

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

“Thy Word is Truth.”

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL
VOLUME
1937

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.”

Acts 20. 32.

THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT,^A
5, ROSE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

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Scripture Truth

VOLUME XXIX.

"THY WORD IS TRUTH."

1937

THE WORD OF GOD.

THE Word of God is perfect and pure. It is above every age, for it was written by the Eternal Spirit, and our wisdom is to receive its teachings with child-like faith, and receive it according to its own method, not mixing it with the enticing words of man's wisdom or the thoughts and terminology of the temporary schools.

The Word of God reveals Christ to us, and it searches out and judges everything in us that prevents us from walking by faith in Him. Solemn and stern as its voice may be in many places, the blessed result to those who are humbled and meek and that tremble at the Word is, that by it they are taught to look off steadfastly unto Jesus, who never did and never can fail, to find in Him the way of life and so be kept from the evil that is in the world.

The Word of God speaks to the heart. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty, the heart hears it and is filled with awe. The voice of the Lord is full of tenderness, and the heart trusts and rejoices. The voice of the Lord declares mercy, and the heart forgives them that have trespassed against us. The voice of the Lord speaks of peace and coming glory, and the heart becomes cheerful and patient in trial, enjoys the feast of His grace and looks on with confidence to His coming again.

The Word of God is our weapon, none other is of any avail when we

stand face to face with our great foe. It will meet every attack; it turns in every direction, "It is written," silences the devil, and puts him to flight. He can blow into splinters the words and opinions of men, but the Word of God he cannot destroy, it is the sword of the Spirit. The Word fits into all circumstances; it is a buckler and shield as well as a sword, and moreover it heals all wounds received in deadly conflict, and it nerves the feeble arm to fight. It is the precise answer to every difficulty, the right method of meeting all opposition, and the one true solace that can get to the heart and strengthen and succour and solace it.

In the Word of God there is light and hope and in nothing else. This Word has outlived the men who have denied and tried to destroy it. This Word flings the light of hope through the tear of despair and turns the night of weeping into the morning of joy. This Word has sung its glad songs when all the world has been out of tune; this is the Word that you must hear, for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Hear the Word! It is calling to you in the rarest and clearest speech that was ever heard. Only out of the mouth of the eternal, all-seeing, almighty, merciful and gracious God could have come the words, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." They have been spoken, they are the very words of God, as sure as His eternal throne, infallible and faithful, and good for every

heart to-day that will hear them and obey.

Bread is the "staff of life," and if a man has been supported by it for 50 years he can not only smile at the foolish person who would condemn such sustenance, but he is fully warranted in pronouncing most favourably on its virtue. He has put it to ample and abundant proof, and refuses to be shaken by its critics.

In like manner, if a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has fed upon the Word of God for 50 years and

has found the truths of the Bible to be food and drink and light and life, joy, instruction, comfort, guidance, and richest blessing to his soul, he may well be unmoved by what its enemies and hostile critics say about it; experience has taught him to repose in unbroken confidence in the unerring accuracy and truth of the Word of God. He has leaned upon it all the time; it has never failed him, nor deceived him by any false light; he has tried it and proved it. His best defence of that Word, if defence were needed, is simply the fact that he himself has proved it

"Take Heed what ye Hear."

We would not purchase our food stuffs from a dealer whom we knew was guilty of adulterating them, for we have a care for the physical health of ourselves and our families. Let us be more watchful still over the health of our souls and refuse to receive spiritual ministry from any tainted source. And every man, whether he be pope, bishop, priest, or preacher, who would displace Christ from the pre-eminent place in all things that God has given Him, is doing incalculable mischief to souls; his words are tainted words, they are from Satan's laboratory, and not from the fountain of life.

The Word of God is a lamp, but it is a lamp that we may walk by its light.

The Word of God is a sword, but it is a sword for conflict, for fight. It has not been given to us merely to appreciate the keenness of its edge, the polish of its blade, and its gem encrusted hilt, but rather that we may take it in our hands and empowered by Him who is the Spirit, make conquests for our Lord.

The Word of God is the living seed, and it is given to us to sow. The Word of God is truly a treasure to be preserved and fought for, but it is also a trust to be put into circulation and used for the glory of God and the blessing of men.

THE TESTING TIME IS A SIFTING TIME. J. T. Mawson.

THERE is more comfort in the Scriptures than ever we have drawn from them, or ever shall. They are like the boundless ocean, while our need is like the bucket that is dropped into it. Take such as passage as this, "*For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, YET SHALL NOT THE LEAST GRAIN FALL UPON THE EARTH*" (Amos 9. 9).

The words have special reference to the sons of Jacob, but they declare a great principle in the ways of God with His saints, and His never-failing care of His work in them in all dispensations, and they are written for our learning and comfort.

The true saints of God are the *wheat, fair and priceless in His estimation*, and it is necessary that they should be put into the sieve, that they might be ridded of the chaff, set free from all refuse forever. Yet in the sifting not a grain shall be lost. God Himself will take care of even "*the least.*" What comfort there is in that!

The New Testament word is tribulation=tribulare—to rub out corn.

The tribulum was a wooden instrument fitted with iron spikes for rubbing out corn. And though tribulation cannot be anything but grievous to nature, yet we shall glory in it if God's purpose in it lays hold upon us.

The sifting may come in various ways. In Simon's case Satan was permitted to use the sieve, and in it the adversary hoped to destroy him, but the result of the sifting was that he was freed from the chaff of self-confidence and boasting. A blessed result! The wheat remained uninjured. His faith did not fail (Luke 22. 32). But whether the sifting comes directly from Satan, or through our circumstances—circumstances of sickness, pain, anxiety, bereavement, hunger, nakedness, peril or sword—"God is Faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10 13), and think well of the Lord's words to Simon, "I have prayed for thee." He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

"SALT IS GOOD; BUT IF . . ."

"Salt is good; but if the salt also has become savourless, wherewith shall it be seasoned" (Luke 14).

HERE is shown the danger of what begins well turning out ill. What is there in the world so useless as salt when it has lost the one property for which it is valued? It is proper for neither land, nor for dung; it is cast out. It is worse than useless for any other purpose. So with the disciple who ceases to be Christ's disciple. He has forsaken God's purpose, and he is not suited

for the world's. He has too much light or knowledge for entering into the vanities and sins of the world, and he has no enjoyment of grace and truth to keep him in the path of Christ. Savourless salt becomes an object of contempt and judgment. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." How solemn the call to the conscience!

“THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN.”

James Scott.

THESE words are to be taken here in a general sense, and not as suggesting, in what follows, an exposition of any particular passage of Scripture. As regards the words found in 2 Cor. 3, J. N. Darby has some interesting remarks in his Synopsis, vol. 4, 295. He says, “‘The things that remain’ are the subject the gospel treats of, not the ministry which announces it—the glory of the Person of Jesus Christ, the substance of that which the Jewish ordinances represented only in figure.” It is a blessed truism that the permanency of our spiritual assets is assured by the permanency of the Person in whom they inhere,—“*but Thou remainest*” (Heb. 1. 11).

That all is not well with the professing church no one will deny. And this is nothing new; it has been more or less true throughout the entire course of its history. It was true when Paul wrote to Timothy from his Roman prison; decay and departure from the truth had already set in; and ever since, with the exception of a few brief periods of revival, things have grown steadily worse, until the end seems near at hand.

It may be asked, Is there no hope of recovery? and if we turn to Scripture for an answer we shall find that it holds out none whatever. The end of Christendom, as distinct from the true church of God, is full-blown apostasy and unsparing judgment. To the church of the Laodiceans, which undoubtedly represents the last phase, the Lord says: “I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

It may be said, and actually has been said, that this is to give way to despair. To all who say or think so we commend the prayerful reading of 2nd Thessalonians, 2nd Peter, the

Epistle of Jude, and 2nd Timothy. Close on fifty years ago Canon Westcott, afterward Bishop of Durham, wrote from Switzerland where he was spending a holiday: “It is difficult to forecast the future. . . . During these four weeks I have had many sad thoughts. I can even see a place for the despair of the Plymouth Brethren. Yet surely we have a gospel. But is this the sphere of its victory?” We have indeed a gospel, and this *is* the sphere of its victory, else were it no gospel at all. “It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.” The great tragedy of Calvary has been answered by the glorious triumph of Pentecost, and now grace reigns through righteousness. Mark the words of the risen Lord, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*”

Christendom has travelled a long way during the past fifty years, and it would be interesting to know what the nature of the Bishop’s thoughts would be if he were alive to-day.

Quite recently an eminent Christian statesman, a member of the British Cabinet, lamenting the decay in the principle of godly living, and the many manifestations of strange doctrine in the Established Church, said “And yet when I am asked what can be done, I have only one answer, ‘I don’t know.’” Well, we have no place for despair, and no excuse for ignorance; the Christian note is ever one of glad certainty—“We know.” God has not left us in the dark; and if we have to confess that we do not know, it may be honest, but it ought to make us feel ashamed.

The Apostle Paul was no pessimist, and if he had to write words of solemn warning to the saints, they were always accompanied by words of hope and encouragement. A good example of this may be seen in *the 2nd Epistle to Timothy*. The state of the church described therein is sad beyond words, yet there is very great encouragement for all who truly desire to walk in the truth. Out from the deepening gloom of the rapidly developing apostasy there shines a heavenly gleam, and the deeper the darkness the brighter the light. In each of the four chapters of this Epistle we shall find at least one gem of priceless worth, speaking to us of the things that remain, and ever shall remain for the comfort of the people of God.

Chapter 1 brings before us the aged apostle in prison. He is in bonds, but "they were not shackles which self had riveted, but a chain with which Christ had invested him." He speaks of shame and suffering and desertion, and no man knew better the meaning of these words, yet we see him, as ever, undaunted. "I am not ashamed." In 2 Cor. 11 we get a glimpse of the suffering that devotedness to the Lord brought upon him. "In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often,

in cold and nakedness" (verses 23—27).

What sustained this apparently poor broken prisoner? What was the secret of his devotedness when his life's work seemed to be going to pieces? Knowing that the messenger of death was even then on the way to meet him, how could he remain unmoved and unashamed? Listen while he tells us: "*For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against day.*" It is faith. But it is a Person. And it is a Person who is almighty, —able to save to the uttermost. Against the dark background *He* stands forth—AN OMNIPOTENT SAVIOUR. This is not the Jesus whom the critics present to us, but it is the Jesus whom Paul knew, the One who was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thank God it is the very same Jesus who saves us. And our deposit is safe with Him. All that we have and are, all that we hope for; our walk and work, our eternal destiny and present joy,—everything that can possibly pertain to us as Christians,—all is in His mighty hand.

It has been remarked that the Apostle took cognisance of only two days,—*to-day*, the day of salvation and service, and *that day*, the day of reckoning, reward, and rest. Here he uses the latter expression because responsibility is in view.

Passing to chapter 2 we see the progress of evil, but not yet the climax. We are enjoined not to strive about words to no profit, and we are to shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more un-

godliness. We do not read here of the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, but of a great house with its vessels, some to honour, and some to dishonour. The one may be described by the word "order," the other by the word "disorder." The figure of the great house seems to be comparable with the parable of the grain of mustard seed. It is Christendom in its pride and self-sufficiency, its lukewarmness and departure from the truth. It is that which the infinitely holy Lord can no longer go on with, and if we are to go on with the Lord the way is plain; we must purify ourselves by separating from that which is dishonouring to Him. No circumstances can ever arise for which the Lord has not made full provision; and so, amid the disorder and instability of these last days, we find here a refuge for the godly.—"*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure. . . .*" This agrees with the words of the prophet: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28. 16). And Peter applies these words to the Lord Jesus Christ, adding, "Unto you therefore who believe He is precious" (2 Peter 2. 6—7). The text may be rendered more accurately: "*The firm foundation of God standeth,*" and firm means stable or immovable. So the next thing which remains is — AN IMMOVABLE FOUNDATION. It reminds us of Judah's Song of Salvation in the day of restoration: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord *Jehovah* is everlasting strength (or, the Rock of Ages)" (Isa. 26. 3—4).

Something like this must have been the stay of the Psalmist when he sang: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." What a foundation! Any other is but a refuge of lies, and will be swept away by the tempest, with all those who trust in it, "but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."

"*The Lord knoweth them that are his.*" He is omniscient as well as omnipotent. But if He knows, and if He puts His seal upon us, He surely demands holiness. "*And, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.*" It is sad to see the worldliness and feebleness of many who are really children of God. O for a heart for Christ among the Lord's people! "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him; rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith" (Col. 2. 6—7).

Chapter 3 looks on to the apostasy, which is the last phase of this dispensation, reaching its full development just before the appearing of Christ (2 Thess. 2. 1—3). In the perilous times of the last days we see its principles busily at work, and it would appear as if judicial darkness had already fallen upon the men described in chapters 3 and 4. "From such turn away" is the solemn injunction to us. In the words of Jesus in Matthew 15. 14, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind."

What is our resource in a day of wholesale departure from the truth?

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (verse 14). We need no new revelation in order to meet the advancing times. We have that which is for all time, and for eternity as well. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119. 89). This is another of the things which remain, and a very precious one too.

AN INFALLIBLE GUIDE.

Thrice happy they of whom it can be said, as it is here said of Timothy, *"that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* What is truth? was asked of old. Here is the answer: "Thy word is truth." It will never deceive; it will never lead us astray. By it we shall be kept from sin, and by it we shall grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we neglect it our spiritual life will be starved, and our spiritual energies will be crippled. Do we read it as much as we ought? "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord." Blessed the man who can say with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (15. 16).

In chapter 4 we get the very last recorded words of the aged apostle. What about his circumstances when they were penned? We read of bonds and infirmity; he is old and worn from toil and suffering beyond the ordinary; he is deserted and lonely. His very days are numbered. Ere long he will be led out of the prison-house to lay his head upon the block, and he knows it. Is he cast down? A

thousand times NO. Listen to the note of triumph and unspeakable joy as the strain of his swan song issues from the Mamertime, and observe that the word "death" occurs only once in the Epistle, and then as a thing "abolished" or annulled, ". . . our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light. . . ." (1. 10). *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."* It is time to unmoor, and hoist the sail. He is going to be with Christ, which is far better. And this brings us to the last thing of which we wish to speak: —AN IMPERISHABLE HOPE. What a change it will be to step out of the dark, dank dungeon into the presence of the Lord. But for a moment his thoughts dwell in retrospect upon the way he has come. It lies behind him now, but what wonderful words these: *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."* Not to exalt himself are the words written, but only to magnify the name of Him whose grace was always sufficient, and through whom he could do all things, as he wrote to the Philippians. And now he turns to the prospect before him, and not his only, but the hope of all who love the appearing, to *that day* when the Lord will come into His own, and will rest in His love, and joy over us with singing. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

What about ourselves? Are these things ours? — *Christ* our Almighty Saviour; *Christ* our Firm Foundation; *Christ* the living Word; and *Christ* our Blessed Hope. The Lord keep us. "To Him be glory, both now and for ever." *Amen.*

HIS HAND - HIS HEART - HIS HOME. W. Bramwell Dick.

THROUGH God's mercy we are permitted to enter upon yet another year. One thing is certain, we were never nearer the end of the road. Our encouragement is that we are in *His Hand*. It was our Lord Jesus Himself who said:—

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of *My Hand*. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of *My Father's Hand*. I and My Father are one” (John 10. 27—30).

What comfort this brought to some of us when first we turned to the Lord, and sometimes wondered if we were really saved for ever. What joy it has brought to some who had been told that we were all right as long as we held on. What assurance it may bring to some troubled, doubting soul who may be reading these lines. The passing of another year reminds us how He has kept us until now, and is the pledge, if such be necessary, of the absolute security of all who belong to Christ, and of whom He lovingly speaks as “*My Sheep*.” Then we have learned, have we not? the sweetness of the word, spoken by Moses, the Man of God, “*All His saints are in Thy hand*” (Deuteronomy 33. 3). Here is perfect safety. The enemy may rage, he may marshal all his forces against us, but what can he do? We are in the Lord's hands. Has the last year been particularly trying? Sickness, sorrow, bereavement, unemployment, disappointment, pressure, an almost unbearable load under which you were inclined

to sink? Does the New Year open for you under a cloud? Listen!

“ALL HIS SAINTS ARE IN THY
HAND.”

That includes you, and you would not wish to be anywhere else, would you? In the hand of infinite power against which not all the powers of darkness can prevail—in *His Hand*? You do know that

“A Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.”

David showed his confidence in God, under most trying circumstances, when he said: “Thou art my God, my times are in *Thy Hand*” (Psalm 31. 14—15).

Through a chequered career, beset by enemies who schemed for his downfall, suffering at the hand of those from whom he should least have expected to suffer, he turned to God, found in Him his refuge and strength, and rested in the knowledge that God was his God, and that his times were in His hands. Let us make David's words our own, as we proceed a little further on our journey, with home in sight. This we do the more readily when we know that behind that hand of almighty power is a heart of infinite love. If we know Him at all, we know something of the love of

HIS HEART.

How exquisite is the Word of the Holy Spirit with regard to the precious love of our blessed Lord Jesus as recorded in John 13. 1, “Having loved *His Own* which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” It was the night of His betrayal. The

world hated Him. There were some, just a few, who had been attracted to Him, whom He claimed as "*His Own*" and He loved them with a beginningless and an endless love. A love of which only His heart is capable; that protected them, cared for them, ministered to them all the time that He was with them; that, after He was gone would remain, like Himself, unchangeable and unchangeably the same, and that would lavish the very best upon those whom He loved so dearly. We look back upon the years that are past, and across them all we trace *His Heart*. We look on to the remaining days ere we see His face, and by whatever way He may lead us, through whatever exercise He may cause us to pass, we can count upon the strength of *His Hand*, and we are assured of the love of *His Heart*. When travelling days are done, when our schooling is finished, there awaits us

HIS HOME.

In John 10 we have read of *His Hand*; in John 13 we have read of *His Heart*; in John 14 we now read of *His Home*. We are ever reminded, thank God, that this was not His home, nor is it ours.

His disciples were to understand that what they had experienced, and what awaited them after He had left them, was not the beginning and end of their experience. He, so to speak, told them, "I am going home, I am going to prepare a home for you,"

and then He so beautifully added, "If it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14. 1-3). Is not this a lovely touch? Love keeps nothing back from its object. He could not be satisfied if He had not with Himself where He is those whom He loves so dearly. He has prepared a special place for a special people, where

"He and we in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share:
Ours, to be for ever with Him;
His, that we are there."

Dear fellow-believer, be of good cheer! Home is in sight. The world is rapidly preparing for that great conflagration which seems ready to burst forth at any moment. It *may* be that before that happens we may hear that welcome summons, and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15. 52). *HIS HAND* of Almighty power, will translate us where *HIS HEART* of infinite love will be known in all its fulness in *HIS HOME* of ineffable delight. What can we do but praise Him again and again? Our doubts and fears vanish as we realise the strength of *HIS HAND*; our confidence is increased as we nestle close to *HIS HEART* of love; and our path is illuminated as we look on to, and momentarily await the call to *HIS HOME*. Precious, peerless Saviour and Lord

"God now is glorified in Thee,
In Thee, His only Son,
HIS HAND, HIS HOUSE, HIS HEART
are free,
Because Thy work is done."

Hallelujah!

The Bible is the Word of God; supernatural in origin; eternal in duration; inexpressible in value; infinite in scope; infallible in authority, universal in interest; personal in application; regenerative in power; inspired in totality.

“HINDER ME NOT.”

J. T. Mawson.

IT will not be necessary to explain to our readers that the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis is one of the most striking and beautiful typical chapters in the Old Testament. They know that Isaac—the beloved son of his father, who had in chapter 22 passed through death in the figure—foreshadowed Christ, the risen heavenly Man; that Abraham’s purpose to secure a suitable wife for his son told out the Father’s purpose that Christ also should have a wife, made entirely suitable to Himself; that the nameless servant who journeyed afar in order to carry out his master’s will and bring Rebekah to his master’s son, set forth the mission of the Holy Ghost, who is now in the world, *gathering out of it* the bride of the Lamb. All this our readers know well; they and we have often gone over it; we would that the blessedness of the truth was as powerfully in our souls as it is plainly in our heads.

Everything in the chapter is beautiful, and Isaac is the centre and object of it all. Abraham loved him and gave him all that he had (verse 36); so also it is written of God’s beloved Son, “*The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands*” (John 3. 35). The nameless servant who went forth to do Abraham’s will sought nothing for himself, nor spoke of himself; all he did was for Isaac; and it is said of the Holy Spirit, “*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come . . . He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you*” (John 16. 13-15). Rebekah,

though she had not seen Isaac, was attracted to him, and went forth to be united to him, solely on the testimony that the servant carried from Isaac to her; and of the Christian it is stated: “*Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*” (1 Peter 1. 8).

Abraham’s purpose, the servant’s labour, and Rebekah’s love, were all for Isaac. It is a great day in the spiritual history of any Christian, when he wakes up to the fact that all the Father’s thoughts and purposes have Christ as their one and worthy object; and that the chief labour of the Holy Spirit who has come from the Father is to unfold the glories of Christ to him so that his heart becomes entranced with Him. The result is that nothing will satisfy the love thus awakened but union with the beloved, all-absorbing Object of the heart. In this way are we drawn in our affections away from the world and its vanities to Christ, where He is, to wait and watch for Him.

THE SERVANT’S MISSION WAS TO FIND A WIFE FOR HIS MASTER’S SON, and Abraham had made him swear a solemn oath that he would not take Isaac back to the land out of which he had come, but that *he would bring the wife out of a place where she was to Isaac where he was*. Nothing could be of greater importance than this, and we shall fail utterly to understand the truth as to Christ and His church, and the present work of the Holy Ghost on earth if we miss the great truth that the church is being gathered out of the world

for Christ where He is. Christ is the risen Man in heaven; and the church, which is the bride, for whom the Holy Ghost has come into the world, must be conducted to Him where He is. Ignorance of this great truth has led many earnest Christians into foolish attempts to connect the name of Christ with great movements which have nothing beyond this present world in view, and others to connect Him with the circumstances of this life merely, as though the end of all was that they should live lives free from burdens here.

DEAL KINDLY AND TRULY WITH MY MASTER, pleaded the servant. It is the appeal of the Holy Spirit to-day. No Christian who ignores the exclusive claims of Christ, deals kindly and truly with Him or with the Father. To deal kindly and truly in this matter is to follow the One who gave Himself for us to the place where He has gone, turning our backs to the world that would tempt us to be unfaithful to Him; and we shall not follow Him unless He has become an Object brighter and better than the best things that are here. The Christian who flirts with the world, forgets that the church is espoused to one husband, to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor 2. 2).

But it is not the world only that bids for the hearts that should be wholly Christ's; natural relationships intervene sometimes and would retain the heart and retard the feet from going after Christ. So Rebekah's mother and brother would have detained her from going to Isaac. There was no haste, they pleaded; let her abide with us a few days, at last ten. "**HINDER ME NOT**," was the sharp response of the servant.

HINDER ME NOT. It is this that I would stress. It seems to me that the Spirit's voice sounds out in these words, and he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith. Worldly ways and entanglements hinder the Spirit in His great work; lukewarmness towards Christ grieves Him sorely; pride and self-complacency quench His activities, and there is no pride so hateful to Him as religious pride. He cannot take of the things of Christ and shew them to us if we are indifferent or inattentive or self-centred. Worldliness is bad, very bad, it shews a divided heart, but religious pretension is worse, for **SELF** is the **A** and the **Z** of it, and Christ and His things are made subservient to self. It is as though Rebekah adorned herself with the jewels that the servant brought from Isaac and went among her friends, displaying herself and saying, "See how rich and increased in goods I am. I have need of nothing." But Rebekah was not so unnatural; she was true as steel to the one who sought her heart and hand; there were no half measures with her, and when the decision was left with her she was decided; she needed neither to ask advice nor time for consideration; "**I WILL GO**," was her answer to those who would have detained her, and that answer must have delighted the servant's heart. Rebekah did not hinder him.

How patient the Holy Spirit is with us. He has sealed us for Christ and taken possession of us, and will never leave us. His work is to bring us into unison with Himself, so that His desires and yearnings may be ours and that we may cry in concert with Him, "Come, Lord Jesus." The Spirit longs for the day of gladness, when the church

shall be presented to Christ, a glorious church; when He shall find in her a full recompense for all His travail and woe. That will be the day of days in heaven, described by John in Revelation 19. 6, 7, 8: "*And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of great thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the*

marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Shall we hinder the Spirit in preparing the bride for that day? God forbid. Let us yield ourselves unreservedly to the gracious work of the Holy Spirit and say as said Rebekah "I WILL GO WITH THIS MAN."

"THIS IS JESUS."

A. M. Chambers.

"His accusation written 'This is Jesus' . . ." (Matt. 27. 37).

"This is Jesus"—name despised,
Butt of gibe and obloquy,
Written on that cross uplifted
For a watching world to see!
Catchword of the careless throng,
Loathed alike by prince and peasant,
Rabble's music — drunkard's song!

But it shines with undimmed lustre,
And its light the world shall fill,
And the sound of it shall one day
All the voice of tumult still!

"Hated name—when shall it perish,
And the memory of Him die?"
Down the ages men and devils
Have united in the cry!

"This is Jesus"—hear the thunder
Of Eternal God's decree!
Every haughty brow is lowered
Bended every stubborn knee!
Every voice once heard reviling
In that heedless, mocking horde
Then shall say with bitter wailings
"This is Jesus—He is Lord!"

"FRET NOT."

"Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity" (Psalm 37).

WE do not need to be told that worry separates us from God, we all know it; it provokes sin (verse 8) and it hinders prayer; it drives peace from our lives, injures others and dishonours God. And envy! How envy poisons the very blood and rouses up the very worst feelings of our corrupt nature that should be kept under the sentence of death.

The soul that worries has no power to "Trust in the Lord," to

"Delight in the Lord" to "Commit its way to the Lord" and to "Rest in the Lord" But a true, practical knowledge of God should preserve us from worrying, yet faith must be in daily exercise. It is only as confidence in God is cultivated daily that we shall be preserved from worrying and envying, and this daily confidence is not something extraordinary, it is the normal life of the one who walks with God.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND HELPFULNESS.

Inglis Fleming.

THE secret of spiritual health and happiness is simple. It is this, "If we live in the Spirit" (that is if we have been born of God) "let us also walk in the Spirit." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5).

As often pointed out "the flesh" is that evil principle of self-seeking which we inherit from fallen Adam. This is still in the believer. So it is written, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1. 8). To allow the flesh to act is sin and unhappiness. But as born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the believer has power to live to God, to refuse the lusts of the flesh and the allurements of the world. He lives in the Spirit, He is "led by the Spirit." He is to walk in the Spirit.

The airman can rise in the air and soar among the clouds superior to the law of gravitation. The engine power of his aeroplane overcomes the force which would hold him down to earth. But if he has engine trouble the law of gravitation always existing may cause him to come down and fall to his serious harm.

So the Christian empowered by the Holy Spirit may rise into the happy heights of holy joy in and praise to God his Father, of service for our Lord Jesus Christ and of liberty from the working of "the flesh." By the Holy Spirit he is superior "to the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8. 2).

But if the Holy Spirit is grieved (Eph. 4. 30) by any allowance of evil in thought, word or deed on the part of the Christian, then His power is for the time "shut off" so to speak. Then, the flesh re-asserting itself the believer comes down to the old level. A serious fall then, such as Peter's when he denied the Lord may result to his distress and harm.

Sad and serious however as this is the believer does not lose his safety "in Christ." Still his suitability to Christ has been lost. What is he to do? How shall he be recovered to happiness and helpfulness.

The Lord Jesus is his Advocate with the Father on high. The Holy Spirit now works with him to bring him to judge himself and to confess his sin. And the Word of God is clear, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (see 1 John 1 and 2). 2. 2).

"Walk" then "in the Spirit" and a victorious and useful life as a Christian will be yours. He will lead you to keep close to Christ, your Saviour and Lord, to the clear confession of Christ before men, to separation from every form of evil, to constant prayer, to daily reading and meditation in the Holy Scriptures, to association with spiritual companions, to attendance upon the ministry of those given by Christ for the help of His own.

By these means you will be kept in the enjoyment of the love of God, in the sunshine of which the wicked one cannot touch you.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE FLOOD.

R. McCallum.

ALTHOUGH the assertion is constantly made that the early chapters of Genesis are to be regarded as purely mythical, legendary or allegorical, it must be evident to a candid reader that the sober, dignified, restrained yet magnificent language of these early chapters removes them from any such classification. There is no Atlas bearing the world upon his shoulders; no elephant being borne upon the back of a tortoise, swimming upon some limitless ocean; but there is a concise statement of beginnings and of early history upon this remarkable planet, which bears the characteristics of soberness and truth. The entire absence of speculative thought is impressive. However distasteful to the man with his head inflated by the importance of his own ideas, there is a dogmatism and finality about truth which is superb and the man governed in thought by the truth is not enslaved or restricted; but is free indeed.

The sublime opening "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" is "without date, without definition of God and without description of process." It negatives atheism, pantheism, unitarianism and every heresy ever propounded as to origin. We have here an all-inclusive beginning, and what follows does not involve the creation of inanimate things but merely concerns their adjustments in order that this planet might become a suitable habitat for living creatures and in particular for man.

These necessary adjustments for the staging of life are presented in the following order in Genesis

chapter 1. (a) Light is commanded to shine out of darkness, (b) A suitable firmament or atmosphere is brought into existence, (c) The waters under the firmament, the seas, are gathered together as one, (d) The heavenly bodