconverted master can appreciate.

Thus it was in the history of Joseph, with the result that the one who was a witness for the Lord was *respected and trusted by man*. So we read, “Joseph found grace in his sight . . . and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand” (verse 4). The Lord was not only with Joseph, but He was for Joseph, disposing the heart of the master in favour of his servant.

It follows that Joseph became *a source of blessing* in the house of the Gentile: “It came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord *blessed* the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake, and the *blessing* of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field” (verse 5). The Christian is not only called to blessing but, as he passes along his way, to be a blessing.

Viewing Joseph as a type of Christ, it is important to remember that it was God’s purpose to set Joseph in the place of supremacy, and hence every one who submits to his supremacy is blessed. Thus Potiphar gives Joseph a place of supremacy in his household, and immediately Potiphar is blessed. A little later the jailer makes Joseph supreme in the prison and blessing follows. Just as in the day of his universal supremacy all submit to him, and all are blessed. The world will be compelled to submit to the supremacy of Christ in the day of His manifested power, but faith delights to anticipate that day and own His supremacy in the day of His rejection. And in the measure in which we yield ourselves, our lives, our all, to the supremacy of Christ, we too shall be blessed, even as the world will be blessed when it submits to His universal sway. The supremacy of Christ demands the submission of man, and the submission of man leads to the blessing of man, though in the day of His rejection that blessing is spiritual rather than material.

Thus we have seen that in the house

of the Gentile Joseph was a submissive man, a prosperous man, a witness for the Lord, a respected and trusted man, and a centre of blessing. Such characteristics constitute a very complete life, and hence we are not surprised to read that "Joseph was of a beautiful form and of a beautiful countenance" (verse 6, N. Tr.). The life that is beautiful before God and man is exemplified in this Old Testament saint.

It is not, however, to be expected that the devil will leave unmolested a life that is beautiful in the sight of God and man. Devotion to the Lord exposes Joseph to the hatred of the devil. Having entirely failed to overcome Joseph by the frowns of the world and the trials of hard circumstances, the devil alters his tactics and seeks to overcome Joseph by the pleasures of sin. In the person of Potiphar's wife he has a ready instrument whereby to tempt Joseph, combined with circumstances that favour her evil designs. In result the temptation only serves to bring out the moral excellence of Joseph. He escapes the snare through maintaining his faithfulness to his master and his fear of God. "Behold," says Joseph, "my master . . . hath committed all that he hath to my hand . . . how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (verses 8 and 9). Here is the secret of Joseph's consistent life before his master. He served faithfully in the presence of man, because he walked continually *in the presence of God*; and walking in the fear of God he was kept in the hour of temptation. Well indeed, for each one of us, if the moment of fierce temptation finds us walking so near to God, that at once we ask, "Can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" To ask the question is to escape the snare. The only thing we have really to be afraid of is fearing anything, or anyone, more than God.

The devil, however, is not content with isolated attacks upon the children

of God. He will wage a continual warfare. It was so with Joseph. The temptation came "day by day" (verse 10), and the attacks more persistent until Joseph "flees" from the temptation and the devil is foiled. But having failed as the tempter, he now becomes the persecutor (verses 13-18). The woman who formerly had cast her evil eyes upon Joseph now witnesses with lying tongue against him, as an old divine has said, "Those who have broken the bonds of modesty will never be held by the bonds of truth. It is no new thing for the best of men to be falsely accused of the worst of crimes by those who are themselves the worst of criminals." In result Joseph escapes from a bad woman and retains a good conscience. But to retain a good conscience may cost much. Joseph has to exchange the comfort of Potiphar's house for the hardships of Pharaoh's prison.

Here Joseph must pass through a new testing. In the house of Potiphar he has borne a bright witness for God, he has overcome temptation, and endured persecution. In the prison of Pharaoh he must learn, not only to witness for God, but *to wait for God*. This, as we well know, is one of the hardest lessons for the saint to learn. It is one thing to witness for God in the busy world, it is a very different thing to wait for God in the lonely prison; in fact it is impossible to nature. Saul, the natural man, lost his kingdom because he could not wait for God (1 Sam. 10. 8; 13. 8-14). But while it is impossible to nature it is a sore trial for the man of faith. Abraham in his day must learn to wait for God. Under the stress of waiting he yields to the suggestion of nature and unbelief, and attempts to obtain the promised seed by fleshly means, only to find that he is shut up to God, and must wait thirteen long years to reach God's due time. So, too, at a later date no one could have given a bolder witness than John the Baptist in the day of Bethabara; in the presence of the

assembled crowds, he exclaims, "This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me; for He was before me." But when John finds himself within the prison walls, when the crowds have gone, when the witnessing time is over, and the waiting time has come, then under the stress of this new trial he exclaims, "Art Thou He that should come?" (John 1. 30; Matt. 11. 3).

Thus Joseph, in his day, finds the waiting time in prison a testing time for faith. He, too, seeks deliverance by an arm of flesh. Having befriended the king's butler, he naturally concludes the butler will intervene with Pharaoh to obtain his release. "Think on me," says Joseph, "when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." Joseph must not only learn that the help of man is vain, but that God is his only resource. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." But to receive this "help" we must learn to "be still" and know

that God is God (Ps. 46. 1 and 10). God has His time as well as His way to bring His purposes to pass.

In the meantime, if man forgets to show Joseph kindness, God will not forget to show him mercy. As we read, "The Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy." Joseph may fail, just as we may, and do, but the Lord's "compassions *fail not*, they are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him" (Lam. 3. 22-24). The devil may tempt us day by day, and God may test by keeping us waiting from day to day; nevertheless His mercy will be renewed every day. Thus, though we oft-times have to wait for the Lord's deliverance, yet "The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him," and on our side we learn that "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam. 3. 25, 26). Forgotten by man Joseph is remembered by the Lord, until in God's due time he learns that "those that wait upon the Lord . . . shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37. 9).

COLOSSE AND LAODICEA.

(S. SCOTT.)

THAT the two assemblies of Colosse and Laodicea were intimately associated is quite clear from the epistle to the former. Further, they appear to have been in the same state of spiritual development. That they were near to each other does not account for the fact that the Apostle Paul requested that the letters addressed to them should be interchangeable, for moral questions are not dealt with on geographical lines.

The deep desire that the Colossian saints should be knit together, have the full assurance of the blessed intimacy that had been established between them and Christ Jesus—so intimate and

vital that it could only be adequately expressed by the relationship of the head to the body—was not for the Colossians only, and the fact that that epistle had been sent to one and was to be exchanged for that addressed to the other, indicated that the spiritual needs of both were practically identical, for the desires, warnings and teachings of the Holy Ghost are not promiscuously given, but are precisely fitted to the actual needs of the assembly addressed. So much is this the case that the state of any company or individual may be readily judged from the character of the word sent to them. Epaphras, too, had a zeal for both assemblies, and had the same desires

for both, praying that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col. 4. 12).

These links are sufficient for us to conclude that what was spoken to one was equally applicable to the other, and we are not under the necessity of considering (what many think probable) that the Ephesian epistle, being a circular letter addressed to all the assemblies, had also reached Laodicea. Yet, even if this were so, it would but enhance the deep failure of a company that had had the unique communications of the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians.

Let us now consider the nature and the extent of the departure unfolded in Revelation 3. 14-22, at once infinitely pathetic and solemn, affording one more warning that acquaintance with the most profound truths that could ever be disclosed (for here are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge) does not produce in itself a condition of soul answering to the revelation, or preserve those who know it from trading falsely in Divine things, or using the grace of God for their own aggrandisement.

May each of us give heed to these warnings, so that we may not incur the awful judgment threatened, for the Laodicean condition appears to be now present, and one of its peculiarities is, that the true state of those in it is unknown to them; indeed, it may be almost safe to say that there may be those who mourn in others the decline that they themselves are involved in, so great being the blindness into which they have fallen.

A comparison of the epistle to the Colossians with that to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3. shows that there is scarcely an item in the lament for the latter assembly that has not already been alluded to, in one way or another, in the letter to the former, either as a statement of doctrine, a warning or a reproof; and when this comparison is carried further, it will be seen that

Laodicea is not only the outcome of the declension that began at Ephesus (Rev. 2. 4), but is also the corruption of Colosse, rather than that of Philadelphia, as has been sometimes suggested, for there is little, if any, real link between the Philadelphian and the Laodicean. In the following paragraphs we put down the comparison step by step. The two epistles might be termed the first and second letters to Laodicea.

"These things saith the Amen." In these opening words the Lord presents Himself as the One who has accomplished every thing for God.

As "the Amen" He will bring to maturity every item of the will of God; all will find its fulfilment in Him, and all the saints have their completion in Him who is the Head of every principality and power (Col. 2. 10) in which fulness it is the right of every saint to participate now, having a taste of its reality by faith, in anticipation of the full enjoyment in a coming day.

"The faithful and true Witness." This Christ was on earth, and His presence at the right hand of God is the expression of the Father's satisfaction with His faithfulness and with the perfect testimony He bore. This witness should find its counterpart in the Colossian saints, and did in a measure, for they were appealed to as "holy and beloved" (Col. 3. 12), commended as bearing fruit, growing and showing forth "love in the Spirit" (1. 8). Nothing was nearer to the heart of the apostle than that this might be more fully developed, for he prayed that they might be "filled with the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," so that they might be more faithful yet; they were also encouraged to a more Christ-like walk, when he says: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering" (3. 12); and, again: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (2. 6).

"*The beginning of the creation of God.*" In Col. 1. 15 the same faithful and true Witness is presented as "the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation," and besides this, "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (1. 18). He begins all things for God, yet when He is spoken of as being the Firstborn there is the assurance that He will have others associated with Him.

"*Neither cold nor hot.*" As soon as the undeviating faithfulness and perfect consistency of the Lord Jesus Christ have been drawn attention to, He lays bare their own unfaithfulness and inconsistency. Once they had faith in Christ and love to all the saints (Col. 1. 4). Now they are charged not merely with the decline of affection, but with the loss of every bit of zeal and interest in His concerns. They had but a tepid indifference to good and evil alike, and a hatred of enthusiasm; they were self-centred and self-contained, being all the while regardless of all that was theirs in Christ, and forgetting that they were complete in Him.

"*Wretched and miserable.*" If the peace of God and the word of Christ had dwelt in them richly, so that they were joyous and "singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3. 16), it would not have been possible to impute wretchedness or misery to them.

But neglect was not their only offence, they had adopted religious forms and ceremonies, in spite of frequent warning, and had also fallen into the grosser forms of evil named in chapter 3.

"*Poor and blind.*" In thus losing the guidance that comes from being filled with the knowledge of His will (Col. 1. 9) they mistook the road and pursued a path that was contrary and

repugnant to Him, showing that they were truly blind; and when their resources in Christ were not realized and not made use of, they were poor indeed, for in them were enfolded all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

"*Naked.*" In addition to the loss of sight and poverty they had neglected the graces of kindness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and forgiveness, hence this charge was also laid to their door.

"*I counsel thee.*" Godly counsel had been offered repeatedly throughout the Colossian epistle, warning, encouragement, precept, injunction abound, and ere the final and contemptuous rejection takes place, a fresh appeal is made to them by the great and glorious One who is grieved at their misery and insensibility.

"*Gold tried in the fire.*" He directs attention to His own illimitable resources, and imperishable riches, gold tried in the fire—Divine righteousness that has withstood every test that could be applied to it. He Himself was girt about with it, but he will not enjoy his triumph alone, he will have those poor, naked, blind and wretched ones buy that which will so truly enrich them, that which will cover them, and that which will restore their sight.

He would enrich them so that they stood perfect and complete in all the will of God, enjoying all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and having in them Christ the hope of glory (Col. 1. 27).

"*White raiment.*" Each, then, would be clothed, having put on that "new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3. 10). The raiment in which they boasted was no covering, but having put on bowels of mercies and the kindred virtues they would be truly clothed in the purity of the holy and spotless Son of God.

"*Eye salve that thou mayest see.*"

But there was more than mere endowment for these. There is a *place* of dignity and honour too. They were brought into "the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1. 13) where they might behold His glory. This wondrous sight is perceived with anointed eyes. It is what the gracious Lord delights to display to those near Him.

This rich endowment, sufficient attire, and extensive view of the purpose that God had in store for them should have aroused their zeal to fever height, and awakened afresh their dying interest in the heavenly sphere to which He would attract their attention.

But God never allows the failure of His people to militate against His purposes, so even where unconcern is most pronounced a door of repentance is opened.* There was still room for return.

"If any man hear My voice." The blow will not fall till every overture has been refused. He lingers outside the closed door, to see if the attractions of His voice will produce a response, or whether "the enticing words" (Col. 2. 4) of philosophy—i.e., worldly wisdom—ordinances—i.e., worldly religion—tradition—i.e., substitutes for the Word of God—or even the occult sciences (2. 18)—would be heeded instead, and the door remain closed against Him.

* While there is little doubt that the assembly at Thyatira has its counterpart in the Romish church, and that Protestantism, as a movement, has no less its representation in Sardis, the character of the Philadelphian and of the Laodicean assemblies is *not* seen in distinct groups of professing Christians to-day, bound together in separate organizations. But while the former represents all who having little strength, keep His Word and do not deny His Name, the latter consists of those who profess to have special endowment, and find in that imagined distinction a complacent satisfaction; whilst all the time He who is the true joy and glory of His people has no place in their midst, standing quite apart from all their pretension. This—the Laodicean principle—is true whether it be found in ones or twos or in whole systems.

Oh! that the realization of "Christ in you the hope of glory," and the sweetness of uninterrupted communion with Him might prevail!

"Open the door, I will come . . . and will sup with him." How immense the boon, to be assured that in spite of departure, there may be recovery of intercourse with Him; and not only recovery of what had been lost but He will conduct his companions into the realms where He is supreme, that place to which their attention had been already directed in Col. 3. 4—a place with Him in His own glory.

"And he with Me." Such are the attractions that are presented to revive affection for Himself! What grace for the one who returns to what had been set forth in their first epistle.

"To him that overcometh." Such an one is designated an overcomer. In the power of that new life that is in Christ and as risen with Christ (Col. 3. 1) he has proved himself superior to the attractions of the world, the artifices of religious association, the devices of Satan. He has overcome as his Master had done, and John 16. 33 is quoted here to establish the statement.

"Will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." When "a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment . . . the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken" (Isa. 32. 1-3), no more shall blindness and mistrust meet what will then be set forth in the Son of God! In that kingdom there will be no more call for watchfulness against an enemy more subtle than themselves, and the overcomer will share in that reign of righteousness and peace which He is waiting to establish, for ere long He will come out to reconcile all things unto Himself (Col. 1. 20). Then they who have waited in patience as "dead" and their life "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3. 3), shall be seen in glory with Him.

"*I . . . am set down with My Father in His throne.*" It is because of His triumph that He is seated on His Father's throne, and His seat there is the testimony to God's appreciation of what He did, when in the body of His flesh through death He wrought reconciliation.

What a stimulus to faithfulness and victory over a defeated enemy!

"*He that hath an ear, let him hear.*" Read again the Colossian epistle, and mark anew how our Lord Jesus is presented to gain our confidence, veneration and fealty; first as Creator and paramount Lord, and then the

many ways in which we are linked up with Him, either as in His kingdom, members of His body, reconciled by His death, buried, risen, quickened and complete in Him, and deriving all from Him by reason of possessing His life; that life finding its due expression in many varied and characteristic activities, which appeared in Him, in whose life they live.

It is not the smallest of God's favours that one may even yet be recovered from the wreckage of a self-complacent but deluded Laodicea, and be enabled to witness to others of the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

THE SON OF THE FATHER.

(H. J. VINE.

FATHER, Thy Son with deep
delight

Rejoices ever in Thy sight,
His hour of suffering now is o'er,
His sorrows passed for evermore;
He dwells before Thy face on high,
And by His blood are we brought nigh.

His *place* of favour now is ours,
Where heavenly grace around us
showers
Blessings divine and riches true,
The Spirit is the Earnest too
Of our inheritance above
In Him, Son of the Father's love.

Father, *the glory* Thou hast given
To Jesus, Thy beloved One,
He has bestowed on us, foreknown,
Thy gracious counsels, too, has shown;
Our God and Father we would praise
And bless Thy Name in sweetest lays.

And, oh, *Thy love* known—long before
Its glorious dress Creation wore—
By Thy blest Son, by Him alone,
Has now been made by Thee our own;
We raise our song on high as one,
We bless the Father and the Son.

VERBAL INSPIRATION.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

ALONE of all God's creation has man been given powers of reading and writing. It is unthinkable that God should have given these powers unless He intended to use them as channels for communicating His own thoughts to His creatures. Many people seem to think that God made this universe as a watchmaker might make a watch endowed with perpetual motion, and, winding it up, thenceforth take no interest or concern in it. Such an idea is perfectly puerile, and if it were not so tragic in its consequences it would be ludicrous to see this attempt of evolutionists and higher critics and modernists to bow the Almighty out of His own universe.

It is obviously reasonable that there should be a Book of God in which man might learn something of God and of his own relation to God, and of that vast eternity to which he is hastening with such speed.

And if there is such a Book it is just as obviously reasonable that it must be inspired of God, for it must in the nature of things contain information beyond man's powers of mind or observation. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job. 11. 7). "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (Isa. 64. 4).

How exalted is God's Word is seen when we read, "Thou hast magnified Thy Word ABOVE all Thy name" (Ps. 138. 2). God's name is inexpressibly blessed, *but the making of it known for His creature's blessing* is still dearer to His heart, and He makes it known through His Word. So the Lord said in that most wonderful prayer recorded in John 17., "Thy Word [whether spoken or written] is truth" (verse 17).

Surely God's Word is kept by Him

pure, and is inspired word by word. There must be much that the creature can receive as revelation, but which he can never fathom.

It is reported that Earl Balfour, speaking on the Atonement, said, "If it were not too vast for our intellectual comprehension, it would be too narrow for our spiritual need." And this can be said of the whole book. If I could understand its heights and depths it would prove that it was written by a finite mind, whose thoughts, though they might be beyond my initiation, were not beyond my comprehension. It is the greatest satisfaction, the greatest rest intellectually to the renewed mind, that though the Bible bears every mark of having been produced mediately by human instrumentality, yet it is immediately the product of the Divine mind.

The necessity of verbal inspiration can be well illustrated. The head of a firm called his typist into his office and dictated a message as follows: "We regret exceedingly that we have misunderstood your instructions, and we are *now* proceeding to execute your esteemed order." The typist produced the letter as follows: "We regret exceedingly that we have misunderstood your instructions, and we are *not* proceeding to execute your esteemed order" (*Italics ours*). One letter in one word exactly reversed the meaning intended. What need for verbal exactitude! Very especially is this so in the book that deals with our eternal destiny. 1 Peter 1. 10-12 tells us that the Old Testament prophets did not themselves understand the import of their own writings—that "it was revealed that NOT unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Here were men living in different centuries, occupying

different positions, such as law-giver, shepherd, king, herdsman, etc., and they produced books, as it has been well put, "without collusion or contradiction"—and in addition they could not know fully the things of which they wrote! Had they not been verbally inspired, the result would have been a hotch-potch of incoherent and contradictory ideas.

It may be asked how verbal inspiration can be maintained without setting aside the personality—the individuality—of the writer. For instance, in reading Isaiah and Amos, Paul and Peter, we are conscious that they are men of different calibres. Paul is analytical, logical, yet withal very human, full of heart and affection. Peter is a man of lesser intellectual force than Paul. One was called from his fishing, the other had graduated at the feet of that great Jewish professor—Gamaliel.

Permit an illustration. Suppose a banquet. A number of jellies are on the tables. Some are plain and some are ornamented with fruits and flowers, some are one shape and some another, some are large and some small. It can be easily seen in what mould the jellies have been shaped. The moulds have given shape to the jellies. Yet how much of the mould is in the jelly? They are pure jelly, with no trace whatever of the mould *in* them.

The illustration is a poor one, but it serves our purpose. God can and does use the personality and order of mind of the different writers; everything on that line is natural and understandable, yet the original Scriptures are *wholly and verbally* inspired of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3. 16), wrote the Apostle Paul, and that without reservation or qualification. A few illustrations will show how full this statement is.

Heb. 12. 27 lays emphasis on a *phrase* as governing the passage. Verse 26 quotes Haggai 2. 6; and verse 27 reiterates and emphasizes the phrase, "*Yet once more*," as being authoritative because it is Scripture.

John 10. 34–36 bases an argument on the use of the word "gods," quoting from Psalm 82. 6.

Gal. 3. 16 bases an argument on the use of the singular *number* and not the plural. In our English Bibles it turns on the use of a *letter*—"seed" and not "seeds," quoting from Gen. 22. 18.

Gal. 4. 9 draws particular attention to the *voice* of the verb, that it is passive and not active.

John 8. 58 owes its significance to the use of the present *tense* in contradistinction to the past tense of the verb—"Before Abraham *was*, I *am*."

Taking these five passages as a whole, we are emphatically taught that "the Scripture cannot be broken," so far as to change a *phrase*, a *word*, the *number* of a noun, the *voice* or *tense* of a verb.

It is remarkable that foresight is attributed to the Scriptures, thus identifying them with their Divine Author, who alone could foretell what would happen in the distant future. This is seen in Gal. 3. 8.

Gal. 3. 22 gives the Scriptures as acting in a universal and judicial way, again identifying them with their Divine Author, who alone is competent to come to this conclusion.

Rom. 9. 17 speaks of the Scriptures speaking to Pharaoh the Word of God, whereas it was Moses who thus spoke, and at the time no line of Scripture had been written. God told Moses to utter these words to Pharaoh, and afterwards inspired Moses to give us the record of them, thus again identifying the Scriptures with Himself in a truly remarkable way. No wonder the inspired Psalmist wrote the words: "Thou has magnified Thy Word ABOVE *all Thy name*" (Ps. 138. 2).

May God bless His Word specially in this day when everything Divine is being called in question, and exalt it in all our hearts, for Christ's name's sake.

GUIDANCE.

*Taken from a letter from a French Christian in connection with
"Revivals" and "Alliances."*

THAT which is given for his guidance to the Christian is, not God's blessings, but His will, as revealed in the Word. Precious blessings will, doubtless, be found in the path of faith; God in there, with all His riches and all His grace; the enjoyment of these is most precious; but it is not our guide; it may at times help us to discern what is pleasing to God; but that which is the spring and controller of our actions is not the joy we find by the way, but the express will of God, and it alone.

There is a disposition which is but too natural to us, to seek our own, to have respect for that which is pleasant to us, and to take our own comfort or feelings for guides. But obedience to the will of God is a very different thing; the two principles of action are diametrically opposed one to the other. In the first case, self is the object sought; in the second, that which is suitable to God. It is only in the second case that there is obedience.

I feel alarmed when I think of the number (greater than might be supposed) of those who pursue their course without clearly seeing what they are doing, without principles, and without the knowledge of the will of God; and, it may be, simply because Christians whom they respect have chosen the same path before them; or because they have found at times more life, joy, or light where they are, than elsewhere. Better motives or convictions they have none. What will become of such in the hour of trial? What perplexity, anxiety, await them! and perhaps even temptations to return to some other path which they have left! God can indeed give more strength after a fall; but it were far better not to have to pass through such experience.

Besides, enjoyment is not always a sure guide; it may be wanting even

when things are, as a whole, according to God's mind, where there still remain things to be judged. The very presence of God is the cause of many a discomfort which God's children feel within themselves and among them, because there is sin: their discomfort would not be felt if God were absent. For this reason, souls that have followed the blessing, instead of understanding the will and truth of God, are so shaken when blessing fails and God comes in to judge; whilst he who understands and obeys the will of God is on a sure foundation—the day may be dark, but he has confidence, and in this there is much peace.

It is always in a faithful walk that most trials are to be met with. Satan lets alone those who do not walk by faith; but he harasses in a thousand ways those whose hearts are right, and whose eye is single before God. Christian assemblies which are faithful will likewise know most of trial.

They who follow a path simply on account of the blessing and comfort they have found in it, are, in a sense, like those to whom the Lord once said, "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves" (John 6. 26). If they had given heed to these miracles, they alone would have proved Jesus to have been sent from the Father, and then they would have clung to Him as the One who had "the words of eternal life" and as being "Christ, the Son of the living God" (verses 68, 69). In this case, their attachment to Jesus would have been unvarying, in spite of all trials. Instead of this, they had followed Jesus, not for His own sake, but for the sake of the loaves with which He had fed them: the loaves—their own comforts and enjoyments—and not the truth, had been sought for. When the soul is in this state, it may

soon leave Jesus, because of the hard things which may be the lot of those that "walk with Him" (verses 60, 65).

The history of the remnant brought back out of captivity to build the temple, amid so many difficulties, presents much instruction, on account of the similarity, in some respects, of their position and ours at the present time. To be in the city of their fathers, and to set up there as well as they could the worship of God, was doubtless great joy; but what a series of difficulties they met with in the execution of their design though it was altogether according to the mind of God! What difficulties were raised on every side! and then how much chastening, how many merited reproofs, and how many years of famine! How many causes for discouragement had they here, especially if they took into consideration the prosperity and peace of those of their brethren who had remained in captivity! It was not far from this time that Esther and Mordecai were made the means of such marked deliverance to the captives of Media. While there was deliverance, feasting, and joy on the one hand, there was poverty, weakness, and misery on the other. It was therefore needful, in order to be able to hold their position in Judea, that those who were there should understand the will and purposes of God; for had any one only sought blessing, he would soon have been discouraged. Did not some few of them bitterly regret leaving Babylon, when they saw the wretched state of the remnant? And yet they were just in the position in which God would have them. The Name and Spirit of the Lord were there; there also were His prophets, His worship, and His Word: none of these were to be found in Media—neither His worship, nor His presence, nor even the name of the Lord is once mentioned in Esther.

Remember also the horrible language of the Jews in Egypt; showing, alas! how Satan can blind the hearts of men when they only seek enjoyment,

instead of the purpose and will of God: "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven . . . as we have done . . . in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine" (Jer. 44. 16-18). Prosperity in this world was one of the blessings of the Jewish covenant; but this terrible example shows us that in the present case it had become a false light leading them to destruction.

In connection with "revivals" and "the effects produced by the — Alliance" it has been asked, "Why is there so much blessing around while there is none among those that walk with you?" I reply, that it is a mistake to suppose that there is none. If God makes us partakers in what He counts the most precious blessing, I cannot say there is none. The pains He takes to humble us, and to lower us in our own eyes, is a most precious and incontrovertible proof of the interest He most graciously takes in us. His work is to strip us of ourselves, of self, which is the greatest obstacle to our blessing. It is bitter water to the flesh, doubtless; but it is invaluable. If we have risen very high in our own conceits, on account of some little light (and our foolish pride has already brought us much sorrow) what better could God do for us, than to deliver us from that which hindered us from being vessels of blessing? As a disordered stomach turns sour the most healthful food, so every blessing which, in such a state, we might have received from God would have proved a temptation, and would have served but to nourish the flesh.

Now, He is bringing us down to a state of heart in which there are fewer obstacles to His blessing us ; and how precious is this ! Death is no longer an instrument of evil for our hurt in the hands of the devil ; it is in the hand of Jesus, and He makes use of it (bitter as it may be) as a remedy, for our good. Therefore it would be a great mistake to say "We have no blessings."

Neither let us forget the state of ruin into which the church has fallen. We who preach this ruin are the first to feel the misery of it. We are far from having gathered all God's children, or from possessing all the gifts. We are also (unconsciously, perhaps) enslaved by many a worldly custom and principle ; and in the little that remains we are unfaithful. These and many other things suffice as the explanation of the much trial and wretchedness which is often so painfully felt.

Then as to those who are bewildered by such things as "revivals" and "alliances." It is indeed beautiful when souls are really turned from darkness to light, and it is a great honour to be used of God for such a work ; yet my object in separating myself from evil all around was neither evangelization, nor the conversion of souls, . . . and yet we have had to praise Him for the conversion of many souls which have been given to us in past times and even of late. O no ! I have no reason to envy any ; but it is well for us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due season.

As to the assertion, that the conversions, awakenings, etc., which have taken place in national churches, etc., prove that God authorizes and approves of the system in the midst of which such things occur, I decidedly and entirely reject it. God blesses His own

Word, and gives also a blessing to the faithfulness of the one who preaches it with sincerity, candour and zeal ; but He will show, sooner or later, that, while acting in the system, the system itself could not meet His approval. Did not the Lord show this in the apostles' days ? How many blessings were shed on the Judæo-Christian church at Jerusalem ! "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe" (Acts 21. 20) : and advantage could be taken of this to show that God approved that Judæo-Christian state of things—as also to wage war with those who did not link themselves with it, so as to slight the efforts of a Paul. But what was the fact of the case ? God was there to bless His Word and His sincere labourers ; but the system was judged soon after, when Titus came to destroy the city, burn the temple, and scatter that oppressed nation. God can act in the system as in a vessel, but not with the principles of the system ; for He never gives efficacy to a bad thing.

(The writer of the above rejoices always when Christ is preached, and at every conversion by that Name. Speaking of union, he says elsewhere, "This word is loudly sounded forth now. The importance of union among Christians is in every one's mouth. But is the union proposed real ? Is it the fruit of the means recognized in Scripture ? Is its tendency the same ? Many an uniting of Christians is union with the world, and tends to lead them back to union with the world, which is the negative of their having been separated from this present evil world. Such is but a snare of the enemy again to get into his possession that which had escaped from him ; it is a snare of the enemy and to be judged as such.")

(Extracted from *The Present Testimony*, vol. 5, 1853).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

The Judgment of the Nations.

It was said lately that the passage, Matthew 25. 31-46, referred to the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, when all nations of all ages would be gathered together to be judged by Him. Will the church of Christ be included in this gathering? What about 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17?—MORRISTON.

THE passage in Matthew 25. clearly refers to the Second Advent. It is the hour "when the Son of man shall come in His glory"—the hour of His public appearing—and "before Him shall be gathered all nations."

If, however, anyone asserts that before Him shall be gathered all nations of *all ages*, they go beyond what Scripture states and add to its words. Mankind is fundamentally one, and nations only exist as the fruit of God's governmental action at Babel (Gen. 11. 1-9), and therefore although nationality is pronounced enough, and is an intensely strong influence in this world, it does not persist beyond death. In the eternal state nationality is no longer recognized, as Revelation 21. 1-5, shows; as one of the fruits of man's sin it is then done away with.

"All nations," then, in Matthew 25. 32, means all existing nations on earth at Christ's coming, apart from Israel, which according to Numbers 23. 9 is never to be reckoned amongst them. As for the innumerable multitude of the dead they are no longer viewed as nations. They are "the dead, small and great" of Revelation 20. 12.

If corroboration of this be needed we may point out that the ground on which judgment proceeds could not possibly apply to the nations of *all ages*. Every-

thing turns on the treatment of the "brethren" of the glorified Son of man, those who had been His messengers and representatives. The dead of all the centuries before Christ came cannot possibly be judged on this ground.

The Church of Christ will not be included in this gathering. In the church, though it is gathered out of the nations, nationality has no place, as we are definitely instructed. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian" (Col. 3. 11). Further, when the Lord Jesus comes in His glory, not only will He be attended by all the holy angels, as Matthew 25. 31, states; but He is coming "with all His saints" (1 Thess. 3. 13). The church then will be with Him when He comes, sharing His glory, and 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17, explains how the saints have reached His presence in a glorified condition, so as to come forth with Him in His appearing.

For the understanding of God's purposes in connection with Christ's glory, it is very important to keep clear and distinct in one's mind: (1) The coming of the Lord Jesus *for* His saints; (2) His appearing *with* His saints, when He will judge the living nations on earth; (3) The raising and judging of the wicked dead at the end of the thousand years' reign.

ERRATUM:—The article entitled *The Prayer Meeting* in last month's issue was largely condensed, with a few additions, from an 8pp. booklet *Hints on the Prayer Meeting* by S. J. B. Carter. *Acknowledgement of this should have been made and we regret that it was omitted.* The booklet, published by G. Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square, may be obtained, 4d. per doz.; 2/- per 100.

"IN SECRET."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

ACRES upon acres of peach trees stretched themselves upon the hillsides of a fertile valley through which we were speeding in the Sydney-Melbourne express. A beautiful sight were those trees, clothed in pink and white blossom from the topmost branches of them to the lowest, and standing as a fair bride to receive the smiles and kisses of the sun which looked upon them from a cloudless sky like a radiant bridegroom. Full of promise were those acres of delicious fruit for the multitudes in the crowded cities in the months yet to be. It was kindly nature, under God's supervision, preparing her stores of solace and refreshment against the day when the summer time would test the strength and mettle of the people with heat and drought and dust.

As my eyes feasted upon that lovely valley I held a silent communion with it. "Tell me," said my heart, "tell me, peach trees, the secret of your beauty and your usefulness—why are you able to stretch out your charms before the sun to-day, and to promise hands and arms laden with fruit for the hot months that lie ahead of us?" And I got my answer definite and clear. "We should have neither beauty to-day nor usefulness to-morrow were it not for a process and power that the eye of man does not see. Our roots strike downwards, and hidden away from all interference we draw from the soil continually the stimulants and nourishment that give and maintain the vigour of our inward life; thus it is that we are benefactors in the world. Our life within, sustained in secret, shows itself in its season as you see it. If this secret life of ours failed, or if it were interrupted by any intrusion from without, we should wither and die."

And as our train sped onward I considered the peach trees, how they grew, and took out my Bible and read, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6. 6). Are any of us mourning our lack of fruitfulness? Do we feel how little we are manifesting that Divine life which is in us in blessing to others? We may be sure that the whole cause of it is the neglect, more or less, of the secret life with God, and every one of us knows that it is so.

This parable of the peach trees enforced its lesson upon me from another side. I thought again of the testing time of the year for this southern land, when the sun blazes from the heavens in his summer strength, scorching and withering almost everything of lesser growth. Yet that same sun does but serve to bring the fruit of those trees to perfection, imparting to them a sweetness and bloom that they could not possess without it. So, too, it is with every test and trial of life: they all have their sure effect upon us. We are either scorched and withered by them like the corn on the rocky ground that perishes when the sun is up, or they bring our Christian life and fruit to maturity; and which of these two effects is to be realized in our case is determined by our secret life with God. If we are much with Him, striking our roots downward in the knowledge of Himself, and drawing our refreshment and strength from the hidden springs that are in Him, we need not dread the trial; we may glory in tribulation, for it will but serve the will of God and work for our good, and enable us to

stretch forth hands laden with sweeter fruit to the weary and distressed.

* * * * *

The time passed quickly as we, a few Christian brethren, talked together upon happy themes, when a glance at my watch warned me that my time was gone and I must leave the pleasant circle. As I walked to the railway station for my train I said to myself, "This watch of mine, the gift of a dear friend to me, has been my very faithful monitor and friend for ten years. It has never failed me, except when I have failed it by forgetting to wind it up. What is it that makes it so reliable, fulfilling its mission every day without noise, weariness or complaint? It is not the highly-polished case, or the neat figures upon its face, or the graceful hands that indicate the hours, not one of nor all those things together make it what every watch ought to be. The secret lies not in these, but in the works, hidden away from view; upon these depend the constant witness of my watch to me. The outward witness is the result entirely of the inward works." And as I considered my watch, how it worked, the importance of the secret hidden life pressed itself afresh upon me. If the inner parts of my watch were exposed to the dust of the day it would soon become a failure; and even so, if we Christians live more before the world than before God, we soon become unfaithful in our witnessing. Our secret life with God must be maintained, and the measure of our intercourse with Him in secret is the measure of our faithfulness in public. The Scriptures are so full of this, and our own consciences and spiritual sense tell us that it is so, that nothing more needs to be said.

* * * * *

And now for a paragraph or two from wise old Bunyan. "I saw in my dream that Interpreter took Christian by the hand and led him into a place where was a fire burning against a wall,

and one standing by it always, casting much water upon it to quench it: yet did the fire burn higher and hotter.

"Then said Christian, 'What means this?' The Interpreter answered, 'This fire is the *work of grace* that is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it to extinguish and put it out, is *the Devil*; but in that thou seest the fire notwithstanding burn higher and hotter, thou shalt also see the reason of that.' So he had him about to the backside of the wall, where he saw a Man with a vessel of oil in His hand, of which He did also continually cast, but *secretly*, into the fire. Then said Christian, 'What means this?' The Interpreter answered, 'This is *Christ*, who continually, with the oil of grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart, by the means of which, notwithstanding what the Devil can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still.'"

Yes, so it is, but do we realize the necessity of our side of this matter? Lukewarm Christians are the devil's delight, and the Lord's grief. Fervency of spirit is above all things to be desired. But if our hearts are to flame in this cold world the oil of grace must flow into them; and for this we must cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, and the secret supplies from His own inexhaustible stores will be more than enough to meet every public demand, and that in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

* * * * *

The Lord's own words, as given us by the prophet centuries before He came into the world, shall clinch for us the lesson of this brief paper. "The Lord, Jehovah, hath given to me the tongue of the instructed that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed" (Isa. 50. 4, N.Tr.).

"HE . . . BECAME OBEDIENT."

(H. J. VINE.)

WHEN the Holy Spirit speaks of the moral glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is a delicacy of expression and refinement of language which, though very simple, is altogether Divine, and in a world which is a compound of Assyrian haughtiness and Babylonish corruption, we are apt to be so affected as to be unable to discern their rich yet lowly beauty, and to be rendered powerless to answer to the Word which says, "Beholding the glory of the Lord."

An artist, anxious to obtain his friend's approval of a beautiful picture he had finished, arranged a time for him to view it. When he arrived, he was left waiting in a small room with the blinds drawn. After awhile he was taken to see the artist's work where the light of day so fell upon the picture that all the chief features of it were clearly shown to the fullest advantage. At once the visitor distinguished these, and was charmed with the result of his friend's labours. "But why did you leave me in that dark room?" he enquired afterwards. "Ah," replied the artist, "I knew you would not be able to discern the points which I wanted you to see in the picture immediately after coming through the busy city with its glare and rush, so I purposely arranged for you to be kept waiting where the effect of these would be removed from your vision!" That is just the reason why we also need to be withdrawn from world-influences, so that we may be able to behold and admire the finer shades of the Lord's glory which have such a transforming effect upon us. He may well say to us to-day, "Be still and know that I am God."

In Philippians 2, where we read of our Lord Jesus Christ "becoming obedient," we have portrayed by the Holy Spirit of God a marvellous representation of His majesty, lowly grace,

and universal glory, unsurpassed elsewhere. Our thoughts become engaged with the commanding and central figure, that of Christ Jesus our Lord. In the eternal past of sublime and unsullied holiness and beauty, He is shown to us as "subsisting in the form of God" (6, N. Tr.) and then, taking part in the history of time, we see Him in the likeness of men, as a bondman, and in wonderful grace humbling himself, "*becoming obedient*" even to death upon the cross. Then highly exalted by God, and given a Name above every other name, the coming day of glory is opened before our gaze, where His Name is proclaimed, and instantly the knees of every intelligent creature in the heavens, on the earth, and in the regions infernal, bow, and the tongues of all are moved to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory" (11). We thus behold Him "in the form of God," "in figure as a man," and honoured in glory by all as "Lord."

We desire however, to call attention to that which the Holy Spirit Himself gives such touching distinction to in this passage—the *obedience* of this One who shares in Deity and is Lord of all. His Deity and Lordship throw into rich relief the moral glory of His obedience, as it is said, "Having been found in figure as a Man [He] humbled Himself, *becoming obedient* even unto death, and that the death of the cross." It does not simply say, *He obeyed*; nor, *He was obedient*; but mark the delicate precision which depicts the truth to us, "*becoming obedient*." In Godhead majesty to whom could He be obedient? but in lowly grace, "taking a bondman's form," He could *become* obedient! As Paul here, so John in his Gospel tells us that the Word who was God (1. 1), "*became*" flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth (14). It should not read "*was made*."

Who could *make* God anything? No, the feature of moral glory here which commands our adoration is the beauty of His *becoming* obedient. For the creature subjection and obedience to God is his right and proper place, but to see the Creator coming down, and as a man *become* obedient, even to a cross of ignominy, shame, and abandonment, is a sight which may well move our hearts to worship, whilst we rejoice in the fact that He is now highly exalted and crowned with glory and honour upon the throne of God.

If not to the same measure, it is nevertheless to the same character of obedience, that the redeemed are set apart to-day, as we read: "By sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience . . . of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1. 2); and the Gospel has been sent to us, as well as the mystery of it revealed, for "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1. 5; 16. 26). We were once "sons of disobedience," for that characterized us until we were saved by grace (Eph. 2. 2, 8; Col. 3. 6); but now the apostle can exhort those who have received the salvation of God—and that after speaking of the obedience of Christ as we have seen—"Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2. 12, 13). The salvation is ours, and we *work out* in obedience, as God *works in* us by grace and power. The understanding of the truth and obedience to it may not be entered upon by us all at once. Paul speaks of the time when, in a certain case, the obedience of the Corinthian believers should be fulfilled (2 Cor. 10. 6); and in the previous verse he tells us that the overthrowing of reasonings, which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, was accomplished not by carnal weapons but Divine, in view of "*bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*" To that end this devoted servant toiled and warred in the con-

flict of faith! Do we truly appreciate the glory of His obedience and seek that this should characterize us?—as we sing:—

"Jesus, the One who trod the earth,
The lowly subject One,
Obedience unto death was Thine,
God's well-beloved Son!"

It is indeed a sight of surpassing beauty to behold Him adorn the pathway of subjection and obedience as He passed onward to Calvary, and then ascend to the throne, and finally retain for ever as Man the place of subjection which He had taken in grace! As we have seen, He became obedient, and in the pathway of suffering which that involved, "though He were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been perfected, became to all them that obey Him, author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5. 8, 9). He, of course, was always perfect, but the lovely quality of obedience became His in the path of suffering, and He took back with Him to heaven that which He did not bring out of it. Son of God, born of the Virgin, His name was Jesus—Jehovah the Saviour—and Emmanuel—God with us; yet we see Him in the temple when twelve years old astonishing the teachers as He hears and asks them questions, and surprising Joseph and Mary by enquiring, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" We see Him doing always the things that were pleasing in His sight, but He went down with His parents "to Nazareth, and was *subject unto them*" (Luke 2. 51).

Subject to Joseph and Mary! Yet in the counsel of God all things are put in subjection to Him (1 Cor. 15. 27), "Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." Yea, the church also, the assembly which is His body and His bride—is subjected to Christ! Indeed, there is only one exception, and that exception is a necessary one, for God Himself who put all things in subjection to Him could not Himself be in subjection to

anyone. God, therefore, is the one exception. And the Son, who became Man, having learned obedience in the place of subjection which He took in grace, retains, we are told, that place of moral distinction for ever. When He is seen in the glory of universal supremacy, the glorifier of God, "then the Son also Himself shall be placed in subjection to Him who put all things in subjection to Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15. 28). What a glorious result to His path of subjection and obedience! If we, as the assembly, are subjected to Christ, then we are given the high honour of holding as to Him the wonderful place which He Himself retains for ever as to God. What a beautiful distinction is this, granted also to the woman in the assembly, and that as observed by the angels (1 Cor. 11. 10), for she has her head covered; also to the believing wife marked by "the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price. For thus also the holy women who have hoped in God heretofore adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands" (1 Peter 3. 4, 5).

This much-to-be-desired distinction for God's pleasure, however, is not to be confined to a favoured few. If our Lord Jesus Christ became obedient, and learned obedience, taking the place of subjection in grace, surely all those who have been redeemed by His precious blood, sealed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and enabled therefore to behold His glory, are expected to be marked by the same character. How could they show forth His excellencies were it not so? Truly the flesh "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." It is useless, therefore, to endeavour to cultivate it. But the true believer on our Lord Jesus Christ is "not in the flesh but in the Spirit," and as led by the Spirit He becomes more like Christ day by day.

Adam's disobedience constituted the many sinners, and produced the "sons

of disobedience," but by the obedience of Christ, not only will the many be constituted righteous and share in His glory by-and-by, but they are freed now to behold and delight in that which is pleasing to God, so as to reproduce it by the Spirit's grace and power. Believing children, therefore, are to be obedient and in subjection to their parents. Younger brethren are to be subject to the elder (1 Peter 5. 5). Sisters are to "learn in quietness and in all subjection." Servants are to be subject to their masters, "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the ill-tempered" (1 Peter 2. 18), for this is "acceptable, if one, for conscience' sake towards God, endure griefs, suffering unjustly." All of us when under the discipline of the One who loves us, whose sons we are, have the place opened to us of being "in subjection to the Father of spirits," and so to live and reap the peaceable fruits which follow. In regard to God's government also we are to recognize what He has ordained: "for there is no authority except from God," wherefore Titus is told to put believers "in mind to be subject to rulers, to authorities, and to be obedient to rule." And in regard to the grace of God known in redemption we are told to be subject one to another, showing all humility, for God giveth grace to the humble.

Obedience, then, is to mark us in every circle of relationship which is established of God, nor is the confused and unrighteous state of that which professes to be Christian to be allowed to rob us of answering to the revealed truth of God. Another has said, "The present state of affairs, in the midst of which we Christians of to-day are responsible to act in obedience to that truth as found in Scripture, renders much prayerful exercise upon our part necessary, lest we fail in its application." Let us never forget the glory of obedience, the beauty of it, the honour of it, yea, the pleasure God Himself finds in it, and the

response He has given to the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ in exalting Him to His right hand. Let us not lose the present path of it by allowing our zeal to carry us outside the will of God. It was for this Samuel reproached Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22).

Disobedience marks the many to-day even as the Spirit foretold in the Scriptures—disobedient to parents—disobedient to rule—disobedient to the Word; "we ourselves were sometimes disobedient," says Paul; but when the call came, "I was not disobedient to

the heavenly vision," he remarked. And before him numbers entered upon the path in response to the Gospel call, and even "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." The Gospel and its mystery have the same end in view to-day. They are given for "obedience of faith" as we have seen. Soon the exercises of faith will be passed! Soon the hope which even now rejoices our hearts will be actually entered upon in glory! But meanwhile, with the glory of the One who has already reached the goal before us, may we so behold His excellencies that they may be reproduced in the Spirit's grace and power for the pleasure and glory of God:—

"From glory into glory changed
Till we behold His face."

"THE SON OF GOD."

(E. CROSS.)

EDITOR'S NOTE:—*The name of the beloved author of this brief paper is well known to many of our readers. Years ago, when he was still in full vigour, articles from his pen appeared with frequency in this magazine.*

When ill and in weakness he dictated these lines to our brother, H. J. Vine, in reference to some lectures the latter contemplated giving. This explains the form in which his remarks are cast.

In an hour when dissolution drew near and he was looking forward to being absent from the body and present with the Lord, what greater subject could have filled his heart and mind than the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him?

*"No subject so glorious as He,
No theme so affecting to us!"*

YOU have a grand subject for your lectures—The Son of Man, the Son of God, and God the Son.

May I suggest that you distinguish between *Son of God* in Luke and *Son of God* in John? Each should be the subject of a most interesting lecture. In Luke He is Son of God as born of the virgin by the power of the Spirit, the vessel of the heavenly purposes of God in man, really the foundation and subject matter of Paul's Gospel, "therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." In John, *the Son of*

God attaches rather to His Divine origin, though it is very interesting to remark that while John specially sets Him forth in His Divine nature He is in several instances in John's Gospel called "a man," e.g., John 1. 30; John 8. 40. But in these cases He is a Man, Son of God, bringing into observation in this world the Divine nature in a man.

Paul, on the other hand, sets forth the *purposes* of God in a Man. It would be helpful to keep these things clear, purposes and nature, and were you to take up each in a separate

lecture it would keep them more clearly in their distinctive characters before your audience.

Again, what is the meaning of "Father" and "Son"? *Father* is the Originator or Reproducer of that which represents *Himself*, and *Son* is the representation of the Father in His nature as expressed. We speak of Father and Son in family relationships as expressive of affection; in reality, fundamentally it is the reproduction of the family type that is in the Father as Head and Originator. He says in 2 Corinthians 6. 16-18, "I will be a *Father* unto you," but that means in separation from the idolatry of false gods, as He separates them to Himself from the paganism around. In Revelation 21. 7, where everything is reduced to its primal, radical, and eternal state, He says, "I will be his *God*," that is, He will recognize no god, no source of power or force, but in the

one true God—such will God be to him—"And he shall be My Son"—such he will be to Me in the vast world of eternal realities. My offspring, the representative of Myself in the eternal future (cf. 1 John 3 and 4).

You will then have four discourses, or five.

1. Son of Man.
2. Son of God as Man (Luke).
3. Son of God who is a Man (John).
4. God the Son (John).
5. Children of God in nature (1 John 3 and 4), and, finally, son of God in the eternal state, Rev. 21. 7, as expressive of Himself.

We have *now* the Spirit of sonship, so that we are already sons of God (Rom. 8.; Gal.; Eph.) while in our present state. Rev. 21. refers to a final and eternal state.

I should much like to hear you expatiating on these grand truths. *What a prospect is before us!*

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. IV. Exaltation and Glory. (Genesis 41.)

IN this portion of Joseph's history we reach the period in which God unfolds His plan for the glory and exaltation of Joseph as well as the government of Egypt. And as this fine story is developed, who can fail to see therein a picture of God's purpose for the exaltation of Christ and God's plan for the government of the world?

God's plans, however, must be carried out in God's time, by God's instruments, and in God's way. Joseph had probably looked forward to an immediate release when the butler was restored to his position in Pharaoh's household. But two full years must pass before God's time is reached. The due time having come, the last instrument in the hand of God is ready to complete the work that leads to the exaltation

of Joseph. Already God had used the king's captain, the king's jailor, and the king's butler, now He will use the king himself. Moreover, it must be in God's way. It will be "a dream, a vision of the night," by which He will trouble the spirit of Pharaoh and awaken the slumbering memory of Pharaoh's butler (8, 9).

First God reveals what He is about to do; but even so man cannot profit by the revelation. God may speak in a vision to Pharaoh, by the writing on the wall in Belshazzar's day, by "great plainness of speech" in our day, but, as in the days that are past, so now, the wise men of this world are utterly at fault in their efforts to interpret the word of God. Thus Pharaoh appeals to the "magicians of Egypt and all the

wise men thereof," only to find "there was none that could interpret" his dreams (8). Man's natural pride of intellect blinds him to the simple fact that communications from God can only be interpreted by God.

Having thus destroyed "the wisdom of the wise" and brought "to nothing the understanding of the prudent," God falls back on the man of His reserve, "a man in whom the spirit of God is." But as ever, God's man is of little account in the eyes of the world. The man who is destined to wield a power that no mortal, before or since, has ever exercised, is for the moment languishing in a prison and reckoned among "the base things of the world and things which are despised." Nevertheless, he is the chosen of God to "confound the mighty" and "bring to nought the things that are." So it comes to pass that Joseph is brought from the dungeon into the presence of earth's most powerful monarch. Pharaoh, speaking as a natural man, at once says, "I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it." Joseph straightway confesses, "It is not in me." It was no more in Joseph than in the wise men of Egypt to interpret a dream. But God was with Joseph, and herein was the great and all-important difference between Joseph and the wise men of Egypt. They may indeed be learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, they may hold the very highest positions in the court of the king; Joseph, on the other hand, is "a young man, an Hebrew, a bondman," in a dungeon, but God being with him he can surpass the wisdom of the wise, stand without a fear in the presence of the king, and with the utmost confidence say, "God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." He does not say, "God can give Pharaoh an answer," however true that would have been, but faith passing beyond what God *can* do, definitely states what God *will* do.

As in Joseph's day, so in this. It is still the possession of the Spirit of God

that makes the immeasurable difference between the children of God and the wise men of the world. Many indeed may possess giant intellects, well stored with such learning as this world can afford, holding, too, high rank in the religious world, but unless born again they are mere natural men, without the Spirit, and cannot even see the things that belong to the kingdom of God, much less enter that fair kingdom.

Having heard Pharaoh's account of his dream, Joseph proceeds to give the king a threefold message from God. First he twice repeats that "God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do" (25, 28). The wise men of Egypt doubtless had their theories as to the future of Egypt, and shaped their policies and made their plans in accordance with their own ideas—even as to-day the leaders of this world, whether political, religious, intellectual, capitalist, or labour, have their various theories for the future government of the world. But from the most exalted imperialist, through all shades of thought to the most degraded bolshevist, there is one thing in common—all the theories of men leave God out of God's world. Men will not own God as "the God of heaven and *earth*." God is welcome to heaven, about which man knows nothing and cares less, but as for earth, the centre of all man's affections, it must be governed according to man's ideal, an ideal which enthrones the will of man as supreme to the total exclusion of God. Nevertheless, God has His plans for the future government of the world, and of these plans God has not left us in ignorance. In Pharaoh's day, "He showed Pharaoh by a dream what He was about to do." In our day He has shown us still more plainly by direct revelation "what He is about to do." God was going to govern Egypt by one who had been rejected by his brethren, cast out, and forgotten by the world. And God has disclosed to us that according to His good pleasure He has purposed to head up all things in Christ,

both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. The One who, when He entered the world, found "no room" even in a wayside inn, who, as He passed through it, was only "a stranger in the land" and a "wayfaring man" with not where to lay His head, who when He went out of the world was nailed to a cross between two thieves, is the One of whom God has decreed, "The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9. 6, N.Tr.).

Moreover, Pharaoh learns a second truth at the lips of Joseph. Not only has God a plan for the government of Egypt, but "*the thing is established by God*" (32). The ingenuity of man can indeed evolve a bewildering succession of theories and plans, but over all there is the fatal stamp of utter instability. One generation unfolds its theories and pursues its plans with immense energy, only to have them entirely flung aside by a succeeding generation. But God can not only declare "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not," but He can say, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 46. 10).

Then a third truth is proclaimed to Pharaoh. Not only "the thing is established by God," but "*God will shortly bring it to pass*," (32). God has a revealed plan; God has established His plan; and what God has planned and established, God will bring to pass. Men foolishly dream of bringing about a millennium after their own thoughts and by their own efforts, through education, civilization, disarmament, leagues and confederacies, but all will be in vain. God has made it perfectly clear that His millennium will only be brought about by the direct intervention of God Himself. As in Joseph's day, so in our day, "God will bring it to pass." Has He not said by the mouth of the prophet, "I have spoken it and I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa.

46. 11)? Moreover, "God will *shortly* bring it to pass." The time may seem long, for God has lingered in long-suffering grace, not willing that any should perish, but as in Pharaoh's day so in ours, it has been given to the One who is going to be supreme, "to show unto His servants things which must *shortly* come to pass" (Rev. 1. 1).

In accordance with God's settled plan, Pharaoh is also instructed as to the way God will take to carry out His plans. Seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine, and Pharaoh is told to "look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt" (21-33). Two things mark this plan. First, God ordains that only one man shall be over the land; second, God will so order circumstances that all will be brought under the sway of this man. Joseph was to be set over all, and all would be brought under Joseph by the seven years of plenty followed by the seven years of famine. The circumstances and the man would combine to bring about God's purposed plan.

This, too, is God's plan for the future government of the world. Not by parliaments, or cabinets, not by counselors and ministers, will God govern, but by "a Man discreet and wise" set over all. And all will be brought under His sway either by the day of grace or in the day of judgment—the years of plenty or the years of famine. For nearly two thousand years God has been meeting man's deepest need according to the riches of His grace, and many have thus been brought under the sway of Christ by confessing Him as Lord to His glory and their blessing. But the world at large that has neglected God's grace and rejected the claims of Christ will be brought to bow in the day of judgment that will follow the years of grace. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26. 9).

All being good in the eyes of Pharaoh,

he proceeds to carry out the God-given counsels of Joseph. Thus it came to pass that the man "who was separated from his brethren" is exalted to a place of supremacy "over all the land of Egypt." The rejection by his brethren, the humiliations he had borne, the lowly positions he had filled, and the sufferings he had endured, all led to the place of exaltation, and have an answer in the varied glories that fall to him as lord of all. Moreover, if the days of his sorrows were a foreshadowing of the yet deeper sufferings and rejection of Christ, so too the supremacy of Joseph foreshadows the still greater glories of Christ as the exalted Man. In story after story of great saints of old the Spirit of God delights to anticipate the supremacy of Christ; by glowing Psalms and thrilling prophecies His exaltation is foretold, and when at last—His sufferings all fulfilled—He is glorified at God's right hand, with yet greater delight the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and unfolds before us His varied glories as the One exalted over all.

In the Ephesians we learn that *the counsel of God has purposed the exaltation of Christ*, for there we read that, "according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself," He is going to head up all things in Christ, "both which are in heaven and which are on earth," and in accord with this purpose He has already "set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet."

In Colossians we learn that *the glory of His Person demands the place of exaltation*. If he is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation," the One by whom all things were created, who is before all, and sustainer of all, then indeed He must "in all things" have the pre-eminence.

In Philippians *His lowly grace secures His exaltation*, for there we read that "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name."

In Hebrews *His sufferings prepare Him for His exaltation*. The One who is set over all—crowned with glory and honour—was first made perfect through sufferings.

In Peter we learn that *His preciousness in the eyes of God is witnessed by His exaltation*. The "stone, cast away indeed as worthless by men," but with God "chosen" and "precious," has been made the head of the corner.

Moreover, John tells us that if others are to share in the blessings and glory of His exaltation, then *suffering and death must be the pathway to exaltation*. When the moment had arrived that the Son of Man should be glorified, then the time had come when the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or for ever abide alone.

But if Joseph is set in a place of supremacy he must needs be there in a condition suited to the place. The prison garments are put off with the passing of prison circumstances. The royal ring, the fine linen, and the chain of gold betoken his high estate, and in a yet deeper and more spiritual way is this true of Christ in His exaltation. The garments of humiliation and poverty by which in grace He clothed Himself, or man in scorn placed upon Him, are for ever laid aside. The crown of thorns is exchanged for a crown of glory, the reed for the royal sceptre, and the seamless robe for the shining raiment exceeding white as snow. On earth He appeared as the poor Man, in heaven the glory of God

is shining in His face. Not only is He in glory but He is glorified.

As exalted and invested with glory, all are called to "bow the knee" to Joseph, and no man is to act independently of him. "Without thee," says Pharaoh, "shall no man lift up his hand in all the land of Egypt." If Joseph is supreme, all are called to submit. And so to-day, if God has exalted the Lord Jesus and given Him a Name which is above every name, it is "that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow." The Christian delights to bow during the plenteous years of grace; the world will be compelled to bow in the years of famine.

In the day of his exaltation Joseph is proved to be a true Revealer of Secrets or Zaphnath-paaneah. The wise men of Egypt, with all their store of learning, could not interpret mysteries or unroll the future. God, too, has His mysteries unknown and unuttered by prophets, priests, or kings. Glorious things they had to say of Christ, but there were secrets that awaited the coming of Christ—the Revealer of Secrets. Then indeed, when Christ is exalted, the greatest mystery of all is disclosed—the mystery of Christ and the church, of which, now that it is revealed, we can see a dim shadow in Joseph and Asenath, his Gentile bride. Rejected by his brethren who are left in far off Canaan, he is, unknown to them, exalted to a place of highest supremacy, there to receive a Gentile bride to share his place of glory. So Christ, rejected on earth by Israel, leaves them under the guilt of their sin, and takes a place in heaven, and during His session at the right hand of God the church is called out from the nations and presented to Him to share His kingdom glories.

Furthermore, during the years of plenty Joseph uses his place of exaltation to reap a great harvest for Egypt. He deals with the harvest of Egypt during the years of plenty, He will deal

with the men of Egypt during the years of famine (36-49). May we not say that in this day of grace the world is passing through its "seven plenteous years," when the grace of God is bestowing blessing by "handfuls"? The men of the world may, alas, entirely neglect the blessings that grace brings to their door, and pursue their way quite heedless of the future. Apparently the men of Egypt took no advantage of the years of plenty to lay up for the years of famine. We do not read that they gathered up any food. It was Joseph that went throughout the land, and gathered up the corn. And so to-day it is the exalted Christ who is reaping a harvest of souls during the day of grace. He is going through the world gathering His people out of the world. But when the days of grace have run their course He will deal with the men of the world.

The two sons that are born to Joseph will also bear their witness to Christ. Manasseh, as we know, signifies "forgetting," and Ephraim "fruitful." Rejected by his brethren, his path had been one of suffering and toil, but Joseph is no loser. His brethren must suffer for their evil course, but Joseph has his great reward and becomes fruitful in the land of his affliction. Nor is it otherwise with Christ. His ancient people may despise and reject Him, they may number Him with the transgressors, but in the day of His rejection, when His soul is made an offering for sin, then "He shall see His seed," yea, "He shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Israel could say, "His blood be on us, and on our children," and indeed they will drink to the dregs their cup of guilt, but Christ has not lost by their rejection. His "toil" has its glorious answer in a great harvest of souls gathered out of the world during the time of His rejection by Israel. The time when He is "forgotten" by Israel is the time when He gathers fruit among the Gentiles.

THE MASTER-KEY.

(J. R. STEPHEN.)

"To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."—Eph. 3. 9.

O LOVE that doth my soul enthrall,
And bids each hell-born tempter
flee,
Of heavenly things the master-
key,
Thy bond-slave, I, without recall.

Spontaneous as the ocean wave,
Illimitable, vast and free,
As wide as God's eternity,
Thine—ever Thine—though foes may
rave.

Held in Thy strong embrace I sing,
No creature power could e'er divine
The peace, the rest, the joy now
mine,
Life's myst'ries all to Thee I bring.

Thou canst alone of things Divine,
Instruct the simple contrite heart,
The blessedness of Truth impart,
That work my Saviour-God is Thine.

Nay! Truth revealed shall ne'er elude
The feeblest grasp of humble mind,
Its treasures Love doth now unbind
Where reason all in vain pursued.

Love, eloquent in heavenly guise
To mortals beckoning the way,
Light from above as sunbeam's ray,
Who heeds her are the truly wise.

Whoso would know this holy Love
In Wisdom's school tuition finds,
And round the soul Her lesson
binds,
Assured all else will falsehood prove.

Then will I trust not aught beside,
Nor bend my ear to grave or gay,
Celestial Light, lead Thou the way,
Thou, Truth and Life, alone me guide.

My faith still outward looks nor fears—
The day draws nigh, wake glory
sheen!
Display the lowly Nazarene!
Whose name we'll laud through endless
years.

"MADE PERFECT IN ONE."

(C. E. H. WARREN.)

I HAVE meditated often and with increasing wonder upon the scene presented to us in Revelation 3. 9, in which they of the synagogue of Satan are made (*lit.*, given, a word that is a key to much in the Apocalypse) to do homage before the feet of the bride and to know that she was the object of the love of Christ. That He attaches importance to this is evident from His use of the word "behold" twice in the verse. "Behold," He says, "I will make them of the synagogue of Satan," and again, "Behold, I will make them to come." In this way He calls attention to the extraordinary phenomenon of such a company, calling itself Jewish, doing homage before the feet of the Gentile bride; doubtless at the same time confessing Christ as Lord, according to Philippians 2., but this of course unwillingly under the compelling power of God, like the foolish virgins too late to secure a blessing. (Compare also Matt. 7. 22).

The character and purpose of the synagogue of Satan is well illustrated by the gathering together effected by the chief priests and Pharisees to oppose the testimony of God, and to murder His faithful Witness, as recorded in John 11. 47. Probably on every occasion since then, when any special testimony has been rendered, Satan has been permitted to gather his council to oppose. Happy they who have been eyes in the body of Christ, which is the church, to detect the wiles of the enemy.

Some may be surprised to read of the saints of Revelation 3. 9 as the bride, but we have seen in a previous article that at the time when the saints are caught away, according to Revelation 3. 10, those phases of the church represented in the addresses to Sardis and Laodicea have lost their vital elements. The words "Thou art dead" apply to the whole assembly in Sardis

at a certain time. As Mr. Darby pointed out, the true believers are concentrated in Philadelphia; hence they may be spoken of as the bride. Her position is further developed in verse 21, as sitting with Christ in His throne.

"To know that I have loved thee." What then shall we say of this love of Christ which these once wretched sinners were made to know entirely outside of themselves? This is the love of relationship, the love that surpasses knowledge, which Paul prays that all saints may know, they having been brought to Him out of the terrible wreck of sin and death by surpassing grace and Divine power, according to the work wrought both for them and in them, as detailed in Ephesians 1. and 2. He will in due time present her to Himself all glorious and spotless.

Now let us turn to another scene, revealed to us in John 17. 22, 23. If we compare this with Revelation 3. 9, we shall find some similarity but also much that differs. Both show us Divine love and its objects, and both refer to the time when the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ will be manifested; but in the Apocalypse the spectators are the wicked who have used all the energy with which Satan could endow them to hinder the progress of God's testimony in this world; whilst in John 17. 23 it is the world to come which receives the knowledge through the glorified saints that Christ is the true Apostle of God and that the saints are the beloved of the Father even "as He loved the Son." From what is written in Revelation 21. 24, "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it," we have ground for thinking that what is thus learnt will be effective in bringing them into a large measure of spiritual blessing. Hitherto Gentile

nations have learnt God in His ways with Israel. But at the time to which we refer, the church is seen descending out of heaven, "A witness of grace in a scene of righteousness," as another has happily remarked, and what a triumphant answer does the golden city give to the sufferings of the cross!

It has often been noticed that there are three orders of unity in John 17. The first is in verse 11, and should read thus, "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we" (N. Tr.). This is quite the same unity as that referred to by the Lord in John 10., "I and the Father are one." Many quote these passages as though they refer to the unity in the Godhead, but obviously no unity of disciples as in chapter 17. 11 could be of that order. Unity in the Godhead is entirely outside our ken, but revealed to faith. The unity required for the propagation of the testimony of the Lord is that His servants should "all speak the same thing," being "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1. 10). Had it been otherwise with the apostles, who are specially in view in the petition of verse 11, we should have had the misery of divided authority and contradictory assertions from the outset, and consequently factions and sects would have been inevitable. The happy contrast is seen in John 10., where the Lord declares "there shall be one flock and one shepherd," that being a part of the one thought between the Father and the Son about the sheep.

It is evident that if the apostles had lacked in this character of unity which the Lord asks for them, their mission would have been a failure. This is seen on a small scale in the difference that arose between Peter and Paul in Galatians 2. Paul, discerning how serious was the defection, even that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, stayed the evil for the time; but how many

generations of foolish Galatians have there been since then?

A second kind of unity is revealed in the Lord's petition for those who should believe on Him through the apostolic testimony that they "all may be one," even as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father—the Son, be it remembered, in all the reality of His perfect Manhood, so that we, as in Him (see John 14. 20), and in the consciousness of eternal life (see 1 John 5. 13), are brought to the Father in whom the Son lives. This unity then is of life and communion, and as it is manifested becomes such a witness to men of the world that they are constrained to believe the mission of the Son from the Father.

It may be asked, What it is men see that so moves their hearts to faith? Is it not that in the saints is seen something of the lowly grace of the Man Christ Jesus and His love shining out towards one another, and towards all?

I have said so much with regard to the unities of verses 11 and 21, that the distinctive characters of each might be apprehended, and that we might see that each has its own sphere of operation; verse 7 with regard to testimony, particularly that of the apostles, verse 21 with regard to communion. The unity of verses 22 and 23 is with regard to the glorified state. Upon the last I desire to dwell more in detail.

Let us then listen to the Son addressing the Father with respect to the ultimate destiny of those given to Him by the Father, and notice the giving of glory both to the Son and the saints is spoken of as a completed transaction; as we read in Romans 8., "whom He justified them He also glorified." The end is sure, the first step having been taken in faith. But consider the wonder of this—that the same glory the Son receives from the Father, as an answer to His accomplished work, and His own personal worthiness, He gives to the saints. He does not give it

away, but, by His gift, brings them into that which is already His. He then tells the Father what He has done, as being perfectly assured of His pleasure and approval.

Now, it may be asked, With what purpose does the Son carry out this amazing act of condescension? This secret He also tells us, viz., "that they may be one even as we are one." That which many a devoted servant of God has prayed and wept for, and in his measure worked for, is at last fulfilled, and such shall see themselves with all the children of God, shining in the same glory and in the likeness of Christ.

"All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored."

Moreover, it should specially be noticed that this unity thus marvelously formed can never be broken, depending as it does, not on the action of failing believers, but on that of the Father and the Son. The Son lives in the saints as the Father does in the Son; but the point to be emphasized is that the saints are so "perfected into one" that their unity is manifested to the world of that day; so that their state of glory becomes a witness to the mission of the Son from the Father. In verse 23 of our chapter the saints are seen sharing the very glory of Christ Himself. Such evidence affords testimony to the world that the Father has sent the Son and that the saints have been loved as Christ was loved. The unity of verse 21 witnesses to faith; that of verse 23 is formative of knowledge.

These outlines of our future blessing, which I have in part been endeavouring to trace, are some of our highest privileges in the glory of the future kingdom. Types of this were seen by the Queen of Sheba, who was so affected by what she saw that there remained no more spirit in her, or as the Septuagint puts it, "she became out of herself." But what she did not see was the glory of the sanctuary, which seems to have its antitype in verse 24 of our

chapter, in which the Lord says, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

This view of the glory seems only to be given to the disciples who share the privileges of the inside place, as the companions of the Son of God (compare Matthew 13. 11 and 36; Song of Solomon 2. 4). It was this place of holy intimacy with Christ which His disciples were grieved in their hearts to be losing; hence the Lord's word to them, "Let not your heart be troubled . . . in My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." He would thus assure them that where He was going there would be an abundant opportunity for a renewal of all that happy intercourse the loss of which they feared so much.

Let us pass on now to verse 26, which, with the preceding verse, forms the seventh section of this wonderful chapter. It may seem arbitrary to interpret the words "I in them" in a different sense in the two verses in which they occur (23 and 26), but the context must decide, and we have already seen that in verse 23 it is a question of manifestation in glory: Christ in the saints (see 2. Thess. 1. 10) and the Father in the Son.

In verse 26 there is no thought of this, but Christ living in us, the power to realize that which He knows so well—the Father's love, which finds in Him an Object ever in perfect accord with itself; but the wonder of the verse is this, that the very same love with which the Father loves the Son rests on the weakest of His saints; and more than this, the Son Himself undertakes so to make known to us the Father's Name that His love may be in us, and Christ in us to make it all good. What pains, so to speak, the Father and the Son take that we should not miss this, perhaps the climax of Christian experience.

Actually there are two principal factors which hinder us from entering

into our own proper portion as above, and knowing the sequel, given us by Christ's own lips in this chapter, His joy fulfilled in us.

The two snares to which I refer are the defilement of our spirits through

sin, and a certain legal-mindedness which leads us to think that the trials and chastenings of the way are evidences of Divine displeasure. Both these must be met by a hearty subjection to the teachings of grace as in Titus 2. and elsewhere.

IS THERE A PATH ?

WE can well understand the questions arising in many minds, and in some cases finding audible expression: "Is there a Divinely ordained path for the children of God to-day? If so, where is it? How may we be sure that we are in the right path?"

To say that the times are difficult is only to state that which is realized by all who seek to follow the Lord; and it simply proves the accurate fulfilment of the prediction: "That in the last days difficult times shall be there" (2 Tim. 3. 1, N.Tr.).

As we look around we see religious denominations torn by dissension. The movement towards Rome, countenanced by those in high places, is pronounced in some quarters; the terrible effects of so-called "Modernism" in others; and there is the lamentable fact of those who say, or write, the most revolting things being elected to positions of authority. In these organizations there are numbers of sincere and earnest believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. They feel that they are engaged in a contest where the odds are heavily against them, and with them the question must often arise: "What are we to do?"

Then there are those who have been favoured with more light from the Lord. They desire to acknowledge the authority of His Word and His Name. They seek to recognize His supremacy as "Head of the Body, the assembly" (Col. 1. 18); and they

wish to be subject to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Alas! They are hopelessly divided. If those who are still entangled in the systems of men are looking for a *company* that professes to answer to the truth, they may find half a dozen companies, or more, who will say that they are seeking to do so, yet they are walking apart from each other. It is evident then that those who desire to follow the Lord find that the times are difficult. We suggest, however, that these difficulties will become less acute if we are satisfied that there is a path. We trust it will not seem like a contradiction of our previous statement if we say that if we follow THE LORD, if it is HIMSELF that we seek, the difficulties for us will vanish because HE will undertake for us, and HE will carry us through.

Before proceeding to answer the question which we have set out to consider it seems to us that there is another question which must have precedence, that is:—

IS THERE A PATH FOR THE LORD TO-DAY ?

Shall we just at this point open our Bibles at Revelation 21. ? From verse 9 onwards, we have a beautiful and graphic description of the coming day of glory, commonly called the millennium. In the magnificent view of the great, or holy, city that is therein presented to us, we read: "And the street of the city was pure

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

gold, as it were transparent glass" (verse 21). Observe the city has *only one street*, and that is a street in which "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" can walk. It is of "pure gold." It is characterized by Divine righteousness. It is according to the Divine mind. Further, it is "as it were transparent glass." It reflects the glories of "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb." It is the Lord's street, it is the path for the Lord.

It may be objected that this is all future. We admit that at once, but it affords us a clue as to the Lord's mind and desire for the present time. Shall we now turn to 2 Corinthians 6. and read verses 14-18? "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Does not this show that there is a street in which our blessed Lord can walk now? A path that is according to His mind. It is evident that He cannot walk:—

1. Where believers and unbelievers are joined in an unequal yoke.

2. Where the strange contradiction is seen of righteousness associating with unrighteousness, and of light mingling with darkness.

3. Where those who profess to love the truth, and those who are endeavouring to shatter it, are seen arm in arm. And

4. Where the authority of the Lord is usurped, and something, or some person is put in His place.

THERE IS A PATH FOR THE LORD TO-DAY,

but it is outside the recognized, systematized order of things by which we are surrounded. There may be those who belong to the Lord inside that order of things, and that such is the case is sadly true, but they are not where He is, and if they wish to be where He is they must "COME OUT!" These are not our words, they are the words of Holy Scripture, they are the call of the Lord. There are those who plead: "If we leave where we are, everything will go to wreck and ruin, and we want to save what we can." The fact is, however, that the wreck is complete, and there is nothing to save. Where the Lord is there can be no compromise with evil, no sanctioning of error, no association with anything not in keeping with that which is due to His holy Name. He calls for separation to Himself from evil in every form. It may cost something and most likely it will. It may be that some who once walked with us will do so no longer; that links of friendship will be snapped; that we shall find the path narrow; that those who tread it will be few; and, without doubt, reproach will mark it.

We shall find, however, that it is the Lord's path. It is a "street of pure gold." In this polluting world it is a clean place in which He can walk; and where all will seek, in lowliness and humility, to answer to His mind, who is "He that is holy, He that is true" (Rev. 3. 7); where they will desire to maintain that which is consistent with His righteousness, and to reflect all that He is. Those who tread that path may be assured of His company, His approval, and all that His bounty can bestow upon them. We see, then, that the Lord has marked out a path for Himself, and to that path—O wondrous grace!—He calls

all those who confess His Name. This path is not a new path designed to meet altered circumstances. It is the path that He has chosen for Himself, and which He marked out for "His own" at the beginning. To be in that path has always involved coming out from the world, religiously, socially, politically, and in every sense of the word, in whole-hearted separation to Himself. The three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost took their stand on the Lord's side and declared that henceforth His path would be their path. When Paul "separated the disciples" and they met in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19. 9), that indicated their break with the hitherto accredited order of things, and their acceptance of the Lord's path. 2 Timothy 1. 15, shows that later there was a not inconsiderable number who were not prepared for that path. Toleration, large-heartedness, broad-mindedness, etc., were probably their catch words. They forsook Paul, and in forsaking Paul they forsook the Lord. They walked in a path of their own choosing, but that was not the Lord's path, and if they escaped the reproach they missed the reward.

The truth of God and the path that the Lord has marked out are not altered to suit ever-changing circum-

stances. The Lord is the same, the truth is the same, the path is the same, and all will be available for those who belong to Him "till He come."

We have not to choose our path. The Lord has chosen the path for us, and it is our privilege to follow Him. We venture to quote the words of a beloved servant of the Lord, long since gone to his rest: "It is of the utmost importance to see that the Name of the Lord will never oblige a man to choose between the lesser of two evils; and this is, in my judgment, what God has been pressing of late. There is a path without evil." These are weighty words. We are not left to view various companies and decide which is best, or failing that, strike out on a path of our own. The Lord has marked out the path for us. If we follow Him, we must be with Him, and if we are with Him, then we shall be in the path of His will. We want to be occupied, not with evil, but with the Lord; we want to take our direction, not from men, but from the Lord; we want to look, not around at the failure, but up—to the Lord. May our hearts be greatly encouraged, may our gaze be fixed upon Himself; and may our feet be found in the path of His will, till we hear His welcome voice, and see Him face to face, for His Name's sake.

Every year the grip on us is getting tighter. The conviction is imperative. **WE MUST SEPARATE OR LOSE OUR FAITH IN THE BIBLE.** Either the Modernists should leave the Evangelical churches and institutions, or we must give up our inheritance, save our faith, and go forward.

Spurgeon saw this in his day. Writing of the controversies then raging, he said: "I have never advised those struggles, nor entertained the slightest hope of their success. My course has been of another kind. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become thoroughly established, I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my counsel has been: 'Come ye out from among them.' If I have rejoiced in the loyalty to Christ's truth which has been shown in other courses of action, yet I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation from known evil." And again he says: "Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it." (*Extracted.*)

HANNAH.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

IT is our privilege, as those whose lot has been cast in the day in which God has been fully revealed, to profit in our souls by the record He has been pleased to give us of His ways and dealings with His people of old. We may be sure that our God would have His saints, who by His grace have been brought into the children's place, to be deeply interested in all His gracious activities, whether in the comparatively dim dispensations of the past, or our own day in which the full light of God's revelation is shining in all its brilliance.

Our minds are ever prone to limit our spiritual outlook to that which has its application more directly to *ourselves*, as those who have a *heavenly calling*, instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to expand our vision, and enlarge our spiritual capacity to trace with adoring hearts the varied glories of Christ, as presented to us in the Holy Scriptures. We remember the Saviour's word to His disciples: "Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you" (John 15. 15). Our Lord in His memorable interview with His two disciples on the way to Emmaus, expounded to them, "*in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself.*" We believe the Lord, by the Holy Spirit, through His saints and servants, is carrying on this blessed work to-day.

The first and second chapters of the book of Samuel, while they bring to light the weakness and failure of God's earthly people, also present to us, in striking contrast, the faith, holy confidence, and spiritual intelligence of one of "wisdom's children." Elkanah had two wives: the one most loved was barren, the other, Penninah, had children. To be childless was a great grief to an Israelitish wife: to be fruitful, on the contrary,

was a signal mark of God's favour. Hannah, who was a woman of faith and looked beyond that which was merely of nature, felt her position keenly, and sorrow filled her heart. Her grief, too, was intensified when she saw that she was despised in Penninah's eyes. Elkanah was a man who feared God, and he sought earnestly to comfort his wife, but in vain. There was only One who could gauge the depth of her heart's sorrow, and Hannah found her resource in the God of Israel. It was in the house of the Lord at Shiloh, at the time of the yearly offering, that she poured out her soul to Jehovah: "If Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid and . . . give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." Conscious of her desolate condition as a wife without a child she was led by grace to cast herself upon the Lord, without judging Him hard towards her, as she spread out her heart's desire into His ever-opened ear.

The solemn fact is here recorded, that the High Priest was not in communion with the mind of God. As Jehovah's representative he ought to have known that this woman was not drunken, as he supposed, but was in deep exercise of soul before God. Convinced by her meek endurance of his reproach, Eli bids her go in peace, with the prayer that the God of Israel might grant her the petition she had asked of Him. Thus her heart was comforted, and "she was no more sad." "And it came to pass when the time was come about . . . that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel." In due time Hannah opens her mind to her husband: "I will not go up until the child be weaned: then I will bring him that he may appear before Jehovah, and there abide for ever." A true wife, she keeps nothing back from her husband, but the God

of Israel was the paramount object before her soul.

We cannot doubt that Hannah loved her boy with all the affection that a mother could bestow upon her child: but she realized the greatness of the honour conferred upon her, in Jehovah's response to her petition. In faith she could look forward, and see her son an honoured servant in the courts of the Lord; she firmly believed that her child was given to be used of God for purposes of blessing in Israel. A study of the early chapters of first Samuel will show how her faith was honoured. "When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord at Shiloh: and they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli: and she said, Oh, my lord, . . . I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed: and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore, also, I have lent him to the Lord: as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." *And Eli worshipped the Lord there.* The goodness of God draws out praise and thanksgiving from glad hearts.

Hannah's prayer-song follows. Happy in the enjoyed sense of Jehovah's favour, she is free to give full expression to her grateful heart in His presence. Her song is not about herself, but all about Jehovah, His ways, His purposes, His triumphs, His power and glory. In faith's vision, she looks down through the centuries, and sees God's glorious King enthroned in power and majesty, when restored Israel, with Jehovah's laws written upon their hearts and minds, under the peaceful sway of the true Messiah, shall sit under their own vine and fig tree: and when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

How wonderful are the ways of God!

Who would have thought, that He would single out, from among the thousands of His chosen people, the lowly wife of an obscure Levite, to be His witness and mouthpiece, to publish, for the joy and blessing of generations still unborn, the glories of His King? How altogether contrary to the thoughts of men! She could say of Jehovah: He "maketh poor, and maketh rich; . . . He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them." How gladly we join in ascription of praise to Jehovah, and His well-beloved Son.

It is worthy of notice that the Lord again visited Hannah, and she "bare three sons and two daughters: and the child Samuel *grew before the Lord.*" Here was her compensation for the glad surrender of her child to Jehovah. Let us note this principle: whatever suffering, or reproach, or loss may be encountered, as the result of service freely rendered to Christ, rest assured that in one form or another, as seems best to Him, ample recompense will be given, for the Lord will be no man's debtor.

Israel's blessings, great and manifold as they truly are, have to do with the earth, and find their centre in the land of Canaan. On the other hand, all those who have received Christ, and are children of God are heavenly in origin, citizenship and destiny: and all the blessings that Israel ever will, or could possess, and infinitely more, are secured to the saints of the present Gospel period, under the endearing name of FATHER. (See John 1. 12, 13; 20. 17; Heb. 2. 11-13.) May we rise, in the faith of our souls, to the dignity of our holy calling, (see Eph. 1. 1-6; 4. 1-4; 2 Tim. 1-9) and, like Hannah of old, in the Spirit's power, make the Lord's interests our chief delight.

"Father, Thy Name our souls would bless,
As children taught by grace :
Lift up our hearts in righteousness,
And joy before Thy face.

Sweet is the confidence Thou giv'st,
Though high above our praise :
Our hearts resort to where Thou liv'st,
In heaven's unclouded rays."

SOWING AND REAPING.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE Epistle to the Galatians was written in defence of the truth of the Gospel. The particular errors it meets were those introduced by men of a legal type, coming from Jerusalem, whose aim was to subject all Christians to the law of Moses, and thus to make Christianity but a new and vigorous off-shoot and development of Judaism.

In meeting these errors the Apostle Paul draws very striking contrasts between "the Jew's religion" and "the truth of the Gospel"; and we might sum up those contrasts, we think, under three heads, viz. :—

*Law and grace,
Works and faith,
Flesh and Spirit;*

the three former are linked together as inseparably connected with "the Jew's religion" in which Paul "profited" above many of his contemporaries (1. 14.); the three latter combine in connection with Christianity.

The Jewish nation had its birth in Abraham, the Jewish kingdom in David, but the Jews' religion started when the law was given at Sinai. In the law of Moses God formulated His righteous demands upon men. He joined with these demands much in the way of ceremonial observance, which had the effect, if observed by Israel, of making them a peculiar people and hindering their free intercourse with the nations. These barriers were purposely erected to act as a kind of insulation so that the test which the law proposed might be carried out under the most favourable circum-

stances. He also connected with His demands the system of sacrifice which foreshadowed the way in which all the questions which the law raised and left unanswered, would in due time be settled to His glory.

The requirement of the law may be summed up in one word—works. Its demands, whether positive or in the form of prohibitions, were to be met by simple obedience. It was "This *do*, and thou shalt live." It called not for discussion of its terms, nor for promises of future improvement, but for instant obedience in works to its behests.

Yet it addressed itself to man in his fallen condition and therefore to the flesh—the Scripture term for that degraded moral condition, or nature, which lies inherent in man's material and physical flesh as the result of the fall. Here lay the secret of the whole breakdown as far as man was concerned. In the law, life was proposed to man as the result of obedience. Yet that "which was ordained to life" turned out "to be unto death" (Rom. 7. 10). The law could not produce compliance with its demands "in that it was weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). This Scripture statement casts no discredit upon the law, which was "holy, just, and good" (Rom. 7. 12); the fact is that in the flesh dwells "no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18), and hence it is hopeless material for the law to operate upon. If a sculptor were presented with first-class tools and an excellent block of marble on which to work, and the result were a hopeless botch, the critics would rightly attribute

blame to the sculptor. If, on the other hand, he were presented with a heap of dry sand on which to exercise his skill, they would exonerate him from all blame. In that case all the failure is in the material and not the sculptor. Thus was it with the law and the flesh.

Hence, though there was breakdown, there was no breakdown in the law. God presented it as a way of life to man, in order to demonstrate to man that it was a way he could not take. God intended it to convict man, stop his mouth, and shut him up to the grace that was coming. This it most effectually did.

"The truth of the Gospel" is that grace has come in Christ and through His redemptive work. It is presented to faith, for the Gospel does not call upon man to do anything, but rather to look in faith upon what Christ has done, and consequent upon faith is the gift of the Spirit; and the Spirit being received He is to be the active energizer of the believer's new life, and not the flesh.

The unbeliever, then, acts according to the flesh, for he has no other principle of life within him. The believer still has the flesh within him, for it is the nature inherent in his mortal body, in which he lives after conversion as truly as he did before conversion; yet he possesses the Spirit of God as the energy of that new life which is his in Christ. Here is an altogether *different* energy of life as to *character*, and altogether *superior* as to *power*. If the believer walks in the Spirit he does "not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5. 16). A new Power is present which then supersedes the old and renders it impotent, "that ye should not do those things which ye desire" (Gal. 5. 17, N.Tr.).

Scripture, then, clearly recognizes the presence in the believer of both the Spirit and the flesh. It also recognizes the individuality and personality

of the believer, the "ego" as it is sometimes termed. The flesh is not myself, for it is "*my* flesh." Needless to say, the Spirit is not myself. Yet there is myself—I—the responsible individual; and as far as practical Christianity is concerned, everything turns on the relation which I, myself, hold in regard to the flesh and the Spirit.

This practical side of things is summed up for us in Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8, under the figure of "sowing" and "reaping." Our thoughts, our words, and our actions are viewed as so many acts of seed sowing. All depends on whether we sow to the flesh or to the Spirit, i.e., whether the tendency and intent and end of our sowing is to the gratification of the cravings of the flesh or of the desires of the Spirit. This it is which determines the character of our sowing, and consequently the character of the reaping.

It is, of course, true that we reap as we sow as to *quantity*. 2 Corinthians 9. 6 emphasizes this side of the question. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Our Scripture is enforcing the truth that as surely as God is God, we reap as we sow as to *character* or *kind*. We cannot sow one kind and reap another kind. There is no such thing as "transmutation of species" in the material creation, though evolutionary philosophers have eagerly sought it. Men cannot sow thistles and reap wheat, or cockle and have a harvest of barley. Neither is there transmutation of species in the spiritual realm. If we sow to the gratification of the flesh we reap corruption, always corruption, and nothing but corruption. If we sow to the Spirit we reap everlasting life. Let us not deceive ourselves on this point, for we are apt to do so, as the apostle's warning implies.

Flesh and corruption are thus inseparably connected as cause and

effect. This has been true as to man's physical flesh ever since the fall. His flesh then became mortal flesh with corruption as its inevitable end. It became equally true of his moral condition and nature which is "the flesh" in the passage we are considering. Its workings always issue in moral and spiritual corruption. The "old man" is "corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4. 22), and so deceitful are its lusts that what appears to be the most intellectual and refined philosophic speculation may really be the wanderings of human minds that are controlled by the *lusts*, that is, the *desires*, of the flesh. Such persons just end by thinking what they *want* to think; and all the corruption which fills the world to-day originates in *thought*: words and actions follow after.

The world then is full of corruption, but how solemn for us believers to think that whenever we pander to the flesh and its desires we lay up for ourselves a harvest of corruption, and that the amount of our sowing in that direction will determine the quantity of the harvest. We may rejoice that these principles are equally true if we turn to the other side, if we sow to the Spirit.

To some of our readers it may appear strange that the term "everlasting life" should be given as the antithesis of "corruption"; and the very idea of everlasting life being "reaped" by anyone as the fruit of a previous sowing may appear to be difficult of explanation; and more difficult and remarkable still that all this should be addressed to believers. Such may ask if this passage does not contradict those statements as to eternal life being the portion of the believer which are found in the Gospel of John.

There is, however, no contradiction; and there is no real difficulty if we grasp but something of the fulness of meaning which lies in the term "everlasting life." If we speak but of

natural "life" as we have it in this world, we know it to be a term of great fulness as to its meaning.

For instance: Here on a bed lies a prostrate form. The patient is critically ill, unconscious, and breathing but feebly. A doctor stands by the bedside, and in answer to an anxious enquiry he pronounces that life is still there, and that while there is life there is hope. We all know what he means. Life in the primary sense, the vital spark, so to speak, is still there and may yet be fanned into a flame. Yet that primary meaning by no means gives a full and proper idea of what human life is. No artist who painted a picture of such a scene, however beautiful and full of pathos it might be, would dream of hanging it in the Academy under the title "Life." No! He would select some subject expressive of human life in its full energy of expression, of the way in which that life may be developed in favourable and happy surroundings. He would paint, perhaps, a picture of healthful and happy children racing along the golden sands in summer sunshine, for we frequently and rightly use the word life in the secondary sense which implies all those relationships and surroundings in which we are set and in which human life develops. The Scriptures themselves speak of human life in this secondary sense when they say, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?" (Psa. 34. 12).

Life in its primary meaning has been spoken of as "*life potential*," i.e., in its potential form, containing within itself marvellous possibilities, as yet undeveloped; in its secondary meaning as "*life phenomenal*," i.e., as expressed in its phenomena; or even as life in its *pregnant* form, i.e., full of significance as to all the relationships and enjoyments which are its proper portion.

In just the same way "everlasting life" in Scripture means far more than

eternal existence. It is, indeed, ours as a new life in the *potential* sense, but it is equally ours in the *phenomenal* and *pregnant* sense, as this Scripture which we are considering shows. In this secondary sense, while ours, it is to be entered upon experimentally and enjoyed, and the more we "sow to the Spirit" the larger our experimental entrance into the relationships and occupations and joys which are essential to it, and which are of such purity and holiness as to be the exact antithesis to the corruption which is the outcome of "sowing to the flesh." Other Scriptures which show that this fulness of meaning is contained in the term "everlasting life" may be turned to. Conspicuous among them are 1 Timothy 6. 12, and John 17. 3.

This digression has been necessary that we should understand and fairly grasp the nature of the alternative presented to us. To the three sets of contrasts pointed out at the beginning of our paper we may now add a fourth, viz. :—

Corruption and everlasting life.

The character of the believer's life will have its answer in the coming age in the shape of loss or reward, but this Scripture is enforcing the present effects. It is a tremendously solemn consideration that every act of our lives has its tendency, sows its seed, in one or other of these two directions. A hundred times a day we stand either in thought or word or act at the parting of the ways and yield either to the desires of the flesh or of the Spirit. Many Christians are puzzled by the happenings that crowd into their lives. All seems a strange jumble

of events and experiences, like an allotment patch which is a tangle of useful vegetables and noxious weeds. Is there, however, any real cause for wonder?

Alas, no! We have made the tangle ourselves. We have sowed to the flesh, often with lavish hand. Had our hearts been under the constraining influence of the love of Christ we should steadily have said, "No" to the flesh, and "Yes" to the Spirit of God, and the result would have been far different.

This sowing, be it noted, comes down to what we might consider very ordinary matters. The immediate context of the passage (verses 6 and 9, 10) shows that what gave rise to the enunciation of these weighty principles were practical matters connected with the temporal support of teachers of the Word, and acting in generosity to all men, especially fellow-believers.

In conclusion, let us take it to heart that the option in this matter, the responsibility of deciding one way or the other, rests with us. It is not something which we can settle for ever by one decision. The flesh is in us and, except we habitually live as those who have been crucified with Christ, it bids for recognition and gratification. The Spirit of God indwells us as "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." But it is WE who sow, and sow in one direction or the other. Our spiritual prosperity hangs upon our sowing. In which direction is it to be?

To decide aright there must be earnest and prayerful dependence upon God Himself. Let us pray.

Now if anything is certain about sin it is this, it destroys the capacity by which alone its estimate can be rightly made. We must judge it from the standpoint of unshaken moral righteousness, from unsullied purity, and that exactly is what we have lost. If "all have sinned," then there is no scale, no measure, because we have all had our faculties disorganized, our senses dulled, and the true vision is denied us. . . . Christ's challenge comes, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Here is One that claims to have that essential requisite, a sinless judgment . . . what is His estimate?

"I ACKNOWLEDGED . . . THOU FORGAVEST."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

NEXT to the blessedness of forgiving, which belongs, of course, to God, comes the blessedness of being forgiven. What words can describe it? The quietness after the storm, the relief after oppression, the deep, holy peace that fills the heart as the sense of forgiveness steals over it! To sink down into the arms of a pardoning God, and to rest on His bosom, the bosom from which the pardon flows, this is a never-to-be-forgotten experience and none who have known it can ever think lightly of it.

The Pharisee cannot know it, nor any man who excuses his sins, or hides them, or refuses to admit to God and himself that he is a sinner. But those who have felt the smart and the sting of sin, those who have tried in vain to destroy the serpent that has bitten them, these will know it. Those who have discovered that their sins are neither dead nor done with, that they cannot escape them, that with persistent feet they are pursuing them, gathering round them, and crying insistently, "Thou art the man," these are on the verge of the blessing. Those whose consciences have awakened, who feel what it is to have sinned against God, and have looked into the abyss of horror into which their sins were carrying them, these will find no refuge, no relief, no hope, except in God, and to Him they will come with broken and contrite hearts and He will receive them. They cannot forgive themselves, neither angel nor man can clear them, but God can. Forgiveness is His grand prerogative, and when conscience-stricken, sin-laden, honest at last they come to Him, they find rest in what He is and what He can do for them. This is Bible truth, and the experience of multitudes has answered to it as the diamond flashes back the light of the sun.

The first mention of God's forgive-

ness is in the Book of Exodus. Israel had sinned, and Moses pleaded for them. "This people," he said, "have sinned a great sin; yet now if Thou wilt forgive them—" And there he broke off his request, he did not finish the sentence. Surely it was too much to ask; it seems from the passage that the thought of his heart made him gasp by its very magnitude; how could God forgive this great rebellion, standing as He did upon the crest of Sinai? This unfinished sentence—half agonizing desire, half eager question—must be left to God to complete. And He did complete it in chapter 34. On the very spot where His holy law had thundered forth He proclaimed His Name to the wondering, worshipping Moses. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." How blessed it is for a soul, bruised and broken by sin, and lashed and seamed by an accusing conscience, and filled with fear at the thought of God's righteous judgment to learn that this is God's Name. It is a revelation, the revelation of the truth.

But the fulness of God's forgiveness could not be known until New Testament times. This awaited the coming of Christ and the doing of redemption's great work. It is in this day of grace, this day of salvation, that the method and the measure of this unspeakable blessing is revealed to us. Forgiveness is in Christ and the forgiven one is in Christ, as Ephes. i. tells us: "*He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.*"

To all those who have believed in Jesus, the beloved Son of God, is this blessing given. The basis of it is the blood, and it is for Christ's sake. "God

for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephes. 4. 32); "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John 2. 12). It is an eternal forgiveness, for it is the act of the eternal God; it is an eternal forgiveness, for it is bestowed for the sake of Him who has brought eternal glory and gives eternal delight to the heart of God. When we understand that it is for Christ's sake that we are forgiven, for the glory of His Name and the joy of His heart, it makes the blessing unspeakably blessed. We are forgiven for Christ's sake. Was there any reluctance then on God's part to forgive us, and was it necessary that the desire and glory of Christ should be brought to bear on this matter before the blessing could be bestowed? By no means. The welcome given to the prodigal shows what delight God has in forgiving; the kiss, the robe, and the merriment all show that to forgive is a necessity to Divine love; but the desire of the heart of Christ and the

glory of His great and precious Name are added motives which give God a greater joy in doing that in which His heart delights. Wonderful grace! Wonderful blessing! Wonderful work and precious blood which has made it all possible! which has provided a meeting-place for a just and pardoning God and ungodly but repentant sinners. And what God is in this blessed character can never change. His very nature finds expression in His pardoning grace, in the riches of His grace. He has set us in His own favour for ever, and everything that could mar our happiness in that place or His delight in having us there has been dealt with according to His own justice, and all for Christ's sake. Now we can sing with David, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4. 7, 8).

"Who is a pardoning God like Thee,
Or who has grace so rich, so free?"

TO WASH OUT WRINKLES.

"ALL the wrinkles upon your face were made by thinking about to-morrow. If anything could rub out those wrinkles it would be yesterday. Have you tried that wondrous instrument? Is it a sponge with which you can wash?" Ah, try it. Try the "Hitherto." "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This is the instrument by which you can rub out the wrinkles and ripped furrows in which you have sown the seeds of bitterness. What have you been so anxious about? I will find you paper and pencil if you will sit down and write on one hand all your miseries. Do not spare them, put every one down, write the list with an emphatic hand; and then do not rise until you have written on the other side all your mercies. What business have you to be alive at all? Your life is forfeited, you live on pity; because the Lord's compassions fail not you are

here; why, that one line outbalances and obliterates the whole miserable registration of your little woes and frets and fumings that you have just written down to your own satisfaction. There should be more happy people in the world. Oh, if only men knew Christ, knew Him as He is to be known, they would soon expunge all their little entries of pain and vexation and trouble and annoyance and nuisance. Come, dear sir, we have had enough of this! On the whole, who are you? Now, come talk of the Lord's mercy and pity. He died for you, and rose again for you, and He is on the throne pleading for you, and He can see you through. Now blot out that side on which you have written all your complaints, and make the tablet of your registration one broad leaf on which you write the love of God and the certainty of heaven. (Adapted.)

"THAT WORTHY NAME."

(H. J. VINE.)

IT is a Name which embraces grace and glory, love and holiness, mercy and majesty. The numerous references to it in the Book of inspiration lead us on expectantly, until we at last behold its infinite splendours expressing themselves fully in the Lord Jesus,—Jehovah the Saviour. In the last book of the Bible, in that section of it which delineates the decline of the assemblies from first love to indifference as to Christ, we are shown those who are approved of God in the midst of the failure, for they keep His Word and *do not deny His Name* (see Rev. 3. 8). It is important, therefore, to know this Name so that we may be loyal to it, and thus be pleasing to God.

At the very start we found salvation through its gracious merit,—“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4. 12). Did our sins cause us to tremble at the thought of the judgment-day?—With what refreshing and peace-giving joy the assuring words of the Holy Spirit come home to our hearts,—“Your sins are forgiven you for His Name’s sake” (1 John 2. 12)! Again, our faith was encouraged as we read those wonderful words of 1 John 5. 13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.” Moreover, we were led on to make our requests known to God in that precious Name through which salvation, forgiveness and life are ours. And words fail to express the deep rejoicing which filled our hearts when we discovered the truth and experienced the reality of Matthew 18. 20: “Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” We have rich cause to sing:—

“As chords of music to the ear
Bring strains of joyful sound,
There is a Name of grace and cheer
To those who Christ have found.”

The servants of our Lord Jesus Christ also have that all-prevailing Name to sustain them in their labours. Like those at the beginning, “for the Name have they gone forth taking nothing of those of the nations” (3 John 7. N. Tr.). Such are to be received and helped, we are told, and to be set on their way worthily of God. They *take nothing* from the unconverted, for they uphold the honour of “*the Name*” of Him they serve. They preach in His Name the glad tidings of the grace of God, as, like Peter, they proclaim, “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10. 43). They also baptize in His Name as we further read in verse 48: “He commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.” Whether it be a mile away or ten thousand miles away, whether surrounded by the wiles of Satan or the ragings of His violence, those who serve for the Name alone,—having their head-quarters where Christ is at God’s right hand,—announce, “Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.” And if sufferings beset these faithful servants, they will be “filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost,” for they are serving in the way of the will of God, knowing that the Gospel is sent to take out of the nations “a people for His Name” (Acts 15. 14). Therefore, like others they rejoice that they are “counted worthy to be dishonoured *for the Name*” (Acts 5. 41, N. Tr.)! This path of faith is recompensed even now by the joy of God, even as the Lord’s “Well done!” will richly reward it in the coming day. Nothing which is done in His Name will be overlooked.

All saints may share in the peculiar sweetness of this pathway surely, for is it not written, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake”? and if joy unspeakable is

found here, what shall be said of that glorious day when those who have served Him on earth, "shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their forehead:"? Then, indeed, from all the redeemed shall be reflected in Divine radiance the glory of Christ; He shall be seen glorified in them, and His beauty, shining far through the vast realms of reconciliation and majesty, shall be admired in them as they show forth the excellencies of His Name.

Someone may inquire, What is meant by "THE NAME"? Seeing the Holy Spirit makes so much of it in the Sacred Writings, it is indeed well to seek and secure understanding as to this. The Name is that which sets forth Who and What the Lord is. James designates it "*the excellent Name* which has been called upon you" (2. 7, N. Tr.). Little by little its wealth is shown in the Old Testament, always encouraging the believer with the fact that its vast treasures will eventually be fully disclosed; and so it has come to pass in the Person of our glorious Saviour, named in the first chapter of the New Testament, Jesus,—Jehovah the Saviour, and Emmanuel, God with us; and in the last book of the inspired volume, "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." In the Name, then, we have an infinite and unfading inheritance opened out for our faith to possess as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Himself.

If various Names are used in the Word, to instruct us as to Who and What God is, we find all their distinctions blending in Christ, and God fully declared by Him. Does the Bible first give us the name of plural majesty, "*Elohim*," the Name of the being of God? Does it speak of Him as "*El*," the strong and mighty One? Does it disclose Him to be "*El Shaddai*," the all-sufficient God? Does it tell us His memorial to all generations, His wonderful personal Name, "*Jehovah*," who

was, who is and is to come, and use it more than any other Name, about 7000 times? Does the Word of God speak of Him as "*Jah*," sublime One; and "*Adon*," the Lord and Master, and "*Ehyeh*," along with other generic, official and compound names? Then all their infinite greatness, grace and glory rest in Christ and yield their marvellous disclosures in Him. He is the Word of God, the exact Expression of all that He is, the Effulgence of His glory, and the Image of the invisible God Himself.

"The harmonies of His great Name
Are all disclosed in Christ,
And He—from age to age the same—
Our longings hath sufficed."

It should be observed that "name" and "glory" are intimately associated in Scripture, as indeed they are also in common parlance. The mention of such a name as Alexander the Great is at once associated in the mind not only with family distinction, but also with military fame, as well as with certain outstanding traits of character. Now when God came down upon the mount and declared *His Name* JEHOVAH to Moses in answer to His prayer, "Show me *Thy glory*," He gave to Moses a partial revelation of that which distinguished His glorious Name, as He proclaimed, "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste and bowed his head to the earth, and worshipped" (Exod. 34. 6-8).

In passing we should notice that sin, transgression and iniquity are kept distinct. The last and not the first (as is invariably said) was to be visited upon the children. The difference is very important. To-day it is exhorted in 2 Tim. 2., "Let every one who names

the Name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity" (N. Tr.). This is a necessity if we are to rightly appreciate the full declaration of the Name and glory now made known in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle had to blame the saints at Corinth because of their unspiritual state, but he also told them the way of improvement by "looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face" (2 Cor. 3. 18, N. Tr.). The reference is to what was shown to Moses. We are changed as we behold *the Lord's glory*. Some have made the mistake of the mystic, and said it is beholding *the Lord in glory*. No, it is His moral glory; not His present position. Having secured eternal redemption for us through His sacrifice and blood-shedding, and having been raised again from among the dead, He is truly in glory—exalted to the throne of God; but it is the marvellous moral perfections which shone out in Him, "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," which we are to behold. As we are apart from the mist and murk of the unrighteous—which is not in accord with His Name, we shall then be able clearly to behold His glory, and that with a very salutary effect upon our own condition. A clear atmosphere and pure air are always beneficial. Over and over again we find this principle illustrated in the old Testament; and of the separate man, who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, the Psalmist sings, "I will set him on high because he hath known My Name" (Ps. 91. 14).

We find, however, a contrast in Jonah. Sent by Jehovah to the Gentiles, his Jewish exclusiveness got the better of his feelings, and he did not want to go. He knew something of the Lord's Name and glory, enough to convince him that His mercy was not confined to Israel. When therefore the Ninevites were not punished, because they repented, Jonah was "exceedingly displeased" and complained to the Lord, "Was not this my saying when I was yet in my

country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." The fact is, Jonah was more zealous of his own reputation and name than that of his Lord's in this case, and he therefore found himself beset with trouble and sorrow on all sides, because it led him to act *inconsistently with what he knew* of the Lord's Name. Many are in the same position to-day. Faith, however, shines out in Abraham when he names the place of burnt-offering, "Jehovah-jireh;" and in Moses when he calls the Lord, "Jehovah-ropheka;" and names an altar "Jehovah-nissi;" and in Gideon, too, when he calls another altar, "Jehovah-shalom;" also in the sweet singer of Israel when he writes of "Jehovah-rohi" (Ps. 23. 1); likewise in Jeremiah and Ezekiel as they speak of "Jehovah-tsidkenu" and "Jehovah-shamah;" and in others who knew His Name and applied it practically, for they put their trust in Him and acted consistently with it. Indeed in the last book of the Old Testament we read of a faithful remnant finding their all in Him as they "thought upon His Name" (Mal. 3. 16), and we are told how pleasing this was to Him whose Name they so prized.

We need not wonder, therefore, if the Spirit of God shows us this Divinely approved remnant fresh and bright through dwelling together upon who and what the Lord is in Himself, amidst the incorrigible corruptions of Judaism at the close of Old Testament days, and if He shows us at the close of the New Testament, when the assemblies have degenerated past recovery, those who are well-pleasing to Christ amidst the general decline and departure from the truth, saying to them, "Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name." How cheering are such words to loyal believers! But we need to know that Name better, as we have said, having wisdom and spiritual understanding in

regard to what it designates, if we are to be consistent therewith and not deny what it stands for. Children are rightly taught to honour the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, but they are unable naturally to apprehend what it enfolds. Some seeing the holiness of it, however, are apt in their religious zeal to deny by their actions the grace of it, while others, rejoicing in its grace, are often in danger of being inconsistent with its holiness.

The individual is told to withdraw from unrighteousness if he names the Lord's Name, and in gathering together unto His Name, those who are thus in separation to the Lord Himself may

know His presence in the midst of them; and while they call upon the Lord together out of a pure heart, they are also exhorted to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace," for these are the things which accord with "that worthy Name." The true servant of Christ, too, goes forth "FOR THE NAME," as we have seen, and upholds its honour in his ways as well as in his words.

"True to Thy Word and loyal to Thy Name,
Would we be found till Thou dost come to
claim
Thy blood-bought bride and take th'
assembly home,
Ere strikes 'the hour of trial'—'the wrath
to come.'"

A MORNING SONG.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

O GOD and Father unto Thee
We raise our morning melody;
Thy mercies rich from day to day
Thou dost renew, and wilt alway.
Thee as the Source of every good
We gladly own, and ever would
Our grateful hearts and voices lift,
To thank Thee for each precious gift.
For life and breath and mental powers,
For restful nights and waking hours;
No claim upon these things have we,
We take them all as gifts from Thee.
We thank Thee for the tender ties
That bind our hearts in families;
For every loved one with us here,
And those that rest with Thee up there.
Preserve us from all ill this day,
And keep us pure from every way
That to Thy heart would grievous be,
And rob us of our joy in Thee.
We pray for brethren near and far,
For all Thy saints who serving are
Our glorious Saviour and our Lord,
In making known the Word of God.
For all Thy ways so merciful,
And for Thy gift unspeakable,
We raise our morning melody
Our God and Father unto Thee.

Tune. "At Even e'er the Sun was set.

THE SAINTS' SAFEGUARDS.

(I. FLEMING.)

THE apostasy is making rapid strides in the lands where the light of the Gospel has shone. The truths of Christianity are given up even if not derided. The glorious person of the Son of God, born of a virgin, truly God and truly Man; the atoning value of His precious blood; the bodily resurrection of the Saviour; the seriousness of sin; the coming of righteous judgment; these and all the salient features of Christianity are denied. And this is done by professed friends of Christ who often receive large salaries and stipends for the defence of His Name and betray Him in the house of His friends.

But are the foundations shaken? Not at all! They are sound as ever, firm for eternity. The house is on the rock, and stormy winds and tides cannot move it. The fact of the giving up of the truth is only confirmatory of the truth itself, for in "the Scripture of truth" it is written that this should come to pass "in the last days" (see 2 Timothy 3. 1-5).

We may be heartily thankful to our God that in His wisdom and goodness His saints have been forewarned in His word in order that they may be forearmed for the fray. He permitted the apostles and others to remain on earth and to communicate His truth in written form so that it might abide for the direction and instruction of His loved ones who should find their lot cast in such days as these in which we have to pursue our homeward way.

Thus it is we have Paul's communications (2 Timothy); Peter's (2 Peter); James' (James 4. and 5.); and John's (1, 2 and 3 John); all bearing upon the giving up, by professors, of the truth of God. And thus it is we have the Epistle of Jude, parts of which I wish to call attention to briefly for the comfort of Christians to-day.

The opening of his brief writing is encouraging. He addresses Christians as: (1) The sanctified (or we should rather read *beloved*) in God the Father; (2) the *preserved* in Jesus Christ; (3) the *called* ones.

Whatever has failed or broken down, God abides. His love, His preserving care, His powerful call. These do not cease, they are the more called into expression by the condition of things prevailing in the midst of that which professes Christ's name.

1. How blessed are we who are enfolded in the love of God our Father, wrapped about by the garment of His eternal affections, loved with the love wherewith He loves His Son. The sense of this may well sustain the heart amid the giving way of so much which once appeared to be stable and secure. The love of God our Father can never give way.

It is said that wise Russians amid the rigours of their winter take care to be thoroughly warm in themselves as well as well wrapped up before going out into the icy blast. Thus they save themselves from being chilled by the intense cold to which they are exposed.

So should it be with us Christians, the beloved ones (vv. 1, 17, 20). We should keep ourselves in this love of God (v. 21). We should live in the constant enjoyment of it. Thus the elements around will be resisted, and we be maintained in spiritual warmth and vigour.

2. Blessed also it is that we are *preserved* in Jesus Christ. Some would translate "preserved by Jesus Christ," and yet others "preserved for Jesus Christ." Whichever way we read it there is the deepest comfort for the Christian in the thought of his preservation while defection is manifested on every side. How can I stand in such an evil time? This leader and that

leader turn aside from the truth, and multitudes go in the way of evil. Can I be maintained in the midst of almost universal secession from vital Christianity?

Yes! Christ continues firm and faithful to His own. Yes! He remains, and He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The grace of His heart and the grip of His hand are just as they were of old. He was enough for His own in the day of His humiliation here, and He is enough for His own in the day of His glory on high. We hear Him say for the cheer of the disciples whom He was about to leave: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore . . . and lo, I am with you alway [*lit.* "All the days"] even unto the end of the world [*age*]. Amen" (Matt. 28. 18-20). Ever keep in your thoughts these words, "all power" (not only in heaven but in earth) and "I am with you all the days." And these last days are included by that comprehensive "all." And indeed, our times are perhaps specially covered by the concluding words, "*Even* unto the end of the age." No cessation of His power and no cessation of His presence with His own even during the mighty upheavals which may be looked for at the end of their earthly sojourn.

They are preserved *in* Jesus Christ. As a jewel locked in a casket they are kept in the heart and hand of Christ, and none can snatch them thence. They are preserved *by* Jesus Christ.

All this almightiness is about them, and who shall break through their defence? They are preserved *for* Jesus Christ. He maintains them for His witnesses and workmen until the purposes of God His Father are fulfilled, and the last of those forming His assembly, His body, His bride, are gathered in.

3. These beloved ones and preserved ones are also "called ones." They have heard in the secret of their souls the voice of divine power. They have been quickened out of their death in sin and are alive unto God in Christ Jesus. As such they are no longer of the world but are separated from it. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," said the Lord of such. As Abraham of old was called out of the idolatry to be a witness for the true God, so believers to-day are called out of the system of things which men have formed in their efforts to make themselves happy without God.

They are saints by calling. They are called ones of Jesus Christ. They are partakers of the heavenly calling. And this call does not accord with the greatness and glory, the glitter and glamour, of the world. "Ye see your calling, brethren," says the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1. 26-29).

From a 12th Century Diary.

YES, it is true! He has gone down into the depths for us, and is set in the heights for us. He that believeth *hath* everlasting life! I believe: therefore I live—live for ever a life of unspeakable, undefiled, unfading joy. "They shall never perish." "He that believeth not is condemned already." There is, then, no middle state between imperishable life and condemnation. *Here* we pass from death unto life—*THERE*, there is a great gulf fixed which cannot be crossed over. Having Himself purged our sins, He is seated as one resting after a finished work, at the right hand of God. *The Cross is the only purgatory!* For those who believe it, no second is needed; for those who reject it no second is possible—"there remaineth no further sacrifice for sins."

FREE-HEARTED LIBERALITY.

(F. B. HOLB.)

SPEAKING generally, we are safe in saying that there is no danger in current Christianity of overlooking the money question. The appeals for money are too loud and too frequent, and the methods adopted in order to obtain it are frequently so questionable, if not so utterly worldly, that the whole thing has become a scandal. Thirty years ago we remember seeing an anti-religious cartoon satirizing the discord and contention which exists between the various sects of Christendom, and underneath were printed words to this effect: "The one point upon which they are all agreed: 'Now concerning the collection' (1 Cor. 16. 1)." Because of the large measure of truth there was in it this was the most stinging point of the satire.

What is in danger of being overlooked is the spirit and attitude and action of the saints of God where giving in relation to the interests of the Lord is concerned. The incessant cry for money may very easily provoke a reaction in our minds and lead to a careless and indifferent spirit on the subject, so that the genuine claims of the Lord are neglected. It is worthy of note that the Spirit of God has been pleased to give us two whole chapters in the New Testament dealing with this matter, besides allusions to it in sundry other passages. We refer to 2 Corinthians 8. and 9.

In these chapters the apostle Paul was dealing with the specific matter of the collection on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, to which he had alluded in the first epistle and also in the epistle to the Romans; consequently he does not touch upon giving to the Lord's servants for the spread of the gospel or the work of the ministry generally. Other Scriptures deal with this side of things, notably the epistle to the Philippians, who are praised by the apostle for their "fellowship in the

Gospel from the first day until now." He does, however, take advantage of this specific matter to unfold the general principles which govern all Christian giving, and hence we have before us here instructions of abiding importance.

First of all in point of importance comes

THE MOTIVE,

for if this be wrong, all is wrong, no matter how much may be given. Giving must spring from the right source, it must draw its motive force from a worthy direction. What that direction is the apostle indicates in verse 9 of chapter 8., saying: "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." The grace of the Lord Jesus operating upon our hearts, produces its own effects in the way of the grace of giving and every other Christian grace. He becomes to us the fountain head of these things, so that even in this sense we rightly sing:

"Lord Jesus, source of every grace,
Glorious in light divine."

At first sight we are inclined to exclaim, "But how great a lever for producing an apparently small result!" Yet is it not ever thus in Scripture? The weightiest considerations are brought to bear upon the simplest details of the Christian's daily life. On second thoughts, however, we perceive that the result is not so small after all. Nothing is more ingrained in man's fallen nature than selfishness, and it was this that accounted for the sluggish action of the Corinthians. When the subject of this collection for the poor saints first came up they willingly agreed to give; the apostle could speak of "the forwardness of your mind" (9. 2), and consequently he boasted of them to others, "that

Achaia was ready a year ago ;" yet though there was this willingness in mind and word there was delay in action, and the thing so far had not materialized. There was "a readiness to will," but they did not readily "perform the doing of it" out of that which they had (8. 11). What could stir their sluggish hearts—or ours—so effectually as a fresh sense of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?

In this we have a motive which is absolutely perfect, yet even so the apostle thought it well to inform the Corinthians of something which he knew would also stir them, and act as just

THE STIMULUS

they needed. He turns their thoughts to the extraordinary generosity which had marked the Macedonian believers, amongst whom would be numbered the Philippians; indeed, he opens up the whole subject in this second epistle by referring to them.

Several circumstances combined to make the giving of the Macedonians very noteworthy. First, they were *very poor*; the apostle speaks of their "deep poverty." Second, they were *very persecuted*, for they were in "a great trial of affliction." Third, they were *very joyful*, since he alludes to "the abundance of their joy."

Now here we have a combination of things which would never suggest itself to the average man of the world. He would almost certainly link together poverty, persecution and misery; and wish to combine wealth, popularity and happiness. Yet he would be wrong, and the proofs of it lie thickly on every hand. True, the poor and persecuted man of the world is miserable enough; yet he is not so commonly found, for being of the world, the world loves its own: the rich and popular are seldom marked by happiness. Find on the other hand the true but poor Christian, marked by a confession of Christ's name so courageous and consistent that it brings down upon him the persecution of the world, and

you will assuredly find one whose soul has such an entrance into the favour of God and the fulness of Christ that his heart is filled with joy.

Here then were these Macedonians, poor, persecuted and yet with a large spiritual entrance into the heavenly blessings and joys of Christianity, and these three things combining, they "abounded unto the riches of their liberality" ("their free-hearted liberality," N. Tr.). They not only gave to their power, but even beyond their power, as Paul bears them record. How interesting is the light which all this sheds on the epistle to the Philippians, and vice versa. In that epistle their poverty is only once alluded to, and that in a very delicate way, when the apostle says, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We have no wish to belittle the general application of these words to any saint in need, and thereby rob them of the comfort they give, but the special application of them evidently is to saints who were poor to begin with, and who impoverished themselves still further by large-hearted giving in the service of God. The persecution they were enduring is alluded to in Phil. 1. 28, and joy, as we know, characterizes that epistle.

All this was intended to have, and doubtless did have, a very stimulating effect upon the Corinthians, who were well-off and inclined to be luxurious as we gather from the first epistle (4. 8). In spite of the readiness of their mind, they had been entirely outstripped in performance by these poor Macedonians. The apostle, however, does not leave it at that, but carries the matter a point further by holding up as an example

THE MANNER

in which they accomplished their giving. He tells us in the 5th verse that they did it in a way that exceeded all his expectations by first giving "their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

It was good that they should give, but doubly good that they should give after such a fashion as this. They might have begun and ended by just giving of their substance; as it was, they first gave themselves to the Lord—they yielded themselves to Him, to be wholly at His disposal—and then as a consequence gave as he directed and as His love prompted; laying their possessions at the apostle's feet, according to His will.

This was giving of a very rare sort to which but few of us have attained. To have so definitely given ourselves to the Lord that we do not regard what we possess as our own but His, is not a common thing. The world may inscribe the words, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," over the Royal Exchange in the City, yet within its courts, and all around, men drive their bargains with a view to obtaining as large a share of God's earth as ever they can, and to keeping the share which they get as much in their own power as possible. Like-wise Christians may very lustily sing:

"Nought that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver,"

and yet betray by their outlook and actions that they are very largely holding it for themselves. But if first we give ourselves to the Lord, then all that we have is necessarily at His disposal. How many of us have reached that point in our history where this becomes an accomplished fact?

It may help us to reach that point if we notice

THE CHARACTER

that giving bears in the case of the Christian. It is not spoken of here as generosity, though we do not deny that it has that character, but as *righteousness*. The apostle quotes from the Psalm, "He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever." And again, he speaks of God increasing "the fruits of your righteousness." Further it is a striking fact that in

such a Scripture as Matt. 6. the word for "alms" is really "righteousness," as an ordinary reference Bible will show.

From this it is evident that it is the normal and proper thing for the Christian to be a giver. If he gives, it is not to be regarded as something wonderful and unexpected for which he is to be highly complimented; the case is rather that if he does not give he is unrighteous. It is positively wrong if he receives such a wealth of blessing from God and yet gives out nothing as a result, and not only wrong but dangerous. If a reservoir has a large intake and a choked-up outflow, a catastrophe of some sort is certain. Nothing is more certain than that the believer is set in this world to be a giver, a dispenser of good things to those in need. This is an obligation which grace imposes, and it is the merest righteousness to fulfil it.

If our giving is to be according to God, one thing further we must notice.

THE SPIRIT

of our giving must be right. This the apostle felt in regard to the Corinthians, and hence while setting before them the motive and the stimulus, and indicating the manner and character of it, he is careful in chapter 9. to exhort them to give not grudgingly but cheerfully. "He instructed them to give "every man according as he purposeth in his heart," and further he took the precaution of sending certain brethren in advance of his own coming to collect that which they purposed to give, so that "the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness" ("as blessing, and not as got out of you," N. Tr.). Neither in appearance nor in fact did he wish their giving to be made under pressure. He had no desire to extract unwilling donations, or excite them into a generosity which went beyond the faith and grace which they possessed, and which afterwards they might regret. What they gave, whether sparingly or bountifully, was to be given with cheerfulness and joy.

The fact is, of course, that though money has a place in connection with the work of God, it has relatively a small place. It is a thing of minor importance here, and if taken out of its place it becomes a curse and not a blessing. God loves a cheerful giver, but He never lowers Himself into the position of grasping from man all He can get, as though it were of importance to Him. If we give, then let us give with joy and cheerfulness. If we aim at inciting others to give, as Paul was doing here, let us avoid every method and every artifice which would be unworthy of the God whom we profess to serve.

Our chapters afford us further instruction on this subject which we must notice. There is a very clear statement of

THE PRINCIPLE

which underlies all giving, especially when, as here, it is a case of giving between believers. The apostle states it in these words: "I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality" (8. 13, 14). He goes on to confirm his words by a quotation from the Old Testament showing that the rich had nothing over, and at the same time the poor had no lack.

At the moment when Paul wrote the need was amongst the saints in Jerusalem and the supply was found amongst the Gentile saints who had been reached through Paul's labours. A tide of supply was consequently to flow from the latter to the former. In process of time the situation might be exactly reversed, and then the tide should flow in the opposite direction. In the physical creation, as we have often been told, "Nature abhors a vacuum." So it is also in the spiritual realm.

We must remember, then, that the

principle which governs our giving is this, if indeed we give as to the Lord. Our natural tendency is to give according to whim or fancy, according to our likes and dislikes, to give more largely to those whom we like and favour, and to withhold from those whom we do not like, even though their need be great, and in so acting we serve our own pleasure and not the Lord.

Another thing which comes clearly into view in these chapters is

THE METHOD

which should be pursued in our giving, and not only in our giving, but in the way the gift should be handled by those who have the business of dealing with it. Paul himself was the chief trustee in connection with this collection made amongst the Gentile assemblies, and he took great care that all should be administered with openness and integrity. His own words are, "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (8. 20, 21). In pursuance of this care he associated with himself no less than three brethren, one of them Titus, who was Paul's nominee in the matter. The other two were messengers of the churches and chosen by them for this service. Of these two, one was much esteemed as an evangelist, the other was noted for his diligence.

It is worthy of note that it is only in connection with the righteous distribution of monetary or other benefits that we find the church choosing the men to be employed. The church chose the seven men of good report who were to properly distribute the daily ration, as recorded in Acts 6. The disciples at Antioch sent the relief they collected for the brethren in Judæa by men of their own choice in Acts 11. In our passage again we find men acting that were selected by the churches, so that the principle that those who give are the ones to determine

who shall handle the gifts evidently has Divine sanction. We have no record in Scripture of the church choosing evangelists, pastors or teachers, or of selecting the elders or bishops who shall exercise rule and oversight. No such authority is committed to the church; it is vested in the Lord.

Lastly we may consider

THE EFFECT

of giving such as is contemplated here. The effect upon the giver varies. If he gives sparingly he reaps sparingly; if he gives bountifully he reaps bountifully. Still, he reaps; and usually in spiritual things. He who sows seed by dispersing abroad what he has to give has to do with a God, "who is able to make all grace abound." ALL grace, be it noted—grace of every kind—grace in spiritual things and grace in material things. The consequence of this is that the liberal giver is "enriched in every way unto all free-hearted liberality" (9. 11, N. Tr.). He is enriched by God so that his giving may go on and expand. This enrichment may not take the form of material things; it may please God rather to enrich him in spiritual things, so that he who began by giving a little money may end by dispensing a rich store of spiritual blessing. There is also, of course, the reward which the future will bring, the increase in the fruits of righteousness which may be expected in the coming days, but this is not the main point here.

Still it is strictly true here that as

we sow we reap. Many believers who have to complain of lack of joy and liberty and freshness, and who pass their time in a state of chronic weakness, would find the solution of their troubles just at this point. The explanation lies in their lack of compassion and generosity and openness of heart and hand. In one word, they are selfish.

The effect upon those who benefit by the free-hearted liberality is that their hearts, discerning the real source of the gift, are lifted in praise to God. The service "is abundant also by many thanksgivings to God," and God is glorified. Thus not only are the wants of the saints supplied, but there is a harvest for God Himself in which He delights.

Upon the onlooker, such as Paul himself was in this case, the effect is similar to that produced in the recipients. In thus giving, the saints were reflecting to others the grace which they had received, and Paul delighted in it. His thoughts were naturally diverted from the reflection to the great reality which produced the reflection, and lifting up his soul he closes the chapter with the joyous outburst, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." The smallest gift of the humblest believer, if offered in THE NAME, is a reproduction and a reminder of the unspeakable gift, and is consequently fragrant; acceptable to God, and promoting praise in those who behold it.

Will it not be worth while for every one of us to diligently cultivate the grace of GIVING?

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WHAT a thorny subject this has been! What acrimonious discussions have ranged around it during the centuries of the Christian era! And yet there is no subject more fraught with blessing to those who whole-heartedly receive it on the testimony of Scripture.

It depends upon the character of a person, who has uncontrolled powers, as to whether those powers will be used beneficially. For instance, if any evil person were possessed of unlimited powers, those powers would be used for evil purposes. Or if a good person without good judgment were to be in

this position his lack of judgment would assuredly cause disaster in the long run.

But when we know God, how happy to realize that

“He sits as sovereign on the throne
And ruleth all things well.”

“God is love.” What a character! Not only so, but perfect wisdom and omnipotent power are the servants of Divine love. What a combination! No wonder we are rejoiced as we know God and that He is Sovereign.

It seems as if God would assert His sovereignty by His acts from earliest times, not by words so much as by actions, though words are not wanting.

The following instances will confirm the previous remark. “And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground” (Gen. 4. 2). Here the younger is mentioned before the elder. One would naturally have thought that in the case of the first two children born into the world the law of primogeniture would have been supreme, and the name of the elder mentioned first, but it is not so.

This is followed up in Gen. 5., where the genealogy of Adam is traced through Seth, the third son, given in place of the murdered Abel, and Cain, the eldest, is heard of no more.

In Gen. 6. 10, we find the names of Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and turning to Gen. 10. 1, and 1 Chron. 1. 4, we find in each chapter the same names in the same order; yet in the light of Gen. 9. 24 and 10. 21, we gather that the actual order of their birth was Japheth, Shem and Ham. Shem being, however, the one specially chosen in the sovereignty of God, his name is placed first.

The sovereignty of God was next seen in the call of Abram, and the miraculous birth of Isaac, spite of the deadness of his own body and that of Sarah’s womb. Why should God have called Abram? The only answer that can be given is that God chose to do so in His sovereign will.

Next Isaac is chosen and not Ishmael, the younger again; and Jacob and not Esau, the younger again.

When we come to Jacob’s sons, we find Reuben, the eldest, set aside, Judah, the law-giver, not chosen, but Joseph is chosen for the birthright; and when this is seen in the “double” portion of two tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh—it is that Ephraim, the younger, gets a superior blessing to Manasseh, the elder, and Jacob’s crossed hands proclaimed the sovereignty of God.

We find Moses was younger than Aaron, and David was the *youngest* son of Jesse’s long family of sons, whilst the children of Israel were chosen as a nation out of all the families of the earth by God’s sovereign choice.

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul signally illustrates sovereignty. The Lord did not choose one of the twelve apostles to bring out the great truths of the church, but the Apostle Paul, “as one born out of due time”—one “less than the least of all saints,” and yet “not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles.”

Rom. 9., 10., and 11. are the chapters that assert in argument the sovereignty of God. So we get the magnificent assertion—

“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (chap. 9. 15).

In truth, God’s sovereignty is ever on the side of mercy. The hyper-Calvinists, who allow one side of the truth to engage them so wholly as to make them blind to and deny another truth just as much asserted in the Scriptures, viz., the responsibility of man to God, sometimes go so far as to fall into the error of saying that God elects the lost to be damned. Never was there a greater mistake.

Lower down in chapter 9. we read of the power of the potter over the clay to make vessels to honour and dishonour; but while it speaks of God’s

longsuffering with vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction, it never says God fitted them for destruction, but that He endured them with much longsuffering ; but in the next verse, where it speaks of vessels of mercy, it distinctly says that God afore prepared them for glory.

Paul argues the case out in a most masterly way, finishing by saying—

"For God hath concluded them [Jew and Gentile] all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all" (chap. 11. 32), and then bursts forth, as the theme fills his swelling soul—

"O the depth and 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 ?" (verses 33, 34).

We are verily indebted to God's sovereignty and may well exclaim—

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (verse 36).

Only thus can blessing to man come.

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. V. The Years of Famine. (Genesis 41. 53-57 ; 42.)

WE have traced Joseph's path to a position of exaltation and power, and we have seen how he used that power during the years of plenty. But "the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come" (verses 53, 54). How will Joseph act in the years of dearth ? His brethren had consigned him to the pit, the Gentiles had flung him into prison. Will Joseph take occasion by the world's extremity, and his brethren's need to use his power in taking vengeance ? Nature indeed might act thus, but grace will take another way. Joseph will use his place of supremacy and power for universal blessing. But while showing grace he will maintain righteousness, hence a cry of need will be wrung from Gentiles and they must submit themselves to Joseph before the blessing is received. So too repentance must precede blessing in the case of the brethren.

During the days of plenty the world paid little heed to Joseph ; of his brethren we hear nothing, they were wholly indifferent to him. When, however, the dearth set in, need is awakened ; "the land of Egypt was famished"

(verse 55) ; and Jacob and his sons are faced with starvation and death (42. 1, 2). The need calls forth a cry for bread, and the Gentiles have to learn, and the brethren discover, that none can meet the need save the one that once they scorned and rejected. The Gentiles must "Go unto Joseph," and the brethren must bow down themselves before him with their faces to the earth (41. 55 ; 42. 6). The once rejected but now exalted man is the alone resource alike for Gentile nations as for Jacob and his sons.

All this, however, speaks plainly of things to come. There fast approaches "the hour of temptation [i.e., trial] which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3. 10), and for the Jew the time of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world" (Matt. 24. 21). "Alas !" says the prophet Jeremiah, "for that day is great, so that none is like it : it is even the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30. 7). And in that day of unprecedented trial the one resource will be the exalted Christ, who, in the days of His humiliation, was rejected and crucified by Jew and Gentile.

Both Jew and Gentile will indeed pass through seas of misery in their vain attempts to bring about prosperity and peace in a world from which God and His Christ are excluded. But not until the Gentile submits to Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the Jew at last confesses "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," will the time of blessing be reached. Then indeed the exalted Christ will, like Joseph of old, open "all the storehouses" of blessing.

There is, however, in the story of Joseph, a great difference in the treatment meted out to the Gentiles, and in his dealings with his brethren. The Gentiles have truly to learn their need and submit to Joseph before the storehouses of blessing are opened. The guilt, however, of the brethren was far greater than the guilt of the Gentiles, and the exercises must be correspondingly deeper that bring them to repentance before they obtain the blessing. And so, too, Scripture makes it abundantly plain that the Jew, with the deeper guilt of having crucified their own Messiah, will pass through far deeper tribulation than the Gentile before obtaining the millennial blessing under Christ.

These deeper exercises of the Jew are foreshadowed in Joseph's dealings with his brethren, as detailed in the chapters that follow. Under the stress of famine Jacob has to say to his sons, "Why do ye look one upon another?" They are in desperate plight, and this much they realize, there is no help in one another. If help is to come it must be from one outside themselves. Hence the ten brethren come to Egypt and present themselves before Joseph.

Time was when Joseph was but a weak and helpless youth in the hands of his elder brethren. What could a youth do in the power of ten men? And in those far-off days they were not slow to use their power to gratify the hatred and envy that filled their hearts. Twenty years have rolled by; circumstances have changed; Joseph

is exalted; his brethren bow before him—ten helpless, needy men. What can ten strangers do in the presence of the all-powerful Governor of Egypt. The day of humiliation is passed, the day of power has come. How will Joseph use his power? Will he condemn his brethren to hard bondage even as he had suffered bondage at their hands? Human nature might prompt such a course, vengeance might delight in it, justice might be pleaded for it. On the other hand, nature might suggest a very different course: could not Joseph act with generosity and entirely overlook the sin of his brethren, even as Esau, the man of nature, overlooked his brother's wrong in an earlier day? For nature can often talk in an airy way of letting bygones be bygones and seek to exalt itself by a show of generosity. Joseph, however, will take another way. The conduct that seems so highly commendable in the eyes of the natural man has no attraction for the man that fears God.

This was the secret of Joseph's life. Through all the vicissitudes of his path from youth to old age he was governed, not by the dictates of nature, but by the holy fear of God. Thus it is in the presence of his brethren he can say, "I fear God" (verse 18). This is the secret spring of all his actions. His thoughts, his words, his ways, were governed by the fear of God. Nature leaves God out and thinks only of self-vindication, self-gratification, or self-exaltation. Faith thinks of God and what is pleasing and due to God. Joseph seeks indeed to "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12. 28). In the day of his temptation he was kept from the path of evil by the fear of God, for he could say, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" In the day of his exaltation he is kept from taking vengeance on his brethren by the fear of God. No sorrows in the day of his humiliation, no glories in the day of his exaltation are allowed to move his soul from the fear of God. He knew

how to be abased, and he knew how to abound. Be the circumstances sad or bright, he ever kept God between himself and his circumstances. Thus walking in God's fear he takes God's way with his brethren, and God's way was the way of love, and yet not the way of mere human love, which is often a feeble and failing thing, even as men say—"love is blind." Divine love with its clear vision is not blind to the faults in the object of love, but rather, in the full recognition of all that is contrary to itself, it sets to work to remove every blemish, so that at length it can rest with satisfaction in its object.

Moreover, love is quick to discern. Multitudes from surrounding nations were driven by need to the feet of Joseph, but directly these ten men appear before him love discerns that they are his brethren, as we read, "Joseph saw his brethren." For twenty years he has not seen them, but with love's quick perception he sees in those ten needy men the brethren from whom he had so long been parted. And love "*knew* them." "Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew him not" (verse 8). Love knew their past history and the present need that brought them to his feet.

And love knew, because love "*remembered*." "Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them" (verse 9). The dreams of the past, the anger and scorn with which they had been received by the brethren, the treatment they had meted out to him, all is remembered, but remembered by one that loves them, for, as Joseph speaks with them, "he turned himself about from them and wept" (verse 24). How deep the feelings of love, and yet love knows how to restrain itself until the moment comes when it can flow out without reserve. So it was that Joseph "turned himself about." Time will come when all the pent-up affections of Joseph will flow out without restraint as he weeps before them, but ere that moment comes he has other work to

do. Love will set itself to work to win their hearts and set them in perfect ease in the presence of the one against whom they had so greatly sinned. To reach this end love will find a way whereby, in righteousness, every stain on the past can be wiped away, so that with every question entirely settled nothing will remain to hinder its outflow between Joseph and his brethren. There is, however, only one way whereby the heart can be set at perfect ease in the presence of one that has been offended. All must be brought to light and fully confessed. Hence the slumbering conscience must be aroused, the sins recalled, and the sins confessed. It is only through the conscience that the heart can be reached and set at ease. Moved by love, Joseph will set himself to reach their consciences. Hence we read he "made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them" (verse 7).

May we not say that Christ after the same fashion made himself strange, in the day when a Gentile woman was driven by her need into His presence and was met by silence, for we read, "He answered her not a word"? And when indeed He does speak, is it not, for the moment, "hard things" that she has to hear? But we know it was the way of perfect love that led to blessing. So too in His future dealings with the Jew, Christ will make Himself strange when according to the prophet He will say, "I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths"; and says the Lord, "I will take away My corn in the time thereof." The Lord will bring famine upon the Jew, in order to bring the Jew into the wilderness, where they have no resources but God. In that wilderness place the Lord can say, "I will speak to her heart" (Hosea 2. 6, 9, 14).

The brethren protest that it is their need that brings them into Egypt. "We have come to buy food" (verse 10). They have indeed come to the right person, but they have come with

a wrong plan and with a wrong plea. Their plan is to buy, and their plea "We are true men" (verse 11). As yet they know neither the love of Joseph's heart, nor the evil of their own hearts. They must learn that Joseph is too rich to sell to His own, and that they have nothing in themselves to plead. Their money shall not buy corn, and of merit they have none whereby to claim it. They must learn that while Joseph is ready to bestow every blessing, he is one upon whom they have forfeited every claim. Love is a giver when worthlessness has nothing to plead. The love of Joseph's heart will shut out all mere barter, and the evil of their hearts exclude all plea of merit. If indeed they think they are true men then Joseph will put them to the test. Moreover they must learn that all their blessing depends upon the man of whom they say "one is not" (verse 13). They say, as it were, "We have not seen him for twenty years: he has entirely passed out of our lives, as far as we are concerned 'He is not'." So, too, in a day to come the Jew will have to learn that all their blessing depends upon One that they set at nought. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 11, 12).

The brethren have condemned themselves out of their own lips. They have protested that they are true men, and in the same breath they say "one is not," knowing full well that if Joseph has passed out of their existence it is entirely owing to their own wickedness. They stand in the presence of the one that they had rejected with unrepentant hearts, and yet protest they are honest men. Joseph now takes the first step to convict them of their sin, by putting them into prison. The fear of losing their lives had brought them into Egypt, with the result that they lose their liberty. For three days they are

left in prison that they may learn in some measure what their sins merit. Joseph had been thrown into prison unjustly, but they are justly brought into the same condemnation. The result is conscience begins to work, for they say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother" (verse 21). Conscience connects their present trouble with their past sin. The prison has so far done its work. They not only say, "we are verily guilty," but "we are verily guilty *concerning our brother.*" We saw the anguish of his soul, but we hardened our hearts. He besought us but we stopped our ears to all his entreaties, "Therefore is this distress come upon us." They rightly connect their present distress with the past sin of twenty years ago.

But all this awakening of conscience, while so far good, is only amongst themselves. It must all come out before Joseph if they are ever to be happy in the presence of Joseph. Hence Joseph will keep his hand upon them. Simeon is bound before their eyes, but it is love that binds the cords round Simeon, for even as he does so he turns aside to weep. The cords that bound him were cords of love. Moreover, he commanded that their sacks be filled with corn. He is not unmindful of their needs and thus grants a measure of relief; none the less Simeon is held in bondage. And in the way Joseph meets their needs he is still leading his brethren a further stage in their restoration, for while supplying them with corn he returns every man his money. Had they eyes to see they would learn in this that Joseph was a giver. But in their condition gifts bestowed only arouse deeper fear. Their hearts fail them at the discovery of their money. "What is this that God hath done unto us?" (verse 28). They have recalled their sin, now they see that *God is dealing with them.* The fear of God is arising in their souls. Not indeed that holy fear that marked Joseph. One has said, "They feared because they were offenders; he feared

lest he should offend." So again when they had returned to Jacob, and each finds his money in his sack, "they were afraid." The goodness of Joseph should have gladdened their hearts, but they are miserable and afraid in the presence of a goodness that their guilty consciences tell them they do not deserve.

Jacob indeed is not guilty, like his sons, but his feeble faith can see no trace of the hand of God in all these circumstances. As he hears the story of his sons' experiences he can only say, "All these things are against me." How different the language of faith which can say, "All things work together for good to them that love God." The very things that to sight and nature were against him were the very means that God was taking for his blessing.

"Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." These are the things that were for him. Joseph lost to his father, rejected and sold, imprisoned and exalted, Simeon held in bondage, Benjamin taken from his father, were all staged in the pathway to blessing, and means used by God to restore Joseph to his father and to bring Jacob and his sons into richer blessing. Yet Jacob is saying to his sons, "Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." At the very moment when Jacob could see nothing in the future but sorrow and the grave, God was about to bring him into joy and blessing. Had Jacob been able to persist in his thoughts he would have thwarted God in His ways of blessing, for says Jacob, "My son shall not go down."

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

(G. J. STEWART.)

The Notes on the Epistle to the Hebrews, of which the first instalment is given here, were prepared by Mr. Stewart in Australia and completed for publication immediately before his death; we are very glad to be able to put them before our readers, and commend them to them as being full of profit and food (Ed.).

WITHOUT farewell to what may have gone before and without preamble, we are here introduced directly to

GOD.

This Name would arrest the Hebrews where another name would have repelled them. All their history and tradition bound them to the One true God. Jehovah, our Elohim is One God. Unity in Deity was the truth which the nation had been called out as a testimony to. Though the Jew had been unfaithful to this testimony, yet he did not own a plurality of gods, nor rear an altar to the unknown God as did the Gentile.

God, however, remained faithful. He remembered His covenant with Abraham and followed the people of His choice with a deep undercurrent of love. Messiah, too, came of that

race. What though the mass rejected Him and lost the blessings which would otherwise have been theirs? The remnant of the people though suffering loss with them, should by their link with Messiah become the nucleus of the new company, who inherit infinitely higher blessings than those they had lost, as the personal glories of Messiah exceeded all their expectations.

God, who had manifested Himself to the nation of old, by many infallible signs, had greater resources in Himself than had hitherto shone out. Now He had manifested Himself in all His glories in Messiah, who was the Son. It was to comfort these Hebrews for what they had lost and to instruct them in the higher glories of their Messiah, and their own heavenly portion in Him, that the epistle was written.

God, the living, existent God, cannot

be discovered by man's groping after Him, yet can He reveal Himself. This He had done partially of old. In many ways and many parts God had spoken to the fathers by the prophets.

This refers us at once to

THE WORD.

It was by the Word God spoke of old. Dimly at first, but with an ever-increasing measure of light, as the prophetic Spirit recognized the nearer approach of Jesus; for the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. For this the prophets of old searched diligently, and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow.

Upon the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon, because they had pretty much lost their own language during their long exile, some of them made a translation or paraphrase of the Jewish Scriptures into the Chaldee tongue. This was called the Chaldee Targum. In it the Messiah is said to be the Word by whom the worlds were created; that it was He who spake to the patriarchs and others of old. To Him also it ascribes all the attributes of Deity. This, they who wrote it, deduced from their own Scriptures; an increase of light upon them which the New Testament endorses and insists upon.

Thus He took upon Him the form of a servant in incarnation, and He it is who spake of old. May we be swift to hear! Once hath God spoken, yea twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God. "Also unto Thee, O God, belongeth mercy" (Ps. 62. 11). Nor has He spoken in secret (Isa. 48. 9); but in desire after His people, rising up early and sending His prophets (Jer. 25. 3). He hath spoken in His holiness (Ps. 50. 6); as a Judge (Ps. 50. 1-5); in the fire of His jealousy (Ezek. 26. 5). Also of time of refreshing (Acts 3. 21). Moreover He will bring what He has spoken to pass

(Isa. 46. 11); of whatever character it may be.

The Spirit is not occupying us with the past, however, but straightway ushers us into the presence of the Son. Immediately He is surrounded by such a constellation of glories as declare Him to be

THE ETERNAL SON.

Before Him all intermediaries between God and man fade away. The prophets as of old are no more, though their writings will be fulfilled; it is now God Himself who speaks, not by another who comes between His people and Himself. Nor is it as the Father, nor in the Person of the Father; nor by the Spirit using a person not Divine; but as Himself, a Divine Person, and that Person the Son.

It is not the Father who is revealed in Hebrews, but God, who is now to be worshipped in a heavenly way, no more after the earthly ritual, though based upon it, but in contrast to it.

Of old it had been said, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down" (Isa. 64. 1). But if God came down in His majesty, earth and its inhabitants would flee before Him. Yet no man can ascend to heaven, or approach God until God Himself approaches man. How then shall He approach man? Agur of old (Prov. 30.) asked, Who hath ascended to heaven; or descended? What is His name and what is His son's name? Jesus (John 3.) answers both these questions, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." No! but the Son of God descended from heaven and stood before them there on earth, at the same time being in heaven. Such the glory of His person. His Name,—Jesus,—Immanuel, the Son in

INCARNATION.

God thus approached man, incarnate, in full display to faith. Not in a way that His terrors made them afraid, He who before had spoken to them in holiness, now speaks to them in infinite grace, in the Son. Grace and truth

came by Him ; and of His fulness have all we received and grace upon grace. Grace was poured into His lips and gracious words proceeded out of His mouth. His Godhead glories laid aside, in the likeness of a humble, obedient man, His grace attracted all.

He touched the leper clean, with an "I will." Empowered the palsied with, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Healed the issue of blood with, "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath healed thee." The Spirit of holiness in all this proclaiming Him Son of God incarnate. But this was more emphatically declared when He said, "Maid, I say unto thee, arise." "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." "Lazarus, come forth!" Above all, when in His own power, He Himself arose from the dead the third day, having conquered the foe in his last stronghold, and laid the foundation for the deliverance of man from his power upon a righteous basis.

God has thus, in the incarnation of His Son, in His death and resurrection, given of Himself

A FULL REVELATION.

The Jews expected a fuller revelation of God than they had, when Messiah came, as did the Samaritans: "When He is come He will tell us all things." They did not expect a complete revelation of Himself in the incarnate Son, to which nothing can be added. All their hopes seemed vain; their Messiah had come, had passed off the scene, and was hidden from their *sight* without having raised His people to earthly glory. This is but part of the revelation of His counsels; He is now presented to them as the Object of their *faith* in heavenly glory, which they shall share with Him.

There He becomes the Antitype of the inner golden vessel of the Sanctuary—the Ark and the Mercy-seat. On that Mercy-seat God met Moses and communed with him of all things which He gave him in commandment concerning the children of Israel. Moses knew

what it was to frequent that place to which he always had access. And when Moses went into the Tent of meeting to speak with God, then he heard the Voice speaking to him from off the Mercy-seat which was upon the Ark of Testimony, from between the two Cherubim, and he spake to God (Num. 7. 89). God here begins with us at once from heaven, unfolding to us the glories of Him in whom He hath displayed Himself. He speaks to us, in communion in the Son, of all the things He hath purposed for His glory. How He will head up all things in heaven and earth in Him. Also that we have obtained an inheritance in Him.

The revelation we have of God Himself in the Son is complete and will never be superseded. Let none think in folly it will wear itself out, or that because of man's advance in knowledge another revelation will be necessary. They who think thus will have to give account to Him whom God hath set up in

UNIVERSAL EMPIRE.

According to Jewish expectation, Messiah would be Heir of the millennial earthly kingdom; but this was postponed, God having some better thing for them. Their Messiah is His Son, He is Heir of all things in heaven and earth, a vastly enlarged outlook. It is described in Colossians as "Things in heaven and things on earth; visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers."

Now although we see not yet all things put under Him, we see Jesus crowned with glory and beauty, realizing His present ministry of blessing and power to ourselves as we await the moment of His universal dominion.

Nebuchadnezzar dimly shadowed universal empire as far as earth was concerned. In him it all failed, being committed to man's responsibility. It cannot be fulfilled until Christ comes as the desire of all nations, and fills

all hearts with joy. It was earlier and more fully set forth in Melchisedec, in whom it is indicated that righteousness and peace shall fill both heaven and earth, and both God and man be satisfied with perpetual blessing and praise.

The future is filled with His glory who delights to administer the all things which were created for Him. The retrospect is filled with His glory also. For to Him is attributed

CREATION.

By Him, the Son, God made the worlds. Here He is identified with the eternal LOGOS without Whom nothing was made that was made. He was with God personally as the Son, the Logos, when in the beginning He created the heavens and the earth. Then He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast. The morning stars and the sons of God—evidently created before the foundations of the earth were laid—sang together and shouted for joy when that event was celebrated. We are thus shown that there is one God, the Father, the *source* of all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, the actor in creation *by* whom are all things and we by Him.

In these Scriptures, therefore, we have the Son, the Word and the Lord Jesus Christ all identified in Him who called creation into being. Besides this we have—The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep, the Agent. This brings in the trinity of the Persons of the Godhead, all active in creation—God; the Word; and the Spirit of God. Gen. 1. says: "God created;" "God said;" and "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep." In this was a partial revelation of God. In the full revelation the Persons of the Godhead are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In our passage we are told, it was by the Son God made the worlds.

The eternal glory of the Son is here set forth. He is Heir of all things, all

are accountable to Him. He created all things; ourselves for our marvellous place in glory with Him.

Further, He is

THE EFFULGENCE OF GOD'S GLORY.

In Him the glory shines forth; its brightness; its splendour. It is what He is; not a reflection, but the direct beams of God's glory showing what God is, as light shows what the sun is. In Old Testament times, rays of this light struck across the darkened horizon; now every ray is seen focussed in its source, enabling us to trace each separate ray to the Word, Messiah, the Son, whence all emanates in full glory.

This glory was His before the foundation of the world. It is His now as a Man, gone back to heaven and seated on the Throne. From His unveiled face the glory shines direct. Our unveiled hearts, turning to the Lord, may catch the rays and be full of the glory which in turn shines out again for others. But this after all is but a reflected ray from us; it is God's glory which emanates from the face of Jesus Christ. It changes us into His image, from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit. The angle of reflection being equal to the angle of incidence, others may see from the direction of our face what the source of the light is and ascribe the glory to Himself. He only is the effulgence of the glory of God.

He is more than this, being the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS ESSENTIAL BEING.

This is more than glory. He is what God is in everything, the relationships only, differing. Not only was He God in the beginning, but God when here on earth, in Bethlehem's manger, on Calvary's cross, true God. In being and character, in motive and object, in counsel and ways, in word and work, He is God. The Spirit of holiness declared Him God here; proved to be such when taking His seat upon the

Throne where no being but God ever sat. Seen henceforth the Son, the Man Christ Jesus, retaining the Body prepared for Him throughout eternity. Filling the universe as Son of man upon the throne of God in heaven. Filling the heavens when He stood as Jesus upon earth: "The Son of Man Who is in heaven." Ever God, yet the only true Man that ever lived. This, not a question of office, but of nature; the two natures united in the one Person of the Son; the Man Christ Jesus.

It is this glorious Person, who is ever the object of the enemy's attack. Man, alas! lends himself to this in his animus against God's Christ. Seeking with the enemy, whose desire is to compass his destruction, to overthrow the only source of his own salvation, accepting the lie of the devil as truth, and seeking to show that he is "as God." Man will have nothing he does not understand. Refusing the true God, who is above his understanding, he loses himself.

May the hearts of God's people bow in adoration before Christ Jesus our Lord, very Man, the exact expression of the essential Being of God, who
**UPHOLDS ALL THINGS BY THE
 WORD OF HIS POWER.**

The all things which He created and of which He is Heir, are the objects

of His unremitting attention and upheld by the word of His power. They are all now made subservient to the success of the Gospel and the accomplishment of His purposes in the souls of His own. Witness the earthquake at Philippi (Acts 16.). All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth, said the risen Jesus. Go ye and preach the Gospel. This Gospel proclaims Him to be Heir of all things and Head of every man. Those who bow to Him, receive an inheritance in Him. Those who refuse to bow are rebels.

One way of the expression of His power is in natural laws, as in gravitation and centrifugal force; yet is He not the slave of His laws. He can reverse them at any time to work out His purposes with and for His people; a human spirit and its progress, being more to God than a universe. For this He called the universe into being; for this He bade the earth to cease to revolve upon its axis for a time at Joshua's request; for this He brought the shadow in the sun dial back ten degrees as a sign for Hezekiah.

And many such like things there be, which show, in the history of souls, the wonders of this God of love. Above all is this shown in that He Himself

MADE PURGATION FOR SINS.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The First Man.

Is it correct to say that in Christ's death "the first man is clean set aside in judgment"? There is of course "the old man." Would not family relationships have reference to the first man; as also the natural man? Would it be more to the point to speak of "Adam fallen" being set aside? or "the first man fallen"? Will you also give a word as to Romans 8. 23: what are the firstfruits of the Spirit? Would this be the same as the earnest of the Spirit?—WALMER.

IF we turn to the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians where the expression "the first man" is found we shall find that primarily it refers to Adam personally—"The first man Adam" (verse 45). Verse 47 gives his character "of

the earth, earthy," and verse 48 goes on to state that the earthy race springing from him partake of his character. His race fell in him, for it was as and when fallen that he became the progenitor of his race, and not before. There was no

"second man" until Christ appeared. This fact alone shows that the idea of "the first man" is extended to cover the race as well as the head. Until Christ came it was all "first man" whatever may have been the secret dealings of God with the souls of individuals.

"The old man" is an abstract expression. If we could extract all those traits of character, those moral features, which find expression in the fallen first man and his race, and blend them together into one entity before our minds, we should have an accurate conception of what the old man is,—*"corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."* "The natural man," is just fallen man in a state of nature, as contrasted with the renewed man under the control of the Spirit of God,—*"the spiritual man."*

The cross of Christ has brought everything to an issue. The world, and the prince of this world, have been judged. Up to that point mankind was under probation, but then the period of trial came to an end and sentence of condemnation was passed. In a sense man was judged from the outset, for physical death lay upon him as God's provisional judgment. The cross of Christ was the

solemn and final ratification of that judgment, and the dreadful doom of the lake of fire will be the irrevocable carrying of it out for all those who remain in Adam.

If any chose to use the phrase, "the first man is clean set aside in judgment," as expressing this great truth, we should raise no objection to the words, although Scripture does not so put it. We should feel inclined to ask for an amplification of the remark, lest any should misunderstand what is meant. Judgment rests on the first man and his race, and he is set aside as now having no status of footing whatever in the presence of God. The relationships that are proper to the first man (husband, wife, children, etc.) are by no means set aside; when, however, we exchange the image of the earthly for the image of the heavenly, they will be. Then the last trace of the first man will pass off us for ever.

As to Romans 8. 23, we believe that the "firstfruits" and the "earnest" of the Spirit are very much akin. The Spirit Himself is the firstfruits; the great harvest of glory awaits the coming of the Lord and the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Spiritual Man.

How are we to know a spiritual man?—LINLITHGOW.

A SPIRITUAL man is like Christ; the more spiritual he is the more he is like Him. This is illustrated in the case of Stephen as recorded in Acts 6. and 7. This likeness proceeds from the sway over his whole renewed being which is exerted by the Spirit, who is *the Spirit of Christ*.

A spiritual man is not necessarily an intellectual man. He may be, and probably will be, to all appearances a very simple person. There is not the slightest reason why the converted peasant may not be a spiritual man. He is hardly likely to appreciate fine points of doctrine which appeal mainly to the intellect, but he discerns all things as having "the mind [i.e., the thinking faculty] of Christ" (1 Cor. 2. 16).

Consequent upon this is that mark

of a spiritual man which we have pointed out to us in 1 Corinthians 14. 37. He always discerns the Word of God and acknowledges it by bowing to its commands. He does not pretend to be in any sense the source of that Word, as though it came out from him. The Word of God has come out through those apostles who were appointed by the Lord, and has been duly communicated to us by them in inspired writings. The spiritual man does not set himself up as an authority, but manifests his spirituality in his whole-hearted subjection to Scripture.

A very important point this, in these days when Scripture is so lightly set aside by many, and the thoughts of man,—even if the man in question is acclaimed as "a spiritual man"—are exalted.

UNSPEAKABLE THINGS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John 3. 16).

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9. 15).

PAUL knew how to use acceptable words, wise preacher that he was, and when occasion required, he could pile superlative upon superlative, as when he wrote of "the exceeding greatness of God's power" and "the exceeding riches of His grace," and of His ability to do "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think," and of "a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory." Moreover, when the deep things of God were to be expressed in words, he was not left to labour with his own vocabulary, for he tells us that he spoke of the things that are freely given us of God in the very words that the Holy Spirit taught him. He was not permitted to express Divine thoughts in words that human wisdom would have selected, else would his Epistles have been faulty and unreliable. It was the work of the Holy Spirit not only to fill his heart and mind with the truth of God and to reveal to him things never known before, but also to give the very words by which the divine revelation was to be made intelligible to others. In this, of course, the Holy Spirit was limited to available human language, which is evidence of the greatness of His grace, but he selected and chose the language. Hence Paul's writings, and all the Scriptures, were God-breathed, inspired by the Holy Ghost; the very words were Divinely given and could not be replaced by others; we speak, of course, of the Scriptures in their original form.

But when Paul wrote of God's gift there were no words that could describe it. If there had been any in human language that could have conveyed to

the human intelligence the immensity of it, the Holy Spirit would have known them and given them to him, but there were none. We may try to encompass that gift with words, and call it great, ineffable, wonderful, incomparable, boundless, perfect, but none nor all of these words will do. All these, or their equivalents in the language of the day, were rejected by the Divinely inspired writer. Overwhelmed by the character of the gift, he tells us in one brief sentence that it defies definition, baffles all description, that it is inexpressible, unspeakable.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

The gift is the proof and measure of God's love. We may consider it, but never comprehend it; we may know it, but it surpasses all knowledge; we may speak of it, but it is unspeakable; we may search the breadth, length, depth and height of it, but all dimensions and magnitudes fail to supply plummet or compass by which we may tell the extent of it. His gift is unspeakable. The incarnation and the cross; the rough way that Jesus trod, His sighs and sorrows, the suffering and shame of Gethsemane and Golgotha, the darkness, the woe, His death and blood shedding were all God's voice to men, speaking with growing intensity; it was God's utterance of an unutterable love; His love declared by His unspeakable gift. Whether we think of the love that gave the gift, or the gift which the love gave, or the flood of life and blessing that flows and will yet flow to us as a result of it, there is but one thing we can do—give "thanks unto God for His unspeakable gift."

*"Unto me, the vile, the guilty,
Flows the living flood;
I, Thine enemy, am ransomed
By the precious blood.
Prostrate at Thy feet I lie,
Lost in love's immensity."*

UNSPEAKABLE JOY.

"Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1. 8).

An unspeakable gift must produce unspeakable joy. Appreciate the gift, let it be kept by the Spirit's power before the heart, and the answering joy will be there; a joy the heart knows for itself, deep, silent, unspeakable. Every earthly pleasure is speakable. Natural sensations may be expressed in human words, the most exquisite thrills of earthly joys that the heart may know may be seized by the poet and poured forth in rhythm and song, but God's unspeakable gift carries us outside earth and nature, and, human though we are, makes us thrill with divine joy, full of glory, unspeakable in human speech. It is the joy of faith, the joy of love, not natural but divine. And strange though it may seem, this unspeakable joy is not inconsistent with, but goes along with, "heaviness through manifold temptations."

If we understood this we should not be so afraid of trials and tests, indeed we should glory in tribulation, for these things wean the heart from the earth, and remove the dross and dirt of it from the soul, and set it free from the speakable to enjoy that that no words can express. On the earthly side, trial and sorrow; on the heavenly side, joy and glory. On the earthly side, "light affliction"; on the heavenly side, "a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory." And though we have not reached the latter, yet we know by faith, and love the One who has reached it, and it is in Him that our joy is found, a joy that cannot be measured, for His love is immeasurable, without taint of selfishness or mortal failure, and He Himself is unspeakably precious, and in Him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We might dwell long and dolefully upon the absence of this joy amongst the children of God, but that is not our purpose. If it is not known it may be, for God can fulfil every word that He

has spoken, and He will fulfil this word to all who seek after it.

UNSPEAKABLE GROANINGS.

The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered" (Romans 8. 26).

There are times when the manifold testings increase in their severity until the Christian knows not what to ask for. And the heaviness of his spirit becomes so great that he cannot pray, and all language fails to express the deep exercises of his soul. Is he forsaken then? Because no prayer rises from his heart and lips, does intercession cease? No, it continues, continues with greater intensity because the need is greater. The Holy Spirit takes up the case, and He can make articulate in groanings the need that is too deep to be uttered in mortal words. The passage opens up for us the wonderful love and interest that the Holy Spirit takes in our welfare.

A mother bends her knees in earnest supplication for an only son. He is exposed to many dangers in the great city where he toils, and the greater her knowledge of this the more she prays, until prayers merge into groans, and the groans are the evidence of the depth of her love. So the Spirit intercedes for us. It does not say here that we groan; what is said of us is that we do not know what to pray for as we ought. It is the Spirit that intercedes with groanings, and these groanings are unutterable. So completely has the Spirit identified itself with our need that the full weight of it is carried in these groanings before God, and God hears the unutterable groanings of the Spirit, and He understands them, and answers them so blessedly, that all things work together for the good of them that love God, and we may know it. That is the answer to the unutterable groanings of the Spirit. The very things that might appear to be against us are the very things that will help us in our journey to the full manifestation of the purpose of God.

UNSPEAKABLE WORDS.

"Heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12. 4).

In the revelation that has come to us in the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Ghost was necessarily limited to the language of mortal men, we could understand no other. But as we have already said, He selected the very words by which the thoughts of God were to be expressed. In doing this He purified these words, amplified them, and often clothed them with meanings that they had not hitherto worn. And as having become the expression of God's thoughts, they are now God's words, possessing a power and purity that no other words possess. They are pure words, perfect words, converting the soul and making wise the simple. They have Divine authority, and should be instantly, implicitly, and constantly obeyed. Still they are human words, and suited to our condition here, while there are yet things to be known and glories to be revealed that could not and never will be expressed in this language, and in view of this, and as we look on to the glorious future, we may truly say and sing—

"With joyful wonder we'll exclaim,
The half has not been told."

If we think of the life of the Lord here, we read, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book" (John 20. 30). And again, "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 if these things have not been written in the Scriptures for us to read and know in this mortal life, their record is on high, and we shall surely know them when we reach the glory of God. It may be said that these things were too numerous to be written; that may be so, but I prefer to think of them as inscrutable, so infinitely blessed in their

nature and character, that no language of men could describe them; they could not be written, or contained if written in this world. What is written is enough to give us the full knowledge of God and to give us fulness of joy in that revelation, and what we have yet to know and absorb of the glories of the triune God will in no wise be contrary to that that we have already learnt.

But there are themes in heaven that we cannot hear or understand in this earthly, mortal condition, and these things Paul heard, but could not communicate. And not until we are clothed upon with our house which is from heaven shall we be able to enter into them; then they will become the subjects of our conversation. We shall not then hear, and speak, and know in a partial way, as 1 Corinthians 13. 9-12 tells us. All that is imperfect, and belongs to our present state of mortality, will be swept away by the power of immortality, and heaven's language will become our familiar tongue, and we shall have the unfettered capacity to enter into the full life of all that is expressed by it. Wonderful prospect! Glories too bright for mortal eyes shall pass before our ransomed vision, and as glory flows on glory throughout the generations of the ages, as now grace flows upon grace, we shall speak a language that will express our full appreciation of it all. "No more with lisping, stammering tongues," but our whole beings strung and tuned by Divine power to bless, and praise, and worship God our Father and His Christ.

The unspeakable gift has reached us in our sin and infirmity and mortality, and that gift was God's pledge to us that He would bring us out of all the degradation of our mortality to a sphere of life where neither sin, nor fear, nor death can come. The glories of that scene of incorruptibility and life will be new to us, for it will be a scene into which flesh and blood cannot enter, and bodies like unto our Lord's own glorious body we must have for it. But what a joy to us now, and an

encouragement to us to reach forward to those bright and blessed scenes, it is to know that He who in that place shall greet us will "greet us with a well-known love." God will not be any other to us than Him whom we have

seen revealed in Jesus in perfect love. Him we know now, for nothing is wanting in God's revelation of Himself for this, and this is life eternal, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ His sent One.

COMFORT IN TRIAL.

THE perfection of the Christian life is absolute trust in God. All roads lead to this, and the one who reaches it in any measure will never be confounded.

Waiting before the Lord is the sure means of qualification for obedience to His bidding.

The fear of God can lift the feeblest and humblest above the fear of man.

Sympathy is the rarest of all ministries, as it is also the sweetest; it makes no show in the world, but it leaves its mark.

In praying for the sick I once heard a brother use this expression: "May those who are too weak to *pray* be able to *lean*."

There is no pillow like love, and we have the Lord's perfect love to rest upon.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; *I shall not want*" (Psa. 23. 1). "I shall not want." This conclusion flows, not from what we are to Him, but from what He is to us.

To desire blessing is easy, but the

path to blessing is through waves and clouds and storms—that is, through the deepest exercises.

What is true of us is not always true to us. It is true of every believer that he is in Christ, but in order to be true to Him he must reach that position in his own soul experimentally.

The secret of many of our sicknesses and sorrows is that our hearts have not been true to the Lord. . . . We assume too much when we are sick; we take it for granted that all is well with us, and forget the hand of the Lord may be in the sickness to recover the hearts of His people.

Whoever goeth to warfare at his own charges? No; He who calls equips and sustains; and the servant has only to learn how to avail himself of what is provided. The Lord expects nothing from us, except looking to Him, and even for that He will give the power.

We are so apt to look for deliverance in suffering, but I suspect that God's object with each of us is to teach us to expect a fresh revelation of Christ and to learn His mind in the trial.

COMFORTED AND COMFORTING.

GOD does not *comfort* us to make us *comfortable* but *comforters*.

There is a three-fold comfort given us by the three Persons of the God-head. The Father has "given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." The Son is anointed to "comfort all who mourn." The Spirit has His own peculiar name, the Comforter, the other Comforter.

The heart of Christ was moved when He saw sorrow. He would not have us cold and indifferent to it, nor yet on

the other hand selfishly affected by it, but full of tenderness and compassion towards those who are suffering. "He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps."

The blessed Lord never fails in sympathy and kindness for the inevitable sorrows of the way. If He takes away what was long an object, and which was for our hearts a prop, He always comes to cheer and comfort the spirit. He alone we can never lose, and He is nearer to us than any human tie.

LIGHT AFFLICTION.

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4. 17).

[T] is blessed to be at the feet of Jesus in our sorrows, for there divine light shines upon them, and though we may suffer, and even be oppressed with our trials, we shall not, while there, doubt His love.

"JESUS WEPT." All know that the verses of our Bible are merely a human arrangement, and yet who can doubt that the Spirit of God controlled the one who made it in putting these two words into one verse? They indeed should stand alone, inasmuch as they afford such an inlet into the recesses of the Lord's heart. They have been the comfort of mourners in all ages, and they will continue to minister consolation to His people until God Himself shall wipe away all tears from their faces.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Untold sorrows characterize the human race, and this invitation is not confined to those who are laden with sin. Jesus addresses any one who is bowed with any possible sorrow, any possible bereavement. Whatever the burden upon you, the Lord speaks to *you*.

Your whole responsibility in a time of trial is to "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." And what a blessing it is that you may and can

rest, whatever your suffering, on the Lord's breast!

It is indeed an immense thing to be in communion with His mind in His object in our sufferings.

God chooses my circumstances, my sicknesses, my sorrows, in view of what He is accomplishing. "We do know that all things work together for good to those who love God. . . . Because whom He has foreknown, He has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8. 28, 29, New Trans.). He thus chooses the circumstances for us that will best accomplish His purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son. The consequence is that, if in the line of His purpose, I will never seek to change my circumstances. In fellowship with the heart of God I will gratefully leave that to Him.

He alone who has made the blank in your life can fill it, and He will. When all the blanks of earth are filled with His presence we gain infinitely more than we have lost.

When the Lord returns we shall lose all bodily weakness. How we shall rejoice when "In soul and body perfect." For this deliverance we have still to wait, but the blessed hope of it cheers us in the midst of our pilgrimage.

DEPENDENCE.

OUR tendency is to lose dependence when we are enjoying the results of dependence.

You ought to begin your day with this confidence, that you have enough in Christ to meet every difficulty that may befall you.

I have One who loves me ten thousand times better than I love myself, and I am in His sphere. I belong to His house, and He cares for me.

How little we realize the magnitude of the fact that God is our Father. If a man had an emperor for his father he

would not go to a peasant to ask for help. We cannot naturally bear the delay and suspense to which we are subjected in turning to God. But the delay is simply to test our faith. He that believeth shall not make haste.

The soul once truly habituated to wait on God learns so to value it that it never can again do without it.

Every hour is an hour of difficulty with us while we are here, and if we do not keep our eye on Him in the little difficulties we shall not be able to find Him in the great ones.

INTELLIGENT SERVICE.

(F. B. HOLE.)

THE Epistle to the Romans, in its first eight chapters, presents us with an orderly unfolding of the Gospel. First of all we are carried through an exposure of the ruin and corruption that marks the human race in all its branches, and then step by step the Divine way of blessing is unfolded: the way in which God has wrought on man's behalf in the death and resurrection of Christ; the particular application of His death and resurrection to the believer, first as regards his sinful acts and then as regards his sinful state; the consequent gift of the Spirit; the experimental process by which the believer learns to now walk in the liberty of the Spirit and free from the dominion of sin and law and flesh. This is supplemented in chapters 9. to 11. by a treatise upon the ways and purposes of God, showing how His ways, which are past finding out, are made to work out to the fulfilment of His purposes.

With chapter 12. we begin the hortatory and practical part of the epistle, and, by the mercies of God unfolded in the earlier chapters, the apostle beseeches us to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," and he adds, "which is your reasonable [intelligent, N. Tr.] service."

That the believer is converted to be a servant of God is a well-recognized fact. When once Divine life has been received, a person is desirous of going in the Divine way and of being a servant of the will of God, even though as yet he has very little knowledge of the truth outlined in Romans 6., 7., and 8. Thus it was with most of us; in the first joy of conversion we began to serve hardly knowing why we did so. We began by rendering what we may call *instinctive service*. We cannot, however, proceed indefinitely upon those lines. Our service, if it is to be sustained and efficient, must flow from

an understanding of the truth, from a recognition of what has been achieved and established in the death and resurrection of Christ. It must be *intelligent service*.

In our unconverted days sin was reigning in our mortal bodies, and we were obeying it in the lusts thereof. Consequently we were yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, and as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, as Romans 6. tells us. As believers now "dead with Christ" we are to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and consequently sin is not to have dominion over us, but we are to yield ourselves unto God, "as those that are alive from the dead," and to yield our members "as instruments of righteousness unto God," and "as servants to righteousness unto holiness." Let this be really laid hold of in the faith of our souls, and we at once perceive that our bodies, which formerly were the vehicle for the expression of our own wills and the pursuit of our own pleasures, are now to be presented as a sacrifice to God.

The sacrifices of Old Testament times were animals devoted to God by way of death, and the thought of a living sacrifice hardly appears; it would indeed have seemed a contradiction in terms, and an impossibility. That, however, which would have been an impossible service under Judaism becomes an intelligent service under Christianity. The only right course for the believer is to present his body to God as a thing wholly devoted to His will and use and glory, and it only can be so presented as a thing which though living is yet acknowledged to be dead as viewed in the light of the death of Christ. The contradiction in terms alone remains, but then such paradoxes are common in Christianity, as Gal. 2. 20 bears witness.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the men and women of the world are largely ruled by their bodies. Scripture speaks of man as a tripartite being. He is "spirit and soul and body," placing the three parts in that order, thus giving prominence to the spirit as the most important, since it is the essential and characteristic part which makes man what he is, and distinguishes him from the lower animal creation. The phrase has passed into common use, but people nearly always invert the order, and speak of "body, soul, and spirit," thus insensibly betraying the view they take of their relative importance. The spirit, which capacitates man for intelligent intercourse with God, is dethroned. The body, which through its five senses puts him in touch with his fellows and with the earth, is exalted. They do not wish to have to do with God, whilst they very much love and enjoy the earth. Consequently the body becomes of prime importance, and they spend their lives over questions as to what they shall put into it, and upon it, or over it in the way of shelter, and how they shall get the wherewithal to provide it with pleasurable sensations through its various senses, or stimulate its jaded nerves to further pleasing action, and of how they shall check the inroads of the diseases and disorders so frequently provoked by their vices and follies, and stave off as long as possible the approach of death.

What a whirlpool of death has the poor world become as a consequence of all this! God does not, however, leave His saints in its power. They are not to be finally sucked down into its vortex, and it is not His will that they should be meanwhile swept along by its current, for those who are in its grip are on their way to death. It is true, of course, that if a true believer gets so entangled God will extricate him before the bitter end is reached, though this may involve terrible loss, as illustrated by God's dealings with Lot in Sodom.

On the outer rim of a whirlpool the motion is but slow; as the vortex is approached the speed is greatly increased. We are not far removed from the vortex of the world's great whirlpool to-day. The pace at which "life," as the world terms it, moves, the speed of all great world movements, is greatly increased. Are Christians generally awake to what the situation really is?

We greatly fear that the answer to that question is in the negative, and hence we venture to pen these lines of earnest appeal and exhortation. We beseech our readers to join us in obeying that wholesome Scriptural exhortation, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; consider your ways" (Haggai 1. 7). The very ease of our circumstances in these favoured English-speaking lands lends itself to religion of an easy-going and semi-worldly, if not wholly worldly, type. Proper Christian life, the life that pleases God, does not, indeed, consist in inward gloom and outward sanctimoniousness, "pulling a long face," as it is popularly called, but then neither does it consist in a piety, however genuine it may be, which goes hand-in-hand with any amount of "innocent" and "harmless" jollification. Those who follow this latter type may flatter themselves that they present to the world an attractive Christianity, and announce that,

"I feel like singing all the time"; yet this "joy-bells" type—as we may call it—is no nearer the thing that Scripture indicates than the other. Not thus did the apostles live.

There are things which really are life, and these are not connected with the earth or the world, and they cannot be purchased with money. For the Christian the possession of money frequently means the death of spirituality, as 1 Timothy 6. shows. Not money but the love of money is the root of the mischief, and yet it is most difficult to possess money without the love of it creeping in, and then money becomes a master and not a slave, and

the possessor of it spends it for his own gratification and not for the will of God. And yet money and all the luxuries it procures are not really life. If any of our readers be rich we beseech them to remember that their wealth is to be used in such a way that they be "rich in good works . . . laying by for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may lay hold of what is really life" (1 Tim. 6. 18, 19, N. Tr.).

The plain fact is that all the things in which the flesh and the world move are but death. Romans 8. tells us that there are the things of the flesh which are minded by those after the flesh, and the things of the Spirit which are minded by those after the Spirit, and that while the mind of the flesh is death, the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. It also tells us very plainly that "if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (verse 13, N. Tr.). In these words the apostle speaks of things according to their essential character. Death lies at the end of a life lived according to flesh, and whoever lives that life, no matter who he may be, or what God in mercy may do before the end is reached, is making straight for death, and may be said to be "about to die." On the contrary, whoever goes forward in the energy of the Spirit putting to death the deeds of the body has life, in its full and proper sense, before him. For such an one "the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (verse 10), i.e., the body is held as a dead thing, for if it gains the mastery of us, so that we are swayed by its desires, only sin is the outcome, whereas when the Spirit controls so as to be the internal means of life, righteousness is the outcome.

We are to present, then, these living bodies of ours to God as things devoted to Him through death, as vehicles for His will because of the acceptance of death as regards the will of the flesh. What this involves is unfolded to us in

the succeeding verses, and that by means of a series of exhortations and instructions.

Before coming to the positive side of things we are shown in one brief sentence what it means on the negative side. "Be not conformed to this world." The word used here for "conformed" is elsewhere translated "fashioned," and that for "world" is more literally "age." "Be not fashioned according to this age" is what the apostle has to say to us. This age is a Christ-rejecting age, and we are called to represent Christ in the midst of it. Can there be accord between us and it? And if there is no inward accord, should there be outward conformity? Never!

How many of us are living our lives in defiance of this injunction? How many of us are content to take our cue from the world, and run after its fashions, and be carried unresistingly with its tide, and do things just because "everybody's doing it"? The fact that "everybody's doing it" ought to be to us a pretty plain intimation that it is a highly desirable thing that we should *not* do it. We are separated and distinct from the world, if in truth we are the children of God. Let us not then ape the ways of the world and so become guilty of the form of hypocrisy to which Christians are liable, viz., that of pretending *not* to be what we are.

When we turn to the positive side of things we do not find reformation urged as the opposite to conformation to this world. It is rather transformation that we need. Here the apostle uses a word which is only used on three other occasions in the New Testament. Twice it is used of the transfiguration of our Lord, and the third occasion is in 2 Cor. 3. 18, where it is translated "is changed." The consideration of its use in these passages may help us to grasp its significance here.

Moreover the exhortation is to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind," for it is always the Divine way

to work from the within to the without. Our bodies are controlled by our thinking faculties, and our very thinking faculties need to be renewed; a striking witness this of how deeply and fundamentally the fall has affected us, and of how impossible it is for us even to think aright except as the fruit of God's work. The reference here, however, is not to the new birth, for that has been accomplished in the case of every true child of God, and is consequently never a subject of exhortation, but to that progressive and daily renewing wrought by the Holy Spirit as our minds are enlightened by and brought into subjection to and into harmony with the Word of God.

At this point again some serious questions suggest themselves. How many of us give sufficient time and place to the Word of God and prayer to get our minds renewed in any thorough fashion? How many of us really want to get them renewed? Some of our Christian acquaintances may tell us with considerable emphasis that they see no harm in this, that, and the other, and that they mean to go on and enjoy themselves, when, if only a little renewing took place, they would not only see the emptiness of these things that charm them, but they would lose all taste for them. Are there any of us secretly afraid to give more than a perfunctory surface reading to the Scriptures, lest too much light should shine into the conscience and disturb it? Alas! if so it should be.

Oh, let us earnestly seek that our minds be so enlightened and renewed that we not only see what is the will of God, but come to delight in it. Then, our renewed minds controlling our bodies, they will be presented as a living sacrifice to God, and we shall be transformed into the character of Christ. The will of God is good and perfect, no matter what our attitude may be; but then we shall know it to be not only good and perfect but acceptable also, and we shall not only know it to be all this, but we shall

prove it to be so. The will of God will be practically wrought out to the point of demonstration in our lives.

The rest of our chapter works out in detail for us what the will of God is. The very first indication of the mind being renewed, and the work of transformation being wrought, is that we cease from high thoughts of ourselves, as verse 3 shows. Nothing is more deeply ingrained in the natural mind than self-esteem. One of the first marks of a renewed mind is humility. Then we begin to think soberly, and to know that our real measure is not to be judged by intellect or money or social status, but by faith; it is, "according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

The second indication is that we begin to think of others. The natural mind is self-centred. The renewed mind becomes enlarged. We discover that we are not the only child in the family of God, or so many isolated units, but rather are intimately connected with all other believers. It is with us just after the analogy of the human body; though many we are "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." This delivers us from selfishness. We begin at once to recognize that what God may bestow upon us is not for our own use and benefit alone, and still less for our own glorification, but is to be utilized for the good of all the members of that one body.

From this it flows that we shall not all be doing the same things. There is unity, for there is but one body. There will be diversity, however, for there are many members. Hence, as the latter part of the chapter shows, we must see to it that we know what is the work or service which is allotted to us each in the will of God; then we are to give ourselves to it with all diligence, and be careful that it is done in the gracious spirit of Christ Himself. Thus we shall be carrying out in detail that intelligent service to which we are called.

"COMPANIONABLE."

(H. P. BARKER.)

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.—Some time ago I was present at some meetings in Edinburgh, and was led to speak a little on what it is to be the Companions of Christ (Hebrews 3.14, Darby's Translation). A brother followed, taking as his subject what it is to be *companionable* to Christ. The word is a striking one, not a coined one, nor one which we find in the Scriptures, but one which started a train of thought in my mind for which I have many times thanked God. I have adopted the word as the title of this article, and desire to put before the reader certain things that we must take into account if we would be companionable to Christ.

"Please read Ruth 3. 2, 3: "*And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor.*"

RUTH, the Moabite stranger, had been most kindly and hospitably received by Boaz, an Israelite of wealth and position. He had dismissed her fears, met her need, ministered to her wants in a gracious way, and encouraged her labours as a gleaner in his fields. But she had never been invited to his house, nor probably had she ever thought of him save as a benefactor. With this she seems to have been content.

Is it not a fact that many Christians never get much beyond this in their thoughts of the Saviour? When they came to Him from their wanderings in the land of great distances He received them with a welcome that expressed the grace of His heart. He bade them to be at rest; He assured them that in Him they had all that they needed. Nor has He ceased for a single moment to minister to their wants. And what gracious encouragement has come from Him, again and again, as they went forth to glean in His fields of blessing. Happy are they to have such a Benefactor, such a Saviour! In this happiness thousands live, and either wait for the Lord to come, or pass from earth to be with Him.

But is this all that is to be known of Christ? Indeed it is not; any more than Ruth was to remain the mere recipient of the bounty of Boaz. She was to become his companion, his bride. And for a like relationship we have been sought by the greater than Boaz. He has not only pitied and saved us;

He has loved us, and wanted us. He has won us to be His companions, His bride, to be eventually with Him for ever in yon bright home which will be our home because it is His home, and we shall be there as His bride.

Naomi seems to have early realized that according to the law of redemption and inheritance in Israel Boaz would make Ruth his wife. And by her wise direction Ruth proceeds to make herself suitable for companionship with Boaz, not in the harvest field, but in the floor where he takes his rest. And the steps that Ruth takes serve to indicate to us the things that the Lord will look for in us if we are to be agreeable to Him as His companions.

Who amongst us would not greatly desire to be this—to be agreeable companions, that is, *companionable* to Christ? It is one thing to be a chosen companion, but quite another thing to be companionable.

I remember once travelling by train up the valley of the Reventazon. The scenery was grand beyond description, and utterly unlike anything that I had seen in Europe. I was lost in wonder and admiration, and gazed almost breathlessly at the ever-changing panorama of beauty and magnificence. Presently, just as we turned a corner and a scene of thrilling grandeur burst into view, a voice at my elbow said: "Shan't we have our pork sandwiches and coffee now?" It was the voice

of the young brother who was accompanying me on the journey. He was my companion, but at that moment he was anything but companionable. I was thinking of the forest-clad hills and the foaming river that danced and glittered and whirled at their foot, and of the mighty ravines that we were skirting; he was thinking of pork and coffee. I should have valued an appreciative companion, one who could share my interest. But I could not give him the eye that looked with delight on the marvellous scenes through which we were passing, so I had to turn from the view that was enchanting me to eat pork sandwiches!

May this illustrate for us the difference between being companions and being companionable? The Lord is interested in certain things. They are eternal things (2 Cor. 4. 18), things of the Spirit of God (Rom. 8. 5), things which are above, where Christ sitteth (Col. 3. 1). He wants us to be interested in these wonderful things, to share His interest in them. Are we more interested in our own things, the meeting of our needs, getting answers to our prayers, the healing of our bodies, and so forth? The blessed Lord is not indifferent to these things. He ministers most graciously to us in connection with them, but He longs that our affections should be more constantly set upon the things amid which He lives, and of which He is delighted to tell us. In other words, He greatly desires that we should, as those who are given to Him for companions, be *companionable* to Him.

Now notice, please, three things that Ruth was to do in order to make herself companionable to Boaz.

First, she was to wash herself. And, in a sense, we too have to do so. There is, of course, the initial washing that makes us Christ's: the cleansing by blood from the guilt of our disobedience and the washing by "water" that takes place in new birth. This initial washing never has to be repeated. We are cleansed, thank God, once for all.

But there is a sense in which we need washing continually. This we are taught in John 13. For the Prince of Glory to gird Himself like a household slave and perform an act of menial service to His disciples was a most marvellous exhibition of humility and grace. But we shall be greatly mistaken if we see in it no more than this. That the act possessed a significance that was not immediately apparent is clear from verse 7.

The Lord was going back to the Father (verse 1), and He wanted to carry the affections of His loved ones with Him to that place. He desired that they should have "*part with Him*" there (verse 8). Not, observe, *part in Him*; that they already had. Nor was it simply a matter of communion. They had enjoyed that with Him while on earth, and saints in olden times held sweet converse with their God. Communion was not a new thing, but what the Lord had in view for His disciples was evidently a thing altogether new, *part with Him* in the place to which He was now going as Man, and which His going there would prepare for them.

To this end He begins to wash their feet. To understand the full significance of this, one needs to remember how different are the customs of the East from those with which we are familiar in English-speaking lands. If one arrives, weary with one's journey, and with one's feet covered with the dust of the hot highway, how refreshing it must be to have water brought, in the house of one's friend, and to have one's feet gently washed by the hands of a willing servant! Even so, if we are to enter into the things of Christ along with Him, it will be necessary to have all that adheres to us of earth, the soil of the way along which we have been passing, washed from our souls by the gentle action of the "water," ministered to us by the Lord Himself.

But suppose the visitor has not been on a weary journey, and that no trace of the high road is visible on his feet,

water will all the same be brought, and his feet washed. It will cool and refresh him, and make it easier for him to forget all that is outside the house in which he sits as a guest. So, even when there is no question of defilement, the ministry of the Lord to our souls refreshes us, draws us closer to Himself, and prepares us to lend an appreciative ear to what He has to communicate to us.

But suppose, once again, that the visitor is neither hot nor weary, and the question of refreshment does not arise. None the less water is brought and his feet are washed. It is, in the East, an act of courtesy equivalent to our saying to one who visits us: "I am delighted to see you and hope that you will make yourself thoroughly at home in this house." It was the omission of this courtesy that the Lord felt so keenly in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7. 44). It was an intimation that He was not very welcome. But the Lord wishes us to feel *very* welcome where He is; that we are more than guests, loved and cherished companions; that He *wants* us near to Himself; and that we have the run of the Father's house. This is the object of the ministry set forth symbolically in the washing of the disciples' feet. It is that which the Lord does to make us feel that we can be thoroughly at home in that fair region of eternal bliss, where love Divine pervades all, and to which He has already carried our hearts.

Secondly, Ruth was to anoint herself. Again, we must distinguish between what is initial and what is continual. When first we received the grace of God we were anointed (2 Cor. 1. 21), and this anointing abides (1 John 2. 27). We are a priestly and a kingly race (Rev. 1. 6), and are anointed in view of the day when we shall be crowned.

But anointing has another significance than this in Scripture. When the wise woman of Tekoa had to play the part of a mourner, she had to refrain from anointing herself with oil.

It was a sign of sadness (1 Sam. 14. 2). And when Daniel gave himself to mourning he too abstained from the usual anointing. For anointing was a sign of joy and gladness. Now mourning and fasting become us in the place from which the Bridegroom has gone (Luke 5. 35). But we are not now speaking of what becomes us in the place where He is not, but of companionship with Him in the place where He is. And if we are to be companionable we must be the very opposite of discouraged, grumbling, and pessimistic. The things of the Lord must have such a place in our hearts that they fill us with a holy joy. How can we be otherwise than full of joy when we consider all that we have been brought to? It is not merely that a door has been shut for ever upon all our sins and upon our sinful selves. It is that a door has been *opened* for us by which we have access to the Father, and find in His holy presence that which fills us with overwhelming delight. Only as this is true of us can we be agreeable company for Christ; only thus can we be truly companionable.

Thirdly, Ruth had to put on suitable raiment. Here, too, we must be careful not to confound the initial with the continual. At the very threshold of the Christian life we find ourselves clothed with a robe of God's own providing, a robe of Divine righteousness so perfect that even God's all-seeing eye can find no flaw therein. In a word, it is Christ as our fitness for the presence of God.

But there is other adornment than this. There is not only *Christ for us* of which we have spoken: there is *Christ wrought in us*, something of Himself produced in us that by-and-by shall enter into the texture of the wonderful raiment worn by His Bride upon her wedding day (Rev. 19. 7, 8). An illustration of this is found in Psalm 45., where, however, the bride is not the Church, nor Israel, but the city of Jerusalem. Her own proper clothing, what may be termed her

home dress, is described in verse 13. It is of gold, the well-known symbol of Divine righteousness. But in verse 14 what we may call her *wedding dress* is referred to. "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work," raiment which we may connect with the "fine linen" of Revelation 19. 8, the righteousnesses (the word is plural) of saints. It is not Christ for us, the righteousness of God; it is Christ wrought in our lives by the Holy Spirit, so that when God looks down on us He may see something in us that shall bring pleasure to His heart. And that must be CHRIST, for there is no other man in whom God finds pleasure. Our righteousnesses can only be the exhibition of that blessed One in our ways.

To be companionable to Christ this also must be true of us. We must be, as it were, in the hands of the Spirit, that He may produce in our affections Christ Himself, and that thus the flesh in all its evil workings may be displaced, and the life become fragrant with the traits which were found in all their perfection in Jesus, and which are wrought in us as we find Him to be the precious object of our hearts, more and more.

These three things, then, were to characterize Ruth. And then, washed, anointed, and suitably clothed, she was to resort, not to the field, where she had made the acquaintance of Boaz and tasted his grace, but to the floor where he rested, and where he carried on operations that had nothing to do with Ruth directly (verse 2). Oh, let us always remember that the field is not the floor! The field speaks of our own blessing; it is where we have gleaned armfuls of golden grain; it is where Christ has spoken to us and met all our need. But the floor is His own withdrawing place, where one goes, not for blessing, but for companionship.

Lest this distinction should seem too abstruse to some of my readers, let me use a humble illustration. A rich and titled lady, living in a beautiful west-

end mansion, devotes herself to work among the poverty-stricken denizens of the unspeakable slum districts in the east-end. She comes across a poor, miserable woman there whom she saves from starvation, and for whom she makes liberal provision. Week by week she visits her, talks to her, comforts her, and succeeds in completely transforming her life. The poor woman is now as happy as formerly she was miserable. And so the weeks pass by. Her kind benefactress showers innumerable kindnesses upon her.

But it never occurs to her that the kind lady is actuated by any other motive than pity and desire to help the forlorn and destitute. But one day her kind friend tells her that it is not only that that lies behind all her gifts, but that she *loves* her, and wants her to come and live for the rest of her days in her own beautiful home, and be her companion, her own dear sister. What a revelation! The very next day a luxurious Rolls-Royce car arrives to take the poor woman from her slum surroundings to the home of the one whose love is still such a surprise to her. We may be sure that, while never ceasing to be grateful and appreciative, she will seek to be more than that. Her desire will be to make herself as agreeable as possible, as *companionable* as possible, to the one whose home is now hers.

Now we have learned, have we not? that it is not only great and Divine compassion that lies behind all that our dear Saviour has done for us, but that He has *loved* and *wanted* us. As to our bodies we are still in slumland. For what is the fairest scene of earth compared with the land where He dwells? But do we know what it is to resort *in our affections* to where He is, and to find the home of our hearts there? If so, surely it will increasingly be the desire and prayer of our souls that we may be truly companionable to Him, that His love may thus find its reward in having us along with Himself where He is.

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. VI. His Brethren Tested. (Genesis 43. 44.)

THE sin of Joseph's brethren has been recalled; their conscience has been awakened; the fear of God has arisen in their souls. There are, however, other experiences they must pass through before Joseph can reveal himself in all the love of his heart, and ere his brethren can be at perfect ease in his presence.

In the past they had sinned, not only against Joseph, but also against their father. They had been "reckless of a brother's cries and of a father's grief." They had sinned as brethren before their brother, they had sinned as sons before their father. One they had treated with the utmost cruelty, the other with the grossest deception. Both as sons and as brethren they had revealed the evil of their way and the hardness of their hearts. The time has come when they will be tested, and Joseph will prove how far any real change has been wrought in them. They have said "we are true men." Joseph will therefore place them in circumstances that will reveal whether at last they can act as true brothers, and true sons. With the utmost wisdom Joseph will re-enact the past. Once again ten men will have to act in regard to a younger brother. Once again they shall have to face an aged father with his great love for the younger son.

Times have changed and circumstances have altered; the setting of the picture is entirely new, but in principle the drama of the fields of Dothan is to be enacted in the land of Egypt. Will those ten men once again abandon their brother, and invent some story to deceive their father? Has true repentance been wrought in the hearts of those brethren? This is the great question that Joseph will solve in their second visit to Egypt.

Again it is their desperate need that

brings them into Egypt. Before starting they make their plans to appease the Governor of Egypt and to secure the safety of Benjamin. Judah undertakes to be surety for Benjamin, and the present is arranged for the Governor. The former goodness of Joseph in returning their money is looked upon as a possible "oversight" (12). All shows how impossible it is for nature to understand the ways of grace. "Why," says Jacob, speaking after the manner of the natural man, "tell the man whether ye had a brother?" (6). Their reply shows the way that grace had taken, "The man asked *very closely* after us, and of our kindred" (N.T.). Grace can forgive all, but grace will have all brought to light (7).

Then Israel unfolds his plan. And man of faith though he was, he speaks now according to the man of nature. "If it must be so *do this*." Jacob's plan depends upon man's doings. He needs corn, he would fain obtain the release of Simeon and secure the safety of Benjamin, and he proposes a way whereby all shall be brought about by their own *doings*. And this is still the way man takes, and has ever taken, to obtain blessing from God. Cain took this way when he brought the first-fruits of his own labours as an offering unto the Lord. Israel took this way when they said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will *do*." The lawyer of New Testament times would take this same way when, in the presence of the Lord, he said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And after nineteen hundred years of grace man still clings to this fatal way, for, in the closing days of Christendom, there are still those of whom we read, "They have gone in the way of Cain."

Occupied thus with their own doings, Jacob unfolds his plan. "*Take*," says he, a present to appease the man.

"Take double money" to buy the corn. "Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man." Nature cannot think of God as a giver, or man as a receiver. Nature has no true knowledge of God or man. It cannot conceive of God so rich in sovereign grace that He can only give, or man so helplessly ruined that he can only receive. But this Jacob and his sons must learn, for all their plans entirely fail to secure the blessing at the hands of Joseph.

Furthermore, we learn in the story that not only are man's plans utterly futile, but that occupation with our plans blinds the soul to the grace of God. Jacob, as he thinks of the goodness of Joseph that had returned their money, can only imagine "it was an oversight." There is, however, no oversight with God. The oversight is all on man's side. Blinded by his own doings he overlooks what God is doing (11-23).

Having made all his plans, Jacob finally commends his sons to the mercy of God Almighty. He puts his plans first and God Almighty second. If there is anything lacking in his plans he expresses the pious hope that the mercy of God will make up the deficiency. And thus it is that men treat God and Christ to-day. God in mercy sent His Son, Christ accomplished the mighty work of redemption, but still man clings to his own doings and looks upon the mercy of God and the work of Christ as mere make-weights to fill up any little shortcomings in man's endeavours. But as with Jacob, so with men. Their own plans leave them in hopeless uncertainty. Jacob has to confess that after all he is quite uncertain of the results. "If I be bereaved, I am bereaved" (14). What a picture of man's way of seeking to obtain blessing from God. Do your best, look to the mercy of God to make up for any failure in your efforts, and then hope for the best in the future, and if you are saved you will be saved, and if you are condemned you will be condemned.

The brethren of Joseph proceed to act upon their father's plan only to realize its utter futility. They took the present, they took double money, and Benjamin, rose up and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph (15). Joseph pays not the slightest heed to their gifts, he does not touch their money, he will not accept Benjamin as a ransom. He entirely ignores their plan and commences to act according to his own heart. First, he says, "Bring those men home, and slay and make ready; for these men shall dine with me." Is this not an anticipation of that far greater message that God sends to a world of sinners, "Come, for all things are now ready." The purposes of Joseph far transcend the plans of his brethren. Their plan was simply to obtain a blessing from Joseph: his purpose was indeed to bestow a blessing, but a blessing that they should enjoy in his company and in his home. Their plan was to buy corn to make a feast among themselves, his plan to spread a feast to be enjoyed with him. "These men," he says, "*shall dine with me*" (16). Like the brethren of Joseph we are equally slow to take in God's thoughts of blessing. We would be content to obtain the forgiveness of sins, and salvation from hell. But how far short of God's thoughts! His thought is to have us with Himself to feast with Him in His home. The prodigal was driven by his need, and some small sense of grace, to return to the father, hoping to get his need met and possibly the place of a servant in the father's house. But no servant's place will suit the father's heart. The prodigal must be brought into the father's home as the father's son, there to feast and make merry with the father. If God sends out the Gospel it is to secure a vast host of redeemed sinners to be in His presence holy and without blame before Him in love.

But we are slow to take in the greatness of God's grace. Even as Joseph's brethren, who "were afraid" when

they were brought into Joseph's house. They could only think they were brought in to be condemned, they could not imagine they were brought in to be feasted. Thus they said, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks . . . are we brought in." Their guilty conscience suggests he "seeks occasion against us." They looked upon Joseph as against them, as one that must be appeased. They have yet to learn that he is making all things work together for good. Instead of judging themselves they are judging Joseph. In all these marks of favour they can only imagine that Joseph is seeking occasion against them—is going to fall upon them and make them bondmen (17, 18).

They explain to the steward that they have brought double money. But though knowing all about it he sets all on one side and brings Simeon to them (19, 23). Still clinging to their own efforts they make ready their present "against Joseph came at noon," only to find that Joseph in his turn sets it all aside. The money and the present entirely fail to effect anything (25, 26).

Joseph speaks kindly to them, yearns in love over his younger brother, weeps in love in secret, but restrains himself in love, for love's time to reveal itself has not yet come. Even so, in perfect wisdom does the Lord deal with the woman by the well. He does not reveal Himself until her conscience is reached and all is out, and she discovers that she is in the presence of One who, knowing her whole history, yet loves her with such a love that He can say to her, "Come hither." Then indeed she can say, "Is not this the Christ?" Joseph will anticipate those perfect ways of grace with a poor sinner. He too speaks words of grace, but restrains himself in the presence of his brethren. He will feast them, but in such a way that they cannot but see their history is known. They are set before him, "the firstborn according to his birth-

right and the youngest according to his youth." In the enjoyment of all this favour, "they drank and were merry with him," but they must learn other lessons before he can be merry with them. They are rejoicing in his gifts, but they have yet to rejoice in himself (27, 34). However, before Joseph can be revealed to them they must be exposed before Joseph. To this end Joseph's cup is placed in Benjamin's sack. The brethren having departed are pursued by Joseph's steward, and charged with having taken the cup. They protest their innocence. "God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing." Then they profess their honesty. "Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths we brought again . . . how then should we steal?" Is it likely that men who deal so honestly in money matters would be guilty of a paltry theft? It must be remembered that these are the men who once sold their brother into slavery for twenty paltry pieces of silver. Surely men who had acted thus would be quite capable of stealing a silver cup, in spite of all protestations to the contrary. The charge is not therefore so unreasonable, *unless indeed full repentance for the past has been wrought in their souls*. That they are innocent of the matter of the cup, Joseph knows full well, but have they repented of the past? This Joseph will find out. In the past they had been neither true sons nor true brothers. Has repentance done its work? Has the heart of stone been changed to a heart of flesh?

Benjamin stands in the place that once had been Joseph's—the youngest and best-beloved son of his father. Benjamin shall pass into bondage, as once Joseph had filled the place of a slave. The ten brethren are perfectly free, as once before, to return to their father in peace. What will they do in these circumstances? Will they again act as in the days of old in the fields of Dothan? Will they abandon their

brother to slavery knowing him to be innocent? They had acted thus with Joseph; will they do so with Benjamin? Will they return to Jacob to face his grief with some false story to account for the absence of Benjamin as once they had accounted for the loss of Joseph? Ah, no! grace has wrought in these men, repentance has done its work. Under the searching questions of Joseph the whole truth is confessed. Joseph can say, "What deed is this that ye have done?" "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly make trial?" (6-15, margin). And this is ever the way grace takes. Thus it was the Lord dealt with a sinful woman "near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." "Go call thy husband" was only another way of saying "What deed is this that ye have done?" and how truly He made Himself known to that guilty sinner as One that can "certainly divine," for she said, "He told me all things that ever I did." And none can be happy and at home in the presence of the Lord of glory until such times as they have learnt that the Lord knows the very worst thing about them, and yet loves them.

This, too, is the way Joseph takes, and with what blessed results! No longer do they justify themselves. They exclaim, "What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my Lord's

servants!" They no longer attempt to justify themselves as to the present, they do not attempt to clear themselves as to the past. They are convicted sinners "found out" by God; and they entirely submit to Joseph, "we are my Lord's servants," they say (16).

This indeed is excellent, but these are words and may be but empty profession. Words must be proved by deeds. Judah, therefore, comes forward on behalf of the brethren, and proves the reality of their words by what they are prepared to do. He can say, "Let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren." Moreover, the pleading love that breathes throughout Judah's touching appeal proves how deep the repentance that has been wrought in their souls. The heart of stone has indeed been changed into a heart of flesh. As a son he pleads for Jacob. He is our father, he is an old man, he loves Benjamin (20), "his life is bound up in the lad's life" (30). How can "I see the evil that shall come on my father"? (34). As a true brother he pleads for Benjamin. He is "a lad," "a little one" (20), "our youngest brother." But this appeal to Joseph shows that not only repentance has been wrought but confidence has been in measure won. A beautiful picture of that "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" which ever accompanies a true work of grace.

The believer is not one who has selfishly secured a pardon in order that he may do anything with impunity. He is one whose heart has been melted by forgiveness and loves much, and who comes back, like the woman-sinner, to pour out the ointment and tears of his very life on Him who saved him.

If I am slothful or unwatchful He may keep back the manifestations of His love to me, and it may be I shall walk in the shadow instead of in the sunshine. But still He loves me as before; He changes not.

Talk with the Lord. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Him as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with so great a love. Cultivate intimacy with Him; it keeps the conscience alive and the heart happy.

THE OLIVE TREE.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

"Contrary to Nature."

GOD'S sovereignty may be looked at in several ways. You may think of it as connected with election and predestination, linking our thoughts with the ages past, before this earth was made, and with the ages yet to come, when this earth shall have ceased to be.

You may look at it in relation to our responsibility as Christians in this life, as seen in 1 Peter 1. 2, where we are elected "*UNTO obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*," and in which we can make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1. 10), just as God in His sovereign choice and wisdom has elected that man shall maintain his natural life by eating, and men make that election and calling sure by partaking of three or four meals in the day.

You may also look at sovereignty in relation to God's governmental dealings in this world with a view to man's spiritual blessing. Our present subject falls under this head.

What, then, is meant by the Olive Tree in Rom. 11. ? It is evidently a system, designed of God, upon earth, in which man can find Divine blessing. This was seen in its beginnings in Abraham. Just as a tree must spring from a small beginning, say an oak from an acorn, and in course of time grow and its roots take firm hold of the soil, and the trunk develop in height, girth, shooting out branches and they in their turn smaller branches, and then twigs and leaves, before you can talk of a tree, so God began with an individual.

Up to Abraham's time God had dealt with individuals in blessing and left them as individuals, such as Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, and the like. But in Abraham God made a new beginning. Abraham was called out, and ever since his day "calling" has been the principle of God's dealings with men.

As we have seen in a previous paper, God in sovereignty chose Isaac and not Ishmael, and Jacob and not Esau.

The root of the Olive Tree lay in God's gracious working with Abraham,* and by the time we get to Jacob's descendants, we find the tree beginning to grow. There were twelve patriarchs, who had some knowledge of God, and by-and-by the branches and twigs and leaves are seen as a mighty nation was redeemed out of Egypt, the males twenty years old and upward numbering 603,550 men.

Where, then, was the advantage that Israel had ? "Much every way," says the Apostle Paul, "chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3. 2).

Some responded and believed, but those who did not respond could not make the faith of God of none effect through their unbelief. They were connected with the Olive Tree, whether they responded or not.

But the day came when the nation led by their responsible rulers rejected Christ. It was Christ who alone could give character and blessing to the Olive Tree. There could be no blessing apart from Him. The dealings with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the Children of Israel were all on the ground that Christ was coming ; and when He came they rejected Him.

Then God's sovereign way in government passed from Israel, and the way was opened up for the Gentiles to come into blessing. No longer was there any blessing in Judaism. In former days, it was true, as the Lord said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4. 22), but now if a Jew wants salvation He must turn his back on Judaism, and find salvation in Christ ; but the moment he is blessed he is added to the church. This was true of the remnant of Israel, of whom Paul speaks in this chapter.

* This is seen in full perspective in Gal. 3. 8 ; "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed."

Gentiles had come into the sphere of blessing through faith ; they had been grafted into the true Olive Tree on this principle. Abraham was the root of it, for he was the father of all that believed. The Jews had lost the place of favour through unbelief, and only by faith can Gentiles continue to hold it.

This place of favour is very real ; for instance, who can deny the marvellous privilege of children being brought up in a Christian home ? Look at the difference between a child in a Christian home and a child brought up in heathen darkness with fetishes and idols and witch doctors and plurality of wives and the like, in the heart of Africa.

But Rom. II. gives us one of the daring imageries of Scripture when we are told that the natural branches (Judaism) have been broken off because of unbelief, and Paul, exulting that he has been called to be the apostle of the Gentiles, rejoices that the wild olive tree (the Gentiles) has been grafted into the Olive Tree. But in nature the graft is good and the root is wild. The sapling is a crab apple, as we say—wild and sour, and the fruit small ; the gardener grafts in, say, a Cox's orange pippin, or a russet strain, and lo ! a cultivated apple, large and sweet, is produced ; but here the graft is wild and the root cultivated—"contrary to nature," as the apostle is careful to point out. Hence the branches do not bear the root, but the root bears the branches, and the only thing that will cause the branches to abide and prosper is *belief*.

And so to-day, the casting off of the Jews religiously, though blessing is offered the Jew freely, but not on the old ground of Judaism, is the reconciling of the world ; but the day will come when the natural branches shall be grafted in again. The promises to Abraham are all to be fulfilled in CHRIST. The Jews, purified by the great tribulation, will behold their Messiah, whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him as a man mourns for his only son, as the result of receiving the spirit of grace and supplication,

and they will then keep the feast of atonement truly for the first time since the day of Calvary (see Zech. 12.). When the day for the receiving of Israel again arrives, it will mean nothing short of "life from the dead." Then will be fulfilled the vision of the valley of dry bones (see Ezekiel 37.), and this glorious millennial reign of Christ—the golden age at last for a weary, weeping world—shall come.

Meanwhile the Olive Tree is connected now with Christ and Christianity, and not with Judaism as in olden times, nor in Christ and Israel as in a coming day. No wonder as the apostle with vigorous and graphic pen reviews God's sovereignty in government, he bursts 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 ! 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 unto Him again ? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen " (Rom II. 33-36).

Our exercise should be that being by God's sovereign grace branches in the Olive Tree of privilege and opportunity, we should draw from the root in *faith* and exercise, and thus in truth be receiving the full benefit of such a position. We have no claim to it—sovereignty has put us there, wild olive tree of the Gentiles as we were, but if we do not respond in faith the day must come when God's government must cut us off, as it once did to Israel because of their unbelief.

Does not the rush of incoming apostasy tell of that time, when the true church, caught up to glory at the second coming of Christ, will leave the present profession of Christianity empty and devoid of the presence of the Spirit, to completely turn its back upon God and welcome the one coming in his own name (John 5. 43), the anti-christ ? The signs to-day are ominous indeed.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter I—continued.

(G. J. STEWART.)

IN the Old Testament, where the doctrine of substitution is taught typically, God accepted the life blood of an innocent creature for a guilty one. This could never put away sins. But now, marvel of marvels! He who is the Creator, stoops to die for the creature and so make purgation for sins. Dead works are of no use here, we need purgation from them. Purgatorial fires may consume, they cannot cleanse. There is no other purgatory but Christ's precious blood. Nor does it say here "our" sins, the thought is larger. Happy the people who by faith can put in the word "our," the man who can say "my" sins. This is the privilege of the partakers of the heavenly calling.

The witness of this purgation must be upon the throne of God; its aspect is toward the universe! This is indicated in Lev. 16. 14. We do not find blood, the witness of atonement made, put upon the Mercy-seat—the figure of the throne of God, until this passage. It was again and again put upon the horns of the brazen altar; sprinkled before the door of the tabernacle; before the veil; once a year put upon the horns of the golden altar, but not till now upon the throne. Possibly the reason of this is, that at this time the priesthood had failed as well as the people; and propitiation must now bring a people nearer to God, as well as extend the sphere of its efficacy.

It would thus indicate the opening of the holiest for a people brought into an irrefragable relationship with God; a priesthood that should never fail. For this atonement is witnessed upon the throne, and its efficacy extends to all things over which that throne has sway.

But it is not only *by* Himself that purgation is made, it is also for Himself (not for sins, for He had none, but)

for His own glory. This is suggested by the word used which has a reflective force. Though all things are His by title of creation, and as the appointed Heir, yet He will not take them up in administration until He has cleansed them from the stains of sins. He cannot take over a sin-stained inheritance, and therefore He tastes death for all things for His own glory. This is typified in the law, where almost all things are purged by blood. Therefore by God's grace, by Himself and for His own glory, He tasted death for everything, so making purgation. Blessed be His Name!

Then, as Himself the witness of atonement made,

HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT
HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON
HIGH.

This is His own act. By right and title He takes a seat where no creature ever sat or will sit, a full proof of His Godhead. Yet as Man He takes that seat; MAN who has accomplished redemption! The priest of old, on the day of atonement, went into the holiest, and from the west side of that which figured the throne, sprinkled the blood upon it. Moses could at all times enter the holiest, and from between the cherubim hold communion with God. But neither of them *touched* the throne. No angel ever sat on God's throne, nor did more than encircle it in adoration of Him whose seat it was. Though Satan, the chief of God's handiwork may have aspired to the place in the pride of his heart which lifted him up, yet he fell prone in the attempt; it was his condemnation.

The blessed Man, Christ Jesus, having made atonement, passes up through all the heavens, and takes His seat unchallenged above them all upon the Throne which proclaims Him God. His Name, also, the Son, the Word

proclaims Him God. His place superior to that of angels; His Name more excellent than they. This Name, His by inheritance eternally, He obtained also as a Man here, obedient unto death. Angels dispute it not. Eternally the Son, all the angels of God worship Him at His birth on earth. Taking His seat on high, all bow low before Him there. God by Him will fill all things in heaven and earth with blessing.

"The Lord God will do nothing, but He will show it unto His servants the prophets," and this is as yet the subject of testimony only. But heavenly blessing is now being dispensed, and opened ears and willing hearts receive this blessing from the Son to-day, and led by faith in Him, enter the Holy places which He has opened for them to fill His ear with praise.

All this was calculated to arrest and lead out the believing remnant from Judaism, which was ordained by angels, into the better thing which God hath prepared by His Son for the partakers of the heavenly calling. In this chapter Christ is viewed as the Apostle of our confession,

THE SENT ONE.

Sent from God, He displays God in His **APPROACH** to man, hence all the glories that surround Him here. Without this there could have been no **APPROACH TO GOD**. He brings the light of God to bear upon everything so that all may appear as they are before God. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me should not abide in darkness. He that followeth Me . . . shall have the light of the life." Every glory that shone from Christ the Son was a ray of light from God, and the whole, blended in one, constitutes the Light which is the Life.

The Light brought out all that man is, penetrating into all the hidden recesses of the heart; at the same time the Life told out all that God is, God so revealed, divinely suiting man so exposed. In only one other way could

God have approached that man; that way is as Judge; then all would have been over, man would never have been able to approach God.

The sent One of God is a blessed title. It was as such He opened blind eyes, as the pool of Siloam witnesses. The poor of the flock, by many such signs, certainly knew that He was the sent One of God—the Apostle.

Many passages from the Old Testament are now cited to show the superiority of the Messiah over angels; they bring out His Personal, moral, and eternal glories.

In verse 2 Messiah is presented as Son-Eternal, in whom God has spoken to us, by whom He made the worlds. In verses 5 and 6 He is presented as

SON, BORN IN TIME.

"Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. 2. 7). "To-day" is a note of time. As such He is higher than angels, though for a little while He became inferior, as to position, to them. Three Scriptures are cited here, which speak of Messiah, born on earth and for earthly glory—King of kings.

To none of the angels, even the highest, did God say at any time—and their creation possibly marks the beginning of time—"Thou art My Son." Yet that is how Messiah is saluted in Ps. 2. The kings and rulers of the earth had taken counsel against Him, but God's decree is also declared and it must stand. He had anointed His King upon His holy hill of Zion. All should bow to Him, kings, rulers, the heathen, and the people of Israel.

No one but He who is eternally Son could be born Son upon earth. The eternal Son, with a "Lo! I come," inhabited the body prepared for Him by God. In grace He became inferior to angels positionally, though at all times personally and in relationship infinitely superior; it is only as Messiah and that by grace there is any comparison. This the angels themselves joyfully acknowledged, and they ministered to Him.

Acts 13. 33 shows this verse refers to Him as born in time and not in resurrection. God raised Him up as a Saviour, just as in verse 22 David was raised up to be a king. Now David was not raised again after death, but saw corruption. Christ saw no corruption, and verse 34 is cited to prove this: "I will give you the sure mercies of David."

These two things are important: (1) That none but He who was eternally Son, could, as He, be called the Son on earth; (2) That Messiah is thus owned God's Son.

The peculiar character of this, His relationship as Son here on earth, is shown in that He ever was, as such,

SON, CHARACTERISTICALLY.

"I will be to Him for Father, and He shall be to me for Son," proves this. It is cited from 2 Sam. 7. 14, and is God's promise to David's Son, Messiah. It shows the moral upholding of the relationship of Father and Son. Other Scriptures illustrate this. Ps. 89. speaks of God's faithfulness to His covenant with David (verses 3 and 4), and in referring to Messiah (verse 26) says, "He shall call unto Me, Thou art My Father." It is a question of the relationship being rightly owned and fulfilled. David also, in his prayer (1 Chron. 17. 24) says, "Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel, is a God to Israel." His being a God to Israel is practical and dependent upon their being morally and characteristically His people. In the New Testament we have also, "Come out from among them . . . and I will be a Father to you" (2 Cor. 6. 17). God is always the Father of true believers to-day, but His acting as a Father to them is contingent upon their morally answering to the relationship of His sons and daughters. Christ ever did that. He is the eternal Son, and being born Son, was ever characteristically Son. Never could it be said that an act or thought was unworthy of the Father. "I do always those things that please Him." The glory as of the only begotten Son

with the Father, was ever there. Again, He is presented as the first born

SON IN RESURRECTION.

"When He bringeth the first-begotten into the habitable earth He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Ps. 97. 7). Here Messiah is just about to return to the habitable earth, and all who serve graven images and worship idols shall be confounded; while all who might be worshipped for God amongst men, as angels, are called upon to worship Him.

The question is raised as to the position of the word "again." Is it only another citation from Scripture, as in verse 5, or does it refer to His being brought again into the habitable earth? The Psalm from which it is cited seems to prove the latter. The order of the Scripture here in Heb. 1. seems also to prove it. He who is the Son, eternal Son, born in time, Son characteristically, is also Son in resurrection. He enters as such eventually upon His earthly glory, when God "will make Him His first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."

But the question in all these Scriptures is more the glory of His Person, His superiority to angels, than one of time; and this is true always. It was certainly shown at His first coming into the habitable earth: "Suddenly there appeared unto the shepherds a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God." How many is not mentioned, but this citation would show it was all the angels of God. A wonderful sight!

To this is objected that He was not firstborn then, nor until He was raised from the dead. But all the titles of Christ were true of Him personally when He became a Man, though He did not officially enter upon some till He was raised from the dead. Even that of King of kings was His, though He did not take it up for the same reason. That Christ was firstborn by pre-eminence was always true.

NOTES AND INCIDENTS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

FORGIVENESS.

[HEARD of a Christian man who was dying and not happy. The cause of the unhappiness was that for years he had nursed unkind feelings towards a fellow Christian. Some quarrel had happened between them, and neither had had the grace to forgive the other. Conscious that he was soon to be in the presence of the Lord, he sent for the brother, and confessing his hard feelings besought his forgiveness, and at the bedside of the dying man these two, long divided in heart, were reconciled, and with the reconciliation returned the joy of the Lord's approval and of happy, holy fellowship with each other. It is probable that the lack of joy and freshness in many Christian lives, and much of the futile energy put forth in service, can be traced to the same sort of spirit that had robbed these two of joy for years. It is a matter about which every Christian heart should be exercised, for the fact is, *we are not in communion with the Lord if we nurse an unforgiving spirit*. If I have hard feelings on my heart against any saint on earth, I am out of communion with the Lord, no matter how great my zeal may be in His service, or extensive my knowledge of His truth. And the things of God cannot prosper in the hands of anyone who is out of communion with the Lord. The deadness in many companies of Christians may be traced to this same cause; roots of bitterness have been allowed to develop and bear their horrid fruit, and what is of Christ has languished and died. Ecclesiastical correctness will not compensate for this. God looks at the heart, and to be externally right and inwardly wrong is an abomination to Him.

Forgiveness is the very genius and spirit of Christianity. It is the way that God met us at first. He forgave us for Christ's sake. We could not have been in His presence at all, and certainly could not have been happy

there on any other ground, but if we do not forgive one another we cannot have the joy of the place grace has given us even though we cannot lose the place. And Christ has forgiven us, and as He has forgiven us we are to forgive one another (Colossians 3. 13). Think of the measure of His forgiveness, He has not only pardoned all our sin and enmity against Himself, but *He has made us members of His body*; this is the measure and character of His forgiveness, and this is the force of the passage in Colossians 3. He can have nothing against us for ever since we are members of His body, for how could the head of a body maintain a quarrel with or have hard feelings against any member of it? How intimate is our relationship with Him, it could not be closer, for we are part of Himself; this could not have been had not all our transgressions been forgiven and all distance and reserve removed. But equally so are we members one of another, and to be unforgiving, impatient and hard toward one another is to deny in practice the whole truth of the body of Christ. To be unforgiving disturbs everything, throws everything out of gear, hinders all joy and progress, grieves the Holy Spirit, dishonours the Lord and delights the devil.

SINS REMEMBERED NO MORE.

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10. 17).

That neither says nor means that God forgets them. This is often said and sung, but the notion springs from loose and shallow thinking and not from the Word of God. It would be no comfort to us to know that our sins and iniquities were merely forgotten, especially when we cannot forget them ourselves. To illustrate. Suppose I contracted a debt and could not pay, and my creditor ceased to make his just demand because he had forgotten all about it. That would bring no

comfort to me, for if the debt had gone from his mind it had not gone from my conscience, and every time I saw him the memory of it would be revived, and some day, having merely forgotten it, he might remember it again and renew his just claim.

But suppose, on the other hand, at regular intervals the demand is made; month by month, because the claim has not been met, it is remembered against me and renewed. But at last to my joy and relief another steps in and takes up my liability and answers for it, completely satisfying my creditor about it all. The demand is no more made on me. The months come and go as before, but the claim troubles me no more. It is not remembered against me or sent in to me again. It is not forgotten, the record of it is still in the creditor's ledger, but it is there as a cancelled debt; it is blotted out as a debt, for full payment has met the obligation, the creditor is satisfied and I am free. It is this that has happened in the case of all who believe; *One Sacrifice* made by the one glorious Man who could make it has been made for sins. And by that one sacrifice He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The sins are remitted, which is very different from being forgotten, and no more offering is

needed, for they are never to be remembered again, that is, no demand as to them will ever be, or can ever be, made in regard to them against us. What rest of heart this gives to us in the presence of God; indeed, we could not be in His presence without it; but the knowledge of it gives us the full assurance of faith which is necessary if we are to take up our title to enter the Holiest—God's own presence. We have yet to learn the vastness of our debt, and this God will show us so that in His eternal glory we may have a just appreciation of the Sacrifice that has met it, and annulled it, and the love that provided the sacrifice with this end in view.

In the old dispensation sins were remembered yearly, and a yearly sacrifice was brought to meet the yearly demand. Those sacrifices were miserably inefficient, and so the question of sins was a perpetual question; it could never be swept out of the way. All is different now; the offering of the body of Jesus Christ is enough; the question of sins is to be no more raised by God against us. It is for ever behind His back, and we are before His face in all the efficacy of the sacrifice that has cleared us, and He is before our faces in all the grace that planned it all.

A GOOD WORK.

(A. G. KNOX.)

I HAVE been considering 1 Timothy 3., especially the first verse, "He that desireth oversight desireth a good work." Young's Concordance places the word used here in the same category as good in "the good Shepherd" (John 10.). In both cases the meaning is given as "beautiful." He is the beautiful Shepherd, and the work of the under shepherds must take character from Him, it is a beautiful work. Everywhere and anyhow that we view Him as the Shepherd He is beautiful, like a precious gem, skilfully cut, from every side flashing its beauty in the sunlight, so is the work of overseeing—of caring for Christ's flock. It is a

beautiful work. But it is a very humble, insignificant office, in fact it is no office at all, but diligent, laborious, heart-testing, strength-testing work, calling for endurance that only Divine love can make possible. It is the love of Christ Himself active in the one who takes it up in service to His loved ones, and He offers at the end a crown of glory to those who place themselves at His disposal for this service now. Living contact with Christ is everything, and as we are kept near to Him we are ready to lose our lives for His sake, and lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3. 16).

(From a letter.)

"YE ARE CHRIST'S."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"YE are Christ's" (1 Corinthians 3. 23). These three words will be enough for my purpose at this time. I invite you to dismiss from your minds all popular notions as to what our relations with Christ are, for the more popular the notion is the more likely it is to be false, and come back to the clear, unmistakable words of Scripture. They are not Christ is yours, but "Ye are Christ's." I am not aware of any passage in the New Testament that says Christ is yours. We are His possession; His claims are absolute; He is Lord; this is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Many things are ours; before we reach this arresting statement, we are told, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours," and popular Christianity would crown this glorious heritage by saying, "And best of all Christ is yours." But the Scripture does not say that at all. What it says is, "YE ARE CHRIST'S, and Christ is God's." Just as Christ was and is and ever will be altogether at God's disposal, the willing Servant of His good pleasure, so are we to be at Christ's disposal, to be pleasurable to Him both now and for ever.

There is a great deal of unhealthy sentiment, I had almost said unholy sentiment, expressed in hymns often sung in modern "revival" and other gatherings, about Christ being ours. This sentiment is the product of a religion that has self for its centre and object, and one's own blessing and happiness and feelings and experiences and doings as its sole concern, instead of Christ and His rights; and these hymns and the sentiment behind them help to perpetuate a worldly, selfish, emasculated Christianity that the apostles knew not. From it may the Lord deliver us and bring us back by

a gracious revival to the fact that we are Christ's, and to what that great fact means. We did not choose Him, but He chose us; we did not buy Him, but He bought us, and great was the price that He paid; and since He chose us and bought us we must belong to Him—spirit, soul and body. Yes, body as well as spirit and soul. It is this that is emphasized later in the epistle when the apostle, full of surprise that his Corinthian converts were forgetting it and of indignation at the conduct that resulted from their forgetfulness, urges, "What, know ye not that your body is 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 bodies, which are God's" (Chap. 6. 19, 20, N.T.). Our bodies belong to God because they are Christ's and Christ is God's. Not only purchased but taken possession of—purchased by blood and possessed by the Holy Ghost. What else could be true but this, "Ye are Christ's"?

There was no selfish challenge to this great fact when first the apostles proclaimed that God had made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ. So real was it to those who yielded themselves to Him that they put all they possessed at His feet; they kept nothing back: lands, houses, everything belonged to Him if they were His; and without delay or regret they surrendered all to the disposal of their Lord. Was that because they were a generous and large-hearted people? Not likely; they were Jews. It was because they wholly recognized the claims of Christ. Nor was the truth less effectual amongst the Gentiles who believed, for the churches of Macedonia, though in great poverty, first gave their own selves to the Lord and then placed what else they had at His command. So it is recorded for us in 2 Corinthians 8.

The Christians at Corinth had not

fully owned this fact. It is probable that they boasted that Christ was theirs. It seems certain that they did, for they were taking the benefits and gifts that they had received because they were Christ's and using them for self-exaltation. They were laying hold of these benefits and saying they are ours, and they were puffed up thereby, and producing all kinds of strife, and envy, and ill-blood where peace and love should have held sway. They were reigning as kings, these people who could boast that Christ was theirs, while Paul and his fellow-apostles, men who fully owned that they were Christ's, were the offscouring of all things, for so we learn from chapter 4. of this epistle; they could not reign where Christ was crucified, they must be as their Lord.

The sort of Christianity that the Corinthians showed is the sort that is popular to-day, and just as they needed to have the truth pressed upon them that they were Christ's, so do we. There can be no advance in grace and truth, no walking and growth in the Spirit apart from this. "Ye are Christ's" must gain its proper ascendancy in our lives if we are to be what the Scripture shows us that Christians really are.

Now before proceeding to speak of the blessedness of this fact, it is not my intention to take from anyone any definite blessing or joy that they may have derived from thinking of Jesus as theirs. There is a certain measure of truth in that side of things; the trouble is that it is forced wholly out of its place to the detriment of souls. It is true that the Lord Jesus has placed Himself at our disposal. All the grace and love that fills His heart flows out without limit for us, in that sense He may be said to be ours; but was there ever a Christian who really got the benefit of these things apart from owning the claims of the Lord? It is only as we are owning that we are Christ's that we can be in the joy of what He is to us. We rejoice to speak

of Him as our Saviour. Yes, but what did He save us for? That we might belong to Him, "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"—that we might be His peculiar treasure. We rejoice to speak of Him as *our* Lord; but that means not that He belongs to us, but that we belong to Him; it is not our claiming Him, but our owning His claims over us. We delight in the fact that "The Lord is my Shepherd." True, but does the Shepherd belong to the sheep or the sheep to the Shepherd? His own account of this blessed relationship is very definite. "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . I am the good Shepherd and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. . . . My sheep hear My voice . . . neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. . . . My Father gave them Me." There is no part of Scripture that emphasizes the great fact that we are Christ's more than John 10., and, oh, the preciousness of it! *We are His* because of the great love that fills His heart for us, love that has flowed forth and proved itself by His death for us. He gave Himself that He might possess us for Himself for ever without a rival. *We are His* because His Father gave us to Him, and we are more precious to Him because of this than thrones and kingdoms; we are the Father's love gift to His well-beloved Son. *We are His* because He can keep us. He can hold us against the threatenings of every hostile power. In His right hand dwells omnipotence, and in that hand we are, for we are His. The sheep belong to the Shepherd. "Ye are Christ's."

We may begin, and often do, like the bride in Canticles who sang in her new-found joy, "My beloved is mine, and I am His," but if we advance in the knowledge of the Lord we shall speedily change our song as she did, and rejoice with a greater joy to sing,

"I am my beloved's, and His desire is toward me." The first is a sort of half truth in which self has a place of prominence, the last is the whole truth, in which Christ is all. There the heart loses sight of all but the greatness and tenderness of Him who has been spoken of in poetical language as "this tremendous Lover." Then it is realized that the only response to love such as His is to yield ourselves to Him, and it becomes the joy of life to own that we are His.

This means much to Him; if we would know how much we must measure the travail of His soul when He gave Himself to save us, and as we endeavour to do that which is impossible, we must remember that His joy in possessing us will compensate Him fully and for ever for all that He has suffered to make us His. But consider the Lord's intercession on behalf of His own in John 17. He is speaking to His Father. In that full and blessed communion that ever existed between the Father in heaven and the beloved Son upon earth, He makes

requests for His own. Hear Him say, "the men Thou gavest me out of the world; Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me." "I pray for them which Thou gavest me; for they are Thine, and all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine. . . . Keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me." When He spoke to His disciples, He could not tell them all; He was straitened and restricted, but here what was in His heart could flow out without any reserve, and could anything affect us more deeply? Could we possibly listen to that wonderful prayer and not gladly and fully own that we are Christ's indeed? His because His Father gave us to Him, His because He bought us with a great price, His because possessed on His behalf by the Holy Ghost. Yes, the truth, the whole truth is this, "Ye are Christ's." Much is involved in it of which I cannot speak now; the fact itself is enough for the time being. Let it fix itself in our hearts and minds, and produce in our lives its own true and blessed fruit.

CONFIDENCE AND REST.

"WHAT pleases Thee, Lord, pleases me" is a grand motto for rest and peace and quiet, and for the stopping of all repining about what we have not got.

You would not be easily startled by events if you saw all that you have in Christ to enable you to meet everything calmly.

I judge that it is a blessed thing to own God in everything and be still. "I was dumb; Thou didst it," said David. There is rest in this—giving to God His own place.

If we knew the heart of God we would never question any of His dealings with us, nor should we ever desire His hand lifted off us till we had learnt all He would teach us.

A PRAYER.

"O GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; Give us seriously to lay to heart the great danger we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that as there is but one body, and one Spirit, and

one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and love, and may with one mind and mouth glorify Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen."

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD.

HE is Lord of all, as He is the agent in the creation of all; and exists as the radiance of the uncreated splendour, and the exact impress of the Father's substance. The universe which He has created He sustains and controls by His omnipotent word; and to the oblation which He presented to God, since it was by Himself, He imparted an infinite worthiness. Hence upon its completion, He assumes His place on the right hand of the Eternal Majesty. In His mediatorial Kingdom He is far exalted above the angels, for His pre-existent nature and hereditary dignity exceeds theirs. The source of this dignity is His Sonship; which is not to be understood as descriptive of office or rank, but of nature; He from the beginning having been begotten of the Father; and so transcendent was the glory of this filial relation, that even in His condition of lowest abasement it procured the homage of angels.

The Son is the true God, seated on a throne of Divine perpetuity, and maintaining a moral government of matchless and inflexible rectitude. Thus, and with especial respect to His immaculate purity, is He designated to the works and triumphs of the Mediatorship. Himself immutable and eternal, He must remain in peerless majesty when the material universe has passed away for ever (Summary of Hebrews 1.).

When the Evangelist (John) would affirm the perfect and eternal intimacy and union between the glorious Persons of the Godhead, and the unspeakable and infinite endearment of our Lord to the Father; when he would convey the loftiest possible idea of the majesty of evangelical truth; when he would impress the minds of his readers with a deep sense at once of the inscrutableness of the Divine nature and the certainty and perfection of the manifestations of God in Christ, he declares—"No man—*nemo*, no being of created

mould—hath seen God at any time; the ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, which is in—exists in—the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." When again He would exalt to the utmost the glory of the WORD in flesh, he styles it "the glory as of the ONLY-BEGOTTEN from the Father." When he would illustrate the benevolence of God with the highest splendour, he says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through Him." And, finally, when our Lord would represent unbelief as the last extreme of human guilt, and as anticipating the judgment of a future world, He finds no stronger argument than that conveyed in this appellation. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD."

"While He yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matthew 17. 5). The designation in this passage is one of strong emphasis: "My Son, [even] the beloved." To increase its significance, there is annexed a yet further expression of the Divine regard, "in whom I am well pleased—I greatly delight." Who then is the Person to whom this testimony is applicable? Who is He that in the presence of Moses, the most venerable of sages—of Elias, the most illustrious of prophets—of the most eminent of the apostles, is yet distinguished above them all, as the Son, the Beloved, and respecting whom the Father, to express His complacency, thus employs the strongest terms? It is even He who is in the bosom of the Father, and who could say in a sense altogether singular, "Thou lovedest Me before the foundation of the world."

The Apostle Peter in his commentary on the transfiguration attributes the honour put upon our Lord specially to GOD THE FATHER. The use of this designation of itself teaches us the existence of a person properly Divine, to whom the title "Son" is applicable. The nature of human language renders such a conclusion inevitable. When we employ a proper name with the annex of *the father*, it invariably suggests the idea of one bearing the same name to whom the correlative *son* belongs. It was *as God the Father* that the first Person of the

Trinity gave this special testimony. "Our Lord" received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—the Divine Father's witness to the glory of the Divine Son. As truly as the first Person of the Trinity is the Father, the second is the Son. In the same sense in which one is Father the other is Son. It is God the Father who testifies; it is God the Son to whom the testimony is borne.—

(Treffrey).

COMPENSATION.

"He woundeth, and his hands make whole" (Job 5. 18).

Dear Lord, I thankfully kiss the hand
That gently stripped me bare,
And laid me on Thy tender breast,
To lose my sorrow there.

'Twas anguish when earth's cup was spilled,
But now with Thee 'tis overfilled;
For, Jesus, Thou art MORE to me
Than all earth's brimming cups could be.

I AM glad that you can have a sympathy greater than I could render, from Him who not only supports you under the suffering but raises the sufferer to His own side, to His own company. This to me is the force of "For such an high priest became us . . . made higher than the heavens." He lifts me to Himself. His arm comes down to me, but it lifts me up to Himself.

Death threatens all ties when it rudely breaks one, and that one of the dearest; but this is the moment for you to find a light in the darkness, and to know the companionship of the Man of sorrows.

You hide your head in sorrow, the whole sky is darkened . . . yet this is the moment for your heart to find in Jesus a resource and satisfaction never known before. . . . No one else can come near enough to you. The dignity of sorrow forbids the intrusion of any but the One who can truly sympathize.

The horror of great darkness is the

gateway into the most blessed unfoldings of His love.

The Lord lead you to see how much He values your heart. "My son, give me thine heart"; and the heart occupied with Christ commands every blessing from God, as it is said, "Because ye have loved me."

He is a great giver, and if He hides His hand from giving to-day, to-morrow He oft gives two-fold.

He is enough for us were the path ten thousand times more sad and difficult.

He that made all things, and upholds all things, is equal to, and a match for, any and every contingency that can befall any between Calvary and the cloud of glory.

"Our Jesus hath done all things well" has long been our song. And so it must be, whatever we may feel; for if the Father of an only-begotten Son settles everything for us which is for the glory of that Son, surely all is well.

CAN "THE HIGHER CRITICS" BE TRUSTED?

(JAMES BOYD.)

THE WISDOM OF THE WISE.

THE student of Scripture should ever keep in mind that, by means of the revelation God has been pleased to give to us, His intention has been to "destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (Isa. 29. 14; 1 Cor. 1. 19), and that He has done this every spiritual person will willingly admit. Not only are the learned in Christendom (with a few brilliant exceptions) totally ignorant of the *spiritual import* of the Word of God, but also of the text itself; and this I hope to show before I finish with the subject I have on hand.

That which is called "Higher Criticism" is, I doubt not, an effort of the enemy to deprive the saints of the great inheritance given to them in the grace of God. If I have to take only that which these men give me as the holy verities of God, and throw the remainder on the dunghill, I shall not have much left to build me up in the knowledge of God, and that which they have left me I have only on their authority, and by what means are they going to authenticate as His Word the moiety that remains? "Knowing of Whom thou hast learned" (2 Tim. 3. 14); but I do not know these men. I know the Apostles and Prophets, for their words are words of life. But I do not know these professors and doctors of divinity, and I refuse to follow them into regions with which I am utterly unacquainted. They have a show of learning, but that makes me only the more shy of them, for the men called out of this world by the preaching of the Apostles were not the learned, the wise, the philosophic, the noble; but rather the poor, the weak, the ignoble, the despised, the base, that the pride of the creature might be humbled, and that no flesh should lift a haughty head or boastful voice in the presence of God, but that every one that boasts should

boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1. 18-31). Our Lord had to say to the Father: "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" (Matt. 11. 25, 26). These babes that our Lord speaks of were most of them poor fishermen, who in their preachings were seen to be unlettered and uneducated men; but the wisdom and the Spirit by which they spoke were irresistible, and their enemies could do nothing but resort to violence to stop the victorious career of their powerful words.

THE SCRIPTURES USELESS.

Now if what these critics tell us be true, the Bible is of no use to the unlearned, to whom, as we see, it has a very special mission. How are they to know what books are mere compilations of folklore and philosophic dreamers, interspersed with a little bit of truth? The record of the lives of the Patriarchs is, we are told, an ideal, rather than an actual, picture of human life at that period. So, perhaps, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had never existence! Perhaps this is true also of the God of those three men! If we could only swallow the first, we might not wamble at the second. We are informed that the religion of Israel derived many of its elements from the primitive religion of the Semites, and was largely influenced in its development by the faiths with which it came in contact in the course of its history. How do I know that this is true? The Scripture tells me that the law was given by Moses, and in all its sacrificial and ceremonial economy we have "Jehovah said unto Moses." And are we to learn from these critics that the whole thing is a perfect farce, for if there is a bit of truth mixed with it, it is only by that mixture made the greater deception?

But we must prepare ourselves for

the marvellous, for one of these men tells us that "The Old Testament forms an integral part of the Bible. It was placed in the hands of the Christian Church by its Founder and His apostles as the record of God's revelation of Himself to His chosen people, and the manifold preparation for His own coming; as the source from which instruction in conduct was to be derived, and as the means by which spiritual life was to be fed. We cannot, therefore, treat it as any other book: it is sacred ground; reverence is demanded of us as we approach it." So far, so good! But that is not all, for the doctor goes on to say: "But it is no true reverence which would exempt it from the fullest examination by all legitimate methods of criticism."

Is there, then, some legitimate method by which criticism can be applied to a Book placed in our hands by God as a revelation of Himself? We get the Book put into our hands by Himself as a revelation of His mind and will, without one single hint in any of its pages that there are things in it, and a very large number of things, that are the mere imagination of the fallen creature, over whose mind the darkness in which he is by nature, and the devil who works in and by that darkness, has full power, but, as I have said, not a hint that there are pages of the book devoted to the drivel of the corrupt and apostate renegade; and having got the Book we have to sit down, and by the power of our own natural minds distinguish between the panacea and the poison, between that which is of Himself and that which is of the corrupt mind of man, between the atmosphere of the highest heaven and the smoke from the abyss of evil—But the living God has not given to His people such a wretched hotchpotch of fact and fable, of truth and error. By such a mixture were our first parents overthrown in Eden, and by such a mixture does he hold the souls of men under his power to-day.

To receive the Book from God's hand

as a revelation of Himself, and having received it, to sit down to see what part of it we are to believe and what part reject, is the most wicked presumption of which any creature can be guilty. If He has given it to us we may be certain that it is divinely perfect, and that it is to be received with holy reverence and thankfulness, being perfectly persuaded that by its words we shall be able to keep ourselves from the paths of the destroyer (Psa. 17. 4). Only a devil incarnate would give to the public a book of instruction regarding the food they should eat and the medicine they should use in order to promote good health, with the half of it commending that which was deadly poison. In the very Book that this learned doctor calls a revelation from God, and which He has put into our hands, the warning is given that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21. 8), and yet He who caused this warning to be given has, according to these doctors of divinity, foisted a Book upon us that "Textual criticism declares the text to be seriously corrupt." They say: "We must distinguish its temporary, imperfect elements. Our Lord Himself taught us to do so." Where He has taught us this we are left to guess.

THE BIBLE'S INERRANCY.

We are told that the inerrancy of Scripture "Is a principle which is nowhere asserted or claimed in Scripture itself." If holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1. 21), most of us who believe that it is impossible that God should lie (Titus 1. 2) would consider this fact sufficient to establish the veracity of Scripture. Have not the Prophets said: "Hear ye the word of the Lord?" And has not our Lord said that Moses wrote of Him, and that had the Jews believed Moses they would have also believed Him, "but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" Evidently He assumed that they ought to have had no difficulty in recognizing his

writings. Perhaps the "Higher Critics" of those days, who were, I suppose, the Sadducees, had disentangled for the people the folklore from the fact! Paul speaks of things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, things that God hath prepared for them that love Him; and of these things, he says: "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." And then as to their communication to others, he says: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And, again: "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 2. 9-13; 14. 37). The Lord Himself, His apostles, and all His prophets, use the Scriptures as the only court of appeal regarding all questions that bear any relation to divine things. A single passage from the inspired volume settled every question that could possibly arise. The Scriptures were neither to be added to, nor taken from. The Thessalonians received the Gospel preached by Paul, who says: "Not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2. 13), and for this he gave thanks to God. There is not a single hint given by either our Lord or His apostles that there might be error in the text. A Book such as these critics tell us the Bible is would never here been put into the hand of any man by the living God. I know Him well enough to be able to say that with the utmost confidence. I will say more than that: I will say that I know Him sufficiently to affirm, that if He has given us this Book as a revelation of the purposes and counsels of His love, His ways with His rebel creature, His government of the world, the way He has taken to bring to pass His eternal counsels, He would not have allowed it to be corrupted by the drivellings of the human mind wandering in the fogs and mists of its abandonment of Himself, but would have

watched over it with infinite solicitude, and would have preserved it from the defiling slaver of the old serpent.

INSPIRATION.

I quote from one of these critics; it is of no importance from whom, as I have not the writings of any special person under examination: "The Christian (?) critic starts with the belief that the Bible contains a revelation of God, and that its writers are inspired; his object is not to deny the revelation or the inspiration, but to ascertain, as far as possible, the conditions under which the revelation was made, the stages through which it passed, and the character and limits of the inspiration which guided the human agents through whom the revelation was made, or who recorded its successive stages. By inspiration I suppose we may understand a divine afflatus which, without superseding or suppressing the human faculties, but rather using them as its instruments, and so conferring upon Scripture its remarkable manifoldness and variety, enabled holy men of old to apprehend, and declare in different degrees, and in accordance with the needs and circumstances of particular ages or occasions, the mind and purpose of God."

Again: "It is our duty to recognize this (the human element), its character and extent, and to show clearly that it does not enter into the creed of a Christian man in the same way in which the fundamental doctrines of the Bible do. In the Apostles' Creed, for instance, we confess our belief in God as the Maker of heaven and earth; but we do not affirm that He made it in the manner described in the first chapter of Genesis."

Again: "I should explain how in the opening chapters of Genesis, two writers had told us how the Hebrews pictured to themselves the beginnings of the world and the early history of man; how, borrowing their materials in some cases from popular tradition or belief, in others directly, or indirectly, from

the distant east, they had breathed into them a new spirit, and constructed with their aid narratives replete with noble and deep truths respecting God and man ; how one writer had grafted upon the false science of antiquity a dignified and true picture of the relation of the world to God."

Again : " No historical writer ever claims to derive the materials for His narrative from a supernatural source " (cf. St. Luke i. 1-4). Supposing that all the historical writers claimed that all they have put on record they had from a supernatural source, how would that in any sense authenticate their historical writings ? Joseph Smith said he found The Book of Mormon near Manchester in the State of New York, and claimed for it a revelation from God, but I do not believe his book to be anything but a wicked invention. Mohammed claimed to be the Prophet of God, much greater than Christ, but I look on his religion as of the devil. I utterly reject both these men and their writings. Did the dying robber, of whom we read in the Gospel, believe in Christ because of His claim to be the Son of God ? What made Peter and the other ten hold to Him when many of His disciples went away back, and walked no more with Him ? That which held them to Him in that trying hour was : " Thou hast the words of eternal life " (John 6. 67-69). Why did the Thessalonians believe the Gospel preached by Paul ? " Our Gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance " (1 Thess. i.). Why did I believe it ? Though brought up in a godly home, for over twenty years I did not believe it. Why did I turn to Christ in the end ? Why ? Ask Lazarus why he came forth from the sepulchre. He would say, I was called out. Did he know who was calling ? Possibly not ; but the Word came to him in its life-giving power, and there was no resisting it. And it is just the same thing as to our natural moral state : " You hath He quickened who

were dead in trespasses and sins " (Eph. 2. 1.). I could understand a person saying : " I believed the Gospel because it was the only thing that met the need of my soul." This is the truth, but it is not the whole truth, for no man has ever found anything else that can meet the need of his soul, yet all do not believe it. Why does one believe it and another reject it ? It is not always the most wicked, neither is it always the most moral who believes it. It is not the intellectual and the learned, though such are not altogether rejectors of the Word ; but, as we have seen, it is the despised of this world that God has chosen. The question that was asked when our Lord was upon earth has been raised in many a heart from that day to this : " Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him ? " (John 7. 48). God takes up in His mighty grace the most unlikely people, not the rulers of this world.

And it is He that takes them up. " All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me " ; and " no man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him " (John 6. 37, 44). God has not sent His Gospel into this world to be at the haphazard of men's faith. He has His purposes to fulfil, and He is well able to do it, even in a world that is energized by bitter hatred against Himself. No greater enemy of God ever breathed the breath of life than Saul of Tarsus, but by the subduing power of divine grace he was changed into the most devoted servant that ever opened his lips for Christ on earth. What was it that brought about this marvellous transformation ? Nothing but that which has transformed at any time a sinner into a saint. *The Word of the Lord*. With Paul there was something additional : he saw the Lord Himself. But this was necessary, if he was to be an apostle, and to this service the Lord called Him. But he was, like everyone else, born again by the Word of truth (James i. 18). There is no other means of salvation but by the Word of the Gospel (Rom. i. 16).

The believer can say : " We know that the Son of God hath come " (1 John 5. 20). How do we know ? Perhaps one of these critics would say, " You believe it because Scripture says He has come." But that would be *faith* ; Scripture says we *know*. I may be asked how I know, and I shall answer by asking another question : How do you know when the sun has risen ? You say you are in the light of it. Just so. I say, I am in the light that the Son of God has brought. Jesus says : " I am the Light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life " (John 8. 12). If the critics do not know this all the worse for them. Christianity is a real, vital, experimental thing. I am a living man upon earth in a life of flesh and blood, with a nature that I know is antagonistic to God, and I require no man to inform me of the fact, I have a too sorrowful acquaintance with it. But I have been born again, and by the grace of God have a new nature and a new life, the life and nature of the risen Christ ; and is this to be less real, and to be less enjoyed, than my life of flesh and blood ? " We know that the Son of God has come." " We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." " We know that we have passed from death into life." How could it be otherwise ? We enjoy life. We live in the love of God and in the love of His people, and thus is the life of heaven begun upon earth.

Who would give himself a moment's uneasiness regarding the claim that might be made by a man whose breath is in his nostrils, unless he is able by some means to substantiate that claim : " God bearing them witness, both by signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will " (Heb. 2. 4) ? Such must be listened to, and their word must be accepted. But, after all, the Word itself is that which enlightens and carries conviction to the soul of man. God does all things by His Word, as far as creation goes, and His

actions upon that creation. He created everything by the Word of His power, and by that same Word He upholds all things. We are born again by His Word. His Word is that which nourishes the divine nature in us. The Words of Jesus, and not so much His miracles, gave men to know Him. Peter says : " Thou hast the Words of eternal life " (John 6. 68). And in the prayer of Christ, as recorded in the same Gospel (chap. 17.), He says : " I have given unto them the Words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." And the Word that Jesus spoke shall judge the unbeliever in the last day (John 12. 48). This would be impossible, unless His Word was unlike any other word that ever was spoken. I do not believe that a beneficent Creator, which assuredly our God is, would give a book, or send a message, to His creature, holding him responsible to receive it, without that Word carrying with it a power that shall impress the hearer that that Book or message is from Himself. That man is a God-hating sinner, and that he is resolutely opposed to having anything to do with God, is that which the Word teaches and that which we are made painfully aware of in our dealings with men, and where there is a strong reluctance to entertain a message, both on account of its character and hatred of the person from whom it comes, however forcibly it may appeal to our conscience, it is easier to flatter ourselves that it is a baseless rumour, than that it is a truth we should receive and act upon. Then there is also to be taken into account the restless activities of the god of this world, who blinds the mind of them that believe not, lest the light of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ who is the image of God should shine for them (2 Cor. 4. 4).

Therefore it is not altogether a question of the claim made by the servant of the Lord, or by any other ;

there is the Word itself that appeals to every creature as the Word of God, saving the souls of those that hear it in faith, and judging those who hear and reject. Certainly the Scriptures are like no other writings; for whether it be Moses, the Prophets, or the Psalms, there are no such writings in the world. Talk about the first and second chapters of Genesis, the fall of man, the history of the antediluvian race, the sons of God, the daughters of men, the men of renown, the giants, the violence and corruption that filled the world, what would the imagination of man, loosed from the restraint of God, have made of all this? What a scene for it to revel in! Think of what has been made of it in Greek mythology! Read that wretched stuff, and then turn to the simple account God has given of it, and how He has closed the door against all the unclean curiosity of the flesh! I say again that not in all this world is there another book that so forces itself upon the mind and conscience of men as the Word of God. Take all the books on theology, commentaries, expositions, notes, disquisitions, interpretations, and sermons, that have at any time been sent forth by the best of men, and compare them with the Word itself as given to us by God, and what a difference is at once apparent! The simplicity, the grandeur, the glory, the beauty, the melody, the sweetness, the power, the heavenly freshness, the divine savour, the immortal grace, the life-imparting tenderness, the absolute righteousness, and burning holiness, that meet the eye in every one of its immaculate pages, reveal but the imperfections, the poverty, the weakness, and the defects of the best of human productions. As the Word of the living God it appeals to the conscience of every man who hears its voice, and no man in the day of judg-

ment will be able to say that he did not know it was His Word.

Another thing authenticates it. From the beginning of the history of fallen man it has been persecuted. Abel, who would obey it, is slain by his brother. Stephen, the protomartyr, meets the wrath of the Jews with the question: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed 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. 52, 53). And Paul tells us that the day was coming in which professing Christians would prefer fables to the truth of God; for sound doctrine they would not endure (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4). To-day we have the Word of God criticized and torn to pieces by men who profess a reverence for it, and they blame that which they call the mistakes of Scripture for the abandonment of Christianity which is shown by the many. If they only read Scripture a little more carefully they would discover that this departure is all there foretold, and that their apostasy is not there put down to their inability to go on with that which is false, but that they prefer the lie of the devil to the truth of God. The great mass of those who have given up all religion know nothing of the things that these critics call mistakes, nor would their writings have any meaning to them. This irreligion of the masses and the criticism of these critics are just symptoms of the antipathy of the human heart to the living God and to His holy and precious Word, a Word that shall judge everyone of its rejectors in the day of judgment.

(To be continued.)

It is better for us to have Divine wisdom and love sitting at the helm, and deciding for us, than for us to be steering our own course.

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE. Chapter I. (J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

THE epistle is addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren." Two classes of Christians are not here addressed. The form of the original will hardly admit of that. I read rather with the New Translation, and the margin of the revisers, "to the holy and faithful brethren in Christ"; faithful being possibly added to the more general character of holy brethren, because of the danger of being removed from the faith they had received, which the apostle has to contemplate in verse 23, and in such warnings as follow in chapter 2.

Verse 5 is "the hope of the Gospel" referred to in verse 23, and in verse 27 as "the hope of glory." It is that of the heavenly glory of Christ, in which when the time comes we shall be manifested with Him (chapter 3. 4). The saints are not in this epistle seen as seated in Him in the heavenlies, but as risen with Him and walking on the earth; and the object of the apostle is largely to fix their eyes on hopes and objects presented to them in heaven, so as to preserve, or deliver if necessary, from the effects of fleshly ordinances and philosophy, which would tend to becloud union with their Head on high, and connect them with man and his world. But the springs of Christian life being yet fresh in them, faith in Christ and love to all the saints in view of the hope laid up for them in heaven, the Apostle finds ground for prayer and thanksgiving on their behalf, seizing upon that which was of God in them, as ever, first, as the ground upon which what was lacking may be met later.

Did the reception of the "truth of the Gospel" produce fruit in the lives of those who knew the grace of God in truth, or does it mean they themselves were the "fruit"?

Both, in fact, are true. The Gospel that had brought them this hope, con-

necting their hearts with heaven, was bearing fruit and growing (as added by all critical texts); in all the world it was so, as among those of Colosse also. Thus there was the inward fruit in life as also the outward progress of the Gospel "since the day ye heard it and knew the grace of God in truth."

Epaphras (one of themselves, 4. 12) had ministered that grace faithfully to them; as it would seem certain, from chapter 2. 1, that the apostle himself had not personally laboured there; and when now a fellow-prisoner with Paul (Philem. 23) he was still striving (the word is the same as in chap. 1. 29) for them in prayer. Through him Paul had learned their "love in the Spirit," which confirms that he had not been there.

The prayer is not here, as in Ephes. 1., for the knowledge of God's counsels and the work of Divine power that gives saints part in them; but for the full knowledge of God's will, to give an intelligent walk according to the heavenly objects revealed to them; the apostle doubtless having in mind the total contrast such a walk would present to that of subjection to the ordinances and commandments of men to which he refers in chap. 2. 20-24. But for the soul to be informed and lit up with Divine intelligence in such a way involves, as ever, a spiritual state formed in communion with God, wherein alone "wisdom and spiritual understanding" will be found as the sphere of that knowledge. Then, too, the Apostle desires for them a "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," who has Himself made such a way for them by going before them in it, and who will be personally known in what is worthy of and well pleasing to Him as we set Him before us, with no other object or motive—"being fruitful in every good work and increasing therein by the full knowledge of God." The prayer for the walk of saints is then

found to be based upon the wonderful deliverance wrought for them, opened out in all the extent of the commission of Paul of which we learn in Acts 26. 17, 18; and the resources of strength for it are only to be measured by "the might of His glory," so that there may not be merely a bright start, or a fresh spurt now and again, but all patience and endurance with joy.

Verse 12. There can be no question that every believer is meet, as it is the first ground of thanksgiving—"giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet"—and this at the very entrance of the path, even before one step is taken in it; so far is it from a gradual process only complete when we reach the end. All our meetness is Christ, and found for us in Him; as with the thief on the cross, made meet companion for the Son of God in the brightest spot in all the heavenly glory, that first moment that the eye of his faith was turned from self, found out to be justly condemned, to the just One who suffered for the unjust to bring us to God.

The inheritance of the saints in light is not here the inheritance of all things over which Christ is seen as Head in Ephesians, and upon which we look down, as it were, from our heavenly position as heirs of it in Him, nor is it indeed the same word, but more

simply "the portion of the saints" which is then characterized by the cloudless light of the presence of God; and to which we look up, in full accord with the hope laid up in heaven.

We learn something of the fearful extent of the power or "authority" of darkness, under which we were once held, from Luke 22. 53. We see it in its full sway in the heathen world; but we have all been under the bondage of it, until we were delivered by faith in Him, who through death brought to naught him who had the power of death, and transferred us from the dark sphere of Satan's authority to His own.

The kingdom of the Son of His love is the same kingdom into which we have entered by grace, but, as here only, characterized by the place the Son has in the Father's love, the object of His predilection and delight—surely a most precious aspect of the kingdom. And He is the One "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." But thus the nature of God has been introduced in its two essential characteristics, light and love. And the whole work of deliverance, and redemption in which it was wrought, is infinitely enhanced by the glory of the Person in whom it is ours, which follows in a wonderful concentration of the light of it.

HOPE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

HOPE sings to me a cheerful song—
The way may seem both dark and long,
But days are passing one by one,
And all is glory farther on.

She sings in sweetest tones to me
When but the heavy clouds I see;
She tells me of the shining sun,
And cloudless glory farther on.

And HOPE has wings as well as song,
And when she spreads her pinions strong
My thoughts soar up and dwell upon
The heavenly glory farther on.

And HOPE has eyes that pierce the gloom;
She looks beyond death and the tomb,
And thrills as though already shone
The deathless glory farther on.

And thus with song and wings and eyes
HOPE lifts my heart up to the skies;
She helps my eager feet to run
To reach the glory farther on.

HOPE, blessed hope, abide with me,
Still sing thy cheerful melody,
Till, clouds and tears for ever gone,
I reach the glory farther on.

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. VII. Reconciliation. Genesis 45. 1.

HITHERTO Joseph has made himself strange, spoken roughly, and dealt grievously with his brethren, for there was conscience work to be done and repentance to be wrought. But love's strange work being accomplished, Joseph can no longer refrain from making himself known. Having exposed the guilt of their hearts, he must make known the love of his heart. Have they discovered the evil of their hearts, then he will disclose the yet greater grace of his heart, that, knowing all their evil, can rise above it in full, free forgiveness.

Joseph must make "*himself known*" (verse 1). Nothing less will satisfy his heart; nothing less will give rest to their hearts. And this is still the way of the loving Saviour with the anxious sinner. Nothing will roll away the burden of guilt but the discovery that all is fully known, and fully forgiven, by the One against whom we have sinned. The knowledge of our hearts, however necessary, will bring no rest to the soul. We may mourn over the past, and weary ourselves with our sins, but no discovery of evil in our hearts, no repentance, however real, no sorrow for sin, however sincere, will bring comfort to the soul. For rest and peace Jesus must make Himself known. Then we discover with great delight that His heart is full of grace for man that is full of sin. That with the full knowledge of all our sins there is nothing but love in His heart towards us. Then indeed we can rest, but we rest in what He is and not in anything we find in ourselves.

But for such discoveries of His heart we must be *alone* with Him. Even so Joseph, before he could make himself known, has to say, "Cause every man to go out from me" (verse 1). Wonderful moment in the history of our souls when all men fade from view and we

see "no man any more save Jesus only"; when alone with Him in the consciousness of our sinfulness, we discover that He knows us through and through, and yet knowing us He loves us. The woman of Sychar finely illustrates such a moment. Alone in His presence He revealed all the sin of her heart—told her all things that ever she did—and then disclosed Himself as the Christ full of grace and truth, for a sinner full of sin. He knows all that she ever did, but, He says, "I that speak unto thee am Christ." She finds herself a sinner exposed in the presence of the Christ of God, but instead of repelling her He can say, "Come hither." He seems to say, "I know the worst about you, and though your sin has made you a lonely woman—though it makes you shrink from the company of your fellow-women—yet you are welcome to Me—Come hither."

And such ways of grace are blessedly foreshadowed in the history of Joseph. Alone with his brethren he at once declares, "I am Joseph." And as the Lord could say to the woman, "Come hither," Joseph can say to his brethren "Come near to me" (verse 4). It is not only that Joseph is ready to forgive, but he desires the company of those that he forgives. We rejoice in the grace that meets our need, but how slow to realize that the One who has removed our guilt desires our company; Christ has come near to us that we might come near to Him. When passing through this world "He ordained twelve, that they should be *with Him*." When He left the world, He "died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live *together with Him*"; and when He comes again to receive us unto Himself it is that we may for ever be "*with the Lord*." If love makes us suited to His company,

love will not be content without our company.

Moreover, if the brethren are to be in the company of Joseph for the satisfaction of his heart, they must be there without a trace of fear, without a single regret, and without a shade of care. No regrets for the past, no fears in the present, no anxieties for the future must rise up to mar the joy of communion between Joseph and his restored brethren. With infinite skill Joseph will remove their fears, banish their regrets, and relieve their anxieties.

That they did fear is evident enough, for we read, "they were troubled at his presence" (verse 3). Joseph, however, draws them to himself with the cords of love; "Come near to me," he says. "And they came near." And having drawn them to himself, he seeks to remove every fear by reminding them he is still their brother, "I am Joseph *your brother*." He says, as it were, "I know full well how you treated me in the days that are past, you hated me, you spurned me, you sold me, but fear not, I am Joseph *your brother*. I know, too, that the day of my humiliation is past, the day of my exaltation is come, and though you see me—the very one you rejected—in the place of power, fear not, for though I am supreme, I am still Joseph *your brother*."

Moreover, as to the past, Joseph cannot allow that any regrets should rise up to mar their enjoyment of his love. "Now therefore," says Joseph, "be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither" (verse 5). The sin has been confessed, and Joseph will not only forgive, but he will remove all lingering regrets and self-reproaches. He will assure them that behind their sin, yea, by means of their sin, God was working out His purposes of blessing. It is true "you sold me hither," Joseph has to say, but he adds, "God sent me before you to save your lives by a great deliverance." Thus he delivers his brethren from

occupation with themselves by engaging their thoughts and affections with himself, his glories, and the blessings that flow to them through his exaltation.

Then as to the future no care or anxiety need cloud their horizon, for Joseph can say, in the message he sends to his father, "Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and all that thou hast, and there will I nourish thee" (verse 10).

Thus with marvellous skill and infinite love, Joseph makes himself known to his brethren, dispels their fears, delivers them from self-occupation, and relieves them from anxiety, by filling their vision with himself and his glories, and engaging their thoughts with his gracious words. "Behold," says Joseph, "*your eyes see . . . that it is my mouth speaketh unto you*" (verse 12). Fear dispelled, grief assuaged, cares banished, love can flow without hindrance,—“He kissed all his brethren”; “and *after that his brethren talked with him*” (verse 15). At first we read, “his brethren could not answer him” (verse 3). But their eyes have seen his glories, their ears have been charmed with his words of grace, their hearts have been warmed with his love and, in the warmth of love, they are set free to talk with him. No shade remains to hinder the communion of love between Joseph and his brethren. Perfect love has cast out fear.

Let us not forget that all this touching history foreshadows the yet future dealings of Christ with His earthly people who rejected Him in the days of old. But more, the story tells us the way Christ takes to teach us the evil of our hearts, and then dispel all fear by making Himself known in the love of His heart.

Moreover, we do well to remember that before Joseph “made himself

known" to his brethren, "he made himself strange unto them" (42. 7). That they might learn the evil of their hearts, he "made himself strange"; that they might learn the love of his heart, he "made himself known." Can not many Christians recall a time in the history of their souls when Christ appeared to make Himself strange and deal roughly with them as they were left to travel through some dark valley of soul exercise, there to discover the evil of the flesh within? In such moments many a dark passage in life's history will rise up to confront the soul in all its hideousness and hatefulness, until the cry is wrung from the soul, "Behold, I am vile" (Job 40. 4). But even so this is not enough, for, as Job found, there is a deeper lesson to learn, and for this we must travel back outside the range of our personal experience until we reach the solemnities of the cross. There may have been plenty of evil in the lives of Joseph's brethren, but if they are to learn the depth of evil in their hearts, they must go back over twenty years of history to recall their treatment of Joseph, when in the face of his love as a brother, they hated him, cast him into the pit, and sold him into Egypt. So with ourselves. Truly we have to learn the evil of the flesh by actual experience, but to learn that in the flesh is *no good thing*—that it is irremediably bad—we must go to the cross. At the cross there was the display of perfect goodness in God and perfect goodness in a Man—the Man Christ Jesus. At the cross, grace, and love, and goodness shone out in all their splendour. How did the flesh act in the presence of perfect goodness? It utterly refused the One in whom goodness was displayed. It rejected Him, spat in His face, mocked Him with a crown of thorns, nailed Him to a cross, and cast Him out of the world. Every one of us was represented at the cross, for every class of man was there, religious and godless, educated and ignorant, refined and rough, all were there, and all rejected the Christ of God. Each can say, "There I see my

flesh—myself—brought face to face with perfect goodness, and without hesitation my flesh—whatever form it takes—declares its utter hatred of goodness." As one has said, "The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there." Learning the flesh experimentally, I discover its lusts and covetousness, its pride and vanity. In a word, I discover by bitter experience that the flesh *loves evil*. But when I come to the cross I learn a more terrible phase of its character, for there I discover that the flesh within *hates good*.

Moreover, in result, the difference is great between learning the character of the flesh experimentally and learning it in the light of God revealed at the cross. If I only know the flesh as I discover it in myself, I may be left with the thought that it can be improved. I may admit that it is vile—that it loves evil—but I may say, "Is it not possible to improve and reform it?" And indeed it is possible to do a great deal for man in the flesh in the way of cultivation and reformation, but in the end it is farther from God than ever. This great lesson I learn at the cross. There Christ was not only the song of the drunkard but the *sober men*—the men who sat in the gate—"speak against Him." Drunk or sober the flesh hates God, and Christ in whom God was expressed. Thus the cross proves the flesh to be irremediably bad. A man that loves sin might be improved, but a man that hates perfect goodness is beyond improvement. When we reach this point, we can say with Job, not only "I am vile," but "I abhor myself." We do not abhor a man, however vile, if he is endeavouring to overcome his evil, we rather admire such an one, but when a man is proved to be bad beyond all hope of improvement we rightly abhor him. To this Job had to come, and we, too, in the light of the cross must reach this point when we give ourselves up as hopelessly bad.

But when like Job in his day, and the brethren of Joseph in their day, we have learned the evil of our own hearts—the utter corruption of the flesh—with what relief we turn from self to Christ, and how He delights to set us free by making Himself known in all the grace of His heart. We may well be appalled as we discover the evil of our hearts. But as Christ reveals to us His heart and tells us that He loves us, though knowing all the evil of our hearts—as He draws us to Him-

self and discloses to us the desire of His heart to have us in His company, as He gives us to behold His glory and to hear His voice,—then indeed the torments of fear are ended by perfect love—the love that casteth out fear—and no more the soul turns in upon itself to grieve over the evil within, the future is no longer dark with dismal forebodings, but in the consciousness of love we can hold sweet communion with Him, after the manner of Joseph's brethren who "talked with him."

HIS SUFFERINGS, OUR SONG.

"THEN came Jesus forth, wearing a crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man" (John 19. 5).

"Mocked and spit upon and bleeding
Pilate leads Thee forth ;
In Thy face they see no beauty,
In the blood no worth.
O despised and humbled Jesus,
What compared with Thee
Are the glory and the beauty
Of all worlds to me ? "

' 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 " (Isaiah 53. 5).

" Mine the sin, O mighty Saviour,
Laid by God on Thee—
Mine eternal condemnation
In Thy cross I see—
In Thine agony Divine
See the curse that else were mine."

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (1 Peter 3. 18).

" For Thee, revilings and the mocking throng,
For me, the ransomed's song ;
For Thee, the frown, the hiding of God's face,
For me, His smile of grace ;
Judgment and woe and bitterest death for Thee,
And heaven and everlasting life for me."

Bad Thoughts.

It is not wickedness to be harassed by bad thoughts if you resist them. It is Satan's effort to get you to adopt them, and thus you are sifted. You will find, if you keep near the Lord, that you are more established after an assault of the kind than you were before ; and the only way to combat Satan's attacks is by the Word. . . . If Satan can lead you to become indifferent to these assaults, then they will lead you to great damage ; but if, on the contrary, they urge you to be more dependent on the Lord Himself and on His word, they will eventually cease, and you will be "settled." "After you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter I—continued.

(G. J. STEWART.)

Returning to the Son, the Spirit views Him as

ON HIS OWN THRONE.

"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." This is from Ps. 45., where the heart of the remnant is occupied with Messiah. He sits upon His own throne, His sceptre one of righteousness.

But His loving righteousness and hating lawlessness discloses a holy nature. There never was a mere man who did this. Adam did not, but the opposite. When he knew both good and evil he loved the evil and hated the good. There was but one inherently holy Man, and He by the Spirit is immediately saluted as God. "Therefore, O God." Thus carefully and in every way is the Deity of Messiah guarded. A true Man sitting upon His own throne upon earth, wielding a righteous sceptre, and with a holy nature is apostrophised by the Spirit, as God. The One whom we now know as our Redeemer and our Friend will thus sit upon His own throne on earth! A truth pregnant with the most important results, for God, for man, for all things.

Dan. 7. 33, 14 shows the Son of man brought before the Ancient of Days, to receive for Himself a Kingdom . . . that all nations and peoples and languages should serve Him; a kingdom that shall not pass away. The earthly portion of the Melchisedec scene is fulfilled when this occurs. Then blessing from God will fill man's heart, and praise satisfy God's, through the Priest upon His throne.

We have already seen Him on the

throne of God in heaven, Heir of all things there as well as on earth. While there He gathers out the heavenly portion of the kingdom, and ministers to them in Melchisedec heavenly blessing and power.

The dim vision which Ezekiel saw, when Israel had destroyed himself, shows the throne of God's government lifted up and taken away from the earth. The wheels which were for earth are apostrophised "O wheel" as though they had no more use; while the wings carried the throne up to heaven to be administered thence henceforth. There above, upon the throne, in sapphire glory is seen "The appearance of the likeness of a Man above, upon it." We know the Man who sits there, the Son, administering now the kingdom of heaven in mystery, and making our hearts glad with the spiritual blessings He has at hand.

The Scripture which recognizes the Godhead of the Man who reigns upon His throne, while showing His own infinite superiority to all those with whom He may in grace associate Himself, shows also that He has

COMPANIONS IN GLORY.

Who are these companions? Whence come they? Those to rescue whom He came down into this world. He found them in ruin and misery and identifying Himself with them in it all, sets aside for ever their sins and their state, bringing them into relationship with Himself and raising them to glory and gladness. All the company are anointed with the oil of gladness, but He above them all. Oil is always in Scripture the type of the Spirit, and gladness is the spring of praise. It is therefore the spirit of praise which is given to this wonderful company.

Chapter 3. 14 shows they are already His companions in the house to sing

God's praise to-day. Also "in the midst of the assembly will I hymn Thy praise" (chapter 2. 12). None but such praise God really desires now from earth, for all believers are His companions to this end. Our verse shows this to be the case also when He shall sit upon His own throne in Melchisedec glory. If all earthly praise comes up to God *from* His companions now, so in the coming age all will come up to Him *through* them. They themselves forming the court of the kingdom in heavenly glory. He, Messiah, the Son, will be owned as God and adored by His companions who will also sing after Him in sweetest notes the praise of God who has by Him brought all into blessing.

When smitten by Jehovah He was owned as *Jehovah's* fellow (Zech. 12.). Now in the glory set forth as Son upon the throne, He claims those for whom He died as *His* fellows. Infinite grace!

Again, as Son of man, sitting on His throne in righteousness, the Spirit guards and celebrates

HIS ETERNAL BEING.

He had come as Messiah; had on account of the state of Israel been lifted up and cast down; He thought of the restoration of Zion, but where would Messiah then be? In weakness He cried, "O My God, cut Me not off in the midst of My days." The answer is,—*"Thou art Jehovah, Creator, the Alpha and Omega. Thou Jehovah in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hand"* (Psa. 102.). He began every thing that had a beginning; all was the work of Him who was about to be cut off. He is the eternal Son. The work of His hands may change as all created things are changeable. "*They shall perish but Thou remainest, yea they all shall wax old as a garment and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up and they shall be changed, but Thou art THE SAME and Thy years shall not fail*" (verses 10–12). He is the

existing One, Who does not change." (ATTAH-HU—a Name of God.)

Eternal, Divine, blessed Being! Art Thou the One who speakest of companions with Thee in Thy glory? Ah, Yes. And then amid the wreck of worlds, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat—then Thy companions, redeemed from the ruined earth, shall above the awful abyss sing Thy praise, and with Thee the praise of Thy God. The object of creation having been accomplished, the praise of the Morning Stars and the sons of God shall be led in an entirely new strain, by Thy companions in glory.

Then shall things be made new, and the things which cannot be shaken be established upon their pre-determined righteous, immovable basis.

"And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold I make all things new . . . it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely."

Having presented the Messiah upon His own Throne, assuring this Hebrew remnant of the fulfilment of Messianic, Melchisedec blessing, the Spirit now returns to—

CHRIST'S SESSION UPON GOD'S THRONE.

This, the heavenly side, is then followed in the epistle. A second challenge is issued to the angelic hosts. To which of them all since their creation ushered in the ages of time, hath God said, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psa. 110. 1)? To no one but the Son could this be said, and here the position is His by the gift of God. He had taken that place Himself in His own right. Here we see He was not only unchallenged, but invited to the place. This is equivalent to proclaiming Him God, for none but God ever sat there.

It is, however, accompanied by a note that may well strike terror to the hearts of His foes, for He sits there till they are made the footstool of His feet. This side of things is occasionally returned to by way of warning; as "How shall we escape?" "Much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." But the epistle pursues the happier object which occupies Christ's heart, while sitting on that Throne, the calling out His companions for glory, and filling their hearts with heavenly blessing, thus securing God's praise during this present period. This, coming actually from earth now, shall presently end in the mighty chorus of praise which shall make the vault of heaven ring with the glorious redemption song.

Angels seek not that Throne, but are content to be His

MINISTERING SPIRITS.

"Are they not all ministering (LEITOURGEIA) spirits, sent forth for service on account of those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (N.T.). This is their present business while waiting upon Him who sits upon God's Throne.

In verse 7 we are told what they *are*; here what they *do*. Angels have always had a large place in God's dealings with men, and have been ever ready to do God's will in this respect whatever it may be. At the fall a Cherub kept the gate of Eden. The law was ordained by them; "spoken" by them. In the Tabernacle Cherubim are of the Mercy-seat, and form the sides of the Throne of Government; interested in the mercy on which it is based and of which the blood speaks.

Other Scriptures speak of the symbolic creatures Cherubim and Seraphim as the executors of His judgment and mercy. The Cherubim are more connected with judgment and the Divine attributes, according to the principles of the Throne. The Seraphim with mercy and the nature of God. Angels

are doubtless the executive in that which is here set forth. Our verse refers to Psa. 103. 20-21, where the angels which are mighty in strength, execute His Word, hearken to His voice, and do His will. Now that will is, that they serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, inducing the praise God seeks at their lips and hearts and relieving them of all hindrances.

How securely would the believer rest if he realized in his heart that the angels who came and ministered to Christ when He was in the wilderness, are at His bidding, ready to perform the same service to himself. It is written, "He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee in all Thy ways, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." But one may say, that was Christ Himself. Is it extended to His own now? Does not our text affirm it is even so? Did not our Lord say of the children even, "Verily I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven?" Did not angels direct Philip the way he should go to reach the Ethiopian? (Acts 8. 26). Did not an angel liberate Peter from prison? (Acts 12. 7-10).

But does God take care of His own more than other men in a providential way? In any case it does not say angels are sent out to minister for them who are not heirs of salvation. There are many heirs of salvation who are not yet called, or who are not in the enjoyment of salvation; to these they minister doubtless, for their mission is to those who shall be heirs. From their birth to their departure from the earth they have angelic attendants. The last act of this kind they will be called upon to perform is to hand over their charge to Him who committed it to them. This they do at death, or finally when they come with Christ; the voice of the archangel mingling with the trump of God and the assembling shout of Christ as He

receives all His own in the cloud to be for ever with Him.

Spiritual things are not in angels' hands, but temporal, providential and governmental matters seem to be. The principle is as true now for us as it was for Christ, for we are His. It is certain as the Word of God is certain. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve on account of them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Incidentally this verse proves that the Angels (ministering spirits), serve the saints.

For the above reasons

WE OUGHT TO GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED.

For the things *we* have heard were spoken directly to us by God the Son. Again, it is an easy thing to drift away from them. Drifting is a process of which we are frequently unconscious until the danger is in view and we are surrounded by shoals and quicksands. We soon get drawn into currents of opinion and then driven by every wind of doctrine. Both of these are in the hand of the prince of the power of the air. He is the enemy of Him by whom the words have been spoken, and the opposer of everything we have heard, since it gives us the portion He has fallen from, and which alone can hold us (chap. 2. 1-4).

But Christ has entered within the Veil as our Forerunner, and this hope is the anchor of the soul amid the

currents which surround us. It is sure and steadfast, having obtained good holding ground in heaven, from which He cannot be dislodged. This preserves from all drift. Let it be observed it is we who drift, the word spoken is steadfast.

Also, there is

NO ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION.

It was even so with the word spoken by angels, and every transgression and disobedience received just retribution. How much more so when it is no more angels who speak nor prophets, but God Himself directly. Heed, earnest and more abundant, should indeed be given to His words, knowing of whom we have heard them. John also says, "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning." Anything less than His very words is a slackness which leaves room for drift.

The word of exhortation is applied from time to time as the truth progresses. Truth which it is well worth holding fast, without slackening the cable of faith by which we hold. It is not against sin we are warned so much as against drift. Drift produces sin, and the wilful sin of chap. 10. 26 is the drifting back to the Judaic rock which wrecks the soul. It is addressed to those who have professed to accept that which has been spoken, not to outside unbelievers.

Sustaining Grace.

SOMEONE said to me: "I do not see miracles now. I do not see a lame man walk." I replied, I see a greater miracle, "I see a lame man so superior to his lameness, because of grace, that he comes earlier and oftener to the meetings than one who has two legs." Grace makes him superior to the infirmity. This is what Paul had learnt when he gloried in his infirmity that the power of Christ might rest upon him. It is a greater thing to be enabled to bear a trial and go through it for the glory of God, than to have the trial removed. To be made more than conquerors through Him that loves us, is a greater thing than to have been carefully preserved from all conflict.

If you urge that the trial be removed, He may hear you and do it, for He is full of tender mercy, but in that case you lose His power which would have sustained you in the trial. You get your desire, but you miss that all-sufficient grace, and the loss is incalculable. It is a blessed thing when we can count upon God for everything, and go through everything with Him, then the outward conflict does not disturb the inward peace.

VOICES FROM THE EXCELLENT GLORY.

(2 Peter 1 17.)

(DR. NORTHCOTE DECK.)

IT is good for us often to resort in memory, as did the aged apostle, to certain scenes in the Saviour's life, there to hear voices from the excellent glory, and there again, in spirit, to become with Him eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty. For in these days of doubt, and the world's despair, our place is not with His detractors who would fain strip Him of His divinity and kingly majesty. No, our habitual attitude is to be that of the first disciples as they "looked stedfastly toward heaven"; our blessed privilege it is to worship, while we wait expectantly for our Lord's return. Yet it may cheer and confirm our hearts, through this little while, if we note how God the Father broke the silence of heaven, to express His good pleasure in the Son, and to publicly authenticate Him at each crisis of His earthly ministry.

1. In the first scene we would turn to (Luke 2. 13) it is indeed not the voice of the Father that we hear. For there we read, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward men."

Yet though the worshippers were the heavenly host, which could no longer be restrained, but burst into this celestial chorus, yet their praise was but the direct echo of the Father's joy, the expression of the Father's heart. For it was at God's express command, that those peaceful fields in the night, and the starry heavens above, were filled with the worship of Emmanuel. "For when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith: Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1. 16). For was it not the signal that the Lord Christ had now taken upon Himself the form of a servant, that He was even now born in the

likeness of men? Was it not a pæan of joy, that for us men and our salvation the Lord of Glory had humbled Himself, that He might presently become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross?

Thus God the Father could not allow the One who was the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person, to begin His life, unheralded, unwelcomed, unannounced. So, acclaimed in the clouds, was born in Bethlehem, the Babe, the "Holy Child Jesus," upon Whom all eyes, all ages, all hopes were centred.

2. Then, passing over the intervening years, we would go with Him in spirit to the waters of Jordan. There around the prophet of the wilderness were gathered multitudes of sinners, repenting from their sins and being baptized as a proof of it. And lo, Another approaches to Whom the prophet himself gives reverence and worship. It is the Son of the Father, the Son of Man, at the outset of His earthly ministry. And He comes to the Jordan intent on fulfilling all righteousness. And so He goes down into the waters to be baptized. Here was no need for baptism of repentance. For in Him, the Holy One and the Just, there was nought to be repented of. To Him this baptism had other significance, for as He went down under the waters, was it not a foreshadowing of that which was soon to be? "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me" (Psa. 42. 7). For see! His going down under the waters did forth tell His death, and His death was for us sinners. Yes, it spake most clearly of His going down even unto death for us, unworthy though we be. There are other thoughts in this act of wonderful condescension, but this we emphasize.

Thus, by His baptism, He clearly announced to His Father, and to all,

that after all the quiet years at Nazareth, His purpose was unchanged, His love undaunted. He, the Lamb of God, had set His feet upon the path that led through all the shame, the conflict, and the contradiction of sinners, to end only on the brow of Calvary. This path, should He not tread it?

What, then, was the heavenly response, the Divine comment upon this prophetic act of obedience? The response was two-fold. For coming up out of the water, straightway, "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove upon Him," and straightway, the voice of the Father was heard, to Him, to the multitude, "Thou art My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." So indeed did the Father glorify the Son, and that publicly, as day by day, act by act, the Son was glorifying the Father.

3. Later came the wonder of THE TRANSFIGURATION. And pondering its meaning, the heart of the matter seems to lie in Matt. 16. 21, where "from that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how He must . . . suffer . . . and be killed." It is to these sayings that Matt. 17. 1 and Luke 9. 22 point back. A crisis had come in His ministry. Welcomed by the poor, the sick, the needy, He had yet been rejected by the nation and its rulers. From now on, His teaching pointed clearly to the cross as His immediate goal. Now He began to prepare His disciples for His death on Calvary, which seemed to them like absolute disaster. No wonder they cried, "Be it far from Thee, Lord," as their dreams of earthly glory faded and they were assured that life could come only through death.

Deep must have been their misgivings those "six days" when in panic of heart "they were afraid to ask Him further of His meaning." Then to three of them was vouchsafed the reassuring vision on "the holy mount." "O! the depth of the riches . . . of the wisdom . . . of God!" For in place of reproaches they were given a

further revelation of the high estate and future glory of the Son of Man; a revelation which the apostles held in trust for, and sought to keep in the remembrance of the church, and after their decease, in the hearts of generations of believers yet unborn (2 Pet. 1. 15).

And with the wonder of the scene, with the "glistening" garments of the Saviour, and that blessed Face, shining "as the sun," there came from the overshadowing cloud the voice of the ever-present Father, again commending the Son in accents of supremest confidence; again He was "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

4. SO THE END APPROACHED, and still the disciples failed yet to understand the way of the Cross. So that when, the last week, He declared, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified" (John 12. 23), it was with a glory that passed their understanding. It was not indeed such as the world counts glory. What He spoke of was the glory of the dying grain (the corn of wheat) which finds in the silent ground but a quiet place in which to fall and die, that it may afterwards bring forth abundant fruit. But such dying being His Father's perfect will for Him, the shame of the cross was thereby transfigured into the supremest glory. So that, though troubled in soul, in spite of all He could but cry, "Father, glorify Thy Name," though that could only be through His own death on the cross.

Again the response was immediate, and deeply impressive. For the sake of the disciples' wavering faith there came the calm, clear assurance from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Ah! Glorious Master, forgive our feeble faith, our wayward steps, our frightened hearts! Pardon and strengthen us, that we may nevermore be "afraid to ask Thee" the way, afraid to follow.

5. And now He was come to THE LAST DARK SCENE ON CALVARY,

where by wicked hands He was crucified and slain. The very nation to whom had been committed the living oracles of God, and which, year by year, century after century, had watched and waited for their expected Messiah, now in their blindness, in place of welcoming Him with a crown, had crucified Him on the cross. Let us then reverently join the onlookers as "they sat and watched Him there," that we may realize afresh the profound truth of their accusation, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

About the time of the evening sacrifice, through the deep darkness that enshrouded Him, came that cry of anguish, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" For then indeed "the Lord . . . laid on Him the iniquities of us all." And because God is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity," for the first time God averted His face from His beloved Son, wringing from Him that awful cry. With the averted face there could be no voice

from the excellent glory, as on former occasions. Yet in the events that followed we can clearly discern the Father's approval in the Saviour's sacrifice. For, confirming His dying triumphal cry, "It is finished," came the Father's reiterated assent. We hear the clear "AMEN" of the Father. in the rent veil (clearest token that the way into the holiest was now made perfect), the earthquake, and the open graves of the resurrected saints; and clearer still we hear His verdict in the empty tomb of the Risen Saviour.

Truly indeed was He called "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God . . . by miracles and wonders and signs!" He is now enthroned on high, angels and principalities being subject to Him. Yet it is our wondrous privilege, in this His day of rejection, to bring Him our service, our hearts, our homage. **OH, MAY HE EVEN NOW BE GLORIFIED IN US HIS SAINTS, MAY HE TO-DAY TRULY BE WORSHIPPED AND ADMIRER BY ALL OF US THAT BELIEVE!**

IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

(CONTRIBUTED.)

DON'T forget the glory of Him to whom you pray, though He calls you to address Him freely.

Don't be irreverent and stare about during prayer, but kneel if possible or at least bow your head.

Don't lose sight of the fact that your prayer is to God, and though He is in heaven and thou upon earth, yet there is no need to shout to Him.

Don't pray into your hands or with your back to others, or else it may be as profitless as if you prayed in an unknown tongue.

Don't aim at praying nicely or expressing yourself eloquently, keep God Himself before you.

Don't make long prayers. It is better to pray twice or thrice for two or three minutes than once for a quarter of an hour or more.

Don't pray all round the compass,

one subject or two will be enough. Leave opportunity for others.

Don't expound passages of Scripture or sermonize; but "Let your requests be made known to God."

Don't pray *at* people. The Lord prays *for* all His own.

Don't limit your prayers to any select few of the Lord's loved ones. "All men, all saints, all servants," form the true scope for our heart's desires.

Don't forget to mingle thanksgiving with prayer. There is so much to be grateful for.

Don't omit to go to the prayer meeting because few attend. The Lord is always present where two or three are gathered together to His Name.

Don't apply these "don'ts" to others, but let each examine himself in these things.

OUR PERFECT PATTERN.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Read John 8. 3-5; 12-15; 34, 35; 14. 1; Colossians 3. 12-17.

Notes of an Address at High Leigh, July 29th, 1924.

WE are glad to think of that glorious hour of which Ephesians 5. 25-27 speaks, when our Lord will present to Himself His church which He loves and for which He gave Himself—a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. In that day, and for ever, His church will remain as a bride adorned for her husband, and He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. His joy in the possession of His church will fully compensate Him for all that He suffered when He went into death to redeem it. Every blood-bought, Holy Ghost indwelt believer on earth is part of that church, and since we gathered here are believers we can rejoice in the prospect before us, and in the fact that then we shall be all that our Lord would have us to be. Now that same church—the assembly of God, is upon earth, and we are part of it, and it should be such as He would have it now. That is my subject. I would address you on the present life and grace of the assembly. I think you will understand what I mean before I come to the end of my address.

Precept is not enough for us, we must have a pattern for our conduct before our eyes, hence the life and grace that should show itself in the church or assembly on earth, is presented to us first in our Lord Jesus Christ. We see it here in this John 13., which is the first of this group of chapters that really form the centre of this special Gospel. The most wonderful words that were ever spoken under heaven fill these chapters, and those who listened to them were the nucleus of the assembly, they represented there all who afterwards should believe in the Name of the Lord; but before He said one word to them as to what their life and conduct during His

absence was to be, He set Himself before them as their pattern.

Mark well how the Holy Spirit has recorded this for us: "*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.*" Let the force of it come home to us. Whatever the Lord did in this chapter was done in the full consciousness of the incomparable dignity that the Father had put upon Him. His right hand was filled and His left hand was filled, all things had been put into His hands—into the hands of JESUS whom men despised. The whole range of the glory of God had been committed to Him—the control of angels, the blessing of men, the judgment of devils; things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth; proof of the absolute confidence that the Father reposed in Him. He knew it, and knowing it, what will He do? What would any other man have done? Would he not have unveiled the glory before the astonished eyes of those who had despised Him and displayed the seals of His splendid office? Did Jesus do this? No, He did not. What did He do? Arising from supper, He laid aside His garments and girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples feet. In the tenderness of Divine love He did for them the labour of a slave. I am bringing before you our pattern, I am wanting to show you what the life and grace of the assembly really are. Look at our great Saviour, the Lord of glory, bending low to wash the feet of those uncultured and ignorant men, and doing it in the full knowledge that the chief place in the universe was His. He, the highest of all, served them in the lowest possible service, because He loved them with the greatest possible love. From Luke's Gospel we learn that they, poor self-centred men, so

much like our wretched selves, were always seeking self-vindication and striving for the first place, that they were doing it even at the supper table, and that He said to them then what they well knew: "I am among you as he that serveth." If there was one task more menial than another it fell to Him, to Him their Lord and Master. Many a time had He been up while they slept and prepared their breakfast. You may ask me how I know that. Recall that memorable morning on the shore of the sea, following their night of fruitless toil. They were disappointed men, tired and cold; but they found upon that shore a fire to warm them, lighted by His hands, and bread and coal thereon prepared by Himself to feed them. It was as though He said, "I want you to understand that I have not changed one bit; death and resurrection have not changed me; many a time before I died I showed my care for you by preparing a breakfast for you, and I am still just what I was, your servant." It was on "*this wise that He shewed Himself to them*" for so we read in John 21. "HE SHEWED HIMSELF"; not the splendour of His majesty or the greatness of His power, but His tenderness, His care for their needs, the love that found its relief in serving them, He showed His heart, Himself. And now, says He, As I have done to you, so do ye to one another, I have left you an example.

The assembly is the continuation of Christ on earth. In it He is to be reproduced; His life and grace, who is the Head of the assembly which is His body, are to be manifested in it. The great truth is this, that we are members of the body of Christ. He went down into death, paying there the mighty price of our redemption, He has been raised up from the depths of death and seated at the right hand of the Eternal Majesty, and from that glory He has sent down the Holy Ghost to indwell us—to indwell you and me; and now, indwelt by the Holy Ghost,

we are part of Himself. He looks down upon this gathering to-night and says, That is part of Me. This great fact was first disclosed when by His power the Lord struck the fanatical Saul of Tarsus to the earth as he pursued his mission of blood to Damascus. To him He said: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And Saul, filled with amazement, asked: "Who art thou, Lord?" From the glory came the answer: "I am JESUS whom thou persecutest." He did not say, You are persecuting Mine, but "Me." And we are that, the youngest Christian here as well as the oldest—of each and all the Lord says, it is Me. He has redeemed us by His blood, sealed us by the Holy Ghost, and gathered us up into His blessed unity; we are members of His body; we are Himself. Pray, young Christian, that you may understand this, and that it may not only be in your head as doctrine, but in your heart and life in power. Christ is the Head of His body, and the life of the Head must flow in its activities through His members. This is the first of all reasons for the body of Christ's presence in the world, His life and grace and character are to come out in us, His members—the life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh. The question is, How can it be?

The answer to our question is not far to seek. The Lord said to them: "Let not you heart be troubled, ye believe in God, *believe also in Me.*" But did they not believe in Him? They did, but this is not faith for soul's salvation, it is something more than that. He was not only their Pattern, He was also to be their Resource. They were to have Him as their inexhaustible and all-sufficient resource for the carrying out of God's purpose in their lives in the world. He is that for us. He says: "Believe also in Me." In that short sentence He presents Himself in the fulness and power of His Deity. All that ever God had been to men in olden days—to Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel—He

would be to them, and will be to us. We do not see Him with our mortal eyes, but faith sees Him, and all that He is is at the disposal of our faith, He is indispensable, all-sufficient. "Believe also in ME."

The assembly when gathered together is the place in which the life and grace of the Lord should be manifested, it is the circle also where the authority of the Lord should be maintained. He is Lord as well as Head. Lordship first and then Headship is the order of the truth. I would connect authority with verse 34 of chap. 13. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." He is the Lord and has the right to command. He is not said to be Lord of the assembly, He is Head of the assembly; but He is certainly Lord *in* the assemblies when they are gathered. They are the circles where His rights and authority must be owned. I know those who can only interpret authority as discipline, judgment, casting out, and putting away. The judgment of evil there must be, of course. I am not setting that aside, but that is abnormal, what is normal is here given to us. The command is, "Love one another." If we are subject to the Lord, we shall exercise ourselves in this. "By this," He says, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love not in word only, but in deed, love such as finds its expression in service, in self-sacrificing service. Of which our Lord gave us the pattern.

It calls for the setting self on one side, of making little of self and much of our fellow-members. Paul trod this path in his self-sacrificing service. He endured all things for the sake of the elect, because they were precious to Christ. This is only possible as Christ displaces self. A man is self-centred until he meets Christ. You never wished to be anybody else but yourself until you saw Christ. You

were full of self-love until you saw Him, then you became sick of self, didn't you?

Many of you are young in the faith, and you have not learnt much about yourselves yet, but what you have learnt has not pleased you; nor have you learnt much about Jesus, but all you have learnt has delighted you. The more you know of Him the more will you abhor self, until you will be glad to look upon self as a condemned criminal and have Christ instead for your gain—that is carrying the cross and following Him, and thus with Christ instead of self before you, you will be able to devote yourself to Him and care for those whom He calls, "Me." Then will you be living in Colossians 3. Take verse 13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." It is not here as in the Ephesian Epistles, "As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," but "as Christ hath forgiven you." It brings before us the manner and the measure of Christ's forgiveness. How has He forgiven us? He has made us part of Himself. He can have nothing against us if He has done that. I want you to understand it, He has not only pardoned every transgression, but He has made us members of His body, we are part of Himself now; we could not be nearer to Him, no relationship could be more intimate, that is how Christ has forgiven us. Now see what flows from this, "so also do ye." It is John 13. repeated. But what is the bearing of this? Well, it should be plain enough. If Christ has made us members of Himself, He has made us members one of another. If we are one with Him, so also are we one with each other, "we being many are one body." This is our calling as indicated in verse 15. Could Christians quarrel if they knew this great fact? Would there not always be the same forbearance and forgiveness towards each other as Christ, our Head, has had to

each of us? Surely, for the grace of the Head would be in the members of His body if the truth were really in power within us.

Some of us, it may be, are conscious of deadness of soul, we are not making spiritual progress. Why? Let me ask, Are there hard feelings in our hearts against any Christian on earth? Are we harbouring an unforgiving spirit, any of us, against any? That is the reason of the dearth, and all our sighing and longing and praying will be futile as long as that spirit remains.

The Holy Ghost is grieved; the truth of our oneness with Christ and one another is denied, and the devil is delighted if we are not forbearing one another and forgiving one another as Christ has forgiven us. A poet has put into Paul's lips:

"O men and women, whom I sought and slew,
When I meet you in the heavenly places
How shall I weep to Stephen and to you?"

But let none of us postpone our weeping. If we have wronged any fellow-member of the body of Christ, if we have been overbearing instead of forbearing, hard and vindictive instead of forgiving, let us weep now, and confess it now as sin, sin not merely against a brother or sister, but against Christ. Then restored to the Lord and reconciled to those from whom we have been estranged, we may have Him afresh before us as our Pattern, and learning of Him become like Him. There is grace enough in Him for this, for He is Lord and He is Head, and as we know this we shall live in Colossians 3., teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.

THE DEATH OF THE LORD.

[I]t is impossible to find two words, the bringing together of which has so important a meaning as the DEATH of the LORD. How many things are comprised in that "He who is called the Lord has died"! What love! What purposes! What efficacy! What results!

Let us remember that between Jesus, as He was in Himself, and death there subsisted no connection. He was without sin, without spot or blemish. He had never transgressed the law. In Him Satan could find nothing; on Him death had no claim. Yet He tasted death. No power could have killed Him. "No man taketh My life from Me," He said, "I lay it down of Myself." Yet He died, the Lord died, He tasted death. His death was a free, voluntary, spontaneous act, and yet an act of obedience, for this commandment He had received from His Father. Yet He *tasted* death, all that is in death, whether as the curse of a broken law, or the power of Satan, or

the dissolver of man's constitution, or the judgment of God, or whatever else is in it was concentrated in the cup that He drank upon the cross. The sweat of blood in Gethsemane was in anticipation of it; it was not it. It was on the cross that He tasted it. He tasted it as the consequence of sin and the judgment of God upon it. He, the sinless One, knew what sin was in its loathsomeness, its apostasy from God, its subservience to the devil, its contrariety to the will of God. He saw the true value of sin Godward and manward; upward to the throne of holiness and downward to the bottomless abyss; in its depths and everlasting consequences He perceived it, and He knew the just displeasure and indignation of God against it. And this, more terrible than all beside, He endured for us. None can explain what this meant to Him. Only by that cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" could it find expression, and let us remember it was for us.

WITH CHRIST.

Fulness of Joy.

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

"COMPANY is better than property."

This old saying of a well-known servant of God embodies important truth for all believers, truth which shines out in the greatest clearness in the Word of God. And many are the forms in which it is presented with regard to the Christian. Let us consider, briefly, some of them.

In order to secure our company with Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His life. So we read in 1 Thess. 5. 10, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep (whether we are still alive or have already fallen asleep when He comes) *we should live together with Him.*"

He died for our sins. He died to deliver us from the fear of death. He died to close our sinful history as part of a fallen race. All this is true, blessedly true, but more than all these He had in view this, "that we should co-live, live-in-partnership-with Himself."

He would gain our presence as His companions in suitability to Himself. It was this He valued and for which He delivered Himself up.

And is not this seen in the days of His earthly way? "He ordained twelve *that they should be with Him* and that He might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3. 14). They were to be *with Him*—this was first. Then they were to be *for Him* in service.

Mark this well, ye Christian workers. Our Communion with Him is more than our Commission for Him, and may we not add that it is in proportion as we company with Him that our service for Him will be effectual for His praise? In His presence it is that we learn His thoughts, we catch His spirit, we are formed after His mind. If we were more in the secret with Him, we should become more like Him in the way we serve. And our labours would not be

less, for His grace towards men would prompt us to go forth diligently to seek the needy and the lost in communion with His own mind.

"Go forth and serve Him while 'tis day,
Nor leave our sweet retreat."

Later in His life of ministry we read (John 6. 3), "Jesus went up into a mountain and there He sat with His disciples." That which transpired before the coming of the multitude we know not. What He said to them or they to Him is not told. But this is recorded, "*He sat with His disciples.*" Did He not find delight in their being "at home" with Him, as they did in being allowed to consort with Himself?

And this was in happiest accord with what had been declared of old, "My delights were with the sons of men (Prov. 8. 31). He *rejoiced* in the *habitable* parts of His earth. "Immanuel . . . *God with us.*"

He loved them, and love ever finds its deepest joy in the nearness of the loved ones. Wonderful indeed that the Son of God should thus be found joying with such as ourselves in the reciprocation of affection.

Again this is seen on the last night before the cross, with all its shame and suffering. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22. 15), are the words which tell His heart's deep love. And that was the occasion when He, in His desire to be remembered by His own, instituted the Lord's supper to be observed "till He come." Love loves love. And did He not give us this love-keepsake because He delights in having even two or three gathered together where He can be with them in their midst, and from their midst sing praise to the Father whose Name He has made known to them?

It was on this same occasion that He said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My

temptations" (Luke 22. 28). He does not refer to their apostleship or preaching on His behalf. He emphasizes the fact that they had remained with Him in His time of rejection. This had been a comfort to Him. Others had gone away. These had been constant. In His tender grace He passes over all their fickleness and all their lack of intelligence, and only recalls to them that they have stayed with Him amid the trials and difficulties of His way.

And it is His presence which will make our heaven. Many and varied have been the imaginings of men as to what will constitute the happiness of those in the courts of bliss. Scripture tells us very little of what those joys will be. It shows that death and woe and pain and night and sorrow will all be over, but of the more positive side it declares but little.

But is not this with a purpose? The eyes of the believer are not turned to look at things; our hopes are centred in Christ. He is to fill the vision, and His being there is to be the secret of eternal happiness in the Father's house. "That where I am ye may be also."

Thus we read of the Lord's word of consolation to the penitent thief beside Him at Calvary, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23. 43). And again, in the parable which presents His coming again, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage (Matt. 25. 10).

For the Christian who now departs, it is to be "*With Christ*" which is "far better" than the deep joys of active service for Him among His own or in the Gospel here. "Absent from the body," the believer is present—at home—*with the Lord*. The spirit there while waiting for a body of glory like Christ's.

This finishing touch will be made at our Lord's return. Then, whether raised or changed, His own will be caught up together and so be for ever *with the Lord*. The ultimate of blessing is reached thus.

And may we not say that it is this

for which He looks? As we have seen, He told the loved ones that if He left them it was but to prepare a place for them, and promised that He would come again in order to receive them to Himself, that where He was they might be also. Consistently with this it is that He prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be *with ME* where I am" (John 17. 24). Is not the height of His joy that His own—the gift of His Father's love—will be in His company eternally, as theirs will be to be with Him?

"He and I, in that bright glory,
One deep joy shall share;
Mine to be for ever with Him,
His that I am there."

So also in His kingdom in glory. He will display His approval of His own who have been overcomers in the world by associating them with Himself. "They shall walk *with Me* in white" (Rev. 3. 4).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit *with Me* in My throne" (Rev. 3. 21).

Blessed indeed is our joyful prospect. We are to be in His company for ever and to know the deep delight of being in perfect accordance with His own mind for us and objects of His pleasure eternally.

In the joy of this thought, an aged Christian shepherd, when giving praise to the Lord, said, "Lord Thou hast not only fitted us for Thy presence, but Thou hast fitted us for Thine own love to rest on with delight for ever."

We might have been blessed with forgiveness of sins and with everlasting salvation and yet have been left at some distance from Himself. This would not have satisfied, however, His love. He has brought us into such nearness that it could not be exceeded. And so He is our joy and, wonder of wonders, we are His joy as we wait for the glad hour of which we sing:—

"For ever with the Lord,
For ever like Him then;
We'll see His face in that blest place,
Our Father's house in heaven."

“STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING.”

(F. B. HOLB.)

IN many respects a distinct likeness can be traced between the state of things which existed in Corinth and in the Corinthian assembly, as depicted in Paul's first epistle to them, and that which prevails to-day amongst the Christians, and in the lands where English is spoken.

Corinth was a city of learning, luxury and licentiousness, and by these three things the assembly in that city was affected. The apostle put it on record that when first he came amongst them he deliberately abstained from anything like “excellency of speech or of wisdom” because he knew their tendency to over-rate human learning. “I determined,” he says, “not to know anything *among you*, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2. 2). He spoke “wisdom” elsewhere, “among them that are perfect,” but he had not done so at Corinth. A little further on in the epistle he says to them, “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you” (4. 8). So that evidently they had plenty of this world's goods and used them largely for self-gratification. Chapter 5. of the epistle is evidence of how licentiousness had crept into their midst.

Living, as we do, in lands where similar conditions prevail, we are very liable to be affected similarly to the Corinthian saints, and, there can be no doubt about it, *we have been so affected*. The apostle plainly told the Corinthians that he could not address them as spiritual, but as carnal, though there were some among them who were approved. He appealed to the parties which existed among them, with their consequent envy and strifes, as proof of their carnality. Their strifes were even brought into connection with the Lord's supper and marred the character

of that holy ordinance, as chapter 11. shows. Where has division in the professed church of God been carried to greater lengths than in the English-speaking lands? Where has more contention raged round the supper of the Lord, which is properly a symbol of unity?

The Corinthian saints combined a certain intellectual arrogance (see 8. 1 and 2) with considerable intellectual and spiritual instability, and consequently some among them were so far carried away as to deny the resurrection of the dead (see 15. 12), not perceiving that thereby they were destroying the very foundations of their faith. An intellectual and speculative religion, rather than a practical, had attractions for them; and one of the necessary features of it was that of progress or novelty, and that which appeared to be firmly held one year might be abandoned next year as new ideas were introduced. Here again, we fear, the Christians of English-speaking lands have in modern times gained an unenviable notoriety.

Ought we not, therefore, to pay particular heed to the exhortation with which Paul closed his first epistle to the Corinthians? Twice he repeated it with somewhat varying words. First he said:—

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, 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” (15. 58).

And then again:—

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity” (16. 13 and 14).

The main idea in both these passages is that of stability. We are to be stedfast or firm, and unmoveable, and if this is to be we must stand fast in the

faith. There can be no stability of Christian character unless our faith strikes its roots down deeply into the faith, and for this we must be well instructed in what the faith is: "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine," as the apostle says to Timothy. If we are to attain to this we must be diligent in our reading of the Word of God, and give it its proper place of authority in our souls. To approach it with any degree of confidence in our own intellectual abilities is fatal. We shall then begin to read our own thoughts into it rather than extracting God's thoughts from it, or we shall feel inclined to fall out with it and dispute its instructions as the Corinthians did. There seems to be almost a touch of sarcasm in the apostle's words, when he wrote, "What? came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (14. 36 and 37). In truth the Word of God came *unto* us only, never came *out from* us. Our place is to receive it humbly and implicitly, and the more spiritual we are the more fully we shall do so.

What stability is imparted to the soul that is rooted in the faith and grounded in the Word of God! The believer of worldly mind is necessarily unstable. He is more or less at the mercy of the strong currents and cross currents of human thoughts and opinions, for there are prevailing fashions in the world of thought as well as in the world of dress. Not so the believer whose faith reposes on what has been aptly termed, "the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture."

The verses that immediately precede the exhortations we are considering are very significant. Let them be carefully read. Having established the truth of resurrection as exemplified in the resurrection of Christ, the apostle shows us that we who by nature were

simply of the order of the first man, Adam, are *now* of the order of the second Man, the last Adam, by His own quickening action, and that for us resurrection will be the taking up of the image of the heavenly Man. Then all will be complete, as far as we are concerned, and in immortality and incorruptibility we shall be in all the victory which characterizes that resurrection world. But the victory is already ours by faith, since that resurrection world and its glory already shines before us through the resurrection of Jesus.

"THEREFORE," says the apostle, "be ye stedfast, unmoveable," and stedfast we are, as the risen Christ and the world of glory connected with Him, shine brightly before our faith: we then become unmoveable. Facing bonds and afflictions, and even the inroads of wolves among the flock, and an impending breakdown amongst the shepherds, the apostle could say, "But none of these things move me" (Acts 20. 24). But this was the man who could write the third chapter of Philipians as the expression of his own heart experience, which means that the risen Christ in His world of glory was the object by faith of his soul.

Further, we are to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." The Christian who, as to the faith and as to character, is most unmoveable, will be, as to service in the Lord's interests, most mobile. He will not be erratic, pursuing the uncertain zig-zag course that marks the flight of a butterfly; he will move rather with the business-like precision which marks the flight of a bee.

The Corinthians were saints who were enriched in both knowledge and utterance. (See 1. 5.) They knew much and could talk well and abundantly. In his second epistle Paul mentions that they *abounded* "in utterance and knowledge" (8. 7), but evidently they did not equally abound in the humble and laborious service of *work*. It is not otherwise to-day.

For one saint who really abounds in the work of the Lord we often find half a dozen who abound in talk or discussion, or in knowledge of how things should be done, without doing them. Yet we have the weightiest incentive to diligent work in the Lord's interests in the knowledge that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord." Vain it may appear to be as far as man and his little world are concerned; but in the Lord and as connected with the order of things established in resurrection it is not in vain.

What a story of failure is presented to us in the history of the church and of the individual servants of the Lord. Not a movement, however spiritual its beginnings, but it has collapsed or been perverted! Not a servant but there has been failure—more or less—in his mission! And in so saying we do not necessarily condemn the movement or the servant. Let the Apostle Paul be witness. A prince among faithful servants, he; and yet in his closing epistle he writes, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me," and "Demas hath forsaken me . . . only Luke is with me. . . . Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. . . . At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." Thus was he permitted to live just long enough to see his labours ending in what men would call defeat; and thus it has been ever since, only that subsequent servants less instructed and less faithful have themselves sown the seeds of defeat in the inherent defects of their own work. A Luther, for instance, is instrumental in working a great deliverance for many a saint in setting them free from the domination of the Papal system, but only to bring them into bondage by an unscriptural subservience to the State.

Yet Paul's work was not in vain. Nor was Luther's in so far as it was "in the Lord." Nor is ours to-day, subject always to the same qualification. Not one item of the work of the Lord done by any of us *in the Lord* will be found

fruitless or in vain in the day when we enter the resurrection world with all the saints. Jeremiah, who was chosen of God to be His witness in the last decadent days of Judah's history, had a most heart-breaking experience as disaster after disaster and failure after failure rolled in upon him. No word of his seemed to prosper, yet the coming day will reveal that the Word of God put into his lips did prosper in the thing whereto the Lord sent it (see Isa. 55. 11), and he will find that his work was not in vain. And then see what stability and unmoveableness marked him! What other Old Testament servant of God was made "a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land"? (Jer. 1. 18).

We live in the last days of the church's history on earth, and the times are difficult, yet we have far more abundant sources of encouragement than ever Jeremiah had. The resurrection world was not full in view of his faith as it is of ours. The victory through our Lord Jesus Christ is given to us as it never was to him. We may well watch and quit ourselves like men in this our day. The Corinthian saints were all too frequently quitting themselves like children, playing with the spiritual gifts entrusted to them as with new toys and using them to show themselves off, the meanwhile often quarrelling amongst themselves. The same tendencies are in our own hearts. Let us watch against them, and quit ourselves like men—men of faith to whom the resurrection world is more real than the poor passing world that is—and let us not sacrifice love in so doing.

"Let all your things be done with charity" or "in love" is the apostolic word; and this directly follows the word "be strong." The tendency of the strong man of the world is to carry his firmness and strength to the point

of brutality. If we quit ourselves like spiritual men and are marked by spiritual strength, we shall always act in love and be characterized by the grace that love begets. There are no exceptions to this rule, for *all* our things are to be done in love. We are no more at liberty to sacrifice love in the display of strength in ecclesiastical matters than in our ordinary and

private affairs. This the epistle itself shows, since amongst the all things to be done in love was the excommunication of the erring brother, as directed in chapter 5. Indeed, if comparison at all be permitted, we are less at liberty there, for in matters ecclesiastical we act, at least professedly, in the name of the Lord, that is, as His representatives.

NOTES AND INCIDENTS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

To-day and To-morrow.

WE have no power over to-morrow, then let us not be full of anxious care about it, our peace of mind lies in trusting God for to-day, and leaving to-morrow in His hands.

The hairs of our head are numbered, which means that those things in our lives which are too insignificant in our eyes to be noticed at all are matters of interest to our Father in heaven.

How could prayer to One who is so interested in us be in vain? The knowledge of His care of us in the smallest things should encourage us in every thing to pray and with our prayers to give thanks. The better we know Him the more will we pray, and the more we pray the more will we turn to His Word. Hearing His word and speaking to Him in prayer, with the obedience that comes from hearkening and the supplies of grace and mercy that come through prayer make up our practical Christian life.

We have to do with God to-day. We may leave to-morrow to Him. He is our God, our Father to-day, He will be the same to-morrow when we meet it. The Lord did not teach His disciples to pray about to-morrow, but "Give us this day our daily bread."

Giving Thanks.

He knew what he was talking about who said, "The best sauce to any meal is a thankful heart." Yes, to receive

our food from God with thanksgiving gives a relish to the plainest meal that no sumptuous banquet possesses. Yet how often it is forgotten by Christians. What a rare thing it is, for instance, to see a head bowed over a meal in thanksgiving to God in a public restaurant. So seldom is it seen that a friend of mine told me that when he did it recently the waiter inquired anxiously, "Anything wrong with the soup, sir?" But the Christian has not only to give thanks for the countless benefits that he and his receive, but also for all men, for so we are told in 1 Timothy 2. I called upon a Christian baker. He supplied a large part of the small town in which he lived with bread, and there were piles of loaves all round awaiting distribution. I saw the meaning then of giving thanks on behalf of all men. "Why," I said to him, "you can exercise your priestly privilege here in your bakehouse. You know that many who will receive these loaves will never think of lifting their voices in thanksgiving to God for them, but you can do it on their behalf before ever they leave your premises. You can thank God for His kindness and care and His provision for those who never even acknowledge Him or give thanks to Him for His good gifts." And so can every Christian. And this thanksgiving for others that can be exercised in a thousand ways leads to blessed communion with God, and our hearts are made very sensible of His exceeding goodness and mercy.

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE.—Chapter 1. continued.

(J. A. TRENCH.)

VERSE 15. Image is representation.

Adam was made in God's image ; he held the place of representing and presenting God. But Christ (of whom he was the figure) is the image of the invisible God. In His own essential Being God is invisible, dwelling in inaccessible light, whom no man hath seen or can see (1 Tim. 6. 16). In Christ incarnate He has made Himself known (John 1. 18). He is characteristically the living representation of the blessed God, and this as Man. And so it will be for ever. If the Gospel is the light of the glory of Christ He is the image of God (2 Cor. 4. 4) ; "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

If as the Image we have His place Godward, in "the Firstborn of every creature," it is that which He has in relation to the creature, in virtue of being the One, "in" whom characteristically (as the Son of His love), "by" whom instrumentally, and "for" whom as the end and object of the whole, all things were created. This necessitates that if He takes a place in creation He must be the Firstborn in rank and dignity, hence the object of angels' worship (cf. Heb. 1. 6). It is part of the pre-eminence "in all things" that is His, which also includes the place He has taken in resurrection, *i.e.*, what He *becomes*, "Head of the body, the assembly ; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." But verse 17 gives what *He is* in Himself "before all things," not merely Firstborn as a consequence of being their Creator, nor indicating pre-existence as to time, but as Divine in nature and wholly above all.

The church—or "assembly," as truer to the original—is defined to be the body of which He is Head in resurrection, as in verse 24, and chapter 2. 19 ; though as may be observed, it is not the object of the apostle to bring out its place and relationship and fulness of blessing, as in Ephesians, but to

occupy us with the glory of the Head which is given in far fuller development. The assembly is indeed a living organism instinct with the life of its risen Head ; and everywhere, save in Ephesians 1., involves either all who are Christ's on the earth at any given time since Pentecost, or those of any locality who are regarded as the body in that place—a corporate assembly by its constitution, even though all might not be assembled. But the next point brings us back to the connection of the apostle's thought.

Verse 19.—Read "For in Him all the Fulness was pleased to dwell." It is the glory of His Person as manifested on earth. He who is the Son could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" ; and as to the Spirit, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" shows what was in the apostle's mind—all the Fulness of the Godhead—Father, Son and Spirit.

The Fulness is said to make peace, through the blood of the cross. All the Divine Fulness manifested here in Him personally did not suffice to do this, but only drew out the irreconcilable enmity of the flesh against God ; such the heart of man. It needed that His blood should be shed as the righteous basis of any true reconciliation of the creature. But thus peace has been made by the full settlement of every question of sin, for the glory of God, in His blood-shedding. And it only remained that by Him all things should be reconciled to the Godhead Fulness ; for the reconciliation will extend out to all things in earth or heaven. The object of the Spirit will be seen (when once the unwarrantable insertion of "the Father" in the text by the A.V. is removed) to be to bring out in the fullest way the glory of the Person of the Son, as though by concentrating the mind upon it, the Colossian saints might be delivered once for all from the beguiling systems of the flesh, reasoning and religion that

tended to obscure the brightness of it. Thus the work of the cross is His in whom the Fulness dwells, and the effects when produced are to reconcile all things to itself as part of the Divine good pleasure.

It is strong evidence of this design that the Spirit is only once mentioned in this epistle, though brought in at every aspect of the truth in Ephesians. Here He keeps Himself in the background to absorb all hearts with the glory of Christ.

The *peace making* lies in the work that has been done: it is "having made peace through the blood of the cross."

The *reconciliation* is the effect, not yet applied to the sphere of verse 16, but that has begun with the most opposed of all His creatures (verse 21), man alienated from Him, as he alone, in heart, mind, and will.

All things are going to be reconciled unto Him:—

1. By the created scene being brought into harmony with the mind of its Creator. Many passages in the Old Testament present this: 2 Samuel 23. 3, 4; Isaiah 32. 15–20; Psalms 147–151 may be referred to.

2. "Things upon earth and things in the heavens" are not persons: they are distinguished in verse 20, where the reconciliation has yet to take place, and verse 21, where it has been accomplished in those to whom it has been and is being applied. Verse 20 can speak of "all things," but there is no trace of such language as to persons.

Only believers are reconciled. No effect is produced by the word of the Gospel when it is not mixed with faith in them that hear it. Reconciliation surely supposes an effect produced in the believer, a total change from the dark distance and enmity and alienation of the past to the terms of confidence and peace and joy in which the reconciled one is with God, the sweetest fruit of the Gospel; but the producing power of that change is a work wrought

outside the believer in the cross, where every question of sin was gone into as it affected the glory of God, and where to faith there is an end "in the body of His flesh through death" of all that state of mind which nothing but the judgment of God could meet; with the result that as we have been delivered from the realm of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, we are only waiting to be presented "holy and unblameable and irreproachable in His sight."

All Christians will be presented unblameable (verse 22) assuredly; as it depends upon the work of Christ. Only that as the Christian though risen with Christ is contemplated as walking upon earth, the "if" of verse 23 comes in, warning of the need of continuance in the faith and the danger of being moved away from the power of heavenly hope.

Q.—*Are professors contemplated in verse 23?*

If you mean mere professors, it is not so. The warnings of Scripture would have no effect upon them; the true believer it is who is kept by them. They mark the sunken rocks on the chart to be avoided. I say to my child, "If you fall over that precipice you will be dashed to pieces"; it is not that I mean to let him fall over. But the moral effect upon the child is important, it makes him cling close to me.

"To every creature under heaven" is the world-wide aspect of the Gospel. The apostle has brought out the double headship or pre-eminence of Christ; as to all creation in verses 15–17, then as the Head of the body, the new beginning of everything in resurrection. To these have answered the reconciliation of all things in earth and heaven (verse 20), and of those who form His body the assembly (verses 21, 22). And now we have the double aspect of the apostle's ministry, that of the Gospel to every creature (verse 23), and of the assembly from verse 24, correlative with the Headship, and reconciliation present and future.

CAN "THE HIGHER CRITICS" BE TRUSTED?

No. 2.

(JAMES BOYD.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

THESE critics do not always begin with the first of Genesis in their ceaseless struggles against the Bible and its Author, but they are ever found to have a strong inclination to hark back to it. Some of them seem to hold very tenaciously to the Apostle's Creed, and therefore do not deny that God made the heaven and the earth. But they are very careful to assure us that they in no wise believe He made it in the manner described in Gen. 1. These critics tell us:

"The science of the first chapter of Genesis is the science of the age in which it was written; but upon this imperfect, and in many respects false science, its author, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, has grafted a wonderfully sublime and spiritual representation of the Sovereign Author of nature, conceiving and presenting Him as a purely spiritual Being; who, moulding the material substance of the universe to His will, adapts the world gradually, by successive stages, to become the abode of lower and higher forms of life, and (ultimately) of beings endowed with reason, and who assigns to every living species upon it its proper office and function." "And so when we pass to the second and third chapters of the same book, though it is true, we can hardly, any more than in the first chapter, be reading a literal history, we have brought before us, in a pictorial or symbolical form, adapted to the comprehension of men for whose spiritual instruction the narrative was first written, deep thoughts about God and man, how man was created by God, and placed by Him in a position designed to develop his capabilities, and test his character; how he was at first innocent; how he became—as man must have become, whether in Eden or elsewhere, at some period of

his existence—conscious of a moral law, but how temptation fell upon him, and he broke it."

Now one would like to know what science has got to do with: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." One might ignorantly speak of this as the conception of the human mind, but the statement in itself could not have anything to do with science, which concerns the discoveries resulting from research. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things that are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11. 3). Everything that God does He does by His Word: to this fact all Scripture bears united testimony. He wills the thing to be; He commands, and it exists. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33. 6). "Upholding all things by the Word of His power" (Heb. 1. 3). By His Word He created all things, and by His Word they subsist. With this, science has nothing to do.

And in all its solitary grandeur stands this statement at the beginning of God's glorious revelation. Alone it stands, and irresponsible for anything that hereafter could be said of that creation, or of any part of it. After its own order it shines out as perfect as the wisdom and the power of God could make it. Whatever might subsequently happen to it through the wickedness of any of His creatures, who might be found to manifest insubordination, does not alter the fact that it was created absolutely perfect, for infinite perfection characterizes everything that He does (Deut. 32. 4), and nothing less than perfection can He demand from His creature. In verse 2 we read: "The earth was without form and void

(waste and empty), and darkness was upon the face of the deep." No one who knows God would expect Him to create a thing in such a condition as that; nor did He, for, speaking by the Spirit, Isaiah says: "He created it not waste; He formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45. 18). In Gen. 1. we have its creation, in verse 2 its ruin; and then we have His forming it as a habitation for His creatures. And this, say the critics, was the cosmogony of the ancients, upon which the author of Genesis "*grafted this wonderfully sublime and spiritual representation of the Sovereign Author of nature*"; making, I suppose, a sort of standard rose out of a wild briar! Into what utter darkness the conceit of these men has driven them!

The power that was allowed to reduce the earth to the state of chaos described here has not been made known to us, but an evil power we may be assured it was, and we know that there was an evil power in the universe before the fall of man; neither are we told what kind of creatures they were who had their dwelling here, nor how long their tenure of earth lasted. We can only conclude by the ruin in which it was found before God began to form it for the dwelling of man that some terrible revolt by the creature had taken place, which drew upon the whole scene the judgment of God. That God did not create it waste we are told, and that it eventually was found waste is also affirmed, and that perhaps is all we have got to do with. Heaven does not seem to have undergone any change; the earth only is said to be waste and empty. The heaven spoken of in Exod. 20. 11 is, I have no doubt, the heaven that God is said to make in verses 7 and 8 of chapter 1., not the heaven in the first verse.

Now all this chapter is not only given by inspiration of God, but it is also a revelation from God. I do not say a revelation of God, for we must come to the New Testament for this. Until the Son of God came into the

world it is said: "No man hath seen God at any time," but when Jesus came to earth this could be said no longer, for: "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). This is no polishing up of the drivellings of the human mind in darkness and error. A dishonest man might patch up something that was erroneous by adding a little modicum of truth, and palm off such a mixture on the public; but what kind of unhallowed mind must a man be possessed of who would entertain such a thought about the living and true God? It was necessary to give the people He had chosen for Himself such an account of the creation and making of the worlds, in order that they might know that the God who had spoken to them by Moses and by angelic means was the God who had created all things, for among all the surrounding nations of the earth there were gods many, and even the people out from the midst of whom He had called their father Abraham had been, and still were, worshippers of false gods. But He who gave this revelation, and caused Moses to make a record of it, watched over it throughout the millenniums of this world's history, that we might have it as light in this day in which that which professes the name of Christ prefers the darkness, and would lead us back into it if we did not withstand them.

There are also other reasons for His watchful care over it, and one of these reasons is the typical nature of the record, for the Old Testament is full of type, shadow, and prophetic outlook. The evolutionist—and I fancy all these Higher Critics are of that class—will tell us that we all have risen from the lowest form of life, and that the gradual steps in that ascent are so clearly marked that it is impossible to mistake the fact, if we are willing to give close attention to them. Now this chapter shows us that man was the great thought of the Creator, and that he was to have dominion over

everything that God had made upon earth. But if he was to take such a place as this it was necessary that he should have the knowledge of the various forms of life that were placed under his authority; that is, that there had to be an affinity between him and the lowest creature. He could not otherwise exercise dominion. Hence all living creatures stand in some relation to the head, some nearer and some more distant. But the fear of him and the dread of him was placed upon all. Man was the creature that was in the mind of God, and all the creatures of the earth were to look up to him, and between him and them there was an affinity, so that when brought before him he could name them every one according to their nature. They were all formed with relation to him.

And this only foreshadowed the position the last Adam shall have over all in the day when "every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father," for God has raised Him from the dead, "And set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephes. 1. 20-23). Adam lost his place at the outset, but for ever is Christ supreme in the whole universe of God. There shall be no failure with Him.

And as Adam had his bride given to him of God, so shall Christ have His Bride when the day comes in which He shall take to Himself His great power and shall reign. But this brings us to the second chapter, which, the critics tell us, is the work of another historian than the one who gave us the first chapter. But why should this be

thought? Well, it is an entirely different account of the making of man, and instead of "Elohim" only, as in the first, we have "Jehovah Elohim." But how could we have the latter name in the first chapter where it is simply God's bringing into existence the animal and vegetable kingdom, as we speak? Jehovah is the name He assumes when His creature, man, is to be considered. He speaks of Himself as Jehovah, which seems to mean self-existing and unchanging (Exod. 3. 14, 15; Mal. 3. 6). I fail to see where *Jehovah* could come in in chapter 1., for there it is not man in relation with God, but with relation to the creation that God had just formed. I need scarcely say that the first three verses of the second chapter belong to the first.

But it was absolutely necessary for our instruction that we should be made acquainted with the contents of the second chapter, for how else were we to see the way in which man received being, in contrast with all the other creatures that were placed under his headship; the relationship in which he stood to God, a relationship in the setting forth of which it was necessary to introduce the additional name of *Jehovah*; the position and surroundings in which he was placed, a garden prepared for him in which was every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the centre? Placed also on the footing of responsibility there was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which tested that responsibility.

But as the Creator saw it was not good that man should be alone, a helpmeet was made for him. But this companion that was made for him was part of himself, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh: she was called woman for she was taken out of man: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." In this we see a foreshadowing of the death of Christ, and the formation of

His Bride while He is, as far as this world is concerned, dead, though the believer knows Him in resurrection glory.

We are again told by the critics that this chapter brings before us: "How man was created by God, and placed by Him in a position designed to develop his capabilities, and test his character; how he was at first innocent; how he became—as man must have become, whether in 'Eden' or elsewhere, at some period of his existence—conscious of a moral law, but how temptation fell upon him, and he broke it." Broke what? The moral law? He ate of a tree of which it would have been no harm to eat if it had not been forbidden by God. He became conscious of a *moral* law after he had eaten the forbidden fruit, for by that act of disobedience he gained a conscience and the knowledge of good and evil, which he had not previously. He could now, apart from law, distinguish between good and evil, but had also to experience that the evil had power over him, and the good he was unable to do.

The fact is, these men will not let us have the Scriptures in the way in which they themselves say that God has given them. The folklore and the truth, they tell us, the fact and the fable are so intermingled, and made so contemptible by this intermingling, that men of intelligence and taste can no longer have any confidence in it. However, these men are going to give us a better book. They have arisen to show us how much better they can do for us than God. They will purge it from its false science, its inaccuracies, its corruptions, its falsehoods, and its power of doing mischief to souls!

And after they have pointed out all these errors to us so that, if we believed them, we would be wondering what kind of a God we had been putting our trust in, they tell us that: "Our sense of the worth of the Old

Testament need know no change; it will still remain the record of God's gradual revelation of Himself to His people Israel." When we read such preposterous folly, we wonder if we are really listening to sane men, or to misanthropical deceivers who take their readers to be imbecile. The utter wickedness and presumption of these critics are appalling! They tell us that their facts are not to be "crushed by denunciation." I do not suppose that anyone is attempting to crush their facts (?) by any such means. But I would ask these men what they would think of a physician who, while professing great love for his fellow-men, and treating all his patients free, mixed every bottle of his medicine with most deadly poison; or how they would regard the man that, when the evil was discovered, made every effort to prove that, though there was really only a modicum of good medicine in the mixture, and all the rest poison, its curative value was unimpaired.

But if we trust these men we must believe that the living God is faithfully represented by this physician. They inform us that He has put into our hands as a guide to eternal happiness, and for the health of our souls, a Book the greater part of which is absolutely false, and nothing but the imagination of the fallen creature; and that into this Book God has by His servants put a modicum of truth, which may not be all truth either, and He has given it to us without telling us that the greater part of that which we read is a lie, and a lie of the worst kind, for it is a lie against Himself, affirming that He has said things He never said, and that He has done things He never did. This Book is your guide to everlasting happiness, and you go there with your mind stuffed with lies against the God you have to meet. And yet the God who has given you that Book has said that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21. 8).

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT:

(H. P. BARKER.)

Is it a Thing for Christians to Seek ?

ONE finds great prominence given in certain circles to teaching concerning the baptism of the Spirit. As a result, two classes of persons have arisen :—

1. Persons who believe that they have received this "Baptism," and who claim to have reached a plane of spirituality loftier than that upon which the majority of their fellow-Christians dwell.

2. Persons who are bitterly disappointed at the failure of their quest for this "Baptism," whose souls, filled with doubt and darkness as a result, become tinged with a measure of unbelief, and often settle down under a cloud of spiritual depression.

The subject is more or less a controversial one. We shall do well, therefore, to adhere closely to the Scriptures in our consideration of it.

There are seven principal words used in the New Testament in connection with the presence and work of the Holy Spirit :—

1. Born (John 3. 5, 6).
2. Indwelt (2 Timothy 1. 14 ; Romans 8. 11).
3. Sealed (2 Cor. 1. 22 ; Ephes. 1. 13 ; 4. 30).
4. Earnest (2 Cor. 1. 22 ; Ephes. 1. 14).
5. Anointed (2 Cor. 1. 21 ; 1 John 2. 27).
6. Filled (Luke 1. 15, 41, 67 ; Acts 4. 8 ; 9. 17), etc., etc.
7. Baptized.

These words are by no means interchangeable, nor do any two of them mean quite the same. Each has its own significance. This should at once be recognized by all who believe that the very words of Scripture are what Psalm 14. 6 affirms them to be : "pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of

earth, purified seven times," that is, entirely free from admixture of human dross. There is design in the selection and use of the very words of the Scriptures.

Let us now examine the passages that definitely speak of the Baptism of the Spirit. There are first what we may call the prophetic, or anticipatory, passages. The first is in Matthew 3. 11. John the Baptist says :—

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance ; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

There are parallel passages in Mark 1. 8 and Luke 3. 16. In John 1. 33 is another passage in which the Lord Jesus is indicated as the One who should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

The remaining passage, of those that we have called prophetic, or anticipatory, is in Acts 1. 5. Here the Lord Himself, after His resurrection, speaks of the promise as yet to be fulfilled, and specifies the time of the Baptism as "not many days" from the time when He was speaking.

These passages, the four from the Gospels and the one from the Acts, cover a period of some three years and a half. During the whole of this period the promise remained unfulfilled. The Baptism was still future.

Yet during this period the servants of Christ achieved some very remarkable results. They preached the Gospel and healed the sick everywhere they went (Luke 9. 6). They cast out demons (Mark 6. 13), and found them forced to subjection (Luke 10. 17). All this, observe, *without any baptism of the Spirit*. On one occasion they failed. On inquiring as to the reason, the Lord did not bid them seek "a

fuller baptism of the Spirit," but informed them that the particular kind of demon that they had failed to cast out, could only be dealt with by prayer and fasting.

The baptism of the Spirit, then, was not necessary for the accomplishment of these wonders, nor for preaching the Gospel, while the Lord was on earth.

Let us next examine the first passage that speaks of the Baptism of the Spirit—Matthew 3.—with care. Note that the prediction affirms that the Lord Jesus would baptize

1. With the Holy Ghost.
2. With fire.

With one or the other every soul of those who heard John speak would be baptized.

What does the *fire* signify? It is spoken of in Matt. 3. three times:—

1. Verse 10: Every unfruitful tree would be cast into the *fire*.
2. Verse 11: Christ would baptize with *fire*.
3. Verse 12: He would burn up those who were mere "chaff" with unquenchable *fire*.

Beyond all question, then, the fire signifies *judgment*.

If it be asked, Why should John speak so much of judgment? the answer lies in the fact that so many were listening to him whom he could only call a "generation of vipers" (verse 7). For them, unless they repented, there was only the baptism of fire, a baptism of "judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10. 27).

In Luke 3. we find the same thing; but in Mark 1. no mention is made of the baptism with fire, but only of the baptism with the Holy Ghost; for in that chapter no "generation of vipers" is in view, but a company "confessing their sins" (verse 5).

Is it not abundantly clear, then, that during the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, and up to the day of Pentecost,

there was no baptism of the Spirit? It was always referred to as a thing yet to take place.

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There is one Scripture which deals with the subject of the Baptism of the Spirit in what we may call a doctrinal way: 1 Cor. 12. 13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

The reading in the Revised Version "WERE we all baptized" is a more correct rendering, and is preferable to that of the Authorized Version, in that the Baptism of the Spirit is not a state or condition, but a historic event that had taken place.

Let three things be particularly noticed in this verse:—

1. HOW MANY of the Corinthian believers were baptized with the Spirit? ALL. This is distinctly affirmed.

Some of these believers were quarrelsome and sectarian in spirit (chap. 1. 11, 12); they were carnal, and walked "as men" (3. 3); some were going to law with their brethren before unbelievers (6. 6); some were even turning the Lord's Supper into an occasion for drunkenness (11. 21, 22) They were by no means exemplary Christians, and again and again the Apostle rebukes them for their fleshly ways. Yet, since they had truly believed in Christ (Acts 18. 8) they were children of God, washed, sanctified and justified (chap. 6. 11). As such, they had shared in the baptism of the Spirit; yes, *all* of them.

2. WITH WHAT OBJECT were the Corinthian believers baptized with the Spirit? Not to specially empower them for testimony and service. At least, this was not the primary object. Nor was it that they might enjoy any exalted experience. It was that they might thereby be united to Christ, their glorified Head, and to one another, as members of His body. The great object of the baptism of the Spirit was

the formation of the Body of Christ. Believers thereby ceased to be a mere company of individuals brought together by a bond of common interests. By the baptism of the Spirit they were transformed into members of a living organism.

For this is what the church of God is. The human body is used in 1 Cor. 12. as a figure of it. Now the human body is not an *organization*, with a president, secretary, treasurer and committee of control. It is an *organism*, with the same life in every part of it, and governed by the head.

In the days of Malachi those that feared the Lord often met together to speak of Him, and wait upon Him in prayer. But they were not members of an organism. No baptism of the Spirit had formed saints into a Body in those days. But in Christianity this marvellous thing has come to pass.

Be it noted, then, that no *individual* is ever said to have been baptized with the Spirit. No *individual* is ever bidden to seek such a baptism. It is a corporate and collective thing. This cannot be too strongly emphasized.

3. WHEN were the Corinthian believers baptized with the Spirit?

Mark the only possible answer: *Not at any time within their own spiritual experience!*

Let me ask the reader's most careful attention to this point. Unless we understand it, we shall never seize the real significance of the Baptism of the Spirit.

Let me illustrate what I mean. In 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2 we read: "*All* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea, and were *all* baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Well, we read of some of the "fathers" in Acts 28. 25. They lived some hundreds of years after the crossing of the Red Sea, yet it is distinctly said "*all* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea."

Again, in Amos 2. 10, Jehovah says

to His erring people: "I brought YOU up from the land of Egypt, and led YOU forty years through the wilderness." As a matter of fact the people addressed had never been in Egypt or the wilderness. They lived hundreds of years after the Exodus. Yet they are said to have shared in that wonderful deliverance.

In like manner, the Corinthian believers had not been actually present on the occasion of the great historic Baptism of the Spirit. But just as the "fathers" of Isaiah's day, and the Israelites addressed by Amos were spoken of as having been the subjects of the great deliverance from Egypt, in that by their birth as Israelites they had become a part of the people thus favoured by God, so the Christians at Corinth are spoken of as having been baptized by the Spirit in that they, being indwelt by the Spirit of God through their reception of the Gospel, had become a part of the wonderful organism, the Body of Christ.

Personally and literally neither the Corinthian Christians (nor any who have lived subsequently) were baptized with the Spirit, any more than those referred to in Amos 2. 10 were personally and literally brought up from Egypt. But each one, as he received the Gospel, was sealed with the Spirit of God, thus becoming an integral part of that company which was formed by the Baptism of the Spirit into one body.

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We now come to the third group of passages that relate to the baptism of the Spirit—the historical, or narrative, Scriptures, that describe, or refer to, the actual event.

Acts 2. is the chapter that gives us in detail the account of how the Lord's promise that the disciples should "be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1. 5) was fulfilled. The actual words "baptism" and "baptize" are not used in this chapter with reference to this great event, but

that it *was* the promised baptism is abundantly clear from Acts I. 5; II. 15, 16.

It is spoken of as a *pouring forth* of the spirit (Acts 2. 33, R.V.). And a later *pouring out* of the Spirit (Acts 10. 45, to which we shall presently refer) is said to have been after the same manner as the way He was given at Pentecost: "as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11. 15).

Again, we notice, as in 1 Cor. 12. the word *all*. The hundred and twenty disciples, men and women, were *all* with one accord in one place. Suddenly the Spirit was "poured forth" and filled them *all* (verse 4). The baptism included every one present, and the result was, that the Body of Christ was formed. The hundred and twenty became members of a living organism, united to their Head in heaven in this wonderful way.

There were other results. A sound was heard as of a rushing mighty wind; cloven tongues, like as of fire, sat on each disciple. Previously God had made His angels winds (Heb. 1. 7, R.V.) and a flame of fire. If God desired to make some great wind blow in the souls of men, or some fire of zeal and enthusiasm to burn and glow, He brought it to pass by the service of His angels. But that was superseded at Pentecost by the gift of the Spirit. Henceforward *He* would be the origin of any mighty wind of God among the sons of men; *He* would be the author of any bright flame that God should kindle.

Now, in that the disciples were all "filled with the Holy Ghost" when the Baptism took place, people have confounded the historic Baptism with the *filling* which continuously takes place, and which is enjoined upon all Christians (Ephes. 5. 18). We are exhorted to be *filled*, but, as before remarked, never to be *baptized*, with the Spirit. The difference is real and important. But of this more anon.

The earnest desire for this "filling" (or "baptism" as it is wrongly called) on the part of many is that they may be empowered for effective service, or that they may be enabled to speak with "tongues," and perform other remarkable exploits. But such control, even by the Spirit of God Himself, does not imply a state of real communion with God, nor real love to Him.

Balaam was a man thus controlled by the Spirit of God (Num. 24. 2). He was forced to utter true and marvellous things. But he himself was a reprobate, a castaway. Saul, too, was a man thus possessed on one occasion by the Spirit of God (1 Sam. 10. 6 and 10). He was "turned into another man" (that is, he was changed from a clumsy country lad into a kingly man who could fill the throne with dignity) and made to open his mouth in prophecy. It was a wonderful "sign" (verse 7), every bit as wonderful as anything done by the claimants to a special endowment of the Spirit to-day; yet Saul remained an unregenerate man, gradually going further and further from God, and ultimately becoming a spiritist, and dying under the sentence of God's anger. The possession of "sign gifts" then, is no proof of holiness or real devotion.

Yet the "signs" that accompanied the historic gift of the Spirit, and which lingered in the church during at least the first part of the life of the apostles, were of real importance in that they marked the ushering in of a new age. It had been so before. When God called Israel to be His people, their birth as a nation and deliverance from Gentile tyranny were marked by mighty "signs" and miracles in Egypt.

It will be so in the future. When the present period is ended, and the millennial age begins, its beginning will be marked by a great outpouring of the Spirit, accompanied by "wonders" (Joel 2. 28-31).

Through the Acts of the Apostles, particularly in chapters 1-12., the

narrative deals with an initiatory and transitional state of things. To this period "speaking with tongues" and similar "signs" were confined. Throughout the history of Paul's life and work, and in all his Epistles, we search in vain for any hint of a baptism of the Spirit which some believers may be without, which is evidenced by speaking with tongues, and which has to be sought.

The "filling" is another matter. We should seek to be filled with the Spirit. But let us be clear that God *does not fill us with His Spirit from the outside, but from the inside.*

A visitor to your house does not fill it. He is confined to that part of the house to which you have introduced him. If, however, you put your whole house at his disposal, and give him the key of every room and cupboard, he then *fills* the establishment. It is not that he comes in from outside. He is already there, but now he is, by your action, in complete control.

Even so it is with the Holy Spirit. We often confine Him to certain parts of our experience and life. But He desires to be in full control, to possess us entirely on behalf of Christ. When we gladly yield to His control the whole establishment of our being, He is then in undisputed charge, and in this sense, fills us. How simple, and how *reasonable*, the truth of God is!

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It remains to be explained that the great historic event of the Baptism of the Spirit took place *in two stages*. The first, recorded in Acts 2. was confined to those of Jewish birth and blood. In Acts 10. the second and final stage is described, and by means of it Gentiles were for the first time made part of the body of Christ, thus giving effect to the wonderful secret of God, see Ephes. 3. 6. We were prepared for this, were we not? in our reading of 1 Cor. 12. 13, where the apostle says: "By one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, *whether Jews or Greeks*" (R.V.). The Baptism, in the case of Jewish believers, took place on the day of Pentecost; in the case of Gentile believers it took place a little later on, in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10. 44, 45).

This latter was a true baptism of the Spirit. The words "poured out" are used, and the event is distinctly stated to have been *as it was* in the case of the Jewish believers *at the beginning*, i.e., at Pentecost (Acts 11. 15).

But from that day on, we may safely say that there has been no further Baptism of the Spirit. Galatians 3. 27 has nothing to do with it, but refers to water baptism. Instead of being carried away by vehement exhortations to seek "a baptism," or "a fresh baptism" of the Spirit, how much better to examine the Scriptures patiently, and submit ourselves to their teaching.

THE UNKNOWN ONE:

(H. J. VINE.)

Who "Knew all men" and "all things."

"HE was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not"! (John 1. 10). He bestowed favours far beyond the power of any earthly sovereign to grant, and He was accessible to the most lowly and sinful, yet He was unknown in the world He had made!

He shone as the true Light amidst the darkness of mankind, showing the state of everything, manifesting the proper relations of all in regard to God, making Him known, too, as both light and love, showing by His works and words that the Creator was present amongst men. Yet they knew Him not!

His works of grace were signs which showed forth His glory. The wine ran out at the marriage feast at Cana. He more than met the need, by Creatorial power.

The son of a certain nobleman lay sick unto death in the same town, but a word from the Lord was enough to restore the ebbing life and bring faith to the nobleman and his whole house ! For thirty-eight years the impotent man lay almost hopeless, for there was no man who could help him at the pool of Bethesda. He was immediately made strong when the Lord said to him, "Arise, take up thy couch and walk." A vast throng of five thousand men beside women and children were fainting with hunger, from a boy's five barley loaves and two small fishes He more than met their need ! Still He was unknown ! Some said, "This is truly the Prophet which is coming into the world !" And when they would have seized Him and made him King, He departed from them, for He knew them ; and "Jesus did not trust Himself to *them*, because He knew all men," and also "what was in man" (see John 2.). They were not born again. But some sought Him and received Him in faith, because they recognized the true Light shining in the midst of the darkness ; to them was granted the wonderful right "to be the children of God," who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. They received Him ! They were God's children !

When the multitude found Him He said, "Ye seek Me not because ye have seen signs, but because ye have eaten of the loaves and have been filled. Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto life eternal." Where there was true faith which appropriated Him and the words of eternal life which He communicated that life became theirs ; but "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe" and even the one who should betray Him. But a sinner

from the streets could respond to His grace. She had no merit or works of righteousness, but He could say to her, "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace." He never spurned or turned aside those who came in need. She loved much because she had been forgiven much. The reasoning and objections of the Pharisee's heart against the rich grace of God then shown in Jesus was known and answered by Him (Luke 7. 36-50).

"I am the Light of the world" said the Saviour, and before Him and His disciples at that time was a blind beggar sitting—blind from his birth. The Lord gave him sight in such a way that questions as to *who it was* that did so would inevitably be raised ! The answers showed Him not only to be unknown in all the activities of His grace and love, but as Isaiah had foretold seven centuries before, "Despised and rejected of men." The religious leaders said to the once blind man, "Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner." He was the unknown One ! Yea, and the rejected One ! They even cast out the subject of His gracious power ! Such is the religious heart of man when in darkness—when in ignorance of God revealed in the Son.

Lazarus had lain four days in the tomb ! Not only had mortality claimed the body, but also corruptibility, nevertheless, One who could say, "I am the resurrection and the life" appeared upon the scene of sorrow. He showed His love by His tears, and His power by His Word, and Lazarus, hearing His call, came forth, leaving the tomb and death and corruption behind ! Thus He showed Himself to be greater than any other who had appeared on earth. A Man truly, but more than a man ! "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." At that very time the chief priests and religious leaders called a council, saying, What do we ? for this Man does many signs ; and the chief priests took

counsel to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus ! Showing the dilemma in which they were and the wickedness of their folly. Did they put Lazarus to death ?—He who raised him to life before could do so again and again ! Did they slay Jesus ?—He had power to rise again, for He could not be holden of death, and indeed He did rise again, as He often told His disciples beforehand. Men knew Him not. The Light shone, but the darkness apprehended it not. He was the unknown One. He knew all, but men loved darkness rather than the Light which shone in Him. The Light was perfect in every way, but they hated the Light.

We have spoken of but a few of His works of power—the signs of the presence of God amongst men—the activities of the true Light making all things manifest. It is thus, too, that the works of true believers are connected with light, for it is said, "Let your *light* so shine before men, that they may see your good (or upright) *works*, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Again we read of "the unfruitful works of darkness" whose true character is exposed by the light which makes everything manifest. "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." This was seen in abounding perfection in the Lord Jesus. His words also told that God was amongst His creatures. Wonderful as these were, they were refused also. The Son brings both together in John 15. 22-25. What He had "*spoken*" left them without excuse for their sin, and what He had "*done*" also—"the works which none other had done." "But now," He added, "they have seen and hated both Me and My Father," for God had been fully declared in Him.

As the One through whom the world received its being, He was unknown by men when here, but as come of royal David's line according to the flesh, the sceptre, the crown and the throne of Israel were His by right. The Jews should have known this. He was their

promised Messiah—He was both God's King according to Psalm 2. and God the King according to Psalm 45., yet when He came to "His own" things—the sceptre, the crown and the throne—"His own" nation received Him not ! By the world He was unknown ; by Israel He was not received. His fore-runner, John the Baptist, when asked if *he* were the Christ, or Elias, or the promised Prophet, replied, No ! but "In the midst of you stands One whom ye know not." He explained to them that though Jesus (1) "*came after*" him, He took a place (2) "*before*" him, because He was (3) *before* him (John 1. 30). As to the first, we know that Jesus was born *in time after* John, who was sent to "prepare the way of Jehovah," and the ministry of Jesus came after him too. In regard to the second, John owned His *pre-eminence in rank*, or dignity, or position, giving the true reason, because He was before him in *the eternity of His Person*. Little wonder then that John immediately adds, in the presence of such an One, "And I knew Him not !" John was of the priestly family, and Jesus was of the royal family, and after the flesh they were related to each other. John knew Him in this way, but as the One who combined in Himself (1) subsequence in time to John (2) pre-eminence in dignity, and (3) precedence in the past—the One who was in the beginning with God, and was God (John 1. 1)—He was unknown even to John, until the Spirit descended upon Him as a dove—marking Jesus out as God had told him—then he said, "I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God."

John baptized with water, but Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is here to glorify the Son. Jesus said of Him, "He shall not speak of (or from) Himself . . . He shall glorify Me." It is because the Spirit has been given since Christ finished the work upon the cross and set Himself down on the right hand of the throne on high that those who are redeemed and

sealed can enter into these things. The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God. In his natural state man cannot know them. He must be born of water and of the Spirit before it is possible. Then the Spirit given to those who believe in Christ leads them on not only to know the blessings but the Blessor Himself. How deeply thankful we should be that this is so. Christ was the hidden Wisdom before prepared for our glory. He is ours. But none of the princes of this world knew Him, we are told, or "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2. 8). He was the unknown One to them; but since He has ascended up on high, of God are we "in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us Wisdom, . . . that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let Him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 30, 31).

Now when "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" was here we might reasonably expect words to fall from His lips that excel all that men have ever uttered. Nor is our expectation disappointed. Even His enemies bear witness—"Never man spake like this man." Men wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. A friend told me he had just been to hear an address on Christ, Confucius and Mohammed. I inquired if the speaker found any point of comparison between them. "Oh," he replied, "the lecturer gave the pre-eminence to Christ, and showed that His teachings were far higher than the others." "Then," I said, "how do you account for the fact that those utterances came from His lips before He was thirty-four years old?" "I had not thought of that," he answered. "He must have been more than a man," I said, "God Himself was here in Christ."

The disciples, though slow to rise to the full recognition of the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, had a deep sense of His omniscience: "We know that Thou knowest all things" they said. They companied with Him, and felt and observed His perfect knowledge of God, of themselves, of men, and of all else. Some in our day question what *they* never thought of questioning. Nathanael had asked Him, "Whence knowest Thou me?" We find the same thing with the woman of Sychar; and she said, "Come see a Man who told me all things I had ever done: is not this the Christ?" Ah, yes, He was there, "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 9. 5). When He was restoring Peter, after his failure which had come to pass just as Jesus told him, because of the sifting of Satan, Peter exclaimed, "Lord, Thou knowest all things!" That is the only rational explanation of His marvellous utterances; but let those who raise sceptical questions to-day remember His words to a similar religious class when He was here on earth, "Ye know neither Me nor My Father. If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also. These words spoke He in the treasury, teaching in the temple; and no one took Him, for His hour was not yet come" (John 8. 19, 20). He left them in darkness. They knew not the true God. Solemn thought for those who are turning away from the final revelation made in the Son. Even fallen spirits "knew Him to be the Christ," and in Mark 1. 24 we read of an unclean spirit crying out, "Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the holy One of God." The devils *believe* and tremble, we are told, yet men *question* now without trembling!

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Nothing in the universe has called forth the compassions of God as the welfare of the souls of men.

Never allow a single thought that would cast a slur upon the perfect goodness of God who gave His Son to die for us.

THE LIFE THAT OVERCOMES.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

QUESTION.—“If a believer has a new life and nature and also the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, why is it that he is so often overcome by sin and more or less in the struggle described in Romans 7.”?

The following report of Addresses on Romans 8. 1-14, given in Sydney, N.S.W., about a year ago, may help some whose difficulties may be expressed in the above question which was handed to us a few weeks ago.

IT is God's intention that His children should live lives free and fruitful, to this end He has given them a new life, and this life is the life that overcomes. Christianity is not always looked upon in that way. It is often viewed as a legal system the object of which is the repression of the evil that is in men. Many think that all it can do for them is to check their evil tendencies and to prevent them from doing the things they would like to do, consequently they find no joy in it at all, and more often than not a joyless Christian is a defeated Christian. Now the law was just what they think Christianity is. It said “Thou shalt not”; it was one big DON'T. Even when it said “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” it was saying “don't.” If a man knocked one of your eyes out your natural desire and impulse would be to strike back, swift and sure, and blind him utterly. No, the law said, you must not do that, one eye for one eye and no more, and so it curbed the evil passions of men, or rather it was given for that purpose, but it failed. It was like a strong cord that bound men hand and foot and said, “Thou shalt not,” but like the demoniac in the Gospels, men broke their fetters and went their own way and did their own wills. Grace is different. It gives A NEW LIFE, not a new code of morals—and the life it gives is an overcoming life; it overcomes evil with good. It is eternal life the gift of God, and to every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ it has been given. Whenever it manifests itself it must triumph, for it is Divine, Christ Himself is it.

Now it is evident that a great many believers are not enjoying this life. The life is theirs but its free and happy expression is thwarted; they are not living in Romans 8., but are bound fast in Romans 7., sighing and struggling, but apparently sighing and struggling in vain. I am reminded of a pathetic sight that I saw when last in Scotland. It was a great eagle in a massive cage. The sun was shining brilliantly in the heavens and seemed to be calling to it to rise from the earth and soar away into its natural element, and the royal bird in answer to the call of the sun spread its mighty wings and stooped for flight, and then, as though conscious to its very heart of the iron bars that held it captive, it lowered its wings and dropped its head in apparent disappointment and shame. I watched that fettered bird on that lovely summer's day with an intense interest. Again and again the light flashed in its eyes as it faced the sun and lifted its wings, full of determination to have done with its bondage, but just as often its great pinions sank down and it bowed its neck, the most striking figure of depression and defeat that I have ever looked upon. I turned away from it with a tightening about my heart and moisture in my eyes, for I had well known an experience of that sort, and well I knew that thousands of Christians are just there. They have the DESIRE for heavenly things, to be free in the love of God; and they have the life and power too, or they are no Christians at all, and yet they are held fast who should be free; they are caged who should be conquerors; the law of sin and death holds them still

in its bondage, though it has no claim upon them, and no power to hold them if they only understood.

The Epistle to the Romans shows us how we may enter into the liberty and triumph of the new life that is ours in Christ, and that is chiefly my subject on this occasion. Our chapter begins with the statement, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." There the verse should stop; it is an absolute statement, and it is one we may well dwell upon.

At one time we were in our sins, we did not believe in Christ, then we were under condemnation. But now there is no condemnation for us. What does it mean? It means first that the question of our guilt has been settled, not for our satisfaction but for God's. It has been settled, not in any way that we could devise, but in a way that God has devised; so that He, who is the Judge, no longer condemns; instead, He justifies. It is God that justifieth. Now how can that be? We must be clear about this. God met us at the Mercy-seat. Chapter 3. tells us that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. Christ is the propitiation—the Mercy-seat—the meeting-place. There we have met God, and instead of our sins being bound upon us and our souls cast into eternal hell God justified us there, for He is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The blood of His beloved Son, whom He gave for our salvation, proclaims His justice, and through that blood He can justly justify all those who believe in Jesus. What a meeting place; there God's glory is maintained, His justice satisfied, and we are saved, and all this in and through our great Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ.

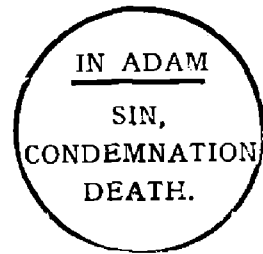
I had a Christian friend, a wholesale provision merchant; one Sunday night he had been to a stirring Gospel meeting in which sinners had been saved. My friend woke up the next morning and went to his business with the joy of the Gospel in his heart. He

had not been sitting in his office very long when a woman was shown in. She was one of his customers who owed him a considerable sum of money. He had allowed the bill to run on, and continued to supply her with goods because she had told him she was just about to realize on some property; and he had believed her, but she had deceived him all the time. But she had come that morning to tell the truth—she had nothing to pay. She was really a bankrupt, and she cast herself upon his mercy. He had a Christian cashier who had also been to the Gospel meeting the night before, and the woman was asked to retire into the outer office while my friend and his cashier discussed the matter between them. Then she was called back, and the cashier put his hand into his pocket and took out his bunch of keys, unlocked the safe, took out the cash-box, and counted out from it the full amount of the bill, and pushed the money across the desk to the master. He counted the money, put it into his pocket, then he stamped the bill and wrote across it "amount received in full," and dated it and signed it and handed the receipted bill to the poor bankrupt storekeeper. It was some minutes before she realized what it meant; she looked at the receipted bill, and then at her erstwhile creditor and then the tears burst from her eyes and rolled down her cheeks as she thanked him. She was free, she was at peace with him, and she went out of the office clear of that debt; it was remembered against her no more. But, you say, the amount came out of his own cash-box. Exactly—but it was the amount due and he accepted it, and she was clear. How every illustration fails in the presence of the fact that out of the glory of God came God's beloved Son, and for us He went into death to pay the mighty price which God has accepted, the price that only could clear us righteously before a righteous God. The amount has been received in full, and we who believe are justified, we are free, and the bill never can be

sent in to us again. That is the meaning of that blessed statement of Scripture, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." There is then no condemnation when it is a question of our sins. Have you got as far as that? If you have you have peace with God. The One who paid the mighty price and did the great work is raised again from the dead, an evidence that God is satisfied with that which He did, and since He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, we have peace with God through Him. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The song begins in the heart and bursts from the lips when that point is reached and our feet are set on the march to victory.

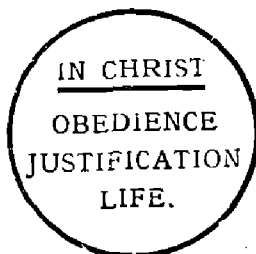
Then comes the question of our old sinful state, and this is the great trouble with many. If God had left us where we were, on the ground of our own responsibility for blessing: "in the flesh" as the 8th chapter puts it, we could not have been clear of condemnation, for we should still have remained in a position and condition before Him that only condemnation could have come upon. So God had to deal with that question as well, and He has dealt with it. And we must learn the truth as to this as well as the truth as to our sins if we are to be really free. If you read Rom. 5. you will find a great many beautiful things in it. You will find that seven times over it is said that we receive certain things through or by our Lord Jesus Christ. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through Him we have access into this grace in which we stand; we shall be saved from wrath through Him; we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation; we reign in life through Him, and have eternal life through Him. But these joys and blessings belong to another sphere of life to that in which we lived before we knew God, and we want to

be practically and experimentally in the new sphere of life. If I had a blackboard here, I would inscribe upon it two circles; over one I would write "Adam" and over the other "Christ." We have all lived in the first circle, we were born into it; Adam was our head, our progenitor, and as he was, so were we. Adam was disobedient, so were we, for his nature has come down to us. Adam's disobedience brought in death, and death passed upon us all, for we have all sinned. Condemnation came upon him and it rested upon us, for we were like him and stood where he stood. So within the Adam circle I would write



These great blessings of which I have spoken don't belong to that circle, nor can they be enjoyed there. How could peace, joy, liberty, life, victory, spring up and flourish in the circle of sin, condemnation and death? But God's grace has abounded exceedingly and a new circle has been formed. The "Christ" circle, and it is to that circle that the blessings belong and there only are they enjoyed. Christ was the obedient One, and His obedience was accomplished on the cross. Verse 19 should read "by one obedience." It is the work of Christ that has brought in life and blessing in contrast to the "one disobedience" of Adam that brought in condemnation and death. There is a very sweet thought in connection with that which will appeal to every Christian heart here. Christ was the obedient one, He went into death as the whole burnt offering. In Leviticus 1.-4. we have both the burnt offering and the sin offering, setting forth in figure Christ's death on the cross. The sin offering sets forth what He was as made sin for us, bearing all the judgment that was our

due; the burnt offering sets forth all the fragrance of His complete obedience to the will of God. So that while Jesus, from the manger to the cross, was always and altogether delightful to the heart of God, there was never a moment when the Father found more pleasure in Him than when He yielded up His life in perfect obedience to God's will. Think of the death of Christ from that standpoint. That death yielded great glory to God, great satisfaction to the heart of God, because of the absolute obedience of it. Adam put SELF first and disobeyed, Christ put GOD first and obeyed, and He who did that has become the Head of a race, the beginning of a new creation, and He imparts to every member of the race of which He is Head and Leader His own life, and that life is a life of justification, it is a sinless and a victorious life. So that in the Christ circle there are



And God in His abundant grace has taken you out of the "Adam" circle and put you in the "Christ" circle.

God has given every one who has believed the Gospel of His Son that place. It is all grace—the much more abundant grace that is greater than all our sin; but there it is, and faith accepts it and delights in it. We are now no longer in Adam but "in Christ" before God. Am I using phrases hard to be understood? I am using Scriptural phrases, and endeavouring to show you the way of life and victory. Romans 8. tells us that there is now "no condemnation to them that are IN CHRIST JESUS." Be determined to understand what "in Christ Jesus" means, so much depends upon it, and God would not have written those

words if He had not meant us to understand them.

But it is not enough for us to know that God has given us this position of favour and blessing, we want to be in it experimentally, don't we? We want to live the overcoming life. If the desire is there it is all to the good, and we shall be of one mind with Paul when he asks in chapter 6., "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." We have no wish to live in that old circle of sin and condemnation and death, we desire to live in the new circle of obedience, and justification, and life, to be experimentally and practically in Christ, and so living the life that overcomes.

Now that which holds us in the old circle in our practice and experience is SELF, and we could never part company with self but for the greater attraction that is in Christ. The more attached to Christ we are the more detached from self we shall be. As Christ draws us after Him we are drawn out of the old circle, but there is only one way out of it, and that is by death. We shall be done with self and sin completely when we die, or the Lord comes. We pass through death now in figure in baptism. So the apostle continues his argument: "How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." I am not thinking of the mere rite of baptism, or the who and when and how of it, but of its deep significance. Too many are occupied solely with the form, and show a lot of ill blood in contending for it, who miss entirely its deep meaning. Let the Ethiopian Eunuch illustrate this for us. He was returning from Jerusalem an unsatisfied man, reading Isa. 53., when the

Holy Spirit sent Philip to him; and Philip, from that most affecting chapter, preached unto him JESUS. The meekness, gentleness and love of that blessed Person won the Ethiopian. Philip's heart was full, and he had a good text, and with the unction of the Spirit he spoke of the suffering Saviour whose love carried Him into DEATH. As the Eunuch listened he fell in love with Jesus, and though not a word, as far as we know, had been said about baptism, he said, "Here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?" It meant, "He died and I will die with Him. I want to reach Him, I will part company with self, and the world and all its honours, for His sake. I must have His company." He could not actually die, but He would do so in figure. That is what baptism means. It means: Good-bye, world—Christ for me! Good-bye, old life—Christ for me! Good-bye, self and sin—Christ for me! But who is up to that but the one who has fallen in love with Christ? On that line is Christian liberty and the life that wins, and on that line alone.

Now we have ascertained three great facts:—

1. God has settled the question of our sins in His own way for His glory and our justification.

2. God has transferred us from Adam to Christ; in His reckoning we are no longer in the circle of sin and death, but in the circle of obedience and life. Faith accepts that.

3. By our baptism we have assented to what God has done, and in figure passed out of the old circle into the new. Our responsibility now is to be true to our baptism.

Now here the great problem confronts us. The pull of the old circle is strong. All the tendencies of the flesh combine to hold us there in our experience and practice, and how can we be free experimentally? The answer is that there is a new power, a power that pervades the new circle—it is "*the law of the spirit of life in Christ*

Jesus." In the Adam circle—or shall I call it henceforward the SELF circle?—there was the law of sin and death, a terrible principle that held us by its mighty power, from which we could not release ourselves. But, says Romans 8. 2, "*The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*" I will try and illustrate. Suppose I had a piece of steel upon this table: there it lies, held by the law of gravitation, with no power in itself to rise or release itself from the law that holds it. But suppose I hold a powerful magnet over it; another force comes into play—the law of magnetic attraction—and at once the steel responds to the pull of it and springs to the magnet. Thus acts the law of the spirit of life. Christ is the magnet, the great lode-stone of our souls. We have an object outside of ourselves now, and Christ is that Object, and just as the steel has a nature that responds to the magnet, so have we a nature that responds to Christ.

I read recently a paper by a celebrated aviator. In it he said that the law of gravitation had no longer any terrors for them, for engineering had been so perfected that they now had motors so powerful and reliable that they could defy the law of gravitation. It is a feeble figure of a great reality; as being "in Christ Jesus" we have a new object outside us and a new power within us, and the power and the object work together. The new Power is the indwelling Holy Spirit and the new Object is Christ.

Up to the 8th chapter of Romans we only read of the Spirit of God once—in the 5th chapter, where it says that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us. But when we come to the 8th chapter, over and over again we read of the Spirit. Nineteen times in the first part of the chapter we read of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has become a new power which is in us, to put us into intelligent and living contact with the great Object outside of us.

We turn away from ourselves to Christ, and we find in Him that which satisfies our hearts. Beloved Christians, is it not so? Just the glimpses we have had of Christ have filled our hearts with love to Him. We have sat under His shadow with great delight and have found His fruit sweet to our taste, and we have to say of Him that He is better than all the blessings He gives. He is altogether lovely. Has He become the Object of your heart? Do you want to live with Him? Do you seek His companionship? Do you want to reach Him? You say, "Can I reach Him?" Not in the body yet; we are going to reach Him in the body soon: but we can reach Him now in spirit, for the Holy Ghost dwells within us to enable us to do it; so that that living, blessed Christ of God becomes a reality to us—the object bright and fair to fill and satisfy the heart; more present to faith's vision keen, than e'en the dearest object seen. Yes, Christ becomes exceedingly precious to the heart. We are brought into communion with God about Him. And we know Him in all the beauty of that grace which was manifested so perfectly when He was here upon the earth, and it is that which has won our hearts. We have followed Him in thought as He bore the cross to Calvary, and there we have learnt the sweetness of that love that shed its fragrance upon death's dark vale, and the infinite love that led Him into those sorrows and sufferings has won our hearts. We love Him and delight to say—He is altogether lovely. And if He is the Object outside of us, we prefer Him to self, and we let self go because of the treasure we have found in His love. And the Spirit of God dwells in us to keep up that affection for Christ and to maintain us on that road.

Then we learn that what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Thank God, no question needs

to be raised in our hearts now as to how God feels about all that we were. What we were as "in the flesh," and all the sins we had committed as connected with that condition, have passed under God's judgment at the cross, and have been removed out of the way that we might be entirely free, and that, as we walk in the Spirit, the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled IN US. To be fulfilled in us is more than being fulfilled by us; it implies that we have a life and nature that delights in what the law asks. What are those righteous requirements? Well, that we should love one another. If we love and are occupied with Christ, we shall be interested in the things which interest Him. If you are entirely indifferent to the interests of any person I am certain you have no love for that person. If you love a person, you are interested in that person's interests. And so, if you love Christ, you are interested in His interests, you love those who are precious to Him, and you will be ready to suffer for them, and won't be back-biting, quarrelling and criticizing; you won't be seeking to injure others if love is active; you will return good for evil and you will be ready to forgive. It is in this way that the new and victorious life finds expression. Not in great exploits, as some imagine and desire, but in self-forgetful service, remembering that it is written in this same epistle, "EVEN CHRIST PLEASED NOT HIMSELF." That is the victorious life, for it is the life of Christ, and in that life we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,—chapter 8. 36, 37; not by killing, but by being killed; not in doing deeds that would call attention to ourselves, but in denying self, setting self aside, and being ready to suffer for His sake.

Now for a moment turn back to chapter 6. Verse 14 says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law but under grace." Law made great demands which we could not satisfy, being "in the flesh."

It made its demands without supplying any life, virtue or power by which they could be met, and so it only exposed our bankruptcy, or helplessness, and sin. It showed what we were. Grace shows what God is—God in the fulness of His goodness and love in Christ; and it tells us that all He is, is for us. Grace is the never-failing, always available supply by which the life which we have in Christ is kept in vigour, and by it every demand from every quarter can be faced. It is what God is, and God is for us.

A word may be necessary as to what the flesh is which is contrasted so strongly with the Spirit in the early part of this chapter.

"The flesh" is not the body; it cannot be that, for the body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is that evil principle that governs man, that makes him his own centre instead of God. It is the very nature of man until he is born again—all his motives spring from self-love: see it in the ambitious politician, the man who is

making haste to get rich, the man who lives for pleasure; let us look at our own lives apart from Christ and the Spirit—that is the flesh, and the end of that is death. If we live in the flesh we shall die—corruption and death are the end of that road. But if we are walking in the Spirit and minding the things of the Spirit, we shall not be self-centred, we shall be Christ-centred, and there will be life and peace. Which road shall we take—the road that ends in death, or the road of life and peace: shall we walk after the flesh and be self-centred, or walk according to the Spirit and be Christ-centred?

There is only one overcoming life, and that is the one life that has been imparted to all who believe. It is the life of the risen, victorious Christ who has conquered death, shaken the dominion of the devil to its very base, and who has gone up on high to be a life-giving centre and head, and to maintain in triumph by His ceaseless intercession all those whose faith and hopes and love are centred in Himself.

OVERCOMING.

(J. A. TRENCH.)

Notes of an Address. Rev. 21. 1-7; Rev. 3. 21, 22; Luke 11. 20, 22; 1 John 2. 13; Rom. 12. 21.

REV. 21. 1-7 is a wonderful passage, giving the furthest light we have as to the new heavens and earth. Verse 7 is a remarkable one in connection with all that wonderful sphere of glory when God Himself will be the source of all the boundless joy of that scene. But it is not a question of overcoming in the new heavens and earth. It is a link with time taken up in eternity. There is nothing more remarkable or precious than that. This is what is to characterize those who inherit these things. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things." What they are it does not say, so that we may dwell upon it, and let it search and exercise us. We have light as to

what is the sphere in which we have to overcome from the second passage that I read—Rev. 3. 21. This verse carries us back to the Lord's path here on earth. This is what He sets before us.—we have to overcome, as He overcame; this is what He looks for in those who are to sit with Him upon His throne.

Let us look for a moment at the path of the overcomer. First of all as we see it in the Lord Himself. It is a bracing word—it speaks of conquest. There is no question here of an easy walk over the course, or of taking our ease in any way; it calls us to face all those opposing forces, a

world to refuse, a Christ to follow, to overcome *as He overcame*.

The verse Rom. 12. 21 is not exactly applied to the Lord Jesus, but we must turn back to His path to see it fully carried out. There is a wide range of overcoming here; we never know when we may be tested in this way. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," etc. It is clear that this precious word summons us to meet the evil by the overwhelming power of good which we have learnt in the blessed Lord. This challenges us as to how far we have laid hold of that goodness. There is nothing so humbling as to find how easily the saints of God are overthrown by evil; a cutting word may overcome us. How much we need to know how the Lord Jesus has risen over all the evil, and address ourselves faithfully, joyfully, to overcome evil with good. We have daily opportunities for it.

Now we find two specific spheres in which the Lord Jesus has overcome. The first is in Luke 11. He met the strong man; we all know who that was, how skilfully he kept his goods in peace, but the Stronger has come and overcome him, and here are the spoils, wondrous spoils, on every hand, of that victory. This brings us still more definitely to the way in which He met the strong man. He was driven into the wilderness! What circumstances in which to meet Satan, the strong man, inflated with the success of hundreds of years!

But the Lord meets him with the words, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." What a lesson for us! He does not use His Divine power; that would have been no example for us; but He keeps His place as a perfect dependent man, and turns to the book of Deuteronomy. He had been forty days hungering and was in need of food, but He would not help Himself to bread, without God's word. The dependent and obedient man will not

act without the word of God. Then the enemy tries Him on the ground of dependence. He takes Him to the pinnacle of the temple, to see if God was as good as His word. And how is this met? Again from the book of Deuteronomy. When all depended upon the issue of this conflict, He dares to take His stand upon the written word of God to meet the strong man. And we know now what tempting God means, as we might never otherwise have known—it is not to trust Him absolutely. But He knew the heart of God too well to tempt Him. Do *we* know how to trust Him absolutely, as to everything in the path of His will for us? The enemy left out the leading clause in the passage he quoted, for it is no part of God's ways with us to bring us into circumstances in which we cannot trust Him.

Now the enemy changes his tactics, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Still unmoved, He takes His stand upon the written word. His blessed path was governed only by the Lord His God as the object of His heart for worship and for service; there were no blanks in His heart for the glory of the world. Now the enemy comes out in his full true character. And the Lord replies to this third temptation, "Get thee behind Me, *Satan*."

Once more, gathering all his forces he comes in Gethsemane. "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Man's hour was characterized by the power of darkness: the enemy's last weapon is the power of death. But Jesus could not be turned aside by its terrors, He overcame the devil in the garden and then He went down into the last stronghold of the enemy's power, and delivered those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage; and we have now to meet a vanquished devil, which makes an incalculable difference to us; the feeblest one has, as it were, only to lift up the little finger and the enemy cannot stand against him.

Do we know what it is to meet the devil in the victory which the Lord Jesus Christ has won? We find it in 1 John 2. 13, "I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." Then in the details which follow (verse 14) we find words of good cheer for us; we triumph in His triumphs by the word of God abiding in us. "Even as I also overcame."

How deep our need of the word of God: the study of it, so that we may be filled with the knowledge of His will, that it may be ever present with us to meet the enemy—not by parley, not by reason, but by the word of God abiding in our souls. This is characteristic of the "young men" stage in the family of God.

There is another thing in chap. 4. 3, 4. Not only have we been given the word of God to abide in us, but we have also a Divine person abiding in us. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." We are surrounded by the hatred to Christ, by the spirit of Antichrist, but "greater is He that is in you" to defend us against this awful spirit of Antichrist.

There is another thing in John 16., last verse—another sphere in which the Lord Jesus has overcome. We have seen how He overcame the enemy when he presented the glory of the world; it is not here the side of the attraction of the world, but all that He suffered from the world. And this is what He promises us. But times of tribulation are always the brightest times; we have more to do with God in the dark days than in the bright ones. Paul says, "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope."

This is very different from all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. That is exactly the danger for us now. The young men who are so brightly addressed in 1 John 2. are warned against the world. What, you say, "do they need to be warned

against the world after having overcome Satan?" Yes, that is exactly the order we have here. The world is Satan's sphere. It is not that he puts you into satisfied possession of anything here, but he works to attract your heart by it; then he has done his work perfectly if he gets your heart attracted after anything in this world. It may be, as one has said, only a ribbon in a shop window, but if that won't do, he can enlarge his bait up to all the kingdoms of the world; so he did with Napoleon. "Love not the world." But you say, "I don't love the world," and if we were left with that, each one would have his own idea as to what the world is, and it would be just what is outside his own horizon. But the Spirit of God guards against that—"neither the things that are in the world." It is a searching word. Is there one thing in the world that your heart is after? It is not what you possess; though that constitutes a difficulty in entering the kingdom of God, scarcely shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of God, but it is what your heart is set on possessing.

Then we learn what this sphere of the enemy's power consists of—lust and pride, nothing else. It is not the material world; it is the pride of what I have got, and the lust for what I have not got. Oh, the shame of having allowed our hearts to go out after any object in such a scene! "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him"; it is deadening to all sense of the relationship with the Father into which we have been brought, it is a death-blow to our enjoyment of our place in the Father's world. If the world adopts religion, it drops the name of Father and addresses God by the more distant name of God Almighty. Which are you going to have, the love of the world, or the love of the Father?

"But," you ask, "how am I to overcome the world?" In 1 John 5. 4 there is a cheering word; the principle of victory is by the life and nature we possess as being born of

God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith". Jesus is the Son of God, and verse 5 tells us, that he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God overcomes the world. There must shine into our souls of the full glory of His person as Son of God, to put us outside the range of the enemy's power. If the enemy decks the world in its brightest, there is a greater brightness in a person in the glory of God, which leaves no place, no blank, nothing for the world to attract in our hearts. Paul was offered the finest place in the world—hear his answer, "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection from among the dead." He was pressing after the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How blessed to be able to meet all the glory of the world with one word—refuse!—nothing to satisfy in it. How far better is faith's portion, the Son of God outside the sphere of this world to fill the eye, to satisfy the heart, to give power to refuse—to overcome as *He also overcame*.

"But," you say, "surely you are forgetting another sphere for overcoming, that is, self; have we not three great enemies, and self perhaps the greatest of all?"

Ah, no, I am speaking now to many who will understand what I say; as long as you are on that ground you are in bondage. This is what we find in Rom. 7. seeking to gain the victory over self. It is a very profitable experience to go through, but it has this one fatal flaw in it, that the soul has not bowed to God's revelation of what the flesh is—incurable. God brings us to learn that there can be no victory over self, but that His way is to deliver us from self. I knew a man in Belfast who told me he had for thirty years been crying daily to God—"Deliver me!" which really meant, give me victory over self; but the truth was that if God had answered his prayer he said he would have been the proudest man in Belfast. This is not God's way.

Deliverance is never known till we come to the end of seeking to gain the

victory over self. The more sincere you are, the more miserable you are "Oh! wretched man than I am, who shall deliver me?" not who shall give me the victory, now. The eyes at last are lifted to Jesus Christ our Lord, and the heart bows in broken utterances of thanksgiving.

There is one more sphere of overcoming, that is the state in which we find the professing church. I am not now going into detail. In the second and third of Revelation the church is not viewed as the work of God (it is not *that* which the Lord Jesus comes to judge), not the Body of Christ, or the House of God, but the church as the vessel of responsible testimony of Christ down here. It is not the *candle*, but the candlestick. Seven times we find the overcomer introduced in this solemn retrospection, which we now, so near the end, can look back upon.

There is the special promise to the overcomer, that we may be cheered in having to overcome where we least expected to have to do so. The state into which the professing church has fallen is far more painful than anything else. It is well we have from the Lord Himself the features of that into which it has fallen. He calls us to faithful resistance, and standing against this state of things. The last promise is that which I read. Thus we ever learn what we ought to be, by being taught what we are; so that we may be true to the characteristics which He presents to us.

I commend to your study what I have just given in outline. These are what will be found in the eternal state. If we have not been overcoming to-day, something has been overcoming us. May the Lord give us to open our hearts to the action of His Word upon us that we may search and see whether we have addressed ourselves with purpose of heart to the path He has set before us. We have a self to deny, a world to refuse. Overcoming will all be over in His presence. May we be found faithful in overcoming!

WHERE MANKIND GOT OFF THE LINE.

(ADAPTED.)

MEN got wrong when they threw off theocracy, when they chose to go their own way instead of God's.

Democracy, poorly defined, is a lie and a blasphemy; so is every other human ocracy. There is but one rule that can touch all time, and hold beneficent dominion over all forces and ministries, and that is the rule of God, undisputed, lovingly accepted, loyally obeyed, longed for. But men don't love the will of God; for some reason or other it irks them, and various theories have been propounded to account for this. But is it any comfort to us to hear that we have grown up from a plasm almost imperceptible to the microscope itself, and have struggled thus far in a process of development, evolution, and therefore we are not to be judged as if we had been guilty personally or ancestrally of an original apostasy and of wilful sin? It might be a comforting doctrine if— Ah, that's where it is, conscience won't let a man be comforted by it. He says, whatever others accept, I cannot accept that explanation, I have known the right and yet pursued the wrong. In instance after instance I have put the good from me and chosen the bad. I felt, I knew, that God had 'claims on me, and I ignored them; I knew that I ought to be upright, true and kind in my relations to others, but I was selfish and hard. I have seen things that I could do and I did not do—nay, I purposely neglected them—nay, I thrust them behind me, and said, I will have my own way, I will play the God to myself. So this balsam, that by an elaborate evolution I may yet attain to perfection, does not heal the wound; the proposition may amuse me in my hours of leisure, and enlarge the margin with which my speculation takes its nocturnal walks in the infinite darkness

of the unknown, but when I come to think of it all, and the light shines on conscience and heart, then I feel that the philosophy daubs the wall with untempered mortar, and cries "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

But what does the Bible say? "God made man upright, but man sought out many inventions." "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." "There is none righteous, no, not one." This is not a comfortable doctrine. It probes the wound, it lays bare the corruption. It shows where men went wrong, and still choose and love the wrong rather than the right. There is no music in this doctrine, but it is true. It rolls back to the beginning, it reveals the departure, and states the case as only God could state it. We may long to contradict it, and choose the false theory of our amazing evolution from next to nothing instead of it, but it is God's pronouncement, and what can man do but be silent when God has spoken? This surely all wise men will do. "Let God be true and every man a liar." "That every mouth might be stopt and all the world become guilty before God." What then? To bow the head in confession of the truth is to be blessed by the true God; to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," is to go down to one's house justified. It is here that a man resumes right relations with God, and lives and rejoices in the grace of God, and comes once and for all into His kingdom. To keep silent and refuse to confess, or to blatantly excuse or justify oneself, is to remain in darkness, wretchedness, and death; but to confess is to be forgiven, regenerated, blessed; and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

Where faith begins anxiety ends, and where anxiety begins faith ends.

If it be from my first knowledge of what sin is to my last trial in this world, it is all a question of whether I trust in myself or in Jesus.

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. VIII. Service. Genesis 45. 9-24.

JOSEPH has made himself known to his brethren. He has dispelled their fears, dealt with their past, and secured their future. The love of Joseph has brought his brethren into sweet communion with himself, as we read, "He kissed all his brethren . . . and after that his brethren talked with him" (verse 15). Now we are to learn that the intimacies of love prepare for the service of love. Those whom Joseph has won for himself he will enlist in his service. His brethren shall become his witnesses.

In like manner the Lord deals with the demoniac of the Gospel story. Clothed, in his right mind, and brought to sit at the feet of Jesus—set free by the Word of the Lord—he is prepared for the service of the Lord by the directions from the Lord, for the Lord can say, "Return to thy own house and show how great things God hath done unto thee" (Luke 8. 29, 35, 39).

So, too, the Lord deals with His disciples on the evening of the resurrection day. As the true Joseph in the presence of His brethren He makes Himself known to the terrified and affrighted disciples. He speaks to their troubled hearts the word of peace; He shows the wounds in His hands and feet whereby He made peace. Dispelling the mists of fear He fills their hearts with gladness and makes them at home in His presence. Then it is He gives them the great commission and speaks of the high privilege of being His witnesses. He can say, "Ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24. 48); and yet a little later, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1. 18).

As with the brethren of Joseph, the demoniac of a later day, and the disciples of the resurrection day, so with ourselves, preparation for service must precede service. We are oftentimes more anxious to be used than

exercised to be "*meet* for the Master's use, and *prepared* for every good work." Further, our preparation for service is only gained as we are found alone with Christ learning His mind in communion with Him and in the realization of His love. How touchingly is this prefigured in the fine scene between Joseph and His brethren, when, apart from all others, "he kissed all his brethren . . . and after that his brethren talked with him" (15). The measure of holy separation to the Lord is the measure of our preparation for His service. They who would serve acceptably must first sit at His feet and hear His Word. There only, in the secret of His presence, can we learn His mind and thus serve under His directions. It was thus with the brethren of Joseph; all their directions as to service came from Joseph. Not one of the brethren suggested service. And when Joseph speaks of service, they do not set one another to serve, nor decide how to serve, to whom they shall go, or where they shall go, or what they shall say. The commission to serve, and every detail of the service, they receive from the lips of Joseph.

First, Joseph presses upon them the urgency of their mission. "Haste ye" is the word with which he sends them forth, and in like manner the exhortation for these days—the last days—is "Proclaim the Word, be *urgent* in season, and out of season" (2 Tim. 4. 2).

Second, not only are they told how to go, but they are instructed *where* to go. The word is "Go, get you into the land of Canaan" (17). They were to be witnesses for Joseph in the very land where, in the days of his humiliation, Joseph received only evil for good, and hatred for his love: where he had been stripped of his honours, flung into a pit, and sold for twenty pieces of silver. And thus it was in that last

parting scene between the risen Lord and His glad disciples. They not only receive a commission to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, but they are instructed where to begin. The Lord's word is "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 47). The witness was to begin in the blackest spot on earth, and amongst the worst of sinners, in the place where the Lord had been sold for thirty pieces of silver, stripped of His robe, mocked with a crown of thorns, and nailed to a cross between two thieves. As an old servant of the Lord has said, it is "As if the Lord had said, 'Tell them though they have gainsaid My doctrine, blasphemed My divinity, taken away My life, . . . endeavoured to murder My reputation, too, by making Me an imposter, go to *Jerusalem*, and by beginning there, show them such a miracle of goodness and grace that they themselves must confess that nothing can be greater than their sin except this mercy and grace of Mine which where their sin abounded grace does much more abound. . . . Begin at Jerusalem, and after the saving efficacy of My grace appears there, no one will question the possibility of their salvation'."

Third, they learn from the lips of Joseph to *whom* they are to carry the message. "Go up to my father" is the direction of Joseph (9). The one they had so grossly deceived, and before whom they had denied all knowledge of Joseph, is the very one before whom they are to bare witness to the glory of Joseph. Nor is it otherwise with Christ and His disciples. The woman of Sychar goes back to the men of the city to bear a bright witness for Christ before those who well knew the manner of her life. In the very place of her sin she is to bear witness to the One who has set her free from sin (John 4. 28, 29). Peter, too, bears witness to Christ before those in whose presence he had once so shamefully denied Christ. Moreover, it is not only to the father that Joseph's brethren are sent,

but to the father's children and the children's children, indeed, says Joseph, tell him the good news is for "*All that thou hast*" (10). And the message is still, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts 16. 31, N. Tr.).

Fourth, the brethren of Joseph are sent back with a very definite message to be delivered with all the authority of Joseph's word. It was to be introduced with a "*Thus saith thy son Joseph*" (9). We do well to remember that the power behind the Gospel message is the authority with which it is proclaimed. It goes forth with a "*Thus saith the Lord.*"

Fifth, the great theme of the message was Joseph and His glory. Tell my father, Joseph can say, that "God hath made me lord of all Egypt" (9). And he adds, "Ye shall tell my father of *all my glory*, and of all that ye have seen" (13). This is still the message that alone will meet the world's famine. Peter preached it with no uncertain sound in the ears of the Jews when, on the day of Pentecost, he said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And again before the Gentiles he can say that Christ "is Lord of all" (Acts 2. 36; 11. 36). Moreover it is still our privilege to declare the glories of the One who is Lord of all, whether it be His personal glories as the eternal Son, His moral glories as the One who is altogether lovely, or His official glories as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Sixth, the message that Joseph sends to Jacob is "Come down unto me" (9). If Joseph is lord of all with the riches of glory at his disposal for all yet it is only those who "*come*" who obtain the blessing. If all power is in his hands to bless, all grace is in his heart to attract to himself—the blesser. Indeed, Joseph says in effect to his father, "I want you," for it is not only "Come," but "Come down unto me."

Seventh, the message speaks of the blessings that await those who "come"

(10, 11). If Jacob will but come the days of his wandering will be past, for, says Joseph, "Thou *shalt dwell* in the land of *Goschen*"; distance and estrangement will be no more, for "thou shalt be *near* unto me"; care and want will be banished, for "there will I *nourish* thee." Still the Lord of glory can say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The soul that comes to Him will find the days of the wandering feet are over, the loneliness of the desolate heart is ended, and the famine of the distant land is met. In the company of Christ there is rest for the conscience, satisfaction for the heart, and food for the soul.

Finally, the message carries with it a word of warning. There is untold blessing for those that come, there is imminent danger for those who delay. Hence Joseph's word is "Tarry not . . . lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty" (9, 11). How far greater the danger if we trifle with that far greater message that comes from the Lord in glory! Well may the apostle ask, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And again, "If they escaped not who refused Him who spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven?" (Heb. 2. 3; 12. 25). If the message of grace opens up a vista of glory with its rest, and satisfaction, and plenty, it also warns those who reject the message that there is nothing before them but the poverty of hell where there is no God, no Christ, and no hope.

Such is the message that Joseph sends to his father foreshadowing the Gospel message which the believer carries to the world from Christ the Lord of all.

It is an urgent message, "Haste ye."

It is a message that proclaims the exaltation and glory of the Lord of all.

It is a message of grace that says, "Come."

It is a message that tells of the blessings for those who "come."

It is a message of warning to those who refuse to come.

Continuing the story of Joseph we discover further rich instruction for the servant of the Lord. The message is full and clear, but it is not enough to be entrusted with a message, the messenger must be fully equipped to deliver the message. The disciples whom the Lord commissioned to preach had to tarry until endued with power from on high. And again the Lord can say, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Luke 24. 49; Acts 1. 8). The power in which they are to serve comes from the Person who gives them their commission, and from the place of exaltation in which that Person is. Is this not foreshadowed in the story of Joseph? for the word is, "Take you waggons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come" (19). They were provided with a new power to journey on their way. And the power that took them back to Canaan was the power in which they were to bring their father to Joseph. Thus we read, "Joseph gave them waggons" (21).

Further, Joseph can say, "Regard not your stuff," or according to a better translation, "Let not your eye regret your stuff" (20). There are things that belong to us naturally—the eloquence of man, and the wisdom of man—and there are carnal means and methods that appeal to the natural man. But, says the apostle, "my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," and again he can say, "we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (1 Cor. 2. 4; 10. 3, 4). In the service of the Lord that which is merely natural is neither to be regarded nor regretted. The Gospel that we carry is too great and serious for the

feebleness of carnal methods and the levity of natural eloquence.

Moreover, had the brethren fallen back on their own "stuff" to support them in their service they would have slighted the provision of Joseph. Their action would have said, "Joseph's provision is not sufficient for Joseph's commission." Joseph, however, can say, "The good of all the land of Egypt is yours," and, in accord with this, he "gave them provision for the way" (20, 21). In carrying out their service for Joseph they were to be sustained by the good of the land from which they came, received from the hand of the one that sent them. Nor is it otherwise in the service of the Lord in this the day of His grace. We have received full provision to carry out His service, and hence to import human methods into this service is to cast a slight upon His provision. By so doing we say the Holy Spirit, and spiritual means, is not sufficient for the service of the Lord. Let us then beware of regarding our "stuff" and neglecting His provision. May we ever remember the words of one who, though in the world's sight an "unlearned and ignorant" man, could say, "His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1-3).

Another lesson we may learn is that, in the service of the Lord, the servant is not only spiritually equipped, but he is dependent upon the Lord for his temporal needs. From the moment Joseph's brethren set forth in their path of service until the day of their return, they were sustained by the provision of Joseph. They were not provided for by the people to whom they were going, but by the person from whom they had come. Apparently they were not to take of Jacob's things to carry out Joseph's work. So in the New Testament we read of those who "for His name's sake . . . went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 John 7).

But blessed as all this is, it is not

enough for the service of the Lord. If the service is to be effectual the life of the servant must be in harmony with the message that he delivers. This important truth is strikingly set forth in the dealing of Joseph with his brethren. Not only did he give them provision for the way, but we read, "To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment" (22). They were not only to deliver a message concerning the glory of Joseph, but they themselves were to be the witness of the change that the glory effected. And, as we have seen, not only were the apostles sent forth to preach Christ but they themselves were to be witnesses to Christ—"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." "Having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new, renewed into full knowledge according to the image of Him that has created him," it is our privilege and responsibility to display the change of raiment by expressing the character of Christ in all its lovely traits—compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and love.

Finally, Joseph sends forth his brethren with the warning word, "See that ye fall not out by the way" (24). And in those last words of the upper room, when the Lord is equipping His disciples to be His witnesses, He thrice exhorts them to love one another (John 13. 34; 15. 12, 17). Alas! we have fallen out by the way. The Galatians by their legality fell out by the way, for the apostle has to say, "Ye bite and devour one another" (Gal. 5. 15). The Corinthians by their carnality fell out by the way, for the apostle writes, "There are contentions among you" (1 Cor. 1. 11). And as in the beginning so it has ever been through the long history of that which professes to be a witness for Christ in the earth. Had love prevailed there would have been no room either for legality or carnality to divide the servants of Christ and mar their service to the Lord.

CAN "THE HIGHER CRITICS" BE TRUSTED?

No. 3.

(JAMES BOYD.)

THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF REVELATION.

A great deal is made by these men of *"The progressiveness of revelation,"* its adaptation at different periods to the moral and spiritual capacities of those to whom it was primarily addressed." There is not a word of truth in the statement. The antediluvians were just as morally and spiritually capable of receiving the communications of God as are the professors of the universities to-day. The ability to receive and understand the Divine Word lies in the willingness to understand it in order to do it. Our Lord says: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself," and: "Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My Word," and: "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 7. 17; 8. 43, 47).

It is not learning people require for the understanding of the revelation of God, but a state of soul which is produced by the Divine Spirit. That man must be born again if he is to receive the testimony of God is just as true to-day as it was at the commencement of his sinful career. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." As regards faith in His Word, ability to appreciate Divine things, or affection for God, these qualities have never been found in the mere child of Adam. Men may spend all their days arguing the point, but when they come to the finish, it will still be found in the revelation that God has given to us: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." All the fallen race is but clay of the same lump, and neither is there one man more ready to listen to the voice of God than another. It is God that

makes the difference, and to Him be all the praise.

Education, such as is found in the schools and colleges of this world, does not lead people into the knowledge of God, nor does it enable them to receive such knowledge. The tendency is rather to make infidels of those whose minds are trained in such places. And this is just what the Word says, as I have already pointed out: "Not many wise men after the flesh are called." Ability to take in and appreciate the Word of God does not depend on the progress of civilization, nor even upon the spread of Gospel truth. No human being had ever been in such favourable circumstances as Judas Iscariot, and yet all that he heard and saw throughout his companionship with the Son of God never laid hold of his sinful heart. No, men may make submarines, aeroplanes, and telescopes, but the invention of these things does not prove that they are more clever than Cain or Abel, however proudly they may boast in their achievements.

That from the fall of man until the coming of Christ, God was speaking to men in various ways is just what Scripture affirms, but that His communications were adapted to the moral and spiritual growth of the human race has no support from the Word of God. The fact is that every dispensation under which men were tested has ended in the utter failure and hopeless condition of those so tested. Ere man was sent out from Eden there was, in the way that God took to clothe the two fallen transgressors, sufficient light given to show his ruined race the way of approach to God, and later we know that Enoch prophesied of the intervention of the Lord in judgment. Enoch also is said to have preached righteousness. But the result of this trial was that God had to intervene in judgment

by a flood of water, and destroy all but Noah and his family and a seed of the lower order of creation to replenish the earth.

In the renewed earth we have Noah and his house placed under the blessing of God, everything put under him; God's covenant with the earth, and the principles of His government to be observed by men. At once we have Noah helplessly drunk with wine, his mocking son coming under the curse, and made a servant of servants. In Romans i. we get a graphic description of the state of idolatry and abominable corruption into which his race fell, and out of which God called Abraham to be His witness, making Himself known to him as the Almighty God, and making him the depository of the promises.

Some four hundred years afterwards the Twelve Tribes are found slaves in Egypt, helplessly bewailing their bitter bondage, and without any knowledge of the true God. For their deliverance God intervenes in power, provides shelter for them when His judgment was abroad in the land, destroys the forces of the Egyptians, and brings Israel to Himself in the wilderness. But all the men that came out of slavery perished in the desert, and never saw the promised land. Their subsequent history is so well known I need not go into the details of it. They persecuted the prophets, broke the law, became idolaters, slew them that testified of the coming of Christ, and when He came they murdered Him.

The history of the world reveals man in his downward career into a sink of moral and spiritual corruption. If God made Himself known as Jehovah to Israel, gave them laws, and put them in possession of His holy oracles, it was not because they had greater moral and spiritual powers than the antediluvians, or if He sent Christ to them, it was not because they were any more likely to receive Him than were others, for He has never yet been dis-

appointed in any creature that He has made and set on the principle of responsibility. The testing of the human race was not for God's education but for ours, if we will only take heed of all that it reveals.

The Christian dispensation is not different from any other. The brightest thing that was ever set up was that which the Holy Spirit sealed at Pentecost, but how quickly it lost its brightness! It has come to be the most corrupt thing the sun can look down on. Like Capernaum, it has been exalted to heaven, but it also shall be thrust down to hell.

Man can keep nothing with which he has been put in trust by God, nor without a Divine work in his soul will he receive any testimony that God may be pleased to send to him. The Word may have a momentary effect upon him, but the moment that he comes to the discovery that to confess it will not be to his advantage in this world, he will quickly give it up. The various ways in which God spoke to men from the beginning were not suggested by the mental state or stature to which they had advanced, but God was pleased to apply various tests to men, in order to bring out the terrible truth that fallen man was incorrigibly wicked, and that if any were to be saved they could only be saved by His acting sovereignly in grace. And every trial to which men were subjected brought this fact into evidence. All that were saved before the flood were saved by faith; and through the law which was the expression of man's accountability, and promised life to the soul that kept it, no one ever gained anything but death, condemnation and the curse. All that entered into blessing entered into it by faith, and not by works. And it is so to-day.

Hence the great object of the devil is, not to make unclean sinners of people, but to destroy their faith in the Word of God. No man ever was or could be saved on any other principle,

and "faith comes by report, and report by the Word of God" (Rom. 10.). Faith is not begotten in the soul by the word of man, though human testimony may, and must in certain cases, be believed. But where human testimony cannot be verified we are never absolutely certain of its truth. Faith which is produced by the Word of God is much more certain than sight, and can confidently await the day in which the report shall be publicly verified.

This is why the whole world is up in arms against the Scriptures. The

attack may take the hypocritical form of "Higher Criticism," or the open form of avowed infidelity, but both have but one object before them, and the contention of both is to one point, and that is, to deprive us of the revelation of God. The critic may attempt to varnish his wicked work by a little false show of piety and respect for the sacred Word, and the infidel, more honest, may rejoice to set before us his attacks in all their naked hideousness, but neither of them is aware of the awful power of evil that compels them to wage this unholy and insane warfare against the living God.

THE UNKNOWN ONE: (*Concluded*). Who "Knew all men" and "all things."

(H. J. VINE)

"HE knew all men," He "knew what was in man," and He knew "all things"; but "the world knew Him not"; and "though He had done so many signs before them," yet the leaders of Israel received Him not. As "the Word"—who "was God"—"become flesh"—the Logos—He was the embodiment and the utterance of all the mind of God. He told us that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How could we have discovered this had He not told us? He fully made God known, yet He was the unknown One. As we have seen, John told those of Jerusalem there was One in their midst whom they did not know; and twice, when His deity was in question, John even said, "I knew Him not," till the Spirit as a dove came and abode upon Him, as he had been told.

Are we therefore to conclude that He remains unknown? Far be the thought. The believing heart which rejoices in His grace and love rightly resents the idea that One so great and yet so loving should remain unknowable. Nay, He Himself said, when speaking

of those for whom He laid down His life, "I know those that are Mine, and *am known of those that are Mine*, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father" (John 10. 14, 15, N.T.). And Paul wrote, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1. 12), and that gave him confidence. The children of God—those who are born of God and have received the Holy Spirit—know Him. John, the apostle, knew Him; and embracing all the family of God in his words, he wrote, "And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2. 3). The above Scriptures do not at all suggest that we know Him in the same *measure* as the Father. That were impossible. The knowledge of infinite Persons must necessarily be infinite. To that we could not attain. Yet we know Him; thanks be to the grace and love of God. In the impenetrable depths of His holy Person, however, we are told, "No one knows who the Son is but the Father" (Luke 11. 22; Matt. 11. 27). Nor does it add, as is often quoted, "and he to whom the Father is pleased to reveal Him." The Father does reveal Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" to souls, and this in regard to His assembly

which is being built by Christ as the Son of Man. Yes, His own know Him as He said, whatever may be their measure, but the Father fully knows the Son, and that without measure, even as His love for the Son is measureless.

The "*babes*" in the family of God needed to be warned as to anti-Christian activities and to be encouraged in the truth. The "*young men*" in that family are warned against the world and encouraged in the Father's love and in the will of God. To "*the fathers*," however, no special warning is given, but it is twice simply stated, "Ye have known Him that is from the beginning." All the family know Him, but in a special way it characterizes those who have matured in God's family. It is in that direction all are exhorted to grow. Some are dwarfed or wrongly developed by assimilating a special ecclesiastical bias or a special school of teaching. True increase is in the knowledge of God in Christ, as made known by the Spirit in the Word. And though all His own know His voice, and know His love, and know Himself, nevertheless this is ever to be a deepening thing with us; and so it is; the

more we know Him and the wonderful love He has expressed towards us at Calvary, the more we desire to know Him; and He has given a capability to us that this may be advanced. He "has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). Every other object—ideal or idol—which would dispute His pre-eminence is to be shunned, therefore the epistle immediately closes with these simple words to the family of God, "Children, keep yourselves from idols."

We are nearing home! soon we shall enter the prepared place in His Father's house! Very soon He will come again and take us there, that where He is we may be also. Then we shall see Him as He is! Then we shall be like Him! How blessed to see His face and to be altogether suitable to Himself! According to the power whereby He is able to put all things in the universe into accord with His holy mind, He will then transform even our bodies of humiliation and make them like His own—all glorious!

The Death of Christ.

It was from a dead Saviour that the water and blood flowed—tokens of an eternal and perfect salvation; the one to cleanse the sinner, the other to expiate his sins.

The holy God and the believer, cleansed from his sins, are brought together by the death of Christ. What love was that which accomplished this!

Humility.

Criticism of others is not humility; inverted pride is not humility; the confession of some barren sentiment is not humility. Humility is dumb; humility keeps no looking glass; humility is unconscious of its own blushing; humility wists not that its face, having been turned to God in long fellowship, burns with the reflected glory of the image it has gazed upon. Humility is not a pose, it is an active power, a fragrant grace in life, but only in the new life, the life that the risen

Christ imparts to His own. It is the life of Jesus made manifest in the mortal flesh of those who have been redeemed by Him. And those who most truly know the high destiny to which grace has called them will most truly display this heavenly grace. It is the sons of God who know that their place is heaven who will take the lowest place on earth and serve others with a self-forgetting love, and thus follow in His steps who though Lord of glory was the servant of all.

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Chapter 2. Verses 5-18.

(G. J. STEWART.)

GOD having approached man in full display in the Son—a necessity before man can approach God—we get now another preliminary step. Man has gone back to God in that same Person. He has accomplished redemption and taken His seat upon the Throne of power. Thence He holds that way of approach open to man—whoever has faith to tread it.

Before entering into the details of this session at God's right hand, which involves Priesthood, it is shown that all God's promises for earth are to be fulfilled, although for the moment postponed. The object of this postponement is the development of the heavenly calling. God will bring many sons to glory, thus forming the heavenly court of the kingdom. This presents a better thing than that contained in the earthly calling and kingdom, and an infinite gain for those who, with Messiah, give up the earthly inheritance which these Hebrew Christians had done.

Earth, therefore, and its subjection to man, is first spoken of (verse 5). It is not the earth in its present state, however, "of which we speak," but

THE HABITABLE EARTH TO COME.

It is that earth to which the First-born is brought again (chap. 1. 6), the Millennial earth. There are only these two occurrences of the word (*oikoumene*) in the epistle. They show on the one hand that it is earth, not heaven, that is referred to—which every use of the word in the New Testament equally shows, especially Luke 2. 1; and on the other hand that it is not earth as we know it now.

The term "habitable earth to come" occurs only here. It can hardly be supposed that the principles of that world are to govern us at the "*present time*." Righteousness reigns there; now, grace reigns through righteousness and this is higher and more Godlike. Righteousness is an attribute of the

Throne; grace is characteristic of God's nature. Bright and blessed world, though this groaning earth of ours will be, a brighter scene attracts our hearts to heaven even amid the surrounding groaning.

God has not subjected the habitable earth to come to angels. They are still in contrast; not now to the Son as such, but to the Son of Man and to every scion of that race of which He is Head. Angels had a great place under the law; a more honourable place in the "new age" as ministers for the co-heirs of Him who sits upon the Throne; but in the habitable earth to come, in its subjugation and government they have no place at all. Nevertheless at the twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem are twelve angels.

In the habitable earth to come, man is superior to angels; who then fall into the place designed for them in God's purpose in creation. It is shown in Gen. 1. that man is the great object of God in creation; the angels are not mentioned there at all. The inferior creation is brought in as showing man's dominion and supremacy; they are called into being by an omnipotent fiat, while man the head is the subject of God's counsel and work. This occupies two chapters, and then the whole of the rest of the Bible is occupied with man and his relationship with God. In John 1. angels are referred to among the all things that received being from the Logos, yet with the other creatures they are in contrast with man, for whom alone is the Light of the Life.

If man is to be finally superior to angels, how can he bow down to and worship them now? The Jew might look up to them, he received the law at their hands and did not know God's mind; philosophy may still seek to draw aside to them under Satan's power (Col. 2. 18); but they serve

now the heirs of salvation as ministers of Him who sits upon the Throne.

If we are thrown still further forward in thought by the expression "habitable earth to come, whereof we speak," that is, into the eternal state, when the Tabernacle of God will be with men, then that earth may take up a position more central in connection with the universe as God's house. But this, though referred to, can scarcely be said to be that "of which we speak" in Hebrews.

That angels are subjected to Man in the habitable earth to come, as one at a certain place testified. That one was David, who by the Logos was used of God to give one of those partial revelations—but true—of Himself. The certain place is in a most beautiful

NIGHT PSALM.

There are morning Psalms; Psalms for the full orb'd day and evening Psalms; but this is a night Psalm (8.). David speaks of the moon and the stars, but not of the sun; the darkness of night surrounded him, illumined only by the moon. He is watching his flocks by night and he looks up to consider the heavens, that vast page in the book of creation in which the Logos has engraved so many valuable revelations of God. It is characteristic of God's servants of old that they considered His works, whether in the heavens which declare His glory; or on earth, where for the moment His glory has been marred, and learnt many a lesson about Himself. So Moses, who seeing the bush burning with fire yet unconsumed, turned aside to consider the great sight. Doubtless he learned the lesson designed.

David here, taught of God, deduces from the created heavens the order that shall reign in the habitable earth to come under Messiah's beneficent rule. But the glory of God, for him, is set above the heavens and beyond his ken. David's words quoted here prove that to man and to the Son of Man the habitable earth to come is subjected. God had ever been mindful

of poor fallen, weak man (Enosh), as the descendant of Adam fallen; and of the race from which the Son of Man should come, born of a woman. He had ever delighted in visiting the Son of Man and to express His delight in Him as more than once He did publicly.

Neither of the above terms really fit Adam as used in the Psalm. A dominion was given to Adam innocent, which he lost when he became weak man (Enosh). Son of Man he never was, but came from God's hand direct. To Christ, the true Son of Man, is the government of the habitable earth to come given, and to His race. He had been made for a little while inferior to the angels; He had been crowned with glory and honour and set over the works of God's hands. All things, even angels, being put in subjection under Him; for He left nothing that is not put under Him.

Three things mark this Son of Man in the Psalm: His humiliation, His coronation, and His universal dominion. The epistle tells us, He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; that He is crowned with glory and honour in heaven; and that angels are subjects under His universal dominion.

But as yet we see not all things put under Him. Two words are translated "see" here. The first (*oromen*) indicates a look round the horizon. In this direction we see all things in confusion under sin, disease, dishonour, death. The rule of the Son of Man cannot be recognized here. All God's original order for the earth is turned upside down. Still the words "not yet" tell us all shall be subject to Him eventually, when the full time has come. The other word (*Blepomen*) supposes a steady gaze fixed upon an object. Oh! what an Object does faith disclose! Amid the deepening darkness of man's day, faith still takes such a look upward and says:—

WE SEE JESUS CROWNED WITH
GLORY AND BEAUTY.

MARY OF MAGDALA.

John 20.

(G. F. EDINGTON.)

IT is worthy of notice that the closing moments of our Lord's sojourn on earth, brought to light the love and devotedness of a loyal-hearted band of followers, who, as we learn from the four Gospels, are seen associated together in loving service towards Him at the cross, and afterwards at the grave. The Spirit of God appears to have singled out from these dear saints for special notice and comment, the name of Mary Magdalene. Reference is made to her in each of the four Gospels. Luke in chapter 8. 2 speaks of her as "Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Speaking of Christ in Acts 10. Peter tells us that "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." Held captive by Satanic power, and utterly unable to free herself from the enemy's grasp, Mary of Magdala was a fitting object for the compassion and wonder-working power of the Son of God. He was here to declare the heart and the attitude of a Saviour God; to speak peace to the anxious, to bind up the broken-hearted, to dry up the mourners' tears, and to set Satan-bound prisoners free (John 1. 18, Luke 4. 18); and the Saviour, who knew her deep need, met this demon-possessed soul, and delivered her from her sevenfold bondage. It was the beginning of "a new day" for Mary Magdalene. She had seen the face of Jesus, had heard His words of love and grace. From midnight darkness and cruel slavery, she had passed into liberty, sunshine, and peace. One *all-commanding* object filled the vision of her soul, and that object was JESUS. The Saviour had won her heart, and henceforward He was to be *everything* to her. No need to wonder that she was first at the sepulchre on the resurrection morn. Had He not come into her darkened life, dispelling its gloom, and filling her soul with new desires and joyous hopes? Apart from Him, the world, to her, was now

a dreary blank—a desolate waste. We see her at the cross, in His closing hours, along with the other Marys: *first* at the tomb and *first* to hear His voice after He was risen from the dead. Others, more intelligent, perhaps, than she, could come to the sepulchre, look into the empty tomb, and go back to their homes; but Mary's deep affections held her to the spot where she last beheld her Lord. And that patient watcher's faithful vigil was amply rewarded: for Mary of Magdala was the honoured instrument, in the Lord's hand, of carrying to His disciples one of the most wonderful communications that was ever conveyed through human lips. "Go to My brethren," said the Lord, "and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father: and to My God and your God." Mary was the first to proclaim the blessed news that the death and resurrection of Christ had ushered in "a new day"; and secured a new place and relationship for all who, by faith, have received Him as their Saviour; and that now it could be truly said that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. 2. 11). It goes without saying that Mary was with the assembled company in the upper room at Jerusalem when the risen Lord came and stood in the midst, breathing words of cheer and comfort to their hearts, and showing them His hands and side. Doubtless the touching story of Mary Magdalene has been given for our encouragement. It discloses to our view the blessed and comforting fact that what the Lord values and appreciates more than aught else in His own is personal, whole-hearted devotedness and affection for Himself; and it is the outshining of this that is so conspicuous in Mary of Magdala. The Saviour could look down into the depths of that affectionate heart and gauge the love that had Himself alone for its supreme object, a fitting vessel,

therefore, to entrust with such a wonderful commission. It was a day of joy and triumph in Jerusalem. It is good for our souls to contemplate the scene and drink into the spirit of it. We see two kindred hearts at the graveside; we think of Mary's joy, as that well-known voice, calling her by name, falls upon her ear. We think of the Saviour's joy as the welcome "Rabboni" comes forth responsive from a worshipping heart. We think of the gathered company with the Lord in the midst. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Well they might. "The strong man armed had been overcome by a stronger than he." Satan and his combined hosts had received their death-blow, and the mighty victor had risen triumphant. The basis had been laid whereby every thought and purpose of the heart of God could be fully carried out, and the glorious Gospel preached to every creature under heaven. Might we ask ourselves if *we* have taken in the deep import of Mary Magdalene's message to the gathered company on that bright resurrection morning? We have seen how the Lord Jesus values the affection of a heart that *cannot do without Him*. That was nearly two thousand years ago. Is He changed? There are millions of true believers on the earth to-day; and all expect, some day, to be with Him in the Father's house on high; but what about the present

moment while we are left down here, in the scene of His shame and deep dishonour? Has He not said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age"? Can this be true, and we not conscious of it? Every true believer in Jesus, however weak and feeble and insignificant in their own estimation they may be, whatever their clime or colour or nationality, are dear to the heart of Christ; and He looks for responsive affection from them; and the Holy Spirit of God has been given to indwell us, that he might take of the things of Christ and show them to us; and this He delights to do if ungrieved and unhindered. We see the glorified Man on the throne of God; His presence there the perfect pledge that all who have put their trust in Him will presently be with Him, perfectly suited to His heart and eye; and when He comes to take His rightful place in the scene of His refusal and rejection His saints shall be associated with Him. In sovereign grace our God has brought us into this place of honour and dignity. What manner of persons ought we to be in the little interval of our sojourn here? In view of the downward trend of everything around us, and the bright prospect of His speedy return, may we not gladly yield Him the undivided allegiance and affection of our hearts; and joyfully "occupy for Him" until He comes?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Falling Away. Hebrews 6.

Can you give me some light on Hebrews 6. 1-10? I have heard it said that the passage refers to apostates, but I am told by others that it refers to Christians. It is verse 4 that is so difficult.—F. W. G.

ONE thing the passage proves conclusively, and that is that those who fall away in this fashion cannot be saved, "*it is impossible to renew them again to repentance*"; let that be clearly seen and much of the difficulty in respect to it will disappear. Plainly it does not refer to what may be called the ordinary backsliding of true Christians, the result and outward evidence of which is sin and failure; such are continually being

brought to repentance and restored to happy communion; and 1 John 1. 9 tells us that: "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The zeal of a true Christian may wane and he may dishonour the Lord by his conduct, but he will grieve about this in secret and blame himself, but he will not renounce the Saviour as unworthy of his

trust; but these contemplated in this passage not only renounce but denounce the Lord: they crucify Him afresh to themselves, and put Him to open shame. They go back from the Christian faith to the dead Judaism out of which they had come, and by so doing say: "We were mistaken when we confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, we believe Him to be an impostor after all, and the Jews were perfectly right when they demanded that He should be crucified, we stand with them against Him." Their case was hopeless; there was hope for the Jew who had not confessed the Lord, for he might yet be enlightened and believe, but for one who had come into the Christian circle and enjoyed all the benefits of it and then abandoned it for his old position there was no hope. To use the figure which the Holy Ghost uses in verses 7 and 8, the rain of blessing from Christ in heaven had come upon him, but he had only borne thorns and briers.

This could not refer to anyone who had been born again and had a vital link with Christ, and the writer of the Hebrew Epistle emphasizes this when he says in verse 9: "But beloved, we are persuaded

better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." It was necessary so to speak, for it was possible and is still possible, for one to take up the *profession* of Christianity and to say, "Lord, Lord," to Jesus, without any real work of grace and faith in the heart.

Verse 4 has in view the outward benefits of the Christian sphere; it is better to live in a professedly Christian land than in one where that light has never shone; there is more kindness and love and consideration for others where the Holy Ghost moves, as had been plainly shown in Acts 2. 41-47; and it is probable that some were affected for the time by that state of things, and entered that circle by baptism without true repentance and faith. They had seen and enjoyed the liberty and love of that circle and had gone back to the darkness out of which they had come; in this way they had apostatised from the faith, never really having been of it. Such a word should not dismay or discourage the true Christian, but make him rejoice and be more diligent in the blessing and encouragement that follows in the chapter.

"Baptized into one body."

Does 1 Corinthians 12. 13 contemplate what is vital, or does it include all profession? —A. J. A.

WE do not see how anyone can maintain that this passage includes those who profess the faith of Christ without reality. The figure of the body which is used should be enough to prove that what is vital is in question; and it is a body formed by the action of the Spirit. The Spirit's work is real work, and not only have the members of this one body been laid hold of by the Spirit and put in their proper place by Him

but each member has drunk into the same Spirit, and so is able to function in the place given to it. Each member has, if we might so put it, not only been appropriated by the Spirit but has appropriated the Spirit for himself. Thus is every Christian placed in vital union with every other Christian by the One Spirit that dwells in all. It is a great truth, but how little is its practical power and blessing known.

"In Christ shall all be made alive."

While it is perfectly clear that believers are especially in view in 1 Corinthians 15, has the statement in verse 22, "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive," a universal application? I ask this because verse 21 speaks of the resurrection of the dead and not "from among the dead" as in Phil. 3. 11.—E. H., CANADA.

THE verse in question presents a contrast between "in Adam" and "in Christ"; there is death in the one, life out of death in the other. Only believers could be said to be "in Christ," and while those who have died without mercy will surely be raised, and in that sense will live as Revelation 20. 5 states, yet in the 12th verse of that chapter they are

called "the dead" after their resurrection. We should connect verse 23 with verse 22; there it is evident that only those that are Christ's are in view. It is true that all who have died will be raised by the Lord as Son of Man as John 5. 28, 29 states, and verse 21 of 1 Corinthians 15. would cover this.

THE SECRET OF ABIDING IN CHRIST (J. T. MAWSON.)

AND OF A FRUITFUL LIFE.

The following series of questions were handed to us during special meetings held for the help of young Christians. We publish the questions and our answers in the hope of helping many others who have similar exercises.

IN John 15. 4 the Lord Jesús says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." The following questions arise from exercise of soul upon this verse :—

I. Does not "EXCEPT" imply that we are not always abiding in Christ?

No ! that is not the meaning of these words. What they plainly teach is that the only possible way of fruit-bearing is by abiding in Christ as a branch abides in the vine ; and that the one evidence of abiding in Christ is fruit-bearing.

And perhaps it will help you in the understanding of the passage if you see that it is not a question of a branch abiding in Christ to-day and not to-morrow, but of two sorts of branches, the fruit-bearing branches and the non-fruit-bearing branches. It is a question of what professes to be for the Lord on earth, and in that sense every professor is a branch ; but if there is not vital union with Him there will be no fruit, and such a branch will eventually be cast forth, as Judas was. Notice that the Lord changes the word when speaking of this. He does not say, "if one of *you*"—the true disciples—"abide not in *Me*," but "if a *man* abide not in *Me*" (verse 6).

II. It is clear from the verse that if we were always abiding in Him, everything else would be right in our lives and we should be fruitful and well-pleasing to God. This is what we want, to bear fruit. What is it then to abide in Christ?

Having settled the question as to your vital oneness with Christ, and that

it is no mere matter of profession with you, though the subject of the Lord's words is really our responsibility as having professed identification with Him, you must next inquire as to what it is you are thinking about first and most. Is it *your* fruit-bearing or Christ ? If it is your fruit-bearing it is self-occupation, and as a consequence the fruit will be both poor in quantity and quality. But if you have learnt what He means when He says, "*Without ME ye can do nothing*," and so have turned wholly to Him—the Source of your life, strength and energy—fruit will not be lacking. You abide in Him when you realize that you can't do without Him, and when you know that all you need is in Him. Two words cover it. He is **INDISPENSABLE** to you, and He is **ALL-SUFFICIENT**. To abide in Him is to cleave to Him with purpose of heart, as Acts 11. 23 says, but it is more than that, for there it is a question of grace from Him, here it is life in Him and the grace which is the strength of that life. In abiding in Him you stay where grace has put you. When you came to Him at first in all your need as a sinner, you turned away from every other hope and helper and from all your own efforts to secure blessing. *Then* salvation and life for you were in Christ alone ; *now*, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. 2. 6, 7). Go on as you began ; as you found all you needed in Him for salvation, now find all you need in Him for fruit-bearing. Derive from Him, draw upon Him, cleave to Him, so that His life may find expression in you in fruit-bearing.

III. What is the secret of constant abiding in Christ?

There is first the sense of your need of Him; when you have this you will cleave to Him **INSTINCTIVELY** as a babe cleaves to its mother's breast, but you will also cleave to Him **INTELLIGENTLY** as you grow in the knowledge of His resources. But there is more than what He can be *for* you, there is what He is *to* you. You will abide in Him **HABITUALLY** when you know His love as greater than all other loves, Himself better than the brightest and best below. So the 9th verse would answer your question. The secret of constant abiding in Him is simply the knowledge of His love. "As the Father hath loved Me"—that is the measure of it—"so have I loved you: continue ye in My love."

But there is another side to the question of fruit-bearing, namely, the purging and the chastening of the Father's hand (verses 1, 2). If you are a fruit-bearing branch, and the desire to be constantly abiding in Christ would be a bit of evidence that you are, the Father's eye is never withdrawn from you. He sees all the tendencies in you that would lead to self-confidence or dependence on men or things instead of upon Christ, and these can only spoil the fruit, so in faithful love He cuts and prunes at these. Are you ready to be wholly in the Father's hands as to this matter? It may mean painful experiences and disappointments, but with great compensations; for what is cut away will make more room for Christ and His life; and though you may not be quite so showy, like a vine closely pruned, yet "Herein," says the Lord, "is My Father glorified," and that is your desire.

Then you must not overlook verse 7, "If ye abide in Me and *My words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." As you abide in Him, His words will be infinitely blessed to you. You will long for them, listen to them, meditate upon them, cherish them and obey them.

What letter is that for which you eagerly looked, and read over and over until you knew it by heart, and yet continued to read it until you got another in the same handwriting? That was a letter from the one you cared most for in all the world. Let the words of Jesus be like that to you, so that they fill your thoughts and form your desires and abide in your heart. Then you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done for you, for then His will will be yours, and your praying will be in response to His words. Your prayers, as in this chapter, will have fruit-bearing specially in view, and they will be answered by an energy of the Holy Ghost which in you will manifest the life of Jesus. Not notable deeds or spectacular service that will make much of you is the fruit here spoken of, but meekness, gentleness, forbearance, forgiveness, self-forgetting service, love, joy, peace, long-suffering—these are the fruit of the Spirit, for these are the graces of Christ, the much fruit by which the Father is glorified.

IV. We are often told that all we have to do is to be "beholding the Lord's glory," "be occupied with Christ," "feed upon Christ." We believe this, but will you please explain how this attitude of soul is to be maintained?

You may have heard of the young lady who, when asked at the close of a Gospel address if she would give her heart to the Lord, replied, "He stole it away in the meeting." Well, if He really had done that, she would not be contented with hearing about Him once a week, she would desire to be occupied with Him continually, and she would wish to feed upon Him, and to know where He is that she might see Him if that was possible. It is the desire for Him that will make you seek Him and His company, and you shall learn that He is not here. He has gone from the world, He is apart from all its empty attractions, its schemes and glory, and if He is more to you than all it has to offer, you shall find the way you seek, for He does not withhold Himself from

those who seek Him; He delights to manifest Himself to those who appreciate His love.

It is the knowledge of His love to you that will set things in motion on this line; as you know that love that passeth knowledge you will be constrained to respond to it, and in that you will have the help of the Holy Ghost. The way the mother bird teaches her fledglings to fly will illustrate this point. She hovers over the nest, calling her young with a peculiar call, and they in response look up and desire to reach her in the air, and lo! they discover that they have the power to do it. They do not think of their wings or the use and power of them; they see the mother bird who has been indispensable to their life and existence hitherto; they hear her voice and desire to join her where she is, and at once a power they knew nothing of before comes into play, their wings become the servants of their desires. So with you, let Christ fill your eyes and heart, and you will spread your wings. You will find that you have the power of the Holy Ghost on your side—the very same power that raised up Christ from the dead and set Him above all principalities and powers and every name that is named is the power that now works in you. It is thus that your question will have a most blessed answer in your experience.

V. What is the meaning of "Ye are filled full in Him"? Are we to seek to get the fulness out of Him into us or just to rest in His fulness, realizing that we are part of Him?

Your question refers, we suppose, to Colossians 2. 9, 10. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power." It is the truth of Christ as Head of His body that is developed in the passage, and the blessed fact is brought clearly out that the members of His body have all they need in Him who is their Head and their life. They need neither human wisdom nor human

religion—both rationalism and ritualism are snares to be avoided, for both displace and obscure Christ. You as a member of the body of Christ are in Him, and you are complete in Him; nothing can be added to Christ, nor can He be improved in any way, and you are filled up in Him. You need nothing apart from Him. Not alone as a unit, as a branch in a vine might be, but as part of His body. The earlier questions have to do with individual life, for you could abide in Him and bear fruit if nobody else did, but here you are part of a body with many members. In the Head of the body, Christ, the glorified Man, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells for His body, and there is no life, or wisdom, or power outside of Him for it or for you as a member of it; but there is an absolutely and ever-available sufficiency of all these things in Him. As you learn the great truth of your oneness with Him, and of His all-sufficiency for His body, both on the side of its nourishment and protection and edification, and also on the side of the manifestation of His life, grace, wisdom and power through it, you will turn from all worldly support and wisdom and hold to Him, the Head of the body; then there will be no hindrance to the manifestation of the fact that He is in you, and the energy of His life in you will find its expression in the Christian company in which you have your part. The way in which this will be seen is described for us in chapter 3. 12-17; there we see Christ in the saints; and if every member of Christ on earth knew the truth and walked in it, that would be the life that they would live.

VI. How do we enjoy our possessions as Christians? Is it simply by believing God's Word that they are ours?

No, simply believing is not enough for the enjoyment of our blessings. God's Word tells us what we possess in Christ, and we believe God, and faith gives us the boldness to enter into what is ours and to enjoy it. But we could not enjoy the things of God apart

from the Spirit of God ; this is made plain in 1 Corinthians 2. 9-14. Every blessing is God's gift to us. Faith gives us the boldness to appropriate what God gives, but it is by the Holy Spirit that we possess in conscious enjoyment what is ours.

VII. When we grieve the Holy Spirit of God through sin, do we lose His witness that we are sons of God ?

We lose the joy of the relationship of sons when we grieve the Holy Spirit, though not the knowledge of the relationship, and often the Spirit uses the knowledge that we have of the relationship to produce in us the deepest repentance and fullest confession for our having sinned in spite of it. Not only what we may call sin grieves the Holy Spirit ; earthly-mindedness, worldliness, and everything that would cause us to be indifferent to Christ, or to think little of our heavenly place and inheritance—these

are the things and ways that grieve Him, just as Israel grieved Him in the wilderness when they despised the pleasant land and turned in heart back again to Egypt. And the impoverished, lethargic, lack-lustre Christian lives, and immature fruit in them, are the result of the Spirit being grieved. But if Christ is the heart's object, if He is paramount in our lives, all is well. We may often fail on that road and sometimes stumble and fall, but there is grace for all that, and in spite of our failure the Spirit will find His delight in leading us into a fuller knowledge of Christ and of those blessed relationships into which grace has put us. The listening ear and responsive heart, the single eye and the subject will, these are the Holy Spirit's delight, whilst self-sufficiency, pride, indifference to His holy mission and the glory of Christ, these are a perpetual grief to Him.

The Lord's Interest in Us.

"And all mine are Thine and Thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them"
(John 17. 10).

YOU may feel very small and of little use, but when you turn to Him as to His thought of you, He says, "I am glorified in you." The very fact of your being here for Him is a pleasure to Him ; and as we bud and blossom and bring forth fruit, He is glorified. This surely urges us to be more according to His mind. If you were only a daisy in a garden, and knew that the owner of the garden prized you very much, and liked to have you in his garden, and came to see you every day, and conferred on you continually some special favour, like the shining of the sun, would you be thinking of your own littleness and uselessness, or of the unaccountable care, interest, and appreciation of the owner of the garden ? But so it is. The Lord thinks of you and He cannot love you little. How the heart of the daisy, if it had one, would expand as it caught the approaching footsteps of the daily visits of the owner !

They say that flowers do not open out into full bloom on a cold, sunless day, but when the sun invites them, they expand into their greatest brilliance, and thus the more you are assured in heart that you are to be left here for the Lord's glory, and that His delight is in you, the more you will be encouraged and stirred up to be to Him what He esteems you to be. It is not so much what one does or what one is, but what one is *to Him*, and consequently to His own who are here. Can anything conduce more to render your stay in this world happy and cheerful, however enfeebled in health or tried by circumstances, than the simple fact that staying here you can please the Lord, and be in fellowship with His interests in His saints ? And again, nothing can more promote zeal and earnestness in you to answer to His love than the very assurance of the estimate you are held in by Him, however you may think yourself of it.

J. B. S.

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. IX. Glory and Blessing. Genesis 45. 25, to 47.

THE brethren of Joseph fulfil their mission according to the directions of Joseph. They "came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor of all the land of Egypt" (25, 26). They witness to a living and exalted Joseph, even as to-day it is the privilege of the believer to witness to the risen and exalted Saviour. A testimony so incredible to the natural mind that it is received with unbelief. Thus it was with Jacob. The exposure of his unbelief was the first result of hearing the good news. Twenty years before these same men had brought a lying report to Jacob, with evidences to support their lie. And without a question Jacob believed the lie. "Without doubt," he said, "Joseph is rent in pieces." Now his sons bring a true report of Joseph with evidences to support the truth, and at once Jacob doubts. His "heart fainted, for he believed them not." Ever since Adam gave his ear to the devil's lie it has been natural for fallen man to believe a lie. Only a work of grace enables men to believe the truth. Hence we read that those who believe on the Name of Christ are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Thus with Jacob, grace overcomes his unbelief. His sons repeat "all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them." Moreover, they show Jacob "the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him." The grace and goodness of Joseph breaks down the unbelief of Jacob. "When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive." This is the confession of faith. He believed with his heart and confessed the truth with his lips. Nor is there any other way of blessing for a sinner to-day. We may indeed at first listen

to the good news with unbelief, but as we hear the grace of the words of Christ, and see that all has been done that we might be blessed, our hearts are won—the goodness of God leadeth to repentance—we believe in our hearts. Just as Jacob sees that Joseph has made every provision that he might personally be blessed, so we see that Christ has done a great work that we individually might be saved, and that God is satisfied with that work, for He has raised Christ from the dead. We believe in our hearts and confess Jesus as Lord with our lips, and we are saved (Rom. 10. 10).

It was Jacob—the man so often marked by unbelief and crooked ways—that could not believe the good news; but directly he uses the language of faith God gives him his new name "Israel." Jacob expressed all that he was by nature, Israel all that he was by grace. But not only is faith kindled in the heart of Jacob, but love goes out in longing to Joseph—"I will go and see him before I die." This is the language of love that is satisfied with nothing less than the one that is loved. The heart that has been won by the grace of Christ will not be satisfied without the company of Christ. Love cannot be satisfied at a distance. The test of love is—does it desire the company of the one that is loved? Are we content to say, "We shall see Him when He comes, or when we die," or do we say, "*I will go and see Him before I die.*" Do we know what it is, in the power of the Spirit, to seek His company, and taste the blessedness of His presence before we die?

In order to reach Joseph, Israel had to take his journey (46. 1). He had to leave the scene of all his natural affections. And so with ourselves, if we are to reach Christ where He is, we must forget the things that are behind. Thus Israel comes into the new land—the land of Goshen, and there meets

with his son Joseph, and Joseph "presented himself unto him" (29). If on the one hand Israel longs for the company of his son, Joseph on his side is delighted to present himself to Israel. Are we set for the company of Christ, we shall find that Christ is delighted to reveal Himself to us. Do we seek like the two disciples of John 1. to know Christ in His own dwelling, we shall be welcomed by the gracious words of the Lord, "Come and see" (John 1. 38, 39).

Then Israel can say, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (30). The man who had always been speaking of death and dreading the grave has now no more fear of death because Joseph is *alive*. It is as we see that Christ is risen, and as we gaze upon His face and learn His love, our souls will be delivered from the fear of death.

Thus Israel and all that he had came to Joseph in his exaltation. God's purposes, as set forth in Joseph's dreams, are brought to pass. What follows will show how Joseph uses his place of universal supremacy for the blessing of those who submit to him.

It is deeply instructive to trace the hand of God in every step of Joseph's path, from the days of his youth when feeding the flock in Canaan, to the day of his glory when set over all the land of Egypt. The varied characters that crossed his path—the father that loved him, the brethren that hated him, the merchants that carried him to Egypt, the captain that promoted him, the woman that traduced him, the jailer that showed him favour, the butler by whom he was forgotten, and the king by whom he was exalted—all were the unconscious instruments to carry out God's purpose for him.

So, too, the changing scenes of his life—the fields of Dothan, the empty pit, the house of Potiphar, the prison and the palace—were all stages on his way to glory, even as his varied pursuits, as shepherd, slave, overseer of Potiphar's house, and keeper of

Pharaoh's prison, prepared him for the use of glory.

It is this use of glory—the way he uses his place of supreme power—that comes before us so strikingly in this portion of Joseph's story. We see this mighty power put forth in a threefold way:—

First, Joseph uses his position of supremacy to bring everything into absolute subjection to himself. All the wealth of Egypt passes into his hands: "Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan" (13, 14). Then when the money failed, Joseph claims the cattle. He said, "Give your cattle," and we read, "They brought their cattle unto Joseph" (15-17). Then, the money spent, the cattle gone, they say there is nothing left but "our bodies and our lands," and so they add, "buy *us* and *our land* for bread." So we read Joseph "bought all the land of Egypt," and "as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof" (19, 21).

Thus all passes under the absolute control of Joseph—money, cattle, the land, and finally the people themselves. The words of Pharaoh are literally fulfilled, "without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt" (41. 44). Joseph uses his power to bring all into subjection. Never, before or since, have such claims been made by any earthly king. Apart from its typical teaching, the historical fact is without parallel in the history of the world. Many a potentate has made crushing claims, but not one has ever dared to claim all after the manner of Joseph. Moreover, those who have made large claims upon their subjects have been unable to make good their claims; or in the attempt to do so have provoked rebellion and revolution. Joseph, however, not only makes unheard-of claims, but he makes good his claims without a voice being raised in rebellion.

Furthermore, a second great fact is noticeable, that in claiming all, Joseph does so for Pharaoh. If Joseph gathers up all the money, we read he "brought the money into Pharaoh's house" (14); again, if the land comes under Joseph's sway, we read he "bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh" (20). So, too, of the people Joseph can say, "I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh." Thus Joseph uses his supreme power, not for his own advancement, but for the glory of Pharaoh.

Finally, a third striking fact remains to be noticed. If on the one hand Joseph's power is used to subdue all for Pharaoh, on the other hand his universal supremacy is used for the blessing of the people. If Pharaoh's glory is maintained, the people's blessing is secured. Moreover, it is only as the people unreservedly submit to Joseph that they come into blessing.

In all this Joseph is a striking type of Christ in exaltation. If we are to be saved from the present power of evil, nothing can be of greater importance than to realize that Christ is in the place of supreme power, and to submit to Him. There are great powers in heaven—angels, principalities and powers; there are great powers in the world—kings and all that are in authority; there are great powers in the lower world—the devil and his angels; but the Lord Jesus is set in a place of absolute supremacy over every power. He is set "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." But if the Father has glorified the Son, it is that the Son may glorify the Father, as the Lord can say in His great prayer, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee" (John 17. 1). Moreover, if the Father is glorified, His people are blessed. So we read, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many

as Thou hast given Him." The glory which the Father has given to the Son is used for the glory of the Father and the blessing of His people.

Nor will it be otherwise in the day to come, when Christ will put forth His subduing power, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the glory of God and the blessing of men under His Millennial reign. And so finally "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be annulled is death." "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." This will introduce the new heavens and the new earth, where God will dwell and men be blessed.

Whether we think of the present day of grace, the Millennium for which earth waits, or the new heavens and the new earth that stretch far into eternity, all depends upon the supreme glory and power of the One who was once rejected by men, used to secure the glory of God and the blessing of man.

And the One who has secured all for the glory of God and the blessing of man will be the centre of heaven's praise. As in the days of old, those who had been blessed by Joseph come to Joseph saying, "*Thou hast saved our lives*" (47. 25). They recognize that they owe everything to Joseph. So, too, the great throng of the redeemed delight to say, "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

But not only were people saved by Joseph, but they prospered under Joseph. This we see set forth in the history of Israel and his sons. The Lord Jesus does a great deal more for His people than save them from the world's famine. He brings us into a good land, a heavenly country, and blesses us with spiritual blessings, and as we enter into those spiritual blessings we shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

(F. B. HOVE.)

Address at High Leigh, July 27, 1924.

Scriptures read—Heb. 10. 35 ; 11. 1-4, 8-10, 24-26 ; Phil. 3. 1-11 ;
Heb. 12. 1-2.

AS you probably know, the eleventh of Hebrews is like a sermon based upon a text taken from Habakkuk 2. 4. It is a commentary by the Spirit of God on the text, "The just shall live by faith." It was a little information which Habakkuk received when he was much disturbed in mind by the conditions that prevailed in his day. He was granted a wonderful vision. In the third and last chapters of his prophecy we are given a description of God riding in majesty to the deliverance of His people and the accomplishing of His own purposes in the earth, which is clearly God putting the world right. God will yet ride in majesty in the overthrow of evil. When Habakkuk heard the story we may imagine him saying, "Oh yes, but how long have I to wait?" But the Lord said to him, "Habakkuk, whilst you wait I will give you the secret of a life according to My mind." The great secret of spiritual life from the beginning is given us in the eleventh of Hebrews, which shows us that it is faith in God—"The just shall live by faith." It has been suggested that in the three New Testament quotations of that little text you have the emphasis laid on a different word in each case, and very clearly here the emphasis is upon the word "live." The point here is, not that we start by faith, nor that we are saved and justified by faith, but that we live by it. It is the great operative principle of Christian life and, indeed, has always been. It is the great principle on which the people of God of all times have pursued their pilgrim way, and what has been done in the past God will do for us to-day. It is really an inspiring thought that we are actually found in the grand faith-succession, which began with Abel and has been increasing down the ages. All along the line God has been pointing

out His thoughts ; there has been as time has progressed far more for faith to see. I remember being told when a young man that faith is "light," but I should feel inclined to say that faith is "sight." Revelation is light, but faith is sight. You may have two men in a dark room, and one of them has most acute vision and the other is stone blind—there is nothing to choose between them ; but bring them into the light and there is all the difference. One has sight that takes in and appreciates the light, and the other has not. Faith is that peculiar capacity which can receive and appreciate the light when the light shines.

The eleventh of Hebrews begins not exactly with a definition of faith, not what faith is in its essence, but with what faith is in its practice. "Now faith is the substance (substantiating) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen." Faith is that which turns "things hoped for" into positive "substance" to-day, and this, of course, is the main argument of this letter to the Hebrews. Some of the Hebrew Christians were beginning to think that they had lost the real thing. Imagine a Jew who had become a follower of that Jesus who was crucified as a malefactor some thirty years before. His old friends say to him, "You are surely a fool. Here is our Temple, with the sacrifices going up and silver trumpets sounding ; we have the ancient God-instituted worship and the priests descended directly from Aaron. You can see our religion ; you can smell it ; you can hear it ; we have the real thing. You have got only a little upper room, where your Master gathered His disciples together ; but now He is gone, and where has He gone ? Really you have got nothing, you are running after mere ideas." This is the

language of the world, but the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, "Your sacrifices are shadows, you have only a shadow temple. Your priests are shadows, and your altar is only a shadow altar." A few years after the epistle was written the Roman armies came and swept the whole shadow system off the map. We Christians have got the substance, that of which the shadows when first they were ordained of God spoke, but it is no good to us except there is faith that lays hold of the unseen things and turns them into real "substance" in our hearts and lives. The writer goes on immediately to speak of creation: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God." No one can prove it nor fully understand it. In the same way as by faith we understand that the Bible is the Word of God, we understand this truth of Creation. Faith can and does receive it. Faith is the eye of the soul, or, as I think we shall see in a moment, is more like a telescope which, applied to the eye, brings into evidence things beyond the reach of mortal eyes. I am not speaking of something that only appeals to very advanced Christians; you are not a Christian at all if you have not got faith. If Christ is not a reality to you, you can hardly claim the name of Christian. I am speaking of that with which you have begun, and I want you to see that faith is not only that with which you start, but the operating force on your side that is going to carry you through. Your life in this grand faith-succession comes down from Abraham, Moses and Paul, and here we are to-day blessed in the Lord Jesus Christ. However humbly you start, you are in this grand faith-succession. Faith saves the soul, and this comes out in the opening instances of Abel, Enoch and Noah. Faith was that which respectively put them in right relations with God, translated them, saved them from the judgment. Faith does save the soul, but it would not do that were it not that faith is sight that sees the thoughts of God and enables us to hold

them: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain"; it was not by accident, but by faith. How could he have done it by faith except there had been some "light"? I have no question in my own mind that it was the first action of the Lord God in the garden in the day when sin came that was the object of Abel's faith. Again and again he must have heard that story of the ineffectiveness of the aprons and how the Lord God made coats of skin, thus indicating His way of covering.

The day that sin came in, sacrifice came in; that very day the death of some sinless victim had to take place, thus in pictorial fashion God set forth His thoughts. The death of a sinless victim is that which covers man's nakedness in the presence of God, and I suppose Abel heard that story again and again, and would say, "Then that is God's way of approach, that is God's way of maintaining such intercourse as is possible between the fallen creature and Himself." Faith sees and discerns God's mind and God's way.

When you come to Abraham, this state of things is very greatly stressed. Abraham was a man with a telescope, a man who had within his knowledge things that his contemporaries apparently knew nothing about. Abraham lived in a very highly civilized age, as is shown by the excavations which have recently been made, but suddenly there came within his knowledge other things; the God of Glory appeared to him and altered his whole outlook. He began to look at other things, and when he was called to go out into a place and take a wanderer's life, he went not knowing whither he went, and he began to look for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God; he turned his back upon Ur, that city of gods. In the case of Abraham what is emphasized is what he saw. Faith brought that heavenly city built of God into his vision, and we are told how the promises came before him and, with others, he saw them and

was persuaded of them, and confessed himself a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth. All these things came into Abraham's view, and faith was to him like a telescope of the soul. What the world thought of Abraham I do not know; he was like a mariner steering his ship by stars which not one of his fellow-mariners had ever seen. They knew about gods and temples and such science as there was approximately two thousand years before Christ, but they did not know God, nor God's country, and Abraham did. He was content to go on in faith, for he had God. Have we all been in the habit of using faith's telescope? Have you before your soul things that the worldling, with whom you have to mix, knows nothing about? Do you steer your course through the world by these things? This is the way the Christian should steer.

The third outstanding character in this chapter is Moses. When he was come to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Faith not only sees like a telescope, but is something like seeing by X rays. Faith has marvellous penetrating power. It not only sees what God sets before us, but it sees through all the fine objects by which it is surrounded. This is what we find in the case of Moses; he had the power of seeing through a thing, and when you see through a thing its fascination for your heart is broken. What you do not see through exerts a remarkable charm over you, but when you see right through the thing (and the things of this world are rather threadbare) the charm disappears. Moses was a man of faith when he came to years, and he knew how to sum up matters and measure things. He made his immortal choice; he saw through the finery and glory of Egypt. Moses saw the purposes of God in a nation of slaves out of which he had been lifted and put into a position of

glory and honour. It might be assumed he would say, "Surely I must keep the place God has given to me"; but he saw through it all, and summed it up rightly, and found it to be but the pleasures of sin, and that only for a season (and a very short season). He saw in this race of slaves a people out of whom was coming Christ, who was to be manifested in the flesh. He said, "I will identify myself with the people of God rather than accept the honour of the world." In this way he is a faint reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he esteemed it greater riches than the pleasures of Egypt. He was prepared to suffer in identification with what was of God, and from that point onward he accepted the thought of suffering.

In the third of Philipians the Apostle Paul was speaking almost in the same strain. You may almost say, "By faith Paul, who before his conversion was a man of eminence with an immense fund of things in which he might glory, saw through all the things which surrounded him, and said, 'I count them but loss for Christ.'" We must remember he wrote these words when he was in a Roman prison near the end of his career. Here was a man who threw up all social position—soon he would have been in the Council of the Seventy, and an acknowledged leader of Israel—but he identified himself with Christ and His interests. He endured in the teeth of opposition for years. They stopped his public labours and left him for years to languish in captivity in the dungeon of Rome. The world would have said, "The man is a fool, he has thrown everything over for a theory." Paul lived long enough to see everything apparently crumbling away, and everything going wrong, but he says, "I am just exactly of the same conviction. When I met Christ on the road to Damascus I flung all away so that I might have Him for my gain." He would have said, "I did not identify myself with Christ because I thought I was going to build up a

church. It was Christ I had before my soul, and He is as bright as ever, in fact He shines more brightly for me in prison than ever He did before."

Christ is to be known now. He is actually living in the presence of God, and we are exhorted to know Him and the power of His resurrection. We are going to know that resurrection with regard to our bodies, but while we are waiting for Him we want to know the power of His resurrection in our spirits and souls, lifting us out of this life into another region of things. How little we know this! You younger Christians may very well desire to know it. It will revolutionize your lives as it will ours. Only remember, Paul is not the one that we are to be primarily occupied with, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. That is why I read the opening of the twelfth chapter, which we must not disconnect from the eleventh. Those who witness to us of the fortitude of faith in the Christian race have been enumerated in the eleventh chapter, and now comes the exhortation: "Let us lay aside every weight."

The writer was adopting the language of the athletic contest. The athlete carries no weight beyond what is absolutely necessary, and so we are exhorted to lay aside every weight and sin which so easily besets us, as though it were some kind of obstacle on the ground, and let us run with patience (endurance) the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus. The word "look" here means looking off every other object and looking exclusively at Him. He is the One who has traversed

the path of faith in its perfection, always doing the things which please the Father, always living in the light of the Father's presence, traversing the whole way of faith from the start to the martyr's crown. He was much more than a martyr, as it goes on to say—by inference, at least—He resisted unto blood striving against sin. All round Him were the powers of evil and of Satan, but He went right through to the finish—death. Ah, fix the gaze of your soul on Jesus, by faith keep Jesus as the living object of your soul! He is seated now at the right hand of God in heaven, and as you keep Him before your soul you will find there is power even to-day for you to run the Christian race.

Let us beware of the weights and of sin. There are many things which you could not exactly label as "sin," but may become weights, viz., those things which impede our progress. We often hear the question: "Is there any harm in it?" but that is not the question at all. "Is there any good in it?" It is not "Is there any harm in this pursuit, or in that book?" but "Is there anything that will help me on in view of Christ and His glory and kingdom?" God helping us, let us lay aside the weights and be warned against the sin that besets us, and looking to Jesus, let us keep Him before us and run the race which is, I believe, now not long. The day of His coming is near. My dear Christian, let us not at the last give up; we are in sight of the goal, let us run the race of faith to the glory of God.

Walking in the Spirit.

YOU may say, "What do you mean by walking in the Spirit?" That is a very good question to be exercised about. I will give you a simple illustration. A sailor when asked, "How do you get on in bad weather?" replied, "I do not mind the weather so long as I can see the sun." When I am walking in the Spirit I see Christ only. If I am going to do my business, who is before me? Christ. If I am

going out to visit, who is before me? Christ. If I am going to write a letter, who is before me? Christ. And when Christ is thus before you, His things are your things, His interests become yours. You will live unto Him; but that means that you will care for those for whom He cares, you will be one with Him in His thoughts, affections, compassions.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

Address at High Leigh, August 1, 1924.

PERSONAL LOVE.

"I AM crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2. 20.)

Do not we treasure these words as we make them our own? "The Son of God loved ME and gave Himself for ME." How glad our hearts are for that individual, personal love of Christ! We get this brought before us in the eleventh of John, "Now He (Jesus) loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." He loved them each, and was there not something peculiar in the character of His love to each one, and is there not that peculiar characteristic that you and I enjoy as we know Jesus for ourselves? It was that the Apostle John revelled in when he spoke of himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Did not Jesus love all the eleven? Surely, but John took that love to his own heart and rested in it. Dear young believer, get alone with Christ; in this day of hurry among men, seek often to be in secret with Him and let the warmth of that love rest upon you. But some of you are saying in these meetings, "I have been disturbed, I find there is something in me that seems so contrary, and which does not answer to the love of Christ, —I have been finding myself out. Romans 6. and 7. have been a torture chamber to me. How I long to be free from the power of sin that seems to dominate me still! Can it be that I am not a true Christian? I would not like to tell anybody about it, but am I a child of God?" Let this verse comfort you: "I am crucified with Christ." To be crucified was to be judged as unfit to live upon the face of the earth. Are you worse than that? And that one can say, "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." The Lord is not disappointed in you;

He knows all that you are and knew from the beginning what you would prove to be, but He has picked you up to keep you, for He loved, loves, will ever love you, not because of anything in you, but because He loved you. Oh, the joy of resting in that! The Son of God loved me because He loved me, and He loves me because He loves me. The Son of God stooped from His glory into manhood to pick you up, but He knew all you were before He picked you up. He was crucified for you, and you may take up this language and say, "I am crucified with Him"—that is the end of your sinful hateful self in righteous judgment; "that though living still here upon earth, I may now live by the faith of the Son of God"—a faith that flows from Him and supplies all that you need for all your way.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Rom. 8. 34-37.)

PERSISTENT LOVE.

We have here not so much the personal love of Christ, but the persistent love of Christ. It is just that which is presented in a verse in John 13., "Jesus, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He loved them perfectly, He loved them right away through. We find in this verse that there are four sides to the love of Christ. It is a love square—"Christ that died." In His deep love for you He went into the distance and darkness and depths of desolation of the cross. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

The Spirit would occupy us with the resurrection of Christ. In what haste His messengers on the resurrection day were sent to His disciples with the message, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them I ascend . . ." It was not, "Go to those poor sinners and tell them I have borne their sins," though that was true. He had died to end their sinful history that they might be for ever associated with Him, but He speaks of the height of blessing He had won for them. Christ has no reserve from you. He keeps back nothing that His love can impart. May you and I have no reserve from Him. We also find that He is "*even at the right hand of God*," and He is there for us. In love He lives as once in love He died, and that love is active—"He maketh intercession for us." How is it that we are here to-night? It is the result of Christ's present loving intercession on our behalf which has brought us hitherto and will bring us to the Father's house on high.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The apostle puts his back against that rock of the love of Christ and challenges all comers, and you may face the future, whatever it may hold, with this assurance that Christ will love you just as He did when He laid down His life on Calvary's cross; for His is an unchanging love.

SEARCHLESS LOVE.

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3. 18-19.)

The apostle takes us on Mount Pisgah. He is looking here at the whole scope of the wonderful purposes of God which have Christ as their centre, and he wants you and me to know the breadth and length and depth and height of His great scheme for the glory

of His Son; but we may almost be dismayed and bewildered in the magnitude of it. He goes on, however, to say, "and to know the love of Christ." In all that glory the place nearest to our heart will be the love of Christ that rests upon us, and that love passes knowledge—is unspeakable.

In Eph. 5. 25 the love of Christ is again brought before us, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." I only turn you to that because I want your heart to take in all who compose that assembly in this present day of blessing from Pentecost until that glad day of rapture when love will have its loved ones in the home on high. Never have less in your thoughts than the whole assembly of God.

CONSTRAINING LOVE.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Cor. 5. 14.)

He died for us that we should live, and grace is now supplied that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves. We have all done that, and whenever we have done it we have just lived lost lives with ourselves as a centre. But He would have us live "unto Him who died for us and rose again." He lives, an object for our hearts, an object for our lives. There is nothing here worth going in for, all here is a bubble that will burst; but there is that which abides, there is a life that lasts, a life that endures for ever, a life lived for the will of God, and you and I constrained by the love of Christ may live unto Him who died for us and rose again. We get in Rom. 12.: "Present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. . . ." We are His by grace, we are His by purchase, by redemption, but He wants each one of us to be His by presentation. Have you ever honestly and sincerely alone with Him put your body in His hands? He has bought you—deliver the goods.

"Lord, I am Thine, Thy claims I own,
Myself to Thee I'd wholly give,
Reign Thou within my heart alone
And let me to Thy glory live."

THE HEAVENLY CALLING.

(JAMES BOYD.)

These papers are written to show the error of the teaching that the church will go through the great tribulation and that only certain of the saints will have part in the Lord's kingdom and glory.

I AM thankful to be able to say that on the subject of the heavenly calling of the saints of the present dispensation of grace I have nothing new to which I may call the attention of the people of God, for it is not only plainly set before us in the Word of Truth, but it is a subject to which our consideration has often been called by faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. My only reason for writing this paper has its foundation in my desire that the minds and hearts of believers should be kept in the simplicity of the Glad Tidings, which on every hand are being assailed by the powers of darkness, a miserable substitute for those life-giving verities being zealously and vigorously propounded.

This is a day in which the restless and lawless activities of the human mind under the influence of the devil are engaged in the invention of fables, which are foisted upon us with all the energy and force of him who never wearies in his warfare against the truth of the living God; and if texts of Scripture, perverted and torn from the setting in which they are placed by the Holy Spirit of God, can be found to give an apparent support to their accursed theories, so much the better. To bring the true light of God to bear upon the smoke that rises so darkening from the abyss of evil, which as the dispensation draws nearer its close, increases in density, is the work of the true servant of the Lord. And first of all it might be well for us to look into that which is the great subject of the preaching.

WHAT IS PRESENTED TO MEN IN THE GOSPEL?

Having accomplished the work of redemption, and just before He ascended up on high, our Lord tells His disciples of the necessity of His death

and resurrection: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 46, 47); and in the Acts of the Apostles we see how faithfully they carried out this mission. Peter says: "To Him give all the prophets witness; that through His name whosoever believeth on Him shall receive forgiveness of sins"; and Paul: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 10. 43; 13. 38, 39). To the Corinthians he says that the Gospel he had preached to them, and which had been the means of their salvation, was: "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 1-4). The coming of Christ to judge the world was also preached, as also the establishment of His kingdom here upon earth.

WHAT, THEN, IS THE OUTLOOK OF THE BELIEVER?

The immediate prospect placed before us is the kingdom, which shall be established under the reign of the Son of Man when He shall appear in glory. In the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah, and the setting-up of this kingdom under His authority, were kept ever in view. His rejection and crucifixion set aside this kingdom, in the way in which it had been at all times viewed by the people of God; not thus for ever set aside, but for a time. Hence we have it at this present time as the result of the preaching of the Word, including within its compass all that call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; that is, all who outwardly acknowledge His Lordship; I say "*outwardly*," because both at this

present time and during His reign there are to be found many who call Him Lord, to whom He shall say : " I never knew you " (Matt. 7. 21-23).

Where His authority is owned on earth, there the kingdom is, although the King be hidden from the eyes of men. When it shall be established in the presence and power of Christ in the age to come its mystery character shall be over, and the subjects of Christ, who now suffer both with and for Him, shall share His glory and reign with Him. And all His true people suffer in both these ways. They suffer with Him, by the fact that they have His nature, and must feel the evil of the world as He felt it, not to the same measure, I need scarcely say, and not in a like measure do they all feel it together. Some perhaps feel it as Abraham felt the idolatry and evil deeds of those from whom he was called to maintain separation, and others as Lot felt the evil of those with whom, alas ! he foolishly mingled, and whose righteous soul was daily vexed by their evil deeds (2 Pet. 2. 7, 8). I fear there are many more Lots to-day than there are Abrahams. Still, all true believers suffer with Him, and therefore shall they reign with Him (Rom. 8. 17 ; 2 Thess. 1. 5 ; 2 Tim. 2. 12). In these days not so many are called to suffer for Him, at least to any great extent.

This is the immediate prospect before us ; for, whatever else may lie beyond the thousand years of the reign of Christ, the way into it all is through the kingdom. We are to " Walk worthy of God, who hath called us to His kingdom and glory " (1 Thess. 2. 12). This is not that which we read of in Rev. 21. 1-4. For this new heaven and earth we look, and it is held up before us as light and encouragement for our hearts, but into this we pass through the kingdom to which we are called. We are called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2. 14), and having been justified by faith we boast in hope

of that glory (Rom. 5. 1, 2). " Waiting for the coming (apocalypse) of our Lord Jesus Christ " (1 Cor. 1. 7). " Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven " (1 Thess. 1. 9, 10). " Keep this commandment unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ " (1 Tim. 6. 14). " Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ " (Titus 2. 13). " When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory " (Col. 3. 4). This is the attitude in which the Gospel sets the believer, to wait for God's Son from heaven, in whom we have found a deliverer from the coming wrath ; giving him the most perfect assurance that when He shall appear we shall also appear with Him in glory. Not a true believer shall in that day be wanting.

Let us now look at what is said about

THE WRATH TO COME.

The Scriptures set before us wrath both governmental and eternal, and it is well to be clear in our souls regarding this solemn subject. The wrath that fell upon the Israelites in the wilderness did not of necessity reach beyond the death of the body. It would be foolish to suppose that all who came out of Egypt of twenty years old and upward, and whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, were for ever lost. What about Moses the man of God, and Aaron the saint of the Lord ? (1 Chron. 23. 14 ; Psalms 106. 16). Yet He says : " I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest " (Psalms 95. 11). This wrath was exclusion from the land of promise, and raised no question regarding their eternal relationships with God.

But of the wrath that is yet to come we have a great deal in the writings of the Prophets. See Isaiah 13. 6-16 ; Zeph. 1. 15-18 ; Amos 5. 18-20 ; Matt. 24. ; Luke 3. 7. All these passages, and many others, speak of the preliminary judgments that shall

introduce the appearing of Christ, which shall be the most terrible of all the woes that the evildoers of the earth have known. Of this wrath the nation of Israel shall be made to bear the brunt, but no nation shall altogether escape. It "shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3. 10). From this hour of temptation the church shall be kept.

From this wrath believers have found a deliverer (1 Thess. 10), even Jesus: "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5. 9). The way in which Jesus would deliver the saints from this wrath had evidently not been told them. They had found a deliverer in Jesus, and this had set their hearts at rest, but how that deliverance was to be effected, we learn from the fourth chapter, they knew not. When the flood came upon the antediluvian world Enoch was not there, having been previously translated. Noah, who represents the Jew, has to go through the judgment, but is saved through it. Enoch was not there at all when it fell upon the world. In like manner the church shall be translated before the hour of judgment comes. It is not only that it shall not perish in the execution of that judgment, it shall not be here in the *hour* in which it falls. This hour ushers in the judgment of the living, which shall continue throughout the thousand years of His reign: "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15. 25, 26). The judgment of the dead is the last judgment, and is after the thousand years are finished, and after the heavens and the earth have passed away. This is the day in which God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel preached by Paul (Romans 2. 6.)

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

I read in Scripture of two resurrections, and of only two; that of the just, and that of the unjust. The first

is a resurrection from among the dead; that is, the resurrection of a select number, leaving the rest of the dead undisturbed. The disciples could not understand what the Lord meant by the rising from among the dead (Mark 9. 10). They had no doubt about the resurrection *of* the dead, but the resurrection from *among* the dead went far beyond their intelligence. Martha says of her brother Lazarus: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11. 24). A general resurrection was held by the orthodox among the Jews, which was to take place when all should be raised together at the last day of this present age.

The first resurrection is from the dead, and it is "*of life.*" All who have received life by the quickening power of the Son of God shall be in this resurrection; the first and larger part, when He puts forth His power to gather up the Church to meet Him in the air. Then He shall raise all His own in incorruption, power, and glory, change the living, and call us up to meet Him in the air. But during the time between this event and His appearing to the world when He comes to reign many will have lost their lives for the truth under the reign of the Beast, and in the first resurrection they shall have part, in order to their reigning with Christ in His kingdom. When this takes place the statement is made: "This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20. 5). None are included, as raised at this time, but those who have been slain under the persecutions that will succeed the taking-up of the church.

But we are told by a well-known writer on this subject that this first resurrection "is a special reward for high attainments in Christian virtue," and that Paul was not certain that he would be in it, but "to share in that he was straining every nerve." Phil. 3. is referred to. What is it that is before the apostle's mind? It is the great fact that he was called to be like Christ

in glory; and having learned something of His moral excellency, his whole spiritual being pressed forward to reach the goal. He well knew that every saint of God would arrive there as soon as himself, but not in that fashion did he reason; he could not settle down in a leisurely mood, comforting himself with the thought that, whatever efforts he might make, he could not have the prize until everyone else had it as well as himself. If he had had the slightest doubt as to the final results, his energies would have been altogether paralysed.

He had been apprehended by Christ to be conformed to His image, and there was only one of two ways by which this could be accomplished—by remaining here until Christ came, or by death and resurrection; he chose the latter way, for his desire was that he might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. The way that Christ took was the way he desired to take, as the means by which he would arrive at the resurrection from among the dead. This was the way he desired to reach the goal—conformity to Christ. By this means he would apprehend that for which he had been apprehended by Christ. Everyone that is taken up by God in grace, God has this end in view for him: "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29). And this is just that which Paul was after: "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The path to this goal rises before his vision, a path his feet were already treading, the highway to that high calling; and not only is the goal itself a mighty power of attraction, but the highway to that goal, a highway that bears the impress of the feet of the One who was the object upon whom he had set his soul,

was in his heart; and at all cost to himself, and by any means, he would tread that path, know the fellowship of His sufferings, become conformable unto His death, share in the resurrection from among the dead, and reach by this highway conformity to the Christ who had apprehended him for this very purpose.

There is not a word about the kingdom in the whole chapter, nor a thought of it either, nor indeed could one gather from the epistle that a kingdom was to be set up on earth under the reign of Christ. The subject of the epistle is Christ, and the goal before the believer is to apprehend that for which he has been apprehended by Him. In chapter 1., the subject is the preaching of Christ; in chapter 2., moral conformity to Him down here; in chapter 3., perfect conformity to Him in glory, which shall be reached when He changes these bodies of humiliation at His coming again, when we shall for ever bear His image; in chapter 4., Christ as Lord and administrator of God's riches in glory, exhortations to the saints to be occupied with the things that are good, that the God of peace might be with them; also to be careful for nothing, but to make their wants known to God, and that with thanksgiving, that the peace of God might guard their hearts and thoughts by Christ Jesus. Of the kingdom we have no mention. It is another subject that is before the heart and mind of the apostle.

I take it that what we have in Rev. 20. 4-6 is the completion of the first resurrection. We get the early part of it in 1 Cor. 15. 42-58, and these are said to sit upon the thrones, and to have judgment given to them. But the saints slain after the rapture of the church are not to lose the kingdom, but are to share in the first resurrection. Therefore I read: "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither

had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This is the first resurrection, and those who have part in it are said to be blessed and holy, and immune from the power of the second death.

There is one thing certain, whatever else may be supposed doubtful: no resurrection can be found in Scripture previous to that which we have spoken of in 1 Cor. 15., and this in Rev. 20. 4; and whatever else may be said about it, in both these places we have a resurrection from among the dead, and I know no other resurrection that could

be said to be first, or from among the dead. In this first resurrection the dead rise, leaving the other dead undisturbed. If this in Rev. 20. takes in all that are in the first resurrection, not one of the apostles, prophets, or saints, from Abel down to the rapture of the church could be in it. This that is definitely called the first has none in it but those who have been martyred during the preliminary judgments through which the world is called to pass between the rapture and the kingdom. "On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

"VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN."

(H. J. VINE.)

THESE words have often produced painful and even rebellious thoughts in the minds of the uninstructed, principally because of their being almost invariably misquoted, for both books and speakers in general say, The Lord visits "the sins" of the fathers upon the children. That is not what the Word of God says.

When Jehovah declared His gracious Name to Moses, giving him a partial view of His glory, it was *iniquity*, and not *transgression*, nor *sin*, which He said would be visited upon "the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exod. 34. 7). Various arguments have been launched against this truth—too many even to notice in this short paper—and any show of reason in any one of them has its foundation in the misquotation we have mentioned, for they confuse things that are to be distinguished; which, when discerned, proves clearly the inspiration and perfection of the of the Scriptures on the one hand, and the fallacy of these unjust attacks on the other.

In the same verse from which we have quoted, the Lord Himself differentiates when He speaks of, "Forgiving

iniquity and transgression and sin." Three distinct things are here named by Him. Elsewhere we also read of *lawlessness* and *offence*. Let us seek in holy fear and lowly confidence to obtain the Spirit's teaching as to these things so that we may intelligently avoid them, and walk before God in truth and love, looking forward to the day when the universal order which He has designed shall prevail, when the Spirit of Truth shall characterize all, and the Lord Jesus Christ shall be honoured to the glory of God the Father.

We will therefore take these things first in the order they are mentioned, and consider them in a concise way.

I. INIQUITY. This is often spoken of as unrighteousness in other parts of the inspired writings. We read in 1 John 5. 17, All, or every unrighteousness is sin. It may not, however, be said that every sin could be Scripturally designated iniquity or unrighteousness. We will follow this out more in detail later on. Meanwhile, it may be said, Iniquity has to do with perversion in relation to any system or order established by God, and the truth which He has made known. The Hebrew word used is *avon*, which means *perversity*.

2. **TRANSGRESSION.** This also is sin, but it is to be distinguished from iniquity. We know that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even upon those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression (Rom. 5. 14). It was necessary for a definite command to be broken for the sin to be called transgression, so we read, "Where no law is there is no transgression" (Rom. 4. 15). Sin may be there in various forms nevertheless. When God's people, Israel, to whom the law was given discover in a later day this truth concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, that it was because of their transgression He was stricken (Isa. 53. 8), as well as for their iniquities and their sins, it will greatly enhance their estimate of His sacrificial work upon the cross, and enrich their notes of thanksgiving and praise.

3, 4. **SIN and LAWLESSNESS.** These may be placed together, for God has told us in 1 John 3. 4: "Everyone that practises sin practises also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." This is the accepted rendering of the verse. The latter clause tells us what sin actually is, and the former that the one who is characterized by practising it is lawless as to all that God orders and favours. When Christ bore our sins and was made sin upon the tree, He cried in the darkness: "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark 15. 34). This shows the awfulness of sin. Great indeed was the love of the sinless One to endure this for us, and to sustain the claims of holiness and justice against sin that we might be saved eternally and God be glorified.

5. **OFFENCE.** When the Gentiles—to whom the law was not given—are addressed, this general term concerning sin is more often used; so in Romans 4. 25, we are told Christ "was delivered for our offences." Adam's transgression is spoken of as "the offence of one" in verse 15. In 2 Cor. 5. 19, the word "trespasses" should be "offences." It is the same in Eph. 2. 15, and Col. 2. 13, where we read

of God's great love towards us even when we were "dead in offences," and having quickened us and saved us by His grace, He has "forgiven us all offences." Anything which is contrary to the pleasure of God may be embraced in the word offence. Somewhat like evil, wickedness, and trespass, it is a general term. "Peace like an even river flows" when we know that all has been met for our eternal blessing and for God's glory by the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification; therefore—as a consequence—being justified on the principle of faith, we have peace with God through Him.

* * * *

We must now point out in regard to the question raised at the beginning of this paper—in regard to that form of sin which is designated by the Holy Spirit as iniquity—every true believer is expressly told to depart from it. There is no escape from this if we are to be found true and loyal to the One we own as Lord—to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us, and surely we should not desire to escape from it! Paul, when addressing the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, told them, "from among your own selves shall rise up men speaking *perverted* things" (Acts 20. 30, N.T.); and later, when widespread perversion in regard to God's order as well as God's truth was plainly foretold, and indeed had already begun, then in words which come with unquestionable authority, yea, as the Word of God—distinctly he enjoins, "LET EVERY ONE WHO NAMES THE NAME OF THE LORD WITHDRAW FROM INIQUITY" (2 Tim. 2. 19, N.T.).

That Divinely inspired instruction is surely sufficient for the one who desires to obey the truth. When disorder or fundamental perversion of the truth has become characteristic, and is beyond remedy among those who profess the faith, then it must be departed from by every one who owns the authority of

Christ, by every one who names the Name of the Lord. Uprightness demands it! Faithfulness demands it! Truth demands it! Obedience demands it! Love demands it! Loyalty demands it! Wisdom demands it! "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28. 28). When the Word of God instructs us it is ours to understand and obey.

We are, moreover, told to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). This is said to those who have been called of God, "beloved in God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ," for men who corrupt the things of God had "crept in unawares" or "unnoticed." *They were therefore to follow together the positive good, and contend for the faith by building themselves up in it, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping themselves in God's love, as they awaited the coming of the Lord.* The order which is according to God's revealed mind, and the truth which He gave at the beginning, are not to be given up as impracticable because of the abounding perversions of it, but that which was delivered of God at the first is still to be the pursuit of the elect. Indeed, where as we have seen, separation from iniquity is enjoined, we are at once instructed in verse 22, to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." A positive attitude is thus characteristic of those who answer to the mind of God at this time, and this will be so doubtless till the Lord returns.

When at Horeb Jehovah spoke to Moses of "*visiting the iniquity of the fathers*" upon the descendants, He was giving the order to be maintained in the nation of Israel and the truth to guide and sustain them. This was done in "the day of assembly" before all Israel. In the historical, poetical, and prophetic books which follow, we see the dreadful perversions of that which God then set up for the nation.

Toward the close, however, Zephaniah speaks of a true and loyal remnant, "an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies" (3. 12, 13). Malachi also tells us of them, and how they spake often together and "thought upon His Name." Then, as if to recall them to the time when that Name was proclaimed. When Jehovah spoke the words at the head of this paper it is said: "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for *all Israel* with the statutes and judgments" (4. 4). The iniquity of the fathers had indeed been visited upon the children! What an entail had been left behind! The very position of those who were true proved it! Nevertheless the real could rest in Jehovah, and rejoice that Israel shall yet be turned from her iniquities when the Lord shall come and reign over them, having been preceded by Elijah; when, as the last verse of the Old Testament says: "*He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.*" Blessed time, indeed, to look forward to! Then shall it be truly said in their redemption—even as Balaam prophesied in view of it "Jehovah hath not beheld *iniquity* in Jacob, neither hath He seen *perverseness* in Israel; the Lord His God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them" (Num. 23. 21).

It is the same now, after the long, sad story of perversion and failure in "the assemblies," we are recalled to the Lord Himself and to that which was given at the beginning for "all saints," avoiding iniquity or unrighteousness as those who name His Name we are to follow together what is right in every relationship established by God, along with faith, love, and peace, looking on to Christ's coming again.

The assembly is God's house, and it is the pillar and base of the truth. The truth is there. Moses was over

the house of Israel as a servant, Christ is over His house to-day as Son, and He abides faithful. He will not fail. It is to Him we are separated. It is upon the Lord Himself we are to call. Soon He will come with a shout, and call the assembly to be with Himself for ever. Perfect then, His bride shall behold His face, and rejoice in His love on high. There will be no iniquity to depart from there, thank God ; but

His order and truth subsisting in love and glory for ever, with Christ as its Head and Centre and the assembly with Him as His body and His bride, all shall resound with the praise of God's grace and glory. There shall be no perversity nor perversion any more. All shall be to the pleasure of God. His rest shall be no more disturbed.

"There shall His love find perfect rest,
Where all around is bliss."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Passover Lamb.

What is the meaning of the Passover Lamb being kept for four days before being slain (Exodus 12.) ?—SYDNEY, N.S.W.

THE four days during which the Lamb was kept up in the houses of the Israelites represent typically the period of the Lord's public life. When first He appeared to Israel, John the Baptist exclaimed, "*Behold the Lamb of God*" (John 1. 29). From that time onward all His ways and words proved the excellence of His person and the sinlessness of His life and nature. He was the Lamb without blemish. Not many may have recognized this then, but we may now ; and as we read through John's Gospel, we should keep before our minds the fact that the One whose words and works we are reading about is the Lamb who was to be slain. His person is shown to us before His work ; it is the excellency of this person that gives value to His work. No lamb was suitable to be a Passover lamb unless it was without blemish, and the Israelites were

brought into intimate contact with the lamb that was to die for them ; for four days it lived with them and they looked upon its beauty. So the Lord came into intimate contact with men ; He dwelt among them and they took note of all His ways, and none of them could convict Him of sin. Three times over Pilate says, "I find no fault in Him." Thus He upon whom death had no claim, because He was absolutely holy, proved that He was indeed the suitable Lamb—the Lamb of God—and in the fourth year of His public ministry, answering to the four days of the Passover period, His blood was poured out for us (John 19. 34).

Then we read, "These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken." That Scripture is Exod. 12. 46, showing how fully John's Gospel encompasses Exod. 12.

Samuel and his Mother.

Is there any lesson for us to learn from the fact that the mother of Samuel made him a coat every year (1 Samuel 2. 19) ?—N.S.W.

WE may surely learn from this fact that, though Hannah had dedicated her son to the Lord, she felt that her responsibility to keep him suitable to his high calling had not ceased. An important lesson for Christian mothers. If a child is dedicated to the Lord, which every child of Christian parents should

be, it is the privilege and responsibility of the parents to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6. 4). Clothing in Scripture often signifies character, and a child more often than not takes its character from the mother's training.

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.

In Ephesians 4. 5 we read, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Some say this refers to the baptism of the Spirit, others to water baptism. Would you kindly give an answer in "Scripture Truth"?—TORONTO.

THE reference is to baptism by water.

There are three concentric circles in verses 4, 5, 6 of this chapter. "One body and one spirit . . . one hope of your calling," is the inner circle; in this unity all is vital, mere profession does not enter into it at all—it is what is inward and real. In the second circle, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," we have the outward profession, into which what is unreal has come: all, in fact, who outwardly own Jesus as Lord, who profess the one Christian faith, and who have signified that they do that by baptism;

or, we should rather say, who have been brought into that circle of profession by baptism. The baptism of the Spirit would have to do with the first circle, not the second. The third circle, "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," is the wide outer circle of creation. The jewel in the casket is the inner unity, and as we enter into the value and the meaning of it we shall be deeply exercised as to how far we are endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (verse 3).

The Nail-pierced Hands.

Do the nail-pierced hands of Zechariah 13. 6 refer to the Lord Jesus? Would the context not forbid that thought? Does not the verse refer to the false prophet, whose parents had thrust him through (verse 3,) who when he goes back to the land has to confess that he had received his wounds in the house of his friends?—LANARKSHIRE.

THERE has been a considerable diversity of thought as to this passage, but we cannot accept the interpretation that the verse in question has a false prophet in view; we have no hesitation in saying that it is the Lord Himself. All are agreed as to who is the Shepherd, Jehovah's Fellow, against whom the sword is summoned to awake (verse 7). Indeed, the Lord Himself puts this beyond question in Matt. 26. 30, 31. But Israel will have to learn, as we all have to learn, that another element entered into the sufferings of the cross other than the righteous judgment of God against their and our sins, which was borne in love by our Substitute, and that was the hatred and treachery of men. And Israel was specially concerned in this; He came to them as to friends, and in their house where He showed nothing but perfect friendship He was rejected, scorned, wounded. They will have to learn this in bitter sorrow, and having learnt it they will repent of their sin with a great repentance, but it will be when they "*look upon One whom they have pierced,*" as the previous chapter, verse 10, states. We connect verse 10 of chap. 12. with the passage under consideration. Verse 5 connects with these two following verses. After a

description of the false prophets and the utter refusal of them even by their own kindred, the voice of the Lord is heard. It was the Spirit of Christ in the prophet declaring the manner of His coming to the people. He was *the* prophet indeed, but He was refused as such; but that did not close up His compassions and drive Him from them; if they refused His words, He would still labour amongst them while the day lasted, and so the last sentence of the verse should read, "I have been a bondman from my youth," or, "Men have acquired me for a slave from my youth." He placed Himself at the service of all. Think of His own words, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9. 4). So to the end of the day He was among men as their servant, labouring in mercy and compassion, doing amongst them the works of God. That was His life amongst men, and this made their hatred and sin all the more terrible, when they pierced His hands and His feet. But again love triumphed over all their hatred, and the cross which declared their hatred in all its abysmal horror became the occasion upon which God declared His love in all its glory, for in that cross a righteous way was found by

which He could save them, as the ninth verse shows. How wonderful it will all appear to Israel when, gathered by the power of God into their own land, they see and realize it all; then Zechariah's prophetic description of their poignant

sorrow and repentance will be fulfilled. That lies in the future; we in the present can glory in the grace that has reached us Gentiles, even though we were not one whit better than they.

A Fountain for Sin and Uncleanness. Zechariah 13.

Is this fountain a fountain of blood or water?—LANARKSHIRE.

IT is a fountain of water and not blood. Scripture never speaks of a fountain of blood. The thought in the lines of Cowper's otherwise beautiful hymn—

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins"—

is a misconception of this passage of Scripture. The blood of Jesus shed once for all makes a once-for-all expiation for *sins*. By that one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10. 14). So complete is the atonement that His blood has made that no fresh application of the blood is called for; it abides in its once-for-all efficacy, and the sins and iniquities of those who believe are remembered no more. This will be true for Israel when as a nation they are restored to Canaan, as they are most surely yet to be, as it is true for us to-day. But then they will need to have this ever-flowing fountain, not for the expiation of their *sins and transgressions*, but for cleansing because of sin and

uncleanness—the inward nature and the outward defilement. Under the law the priests had to wash at the laver before performing their priestly office in the tabernacle, and many washings were enjoined upon the people to remove defilement from them and make them ceremonially clean. The fountain will supply this for them in the future, and they will learn from it the deeper lesson, namely, that to be maintained in communion with the God who has redeemed them they must have a daily cleansing of their ways from all that is defiling. The fact of its being a fountain is, we believe, emblematic of an energy of the Holy Ghost amongst them in applying the Word of God to their hearts and consciences.

There is that which answers to this in the Christian life. The washing of water by the Word (Ephesians 5. 26) and the gracious action of the Lord in washing His disciples' feet, that they might have part with Him (John 13.).

A Light Shining in a Dark Place.

There is some difference of opinion amongst those competent to judge as to where to place the parenthesis in the latter part of 2 Peter 1. 19, which of course materially affects the sense of the passage. J. N. Darby, in presenting the correct construction of the sentence, gives it thus—" (as to a light shining in a dark place)." See "Synopsis," vol. 5, page 496; also the New Translation. So, too, Kelly, while not actually marking by brackets, labours considerably to establish the same sense. Compare—"Lectures on the Second Coming," etc., pages 1-7; "The Second Epistle of Peter," pages 108-9; "The Coming and Day of the Lord," page 7 (footnote). On the other hand, W. Grant, in "Numerical Bible," vol. 6, page 182, gives " (as to a lamp that shineth in an obscure place until the day dawn and the morning-star ariseth)," and adds in the notes that "the proper placing of the parenthesis here removes all difficulty." I should be greatly obliged if you would kindly weigh this and give your judgment as to how the passage should read and its meaning.—E. H., ONTARIO.

WE think you will do well in this instance to follow J. N. Darby and Wm. Kelly. It is plain that the ancient prophetic word as to the coming glories of the Messiah shone in the darkness of the old dispensation for the race of faith, to light their path until the

coming of the Messiah for whom they looked. It is plain that that word was confirmed to the disciples when they saw the glory of their Lord on the mount. It should also be plain that we are not now in the dark days in which the prophecies were spoken, for the darkness

is passing and for us the true light now shines. And while the day has not yet dawned and the lamp of prophecy will shine until it does, yet the Day Star has arisen in our hearts; the Christian lives in the light of the day, for in his heart there already shines the One who will bring in the day for the world. The Spirit has come from a glorified Christ to bear witness to us of Him.

“Yet midst Thine own the Spirit still
Bears witness of His glory there,
And from the sphere which He doth fill
Brings knowledge of His fulness here.”

We have New Testament light—a glorified Christ and an indwelling Spirit, and all that this means—unfolded for us in the New Testament. This surely

does not set aside the Old Testament prophecies, as F. W. Grant rightly states. We can read them and learn from them the unity of all Scripture, and rejoice as we see the way that God confirms and carries out His Own Word in and through Christ. They give us, too, in great detail and glowing language what the wonderful effect will be of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness for the world, and all for our joy and profit, because they thus magnify the Name of the Lord Jesus. But our knowledge of Christ and His glory is not limited by those prophecies, nor even by the revelation of His glory upon the Holy Mount: the fullest light shines for us now while we await the kingdom and glory of our blessed Lord.

A man without the Wedding Garment.

What answers to verses 11–14 of Matthew 22? And who are the servants who are to cast out the intruder of verse 13? Are they the same as the heralds of grace throughout the parable?—E. H.

THE parable gives us the carrying forth of God's message of grace first to the Jew (verses 1–7)—who despised it and slew the messengers, for which wrath came upon them to the uttermost and their city was destroyed—then to the Gentile (8–10). This message gathers men into the Kingdom where fitness for God's presence is provided for all who come. Christ Himself is that fitness, the wedding garment, our perfect Righteousness.

But all are to be tested who have made a profession of receiving God's invitation, as to whether they have owned their need of Christ or have been presumptuously

satisfied with themselves and their works. All the latter must be cast out of the Kingdom as this man was in the parable. The testing time is coming for all.

The servants of verse 13 are not the heralds of the early part of the chapter, a different word is used. Those who carried the message of grace were called bondmen or slaves; while these are called ministers or attendants. They are probably the angels who gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, and sever the wicked from the just (Matthew 13. 41, 49).

“THOUSANDS of things do Thee employ
In ruling all
This spacious globe; angels must have their joy,
Devils their rod, the sea his shore,
The winds their stint; and yet when I did call,
Thou heard'st my call and more.” (Herbert).

ACROSS my path I cannot tell
If ill shall sweep or all be well;
But this I know, whate'er betide
Jesus shall be my guard and guide.

I know not what each day may bring,
Whether my heart shall sigh or sing;
But grace is given for daily need,
For Jesus lives to intercede.

"GOD GIVETH US THE VICTORY." (J. T. MAWSON.)

THE life that overcomes was God's gift to us when we received it at first through our Lord Jesus Christ, and its great triumph when at last we leave the field of conflict is also God's gift to us through our Lord Jesus Christ—so we learn from two texts of Scripture—Romans 6. 23 and 1 Corinthians 15. 57. And, thanks be unto God, His Word cannot fail us, we may take our stand in fearless faith upon it, and this we do and will continue to do. His gift of life He will never recall, and in the life that He has given His saints must always triumph through Him that loves us. The final victory is over death—the last enemy. The King of Terrors we used to call it, but no longer does that name apply for the children of God, for death has met its Master—it is a defeated, throneless, crownless king; wrenched from its hands are the keys of its stronghold; annulled is its great power, and delivered are those who through fear of it were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For if by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection from the dead, and it is because Christ died and rose again that we have the victory.

An old Christian and a valued friend of mine in Adelaide was stricken with paralysis, and it was clear that his service for Christ was done and his life on earth drawing to its close. The last hour had come, and his family, Christians every member of it, were gathered in his chamber. The paralysis had robbed the dying man of the power of speech but not of his joy in the Lord; his family could see that and had no misgivings for him. Yet they longed for some final word, some cheer and comfort that would abide with them when he was gone, and it was quite natural and right that they should; and so in the hope that at the very last his speech might be restored to him they asked if he had anything to say to them. It was not to be, articulate he

could not, nor did it matter, for his last word was to be given to them in a more deliberate and thrilling way than by mere speech. He had learned to spell out the deaf and dumb alphabet upon his fingers in order to preach the Gospel to deaf-mutes, and now this knowledge came into blessed use, for upon his fingers he spelt out one word—just one word, slowly and with emphasis—and his family, as they eagerly watched the dying fingers, read all they desired, for the word spelt upon them was G-L-O-R-Y. No wonder they were able to say, "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I was spending some days in the city of Aberdeen, and having an afternoon at liberty, I went to the infirmary to visit one of the men's wards. Every bed in it was occupied, and I spent a few minutes chatting with each patient until I came to the last bed in the ward. Here was lying a youth who could not have been more than eighteen years of age. His eyes were closed and he looked very wan and ill. I sat quietly by his side until he opened his eyes and turned to me with a look of surprise that plainly said, "Who are you?" I said, "I have been giving to the men in this ward some Gospel books, but I am afraid you are too ill to read." "Yes," he answered, "and the doctor says there's no hope for me, *but I'm in the Lord's hands.*" I had not expected that from him and his words moved me. "Then you are in the very best possible hands," I said, "for He has said, 'My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of *My hands.*'" "Yes, He did say that," he responded, "and He also said, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'" Then he closed his eyes again, and as though oblivious of my presence he

repeated to himself, "everlasting life, everlasting life." I left him repeating those two words—not disappointment, defeat, dread were at that lad's dying bed, but everlasting life—VICTORY.

Yes, whether in the far north or under the Southern Cross; whether with the youth in his teens, a babe in Christ, or in the septuagenarian who had known the Lord for half a century, the life is the same, and its victory is the same through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is thus that His saints triumph one by one, and march in a continuous procession to be with Christ, which is far better; but we who are alive and remain are waiting not for death but for Himself, we have a blessed hope, it

is the coming of Christ; for "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.**" That is our hope, and therein will be displayed the victory of God in which all His saints shall share, and the final triumph and blessedness of the life that overcomes.

OUR HEAVENLY HOME.

HEAVENLY Home, beyond the stars appearing,
Longs my heart in Meshech land for thee!
Resting place, by Jesus' hand preparing,
Heavenly City, which by faith I see!

O Jerusalem above, how glorious
Shine thy well-beloved pearly gates,
Where shall enter in, white-robed, victorious,
All the pilgrim host whom rest awaits!

Earthy things around removing, shaking,
Heavenward, homeward oft I turn mine eye,
And my heart, with rapturous awaking
Fain would burst her bonds and upward fly.

Not to trace the City's golden measure,
But to fall at Jesus' piercèd feet,
Own myself His dear redeemed treasure,
Praise Him with His ransomed church complete.

O my Saviour, hasten Thy returning!
Call us home to see Thy glorious face,
Change the earthly shadows into *morning*,
Crown with glory all Thy work of grace.

"But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city."—
Heb. 11. 16.

DISCIPLESHIP IN AN EVIL DAY.

(ARTHUR CUTTING.)

Luke 14. 25-33.

Address given at High Leigh, July 28th, 1924.

THE word "Disciple" is a far more serious word than we have been accustomed to think: indeed, it is a word that has considerably dropped out of our vocabulary, or if used, it is in a very loose and general way.

One feels considerable diffidence in approaching a subject like this on account of the feeling of how far short one falls of the Divine standard of true discipleship. Though we may well feel humbled, we need not be disheartened.

What serious-minded boy would cease to appreciate and speak of the high standard of the headline of his copy book, because his attempt to copy it had been such an ignominious failure? Let us never give up a perfect object because of our imperfect attainments. In this case let us look again at this headline—the marks of true discipleship—and seek more ardently fresh grace to reproduce them daily.

ITS GENERAL APPLICATION.

The word "disciple" is derived from the Latin word "discipulus," meaning scholar, learner, or follower. The word itself is not altogether a New Testament word, for we find it once in the Old Testament (Isa. 8. 16); nor is the term limited to Scripture, it is applied also to Arts and Science. It conveys the idea of a school of thought, or design, initiated by some master mind, as for instance in Art, we speak of a Raphael, a Rembrandt, a Turner, each standing for some special school of painting. Others charmed and fascinated by them become their disciples or followers, and set themselves to catch the master's spirit, follow his ideals, his methods of colour and design, and presently you may recognize the traits of these masters shown in the productions of their disciples: in fact, to use a Scriptural expression in connection

with discipleship, they "become as their Master" (Matt. 10. 5). They come not into their discipleship by compulsion, they are lured into that path by their admiration for His lofty ideals and tastes, till they reproduce in their own works the traits of their distinguished Master.

I believe that is the only way by which we become "disciples indeed" of our beloved and illustrious Master. It is our response to His love to us and a Divinely begotten appreciation of His own personal charm and excellency, that will put us into His school and into the pathway of true discipleship. How often we have sung together—

"Oh! tell us often of Thy love,
Of all Thy grief and pain,
That we may in some small degree
Return Thy love again."

Now discipleship is just the way, *the special way* by which we may "return His love again." It is not the result of legal compellings, but by a sweet constraint—"The love of Christ constraineth us."

In view of this it is not surprising that it is Luke, the great apostle of grace, that should be the one to write the conditions of discipleship, nor is it surprising that these conditions are given immediately after the parable of the great supper of grace in Luke 14., for such grace should naturally produce disciples. *Grace* is the character *His love* takes in its activities *towards us*, so utterly undeserving. *Discipleship* is the character *our love* takes in its activities *towards Him*, so altogether deserving.

Grace in its display *cost Him*.
Discipleship in its display *will cost us*.

"Oh! let us freely count
Whate'er we have but loss,
The dearest object of our love
Compared with Thee but dross."

Alas! our natural proclivity is to take the path of the least resistance. Under the circumstances of Revelation 14. there will be no difficulty to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." The difficulty is here and now.

CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

It is Luke alone that gives the absolute conditions—the *sine qua non* of discipleship. May I use the academical term "Matriculation" to illustrate what I mean? To matriculate is to obtain the right or privilege to enter some university or school of learning, with a view to becoming a graduate or member of that school. Luke states the very sweeping terms that must be satisfied if we would enter the list of graduates or become "disciples indeed."

We may see from Luke, too, that we might perhaps be more consistently called believers or Christians rather than disciples. Compare Luke 14. 26 with John 6. 37. Luke begins thus: "If any man come to Me"—Pause there and ask yourself what will happen to such a man? John will answer the question. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," that means Christ will receive any such. What music have these few words made in the ears of many a poor sinner! To come to Him is to believe on Him, and to believe on Him is to be saved, to be forgiven, to be what is called a Christian, and as such to receive every Christian blessing that grace makes available to us.

Now let us read Luke 14. 26 a little further. "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother . . . yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple," not he cannot be saved, cannot be a Christian, but *cannot be My disciple*. We are not called upon to do anything to be saved, but we are called upon to do very serious things if we are to be His disciples. Luke gives the Matriculation test, John on the other hand the distinguishing marks of the

Graduate in that school (see John 8. 31; 13. 35; 15. 8). Matthew introduces to the Master who invites into His school, saying, "Learn of Me, I am meek and lowly in heart"—I will be your teacher and lesson-book. Then again, it is well to note that there is progress in discipleship, but not in salvation. "It is enough that the disciple shall be—become—as His Master" (Matt. 10. 25). Now while these terms are different in their conception, it was never the Divine mind that a Christian should ever be *anything less than a disciple*. This should be a very serious consideration for us.

It is easy enough to sing with exuberance "Where He leads I will follow," but we need to observe that it requires more than exuberance of spirit to take that path. We often hear it said that "One volunteer is worth ten pressed men," yet it is to be noticed that it was the volunteers that broke down so signally.

Peter said, "I am ready to go with Thee into prison and to death," and before the night was out he had declared that he did not know Him!

Thomas said, "Let us also go that we may die with Him" (John 11. 16), but he was found later in the company of the disciples who all forsook Him and fled.

One came to Him and said, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," but the Lord said tacitly, "First follow that bird and that fox, and at the end of the day you will find they have a place of rest, but I have not where to lay My head." We hear no more of that would-be disciple. He failed in his matriculation.

Another said, "I will follow Thee . . . but let me first bid farewell to them at home," and we hear no more about him. He failed to matriculate. He did not put first things first. He must learn that "ME FIRST" is not the feature of true discipleship, but rather "*Him first, Him last, Him all day long*"!

Why is the pathway of discipleship so thorny and difficult? Because it was so for the Master. He was "disallowed indeed of men," and the disciple is not greater than his Master. You must be prepared to be disallowed of men, not perhaps by the rack, the fire and the sword, as were our illustrious predecessors, but by being "cut" by your friends, and maybe by your Christian friends too; to be left out of their circle of friendship, snubbed and sneered at, and in a thousand ways share His rejection. The personal charm and the constraining influence of the love of Christ alone can take us and keep us in the pathway of discipleship in an evil day.

You remember that historic figure in Scottish history, "Bonny Prince Charlie"! The story is told of one who had made up his mind to see him and try and influence him to pursue another course. One who knew him said, "Don't go near him! for if once you look upon him you will do everything he wants you to do."

Is there not enough in our Master to charm us into His path even if it is a thorny one? The one who wrote these lines knew something of Him —

"But ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That those who meet Him unaware
Can never rest on earth again."

Referring again to Luke 14. 26. It may be asked, "How is it that I am told to hate those whom Scripture tells me to honour?" Love and hatred are comparative terms. It does not mean that I am actually to hate my parents. What I really hate I turn away from as being intolerable to me; that is, anything that would stand between me and my Master must be turned away from as I should turn away from the thing that I loathed, no more to be allowed than a thing that I detested.

A dear Scotch friend of mine was talking to a relative about his desire to tread the pathway of discipleship,

but his mother was so strongly against it. Her reply was, "If I kened the truth as you ken it, I wouldna let my ain mither stand in my way, I would burn for it first." That is the material of which "disciples indeed" are made. May the Lord give us something of that spirit.

You remember in Peter's own history in Matt. 16., there came a moment when the Lord could say to him that he had been highly favoured by His Father in having this special revelation as to His Person. Then a few verses lower down He turned to him and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan"! Why this sudden change?

It looked as if Peter had become an object as much to be loathed as Satan! Peter had only made a human remark when the Lord had told them He was to go to Jerusalem to suffer and to be killed. Peter feelingly remarked, "Pity Thyself, this shall not be to Thee." The Lord recognized in that remark an effort of *Satan* to seduce Him from the path of obedience, and hence he turned from Peter who for the moment He saw had become a tool of Satan to that end. He did not love Peter personally the less.

Again it says, "*Hateth his own life also.*" Yes, the thing that I love best — my own life — must not be allowed to hinder my following Christ. We read of some in the Revelation "*Who loved not their lives unto death.*" All this must be faced, for the world will never change its judgment of Christ. Its opposition may change in character, but its nature never.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9. 23). To *deny self* is practically to put self in the place of death. The original word which our Bible translates *deny* is a very strong one. It is a word from which we get our word "suicide." Self denial is not merely denying certain things to self, and thus practically

recognizing, though curbing it. Self does not mind a self denial week, or the curb of a Lenten six weeks, so long as it can get the rein again at Easter.

When Peter denied the Lord he did not deny certain things to the Lord, he disowned Him altogether, as having no sort of link with Him, "cut" Him as you would "cut" a person in the street that you did not want to recognize. This is what discipleship calls for in connection with self. It does not mean "*Some of self* and some of Thee, nor even *less of self* and more of Thee, but *none of self* and all of Thee."

It also says, "Take up his cross daily." What may that mean? The cross is not every difficulty we may find in our pathway. One says, "I have a heavy cross to bear in a weak and sickly wife." Another, "What a heavy cross I have to carry in having no work!" Remember unconverted people get those trials too. The cross is what I am made to suffer because I follow a rejected Christ, and that kind of suffering I shall find daily, and my love to Christ will lead me not to shun it, but to *take it up daily* for His sake. "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Happy disciples indeed!

COUNTING THE COST.

Turning again to Luke 14. we find the Master preparing His disciples for following, not in the paths of glory, but in an evil day into a path that will lead to glory. He speaks of counting the cost, building a tower, and making war. His disciples were to be left in a hostile country, and must be prepared to take the offensive as well as be on the defensive. Building a tower is being on the defensive. But does not the building of a tower make you an object of attack? Surely: but it is your defence too. A person who makes a bold, bright, conspicuous stand for Christ is not subjected to so many

tempting worldly invitations that a half-hearted person would get and probably surrender to.

In counting the cost, the Lord would have us understand that we must not merely calculate the odds against us, but also that which is for us. To leave the Lord out is not the proper way of counting the cost any more than a person who calculates he cannot carry out a building scheme because he has not enough in his purse to do it, and forgets that he has a big banking account.

The record given of the twelve spies that went to spy out the land of Canaan furnishes illustration of these two things.

Ten came back and said "we are not able," but the two said, "Let us go up at once, . . . for we are *well able*" (Num. 13. 30). What made the difference? The ten measured themselves against the foe, and the two measured the foe against God. If we raise the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" our reply must be, "Our sufficiency is of God."

It is true the fullest compensation will only be received in the kingdom, but it is not all loss here. Luke 18. 30 tells us that the gain is "*manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.*"

Discipleship may mean that we have to *leave all* to follow Him; but it is leaving it as far as holding it for ourselves is concerned, as we sometimes sing—

"Nought that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver.
My heart, my soul, my life, my all
Are His, and His for ever."

May the Lord grant us a deeper desire not merely to be recognized professing Christians, but such that He may pronounce as "disciples indeed."

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. (JAMES C. TRENCH.)

THE Righteousness of God as presented in the Epistle to the Romans opens up a very important line of truth, as forming the basis upon which the blessed God can in full keeping with the requirements of His holy nature, quicken, justify and save the blackest sinner who repents and believes the Gospel.

In Romans 10. the Apostle asserts that Israel "*being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness,*" had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God—for "Christ is the *end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*" And it may be added that not many of the children of God appear to have learned the truth that Israel was ignorant of.

So it were well to turn back to the beginning of the epistle and see what he has to teach on the subject.

As the Apostle Paul had not been to Rome at the time he wrote the epistle, it was natural that in writing to the saints there, he should set forth in a formal way—more like an essay than a letter—the Gospel of God as he had learned it, and for this we may all be very thankful. And so he opens the subject by saying, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." "For therein is the *righteousness of God* revealed from faith to faith" (that is, on the principle of faith, instead of works, to faith in the individual), "as it is written, 'the just shall live by faith.'"

Notice that he does not say that in the Gospel the *love of God* is revealed—though it be blessedly true—as comes out later on (chap. 5.), but that *God's righteousness* is therein revealed—for *love* cannot reach the sinner until *righteousness* has had its way—and in it "the wrath of God is revealed against

all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness." So before love can reach any one of us, righteousness must express itself in wrath against all mankind, and the rest of chap. 1., chap. 2., and chap. 3. 1-20 is a most solemn and very powerful description of how *mankind* appears under the revelation of God come out in righteousness, whether he be a barbaric heathen (chap. 1. 21-32), a cultured heathen (chap. 2. 1-16), or a Jew (chap. 2. 17; 3. 1-20).

The steps downward of the race were terrible indeed:—

1. When they knew God—"glorified Him *not* as God" (verse 21).
2. "Changed the glory of God into an image" (verse 23).
3. "Changed the truth of God into a lie" (verse 25).
4. "Did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (verse 28).
5. "Became haters of God" (verse 30).
6. Knowing the judgment of God, not only sin but have *pleasure* in them that do likewise (verse 32).

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest"—and then is placed on record the condition of the educated heathen who judged and condemned evil theoretically yet practised it themselves—imagining he merited some reward for moralizing about it, although practising the sin he exposed (verses 1-16 of chap. 2.).

Then comes the Jew, a still higher class of man from verse 17 of chap. 2. and verse 8 of chap. 3., who had the law, the covenant, making his "boast of God," knowing His will, etc., etc., who preached the law, but broke it himself—against whom the Apostle asks: "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" . . .

"Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)? No, in no wise, for we have before proved *both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin*. As it is written, 'There is *none righteous, no not one*'; 'none that doeth good.' " "Throat," "lips," "mouth," "feet," "ways," "eyes," are looked at—all found *corrupt*—and the Law, instead of affording a ladder by which to climb out of the mass of ungodliness, is declared to be the very instrument that "stops every mouth, and brings in all the world as *guilty before God*," or strictly, "*subject to the judgment of God*." This, then, is the result of the revelation of the righteousness of God—all the human race are found to be lost, and subject to the judgment of God.

But in the 21st verse of chap. 3. a glorious change breaks upon our view, and the righteousness of God is presented in a new and astonishing aspect. God's claim on man for righteousness had ended in catastrophe! So instead of demanding righteousness from man, He determines to *supply him with His own righteousness*! But how could this be done in consistency with what was just, and in correspondence with God's holy nature? Answer—"But now the righteousness of God *without the law* is manifested, even righteousness of God *by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all* them that believe, for all have sinned and come short of the *glory of God*. Being *justified freely* by His *grace*, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth, a mercy seat, through faith in His blood, to declare righteousness for the passing over of the sins that had taken place before" [that is the passing over for the time being, in view of the cross (not remitting) the sins committed by the Old Testament saints], "to declare at *this time*" (now that Christ has died) "His (God's) righteousness: that He might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him who believeth in Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without deeds of law."

God, in fact, has placed His own dear Son in the position of the sinner, making Him to be sin, and placing all the believer's sins upon Him, and then pouring out all His *righteous wrath and judgment on the spotless Victim* until every claim was satisfied, and God's holy nature glorified, and His throne vindicated in the fullest way. For only a Divine and infinite Person could meet the infinite claims of God—suffering and exhausting the wrath of God!

In result we read (chap. 5. 1), "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. . . . The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, for God *commendeth His love toward us* in that, while we were *yet sinners*, *Christ died for us*. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be *saved from wrath* through Him . . . and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now have received *the reconciliation*."

What an amazing change has the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ brought about, resulting in the *righteousness of God* now becoming our *strongest fortification against damnation*, which without the cross of Christ would have secured our irretrievable doom. In other words, God's righteousness is pledged to our eternal salvation, because His Son has borne sin's penalty, and if a single believer were lost it would be tantamount to ignoring and casting a slur upon the atoning death of our Lord.

To imagine that such a miscarriage of justice could take place would be to imagine it possible for God to depreciate the work and Person of His Son and to falsify His own word.

It may be added here that not only is the believer forgiven, justified and saved in strict *justice*, but 2 Cor. 5. 21

carries the glorious truth a step further, and announces that God has *made the believer "the righteousness of God in Christ."* Glory be to His blessed Name!

And so returning to Romans 10., where we began, we find "the righteousness of faith speaketh on this wise. . . . 'The word is nigh thee even in thine heart, that is the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, for the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10. 6-12).

"THE CHURCH OF GOD." Acts 20. 28.

"THE Church of God," amazing precious thought!

That sinners vile and outcast should be brought,
Renewed in heart and cleansed by Jesus' blood,
To form Christ's body and the "Church of God."

Angels around the throne, that never fell,
Seraphic spirits that in glory dwell,
The holy patriarchs, before the flood,
Nor Israel since compose "the Church of God."

Distinct in glory from the Church they shine,
Though each unfolds a wonderful design;
The Holy Spirit makes His blest abode
In those alone, who form the "Church of God."

Renewed and quickened by the Holy Ghost,
The Church began on earth at Pentecost,
When like a fire He came on earth and stood,
That little band commenced "the Church of God."

The Church is one, it has one glorious Head,
And by one Spirit through this waste is led;
And nourishment from Christ on high bestowed
Together binds in one the "Church of God."

United to her risen Head above,
E'en now she knows the sweetness of His love,
His power is hers to help her on the road,
Bride of the Lamb—Church of the living God!

Soon will He come and take His Church away;
O God and Father, hasten on the day
When He will stand, with all His saints avowed,
Head of the Church, the purchased "Church of God."

THE HEAVENLY CALLING—*contd.*

(JAMES BOYD.)

These papers are written to show the error of the teaching that the church will go through the great tribulation and that only certain of the saints will have part in the Lord's kingdom and glory.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE UNJUST.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Then, when the thousand years of the glorious reign of Christ and the saints with Him have been completed, "The rest of the dead" are raised. This is a resurrection of the dead, but not *from* the dead; none now being left behind. This is the resurrection of judgment, the resurrection of the unjust. In this there are none "Blessed and holy," none over whom the second death hath no power. These are "*Clothed*," and yet "*Naked*"—destitute of righteousness, and exposed to the judgment of God (2 Cor. 5. 3), a resurrection inglorious and hopeless. The voice of the Son of God shall bring these forth, but the sound of it shall be in the ear of every one of them as the roaring of the lion, more terrible indeed than the thunder of the lion of the forest. And for the first time in their whole history those who hear shall obey. Their doom is certain, and long have they known it, for in hades their utterly lost condition had been a continual torment to their unhappy spirits.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Those inanimate and guiltless haunts of wicked spirits and men, rendered unclean by the presence and practices of rebels against the authority of God, cannot endure the look of righteous indignation cast upon them by the Lord of glory, and vainly seek a hiding place. Peter in his second epistle speaks of this day, and says that—"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."

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which was the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works." The whole sphere in which man under the power of Satan pursued his wicked career of hatred and rebellion against God, and in which all that God is in His hatred of sin and in His unspeakable love to the creature who was dominated by it came into perfect manifestation (a manifestation that shall fill the vast universe of blessing with glory, and every redeemed heart with unspeakable joy), has passed away before the frown of eternal righteousness, and in its place a throne of spotless purity, before which are assembled for judgment the whole generation of the sons of disobedience, whose hatred of God was perfectly displayed in the cross of His only-begotten Son.

"The books were opened," and out of these books the dead were judged according to their works. What the result of such a judgment must be, can anyone who knows his own sinfulness and the righteousness of God have a solitary question? "*Every man*" of them was judged according to his deeds. There was no escape for any soul. Every man must have his place in eternity according to that which his works merit. The man who has sinned under law shall be there, so shall the man who has sinned without law (Rom. 2. 12); so shall the hypocritical servant of Christ, the false apostle, the reprobate disciple, the self-deceived miracle-worker, the corrupter of the truth, the modernist, the infidel, the Christless professor, the liar, the murderer, and the fornicator. And that which the works of every man merit, that shall he receive. For none of these was

there anything settled at the cross ; they chose to answer for themselves, and the desire of their heart has been granted. They shall have an eternity of woe in which to lament their folly.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Death and hades cease to exist by the casting into the lake of fire all that were in that condition. Not a soul saved out of that vast multitude ! Over all in this judgment the second death has power. It has been asked : "Why then is the book of life said to be there ?" My reply is, "What answer does Scripture give to your question ?" "Oh ! it does not say." Well, if Scripture does not say, it is in vain to ask me. I should, however, gather from the little knowledge that I have of God's Word, that it is there to show how thoroughly is reconciled the sovereign grace of God with the accountability of man. Only the works of men are their destruction ; only sovereign grace saves. None in this judgment is the subject of electing grace. "They were judged every man according to their works." Is there any soul who may read these words mad enough to suppose that, if his condition for all eternity was to be determined by his works, it would be anything but unspeakable misery ? I would fain hope that the reader is well aware that his works merit nothing but eternal damnation. "In thy sight shall no man living be justified."

No one could be found in this judgment whose name was in the book of life. Where would be the consistency in placing names in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Rev. 16. 8), and in the end bringing them into judgment that they may receive eternal bliss or blame according to the merit of their deeds ? Only the stupid mind of man could suppose such an absurdity. Jesus says : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life"

(John 5. 24). It must be either works or grace that save. There can be no mixture (Rom 4. 4, 5). If a sinner turns to God through the cross of Christ, he there sees all his sins, and also the evil nature that produced the sins, condemned and set aside in Divine judgment (Rom. 4. 25 ; 8. 3). Not only that, but he now lives by the quickening power of God in a new and Divine nature incapable of sinning ; and all he waits for is to have his body changed and fashioned like the body of Christ, that he may be ever with the Lord (John 5. 25 ; Col. 2. 13 ; 1 John 3. 9 ; Phil. 3. 21), and then neither in nor about him shall there be anything but the work of God ; and this shall not be judged by God, for He shall not judge His own work. Man could not be either praised or blamed for that which is done by God.

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

Have believers not to give account to God ? Surely : all must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, "that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5. 10). And seeing the effect that this manifestation would have upon himself, the hopeless condition of the sinner is brought home to his soul in such power that he says : "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." It had no terror for him, for "We have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17). We have no reason to fear the disclosures of that judgment, for the love of God has sent the Son that He should be the propitiation for our sins, and that we might live through Him (1 John 4. 9, 10). And not only that, but that mighty love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom. 5. 5), and it will never leave us, nor will it have its perfect satisfaction until we are in the likeness of Christ. Therefore fear has been driven out of our hearts. "He

that feareth is not made perfect in love." The love and the fear cannot both dwell together in the same heart. His perfect love drives out the fear. The judgment can be looked forward to with the utmost tranquillity. Indeed no true heart would wish to be without this manifestation, for there has been much in all our lives that we have little understood. Then we shall know as we are known. We shall see our failures in the light of infinite holiness and righteousness; and along with all the provocation with which we have vexed His Holy Spirit, we shall see the patient grace and boundless love that bore with us in our wanderings, and which kept us for Himself in spite of the evil nature that could be so easily wrought upon by the devil, and which we so sadly failed to keep in the place of death. Instead of being a terror to us, it is a real comfort and joy to contemplate.

When we appear before the judgment-seat we shall be glorified, for that which "is sown in dishonour is raised in glory" (1 Cor. 15. 43), and we shall be like Christ. Not only that, but when we are raised, or caught up without dying, to meet the Lord in the air, it is said: "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Not for one instant shall we be absent from Him (1 Thess. 4. 17). Wherever He is we shall ever be.

But it may now be said to me: "By this you seem to make it appear that every true believer shall reign with Christ." Yes, this is just what I see the Scripture teaches. In that day there shall not be one bit of blame for any true saint of God. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love"; and "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," when everything is gathered under Christ, we are to be "to the praise of His glory"; and the earnest of that we have in the gift of the Spirit (Ephes. 1. 4, 9-14). We are also part of that building that is

growing to a holy temple in the Lord. And if the Apostle has to warn the saints against the allowance of the fleshly will, he tells them that because of this the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; that is, those that do not obey the Gospel. He does not say it comes upon them (Ephes. 5. 3-8). The Colossians are said to have been reconciled in the body of Christ's flesh through death "To present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel" (Col. 1. 21-23). Continuance proves the reality of their faith. Again, he says: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4). The day of the Lord that shall come on all the world as a thief shall not come thus upon believers. He says: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. . . . And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5. 4-11, 23, 24). Again: "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation

through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth ; whereunto He called you by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ " (2. Thess. 2. 13, 14). Now in hope of this glory we rejoice (Rom. 5. 2). And 1 Cor. 1. 7, 8 : " Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Again : " Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world ? " " Know ye not that we shall judge angels ? " (1 Cor. 6. 2, 3).

Now when shall the saints judge the world or angels, except at His appearing and kingdom ? Perhaps you say, " It does not say all the saints." Neither does it say all the world. It says "*the saints*" and it says "*the world*"; and that without any qualification whatever. And was Paul dreaming when he said that the Lord would confirm the saints blameless in that day ? And was it not true that the Thessalonians were called to the obtaining of the glory that shall be revealed in that day ? And was it a promise never to be fulfilled, that God would preserve them, spirit, soul and body, blameless against that day ? And shall that day overtake the saints as a thief, though they be not in darkness, but are children of light and of the day ? Are these encouragements held out to the saints of God in this hostile world nothing but a pack of lies ?

We are told by certain teachers that Paul was not perfectly sure as to how he might stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. Do they really study the Scriptures ? The truth is, that in contemplating that judgment it is not for himself he has the slightest fear. He was always confident. He says : " Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men " (2. Cor. 5. 11). When he views the searching character of that judgment, as it shall affect the works of believers, a powerful impression is conveyed to his mind of the terrible consequences to those who

have to appear there in their sins ; for whether it be designated the judgment-seat or the great white throne, it is the same righteous Person that shall judge, and where it is the judgment of persons the terror of its results for them is unspeakable. Hence he uses that judgment to get at the consciences of sinners and to wake them up. With Felix he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, until the Roman Governor trembled with fear. But as to himself, he had not the slightest fear. How could he have fear when the rest of us have boldness for the day of judgment, and just because the work that has been done for us is infinitely perfect, that our sins are as completely gone as though they never had existence, and our relations with God are the same as His own, " For as He is, so are we in this world " (1 John 4. 17). This judgment had no terrors for the Apostle, and, thank God, it has none for the writer of this paper.

Another thing I would refer my reader's attention to : We are members of the body of Christ. He is our risen and exalted Head, and we are part of Himself. Yet these teachers tell us that we may be during the time of His kingdom in the lake of fire. Just think of a part of Christ in the torment of Gehenna ! And yet these wild and wicked notions are foisted upon the saints of God, and, alas ! are in some instances gladly accepted as most precious truth. We learn in the Word that He loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and these men tell us that some of it shall be purged in the lake of fire !

But now, by the help of God, I will seek to turn the attention of the reader to the promises made to the " Father of the faithful," that we may see the bearing of those promises upon others than himself. Abraham was made the

father of all them that believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, and the promise made to him was, that he should be heir of the world. And this promise was on the principle of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all . . . before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were (Rom. 4.), and grace recognizes no merit in the recipient. Now these promises were established in Christ (Gal. 3. 16), for all the promises are in Him (2 Cor. 1. 20). Jew and Gentile are all "concluded under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." And therefore is it stated : "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3. 22, 29).

Now none but *sons* inherit, and they inherit all things, for they are heirs of God ; and therefore, "All things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3. 21-23). And "How shall He not with Him freely give us all things" (Rom. 8. 32). Need I quote more Scripture texts ?

Encouragement.

AS to things generally, they are—as they have been from the beginning—all moving on to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ "*in power.*" This is Paul's Gospel ! Cf. Luke 1. 35 and Rom. 1. 4. There is not much difference between what *is* and what *was*. The days cannot be much worse than Luke 23. 18 or 2 Tim. 1. 15, but in the midst of things as they are, and which we cannot change, it is well for us to dwell on the prophetic faith of Simeon and of Anna (Luke 2. 29, 32, 38) and the courage of Paul (2 Tim. 1. 7), etc.,

If a man is not satisfied with the revelation given to us in the love of God, let him say so, and in the hand of God we can leave him.

I have said servants do not inherit. It is only as sons that we are heirs of God (Gal. 4. 30). In one way we are all servants of God, but not as servants are we heirs, but as sons. Nor have servants any security, except that which their faithfulness gives them. But no one who is not a son can be faithful, for only by love can God be served (1 Cor. 13. 1-3). "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8. 35, 36). And the way in which He makes free is in sonship. And it is in this connection we have the exhortation : "Stand therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. 5. 1). The son is ever greater than the servant, for the son speaks of vital relationship, which the servant does not. A servant may be dismissed, and the master be done with him for ever, but not the son, he abides in the house for ever. This relationship cannot be broken. In grace God gives opportunity of serving Him, and we delight to accept the privilege, but we do so because we are sons, and because we stand in higher relationship with Him. We are sons, and by the Spirit of His Son call Him Father.

and his noble and encouraging words as he keeps his head above water and battles with the waves (chap. 2.), exposes the sharks (chap. 3.), and does battle with the monsters of the deep and the wild beasts on land (chap. 4. 17) until "the time of his release is reached and he passes out of reach of every wicked work into the heavenly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. 4. 18), leaving the battle to be carried on by "faithful men and competent" to keep untarnished the "deposit first entrusted to him" (chap. 1).—*From a letter.*

JOSEPH.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

No. X. The Vision of Faith. Genesis 50. 15-26.

THE last two scenes in the history of Joseph present a striking contrast between the unbelief of the brethren and the dying faith of Joseph. If the first scene, described in verses 15 to 21, presents a sorrowful picture of the unbelief of the brethren, it also brings into display the perfect grace of Joseph. A crisis in the history of the brethren makes manifest that they had no true knowledge of the heart of Joseph and therefore no real confidence in him.

Joseph had saved their lives with a great deliverance (Gen. 45. 7); he had put them in possession of "the best of the land" of Egypt, and he had nourished them with bread (Gen. 47. 12). For seventeen years they had been the recipients of Joseph's bounty, and the special objects of his loving care, and yet—when a crisis arises—it becomes manifest that they have no personal knowledge of Joseph. They know something of his greatness and glory; they know the great work he has accomplished, they know that every blessing they enjoy is owing to his position and work, but they had no personal acquaintance with his mind and heart. It is as if they said, "We know what he has done for us, but *we do not know how he feels about us.*"

And not knowing his mind, when the crisis arises it becomes manifest that they have *no confidence in him*, with the result that they conclude that he will think and act towards them according to the way they had thought and acted towards him.

They remember that when Joseph was but a lad of seventeen, "they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him," and now they conclude, "Joseph will peradventure hate us." Conscience recalls how wickedly they had acted in regard to Joseph, and now

they say, he "will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." They judge of his thoughts by their thoughts, of his heart by their hearts, and of his acts by their acts.

Alas! are not we Christians to-day oftentimes like Joseph's brethren of old? We know something of the glory of the Person of Christ, we know something of the efficacy of His work, we enjoy the benefits that flow from His finished work on the cross and His present service in the glory, but when some little crisis arises in our history *it becomes manifest how little we know* His heart, and therefore what little confidence we have in Himself. We lack that personal, intimate acquaintance with Christ, by which alone His mind is learned in such fashion that we can say not only "I know what He has done for me," but "*I know how He feels about me.*" The result is that in the presence of some special trial we are, like Joseph's brethren, greatly distressed in soul. One has truly said, "Nothing has contributed more to the present distraction of saints than the lack of personal intercourse with the Lord. There has been a great and increased zeal to acquire knowledge of the Scriptures, but personal acquaintance with the Lord has not been correspondingly sought after."

The brethren of Joseph had heard the gracious words of Joseph when alone with him, but, not knowing his heart, they had little entered into the full, deep meaning of his words. So with ourselves it is possible to have great knowledge of the words of Scripture and yet be very ignorant of the great truths the words convey. A true understanding can only be obtained by the knowledge of Christ. Hence the Apostle prays, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom

and revelation in the *knowledge of Him*." The knowledge of the schools—the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew—however useful in its place, will never give us *the spirit* of wisdom and revelation. Such knowledge may give an understanding of the letter of revelation, but not the spirit of revelation. We must know the mind of Christ to understand the words of Christ.

Scripture speaks of external knowledge which a person may acquire by hearsay or sight, and also of conscious knowledge—that personal acquaintance by which we can know a person's mind. It is of this latter knowledge—this personal, intimate knowledge—of which Paul speaks, when he says, "That I may know Him," and it is this knowledge we so often lack. We know and rejoice in the glorious things He has done, but do we know the heart of the One who has done so much for us, in such fashion that we can say, "I know how He feels about me"?

The lack of true knowledge of Joseph's heart, and the consequent lack of confidence in Joseph is revealed in the message that his brethren send to him. And worse, they attempt to hide their own unbelief, and mistrust of Joseph, by pretending they are only carrying out the dying commands of Joseph's father. It is impossible to believe that Jacob left any such command. In total forgetfulness of Joseph's forgiveness of all their sad past they now pray to be forgiven. In spite of all the manifested grace and love of Joseph their uneasy conscience leads them to harbour the thought that Joseph still has something against them. And even so, if not living in nearness to Christ—if we have not made acquaintance with His heart—we may, through sin, failure, and a careless walk, still think, when conscience begins to work, that Christ is against us for something that we have done, and, like Joseph's brethren, ask for forgiveness. And yet however great the failure of a true believer, Scripture

never suggests that he should plead for forgiveness as if that question were not fully and eternally settled, but rather he is exhorted to *confess* his sin that communion may be restored.

This lack of confidence, after all the love that had been lavished upon them, broke the heart of Joseph. He "wept when they spake unto him" (17). The saddest thing in all this sad world is unrequited love. But though his tears showed how deeply he felt the unbelief of his brethren, yet he utters no word of reproach. The very tears would surely be sufficient to wither up their unbelief. But Joseph leads them into personal acquaintance with himself by letting them know *there is nothing but love in his heart towards them, though he fully knows the evil of their hearts towards him*.

"As for you," he can say, "Ye thought evil against me," but he can add, "Fear ye not." He says as it were, "I know all the evil of your hearts toward me, but there is nothing to fear, for there is nothing but love in my heart toward you." And thus once again he removes all fear as to the past and all anxiety as to the future, for he adds, "I will nourish you and your little ones." Thus it was "he comforted them and spake to their hearts" (margin). Perfect love casts out all fear.

What a difference this interview must have made to these brethren. After this did any one seek to cast a doubt upon Joseph's love they would surely say, "We have been in his presence, we have made personal acquaintance with himself, we know his mind. We not only know what he has done for us, but we know how he feels toward us."

In the final scene between Joseph and his brethren, the faith of Joseph rises above all the glories of this passing world and looks on to a better and brighter world that is yet to come. He thinks and speaks no more of the things that he had suffered, the power he had wielded, or the good he may have done. He forgets the things that

are behind and reaches out to the things that are before.

Isaac, in his day, when he "was old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see," looked on with faith's clear vision to another world and spake "concerning things to come." Jacob at a later day, when dying, with like faith catches a glimpse of the glories on beyond, and worships, leaning upon the top of his staff. And now Joseph, about to take the passage through the valley, catches sight of the hills that are beyond, and rising above all passing things, lays hold by faith of the world to come.

And God is not slow to mark His approval of the faith of these dying saints, shining in its greatest strength in the moment of nature's greatest weakness. It is not the great deeds they may have wrought in the course of their active lives, but the faith, shining amidst the feebleness of age and the weakness of their dying moments, that has secured them a place in God's list of worthies of other days. The faith of other saints may shine in overcoming the difficulties of the way, in escaping the snares of the enemy, and triumphing over the temptations of the world, but the faith of these three saints is distinguished in that it forgets all seen and passing things, be they good or bad, great or small, and *looks on to another world*. And this is the more striking in the case of Joseph, seeing he had filled a place of such vast importance before the world in his day and generation. He realizes that all the glory of Egypt ends at last in a coffin in Egypt. He had worthily filled a place of great power and glory in this world, such as no man before or since has ever had, but the end of all Egypt's glory is reached in these significant words, "*he was put in a coffin in Egypt.*"

Thus it is he speaks no more of man, and man's small world, but of God—the living God, of the faithfulness of God, of the power of God, and the land of God.

"I die," says Joseph. The life of the man who had saved other lives by a great deliverance (Gen. 45. 7) is fast slipping away, but if Joseph dies God lives, if Joseph departs God remains. And into the hands of the living and unchanging God he commends his brethren. Though he may be taken from them, yet he can say with the utmost assurance of faith, "God will surely visit you." The living God is their unfailing resource in the presence of the dying Joseph. With men all is uncertain, with God all is sure—He will *surely* visit you.

Furthermore, God will act in mighty power on behalf of His people, for, says Joseph, He will "bring you out of this land." Joseph had been long in Egypt; he "saw Ephraim's children of the third generation" (23). They were thoroughly established in the land of Egypt. To nature nothing looked more unlikely than that a time would ever come when they would leave the land of Egypt for a land they had never seen, but faith, rising above things seen, and refusing to reason according to the mind of nature, sees with clear vision that, though the people of God may sojourn for a time in the land of Egypt, yet it is not the land of rest that God has promised for His people. Stranger-ship in the land of Egypt may form part of God's ways with His people, but has no place in God's purpose for His people.

Thus the faith of Joseph passes on to the land of promise. As surely as God will visit His people in grace to bring them out of Egypt, so surely He will stretch out His hand in mighty delivering power to bring them into the land of His purpose—"a good land and a large . . . a land flowing with milk and honey." Moreover this good land, with all its blessing and glory, which is unrolled before the faith of the dying Joseph, is secured by the unconditional promise of God, made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph is dying, but no shadows darken the hour of his passing, for he sees in faith

that all blessing to a far future rests upon the faithfulness and power of the living God.

So it comes to pass in the power of faith's vision of the living God he gives directions concerning his bones. They are not to be left in Egypt. What a witness to the Israelites must the coffin of Joseph have been through the long centuries, for ever reminding them that not even death itself can hinder the living God from fulfilling all His pleasure, and carrying out His purpose for His people. So in accord with the oath made to Joseph, when at last they leave the land of Egypt, "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exod. 13. 19), still to be a witness to faith in God, throughout the forty years of wilderness journeyings. And when at last they reach the land of promise, his body is buried "in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor" (Joshua 24. 32), there to sleep in the dust of the earth until he awakes to everlasting life and stands in his lot at the end of days.

Nor is it otherwise with the people of God to-day. Faith still looks beyond the valley of the shadow of death, to the home of God's eternal purpose. In the presence of death faith, as of old, still rests on the God of resurrection,

but with yet clearer vision, for we see Christ risen from among the dead seated at God's right hand of power, holding in His hand the keys of death and the grave. As our faith looks up to the risen Man in the glory, may the passing glories of this dying world become small in our esteem, so that, forgetting the things that are behind, we reach out to the things that are before, while waiting for the moment when the Lord will surely visit His people—when He "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."

Thus while to sight all may seem to end in a coffin in Egypt, faith has in view that glorious moment when we shall be caught up together to be for ever with the Lord. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words"—

"The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks,
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair sweet morn awakes.
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

"The Jews sought to kill Him."

CAN this be wholly charged upon the Jews or upon people who lived twenty centuries ago? What was, what is, the name of the murderer? It is man. Not the Jews or the Gentiles, or mankind in any narrow or sectional sense, but man; the Son of God was killed by man. Let us not blame the wrong parties; men who are blaming others should be broken-hearted about themselves. In those former days they would have eaten His loaves and fishes and have accepted in a sullen way those gifts of health and good deeds that He did among them, but Himself they could not tolerate. His words they hated. Himself they

rejected, for He was the light, and His very presence exposed their moral obliquity, the crookedness and sham and corruption of their lives. His words they hated, for they shot like arrows to their very hearts and consciences. His words showed the right way, but they loved the wrong way; His words declared what God is, but they preferred their ignorance. They saw Him and heard Him, and hated both Him and His Father. But it was man that did it. Man who is unchanged to this day. Man as man does not want Christ to-day any more than he ever did, and "except a man be born again He cannot enter the kingdom of God."

THE SON OF GOD.

(JAMES GREEN.)

THERE are three thoughts conveyed in the title of Son: (1) Relationship. (2) Representation. (3) Continuation. The first determines the character of that which is to be represented and continued. In the case of our Lord the relationship is absolute and unique. Others may be "sons," but of Him alone can it be said that He is "the Son." This is His Divine prerogative, and it must be so, for only One who was Himself God could be a true representation of God, and also maintain the blessed results of such a revelation. These three thoughts of Sonship are seen in the early chapters of Genesis. First, **CREATION**. It was by "the Son" that this was called into being, He made the worlds (Heb. 1. 2). This is a clear assertion of His Godhead, for God only can create. Secondly (Gen. 5. 3), Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image. Here is the thought of "**REPRESENTATION**": to know Seth was to know Adam, he was like his father, he stood in Adam's place. Thirdly (Gen. 4. 17), Cain called the city which he built, after the name of his son, for it was intended to be the centre from which the line of Cain would be continued: "**CONTINUATION**." These three thoughts are involved in the title of "Son of God" applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. (1) He is God the Son in His relationship to the Father, eternal in His existence as such, and distinct in His person. (2) As born in time, truly human, He laid aside the outward form of Godhead and took upon Him the form of a servant, but His person and relationship were unchanged. Thus it was said of Him, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." There is no such thought as being begotten before all worlds, He was ever "The Son," but as born into the world, He inherited a title more excellent than creature ever bore, and in the name of "Son" was the representation of God

to men. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called 'The Son of God'" (Luke 1. 35). (3) Such an one must take precedence of all others as the centre from which the continuation of glory and blessing must flow, and in this He associates "sons," whom grace has called, with Himself. A city gives the idea of association, for the purpose of maintaining by means of its citizens that which has been already established. The city of God will be founded to continue the Name of God revealed in His Son, to all generations. Cf. Psalm 72. 17-19. In the first epistle of John there are seven mentions of "The Son of God," besides the characteristic name of the epistle, "The Son" or "His Son," which occurs fourteen times.

1. Chap. 3. 8, "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy (undo) the works of the devil.*"

The object of His coming was to expose, by the revelation of the nature of God, the devil's lie, which had falsified the character of God. The Son of God declared the love of God, in a world which lay in darkness and ignorance of God. For men do not think that God is what He is, their conception of Him is all astray. And although the revelation has been made, they do not know Him, for the god of this world hath blinded the thoughts of those who believe not, lest they should discern the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God. As soon as that image in the face of Jesus Christ enters the soul, the darkness flees, the fetters of sin are broken, the works of the devil are there undone, for an entirely new conception of God takes the place of Satan's calumny which brought about the fall of man.

2. Chap. 4. 15, "*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*"

There is henceforth established a point of contact between the soul and God. It is Jesus, the One whom the Father sent to be the Saviour of the world. The result of the heart's acknowledgment that He is the Son of God is that God finds in the confessor *an abiding-place of rest, and dwells there by His Holy Spirit, for hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us* (1 John 3. 24). We dwell in Him, His love is made perfect in us, every fear in respect of the coming day of judgment is gone, we are at home with God and share His thoughts concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Chap. 5. 5, "*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.*"

The victory that overcometh the world is "our faith," not so much the subjective principle of faith, as the object on which the faith of the soul is fixed. This carries us up in affection to where the Son of God is, the centre of another world. Our souls become entranced with the sight of His glory there, and so this world loses its charms, its objects, its value for us. When Saul of Tarsus could not see for the light that revealed Jesus the Lord in glory, straightway he preached Him as the Son of God. The world, religious, political and social; the highest, the lowest, and all their glory; as well as the righteousness in which men make their boast, with all their pride, was overcome and became worthless by reason of the glory that excelleth. Thus is the transfer of the affections of the heart from this world to another accomplished.

4. Chap. 5. 10, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*"

The inward witness is the answer on earth to the glory which is above, given to the one who believes on the Son of God. It is the great fact of the indwelling Holy Spirit, whose presence is the Divine witness that the believer

has eternal life. By the Spirit the love of God is shed abroad, and joy in hope of His glory fills the soul. Those who believe not the witness that God has given of His Son by the same Spirit, when He lived here on earth, may count the Christian's hope but as *the imagination of an empty dream*; but the believer on the Son of God knows the solid reality of that which God has declared, for he has received the Holy Spirit of God come from heaven.

5. Chap. 5. 12, "*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*"

The Spirit joins His witness with the water and the blood, which testify that cleansing from sin has been accomplished in the cross. Thus by three unchangeable things—the water and the blood from the side of Christ in death, and the Spirit come from Christ in glory—the believer is assured that he has eternal life. Not disconnected indeed from its source, for it is in Him, God's Son, and in the soul a fountain springing up to eternal life, in constant supply. He that has the Son has it, and he that has not the Son of God has it not. This verse shows how inseparable are the two titles, and likewise eternal life with all its deep joys, from Him who lives in the glory of God.

6. Chap. 5. 13, "*These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*" (The latter part of this verse should be omitted.)

Blessed as it is to be assured that eternal life is ours, and that in connection with Him who is its source, how great the joy of living that life in its present relationships and activities—in other words, to know it! This verse was written to those who already believed on the Name of the Son of God, that they might have the conscious knowledge (*oicē*) of eternal life. Wondrous privilege to enter with the Son into the joys of His home, into the

knowledge of His Father, and to explore the depths of those eternal counsels which have for their purpose the glory of God by Christ Jesus unto the endless ages to come.

7. Chap. 5. 20, "*We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true.*"

This is the great conclusion. Man may understand his fellow-men, and that is the extent of his capacity ; but to understand God, to have the faculty capable of this, is indeed a surpassing thought. Yet this is the portion of those that know (*οἶδα*) that the Son of God is come. Set in Christ before Him in love, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul forms new affections

that return in love to Him who first loved. The understanding given is the response of affection to the Father which was in Christ. Love knows (*γινώσκω*) as an object Him who is infinite. It is the "I in them" of the last verse of John 17. In Him it is perfect, in us in measure but of the same character ; and in this lies the secret of worship in spirit and in truth which the Father seeks.

Is it any wonder that with this love filling his soul John says, "Children, keep yourselves from idols," whatever it be that turns the heart from single-hearted affection to God, who has revealed Himself after such a manner ? Let us not miss the force of the warning conveyed in the words "keep yourselves" and most surely in dependence on Him "who is able to keep."

WISDOM OF KNOWLEDGE.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

WISDOM would have no room for its exercise were there no knowledge. Knowledge is positively dangerous where there is no wisdom.

Knowledge consists of information as to God and all His works, as well as of all that sin has brought into the world. The former is desirable, the latter undesirable.

Wisdom is the faculty that enables the possessor of knowledge so to use it as to make it really useful, and avoid using it for what would be useless or mischievous.

Knowledge cries, I know !
Wisdom cries, I edify !

We must, however, distinguish between "knowledge" and "the knowledge of God." "Knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8. 1.) We increase in or by the knowledge of God. (See Col. 1. 10). The knowledge of God would lead surely to humility and reverence and the growth of a spiritual constitution pleasing to Him. In our title we refer to "knowledge."

The first mention of knowledge in the Bible is in Gen. 2. 17. There we see pre-eminently the need of wisdom. The hand of disobedience was put out. Eve took of the forbidden fruit—her husband partook of her sin—our first parents fell, and in their fall dragged down the whole human race. Knowledge was acquired, but no wisdom, and man's knowledge since then has been his ruin—knowledge of good, but no power to practise it ; knowledge of evil and no power to resist it. And since that day man's so-called wisdom has been consummate folly.

Writing to the assembly at Corinth, a place noted for its learning and notorious for its wickedness, Paul speaks of the wisdom of this world and of the princes of this world, which comes to nought. True wisdom abides. The spurious article comes to nought. Man's highest wisdom was to crucify Christ. Never was there an act of such a combination of folly and wickedness and injustice ever seen or will be in the history of this world.

Where does wisdom then begin with men? "The fear of the Lord is *the beginning of wisdom*" (Psalm III. 10; Prov. 9. 10). Wisdom has a large place in Scripture. In Prov. 8. and 9. it is personified in a remarkable way, whilst in 1 Cor. 1. 30. Christ is made unto us *wisdom*. How noticeable all this is!

In the case of the blessed Lord, all that He has worked out through His death and resurrection is all the working out of wisdom. There is a reason for everything. Everything in this connection is necessary. One thing more would have been superfluous; one thing less would have meant incompleteness.

Now as to applying it to ourselves, it is very noticeable that whenever wisdom and knowledge come together in the Scriptures wisdom always comes first.

The first mention of wisdom and knowledge together in the Word is found in Exodus 31.: "I have filled him [Bezaleel] with the Spirit of God *in wisdom*, and in understanding, and *in knowledge*, and in all manner of workmanship."

Again in the assembly it is noticeable that wisdom is put first. We read: "To one is given *the word of wisdom*; to another *the word of knowledge* by the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 8).

It is sad how dangerous mere knowledge can be. What a length it can go, when undirected by wisdom, when it could be written, "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died" (1 Cor. 8. 11).

Wisdom always has edification in view. Paul exclaimed that he would rather speak five words with his understanding that others might be taught, than utter ten thousand words in an

unknown tongue—showy as the latter performance would be.

How much we should be spared if all this were kept in view. Mere points do not feed the soul. Much that may be privately interesting is not necessarily useful for public edification. Theories and speculation that go beyond true knowledge should of course be kept quite clear of; but even knowledge, true and correct, is not to be used on all occasions, save as wisdom directs.

Paul showed his wisdom with the Hebrew believers when he fed them with milk and not with strong meat (Heb. 5. 12-14); and again, the same with the Corinthians, when he could say, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you[†] as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3. 1-3).

May the Lord exercise us more truly as to the use we make of our knowledge. We may turn knowledge into an instrument of discomfort and even pain to the saints. Wisdom would correct all that. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3. 17). What a character!

Do we feel our lack? We read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him*" (James 1. 5).

This is a vast subject. In reference to our blessed Lord what a theme! Christ made unto us the wisdom of God. What room for meditation! In studying Him we shall surely learn wisdom. How quickly we fail in these things! The Lord give us grace.

When place I seek or place I shun,
My soul is satisfied with none;
But when Thy will directs my way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Lord's Supper.

"Do we in the light of 1 Corinthians 11. remember a dead Christ at the Lord's Supper, or think of a living Christ who once died for us?"—G. W. B.

WE remember our Lord *in death* for us.

The bread and the wine, being separate, speak of Him in death, and not as living: they tell of His body given for us, and His blood poured out for us; this surely is past not present. "*In remembrance of Me,*" plainly refers to what is past; it is a recalling of what He was, not what He is. We do this in His presence, the living One, for where two or three are gathered together unto His Name, there He is, and it is in His company who lives, that we go back in thought and remember Him when He died.

Thus is His love in its full manifestation and suffering brought freshly before our souls; and this moves our hearts to adoration and worship as nothing else can. We must not allow the meaning of the Lord's Supper to be clouded by the vain thoughts of men, but must maintain it in its simplicity and blessedness, as first given to us by the Lord. We meet Him as He is. We enter His presence joyfully, but it is to recall what He was when in the immensity of His love He laid down His life for us.

The Lord's Supper, 2nd Question.

"The idea expressed, was that when the bread is broken at the Supper the door is opened for the Lord to come into the meeting; that it is then that 'we call Him into presence,' which is the interpretation put upon in remembrance of Me."—MELBOURNE.

THE idea is a figment of a mind ignorant of the truth and searching for novelty, and it is as false as it is foolish; it is worse than that, it savours of profanity. The Scriptures do tell us of a church at the closed door of which the Lord stands and knocks, but who that really loves Him would have part in the condition of things that the Laodicean church represents! That church had lost all semblance of a true Christian assembly, for Christ was outside of it, and so has every other company where He is

not, where a door has to be opened for Him before He can enter. Such have no right to the Lord's Supper, for it is the one feast of His assembly. He instituted the Supper at the beginning, and He directs it now, for He is Lord in the assemblies and the Head of His body. If the truth gathers His saints together, it gathers them to *Himself*; and those who are gathered by it assemble to meet Him, and the Supper and every other privilege of the assembly are enjoyed in His presence, or else they are lifeless, joyless, useless forms.

"Them also that sleep in Jesus."

"Does 1 Thessalonians 4. 14 refer to the period when the Lord returns to earth after the rapture of the saints, which rapture is set forth in verses 15, 16, 17?"—G. W. B.

YES. It refers to the appearing of the Lord in glory to establish His kingdom on earth. The coming of the Lord from heaven for His kingdom was part of the Gospel that Paul had preached to the Thessalonians, and they "turned to God from idols . . . to wait for His Son from heaven" (chap. 1. 9, 10); this was their immediate hope. Meanwhile many were suffering martyrdom for Christ's sake and dying in the ordinary course of nature, and those remaining were ignorant as to the place they would have at the coming of the Lord. They evidently thought that they would have no part in that which was to them a glorious hope, and they sorrowed deeply

for them in consequence. To comfort them the Apostle received a special communication from the Lord. He tells them that those who sleep through Jesus will come with Him when He comes to reign, that God Himself will see to this. Then he goes on to show them how their beloved brethren would be with the Lord and we also when He does so come. Those that are alive and remain will have no advantage over those that sleep; on the contrary the first wave of the Lord's power will bring these out of their graves, then we, caught up *together with them*, shall meet the Lord in the air to be for ever with Him, and to come forth with Him when He comes with His saints to reign.

A NEW JEWISH TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

(H. P. BARKER.)

THE present year, 1924, has witnessed the production of the fifth impression of an entirely new translation of the Old Testament by a Board of eminent Rabbis and other Jewish scholars. It is of great interest to us Christians, in that men of Hebrew birth and blood can bring a certain acumen and knowledge to bear upon their task, which is the result of their Jewish training, and which Gentile scholars cannot reckon as part of their equipment.

We quote a few sentences from the Preface to the new work, showing the attitude of the translators to the Holy Scriptures, and to Christian translations thereof.

"The sacred task of translating the Word of God, as revealed to Israel through lawgiver, prophet, psalmist and sage, began at an early date. According to ancient rabbinic tradition, Joshua had the Torah engraved upon the stones of the altar (Joshua 8. 32), not in the original Hebrew alone, but in all the languages of mankind, which was held to be seventy, in order that all men might become acquainted with the words of the Scriptures. This statement, with its universalistic tendency, is, of course, a reflex of later times, when the Hebrew Scriptures had become a subject of curiosity and perhaps also of anxiety to the pagan or semi-pagan world.

"While this tradition contains an element of truth, it is certain that the primary object of translating the Bible was to minister to a need nearer home. Upon the establishment of the Second Commonwealth under Ezra and Nehemiah, it became imperative to make the Torah of God 'distinct and giving sense' through the means of interpretation (Nehemiah 8. 8 and 13. 24), that the Word of God might be understood by all the people. . . .

"The repeated efforts made by the Jews in the field of biblical translation show their sentiment toward translations prepared by other denominations. The dominant feature of this sentiment, apart from the thought that the christological interpretations in non-Jewish translations are out of place in a Jewish Bible, is and was that the Jew cannot afford to have his Bible translation prepared for him by others. He cannot have it as a gift, even as he cannot borrow his soul from others. . . .

"We are, it is hardly needful to say, deeply grateful for the works of our non-Jewish predecessors, such as the Authorized Version with its admirable diction, which can never

be surpassed, as well as for the Revised Version with its ample learning—but they are not ours. . . .

"In all humility their co-workers submit this version to the Jewish people in the confident hope that it will aid them in the knowledge of the Word of God."

It is good indeed to be assured that, in the opinion of competent Jewish scholars, our Authorized Version can never be surpassed. And a comparison of this new Jewish version with the Bible that we English-speaking Christians have in common use shows how very secondary in importance are the differences between the two. True, the Jewish translation throws a welcome light on some of the more obscure passages, and in many instances they conform rather to the Revised than to the Authorized Version. But, on the whole, this new work is a remarkable testimony to the fact that in our Authorized Version we have the Word of God in very nearly its original integrity.

But something beyond scholarship is needed for the right rendering of God's holy Word into any language. *Spiritual discernment* plays a large part. And this we cannot look for where Christ is rejected, and where the testimony of the Old Testament to Him is overlooked or denied. Of the learned Jewish translators we fear it must still be said: "the vail is upon their heart," even when the Torah itself is read (2. Cor. 3. 15). Would that they could see the truth of what was affirmed by one of their own nation, that *all* their prophets give witness to Christ (Acts 10. 43), and that the very Torah in which a righteousness is demanded from man which none has ever produced, bears witness to the righteousness of God irrespective of law altogether (Romans 3. 21).

For those who wish to examine the new Jewish translation for themselves, we may mention that it is published by The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia.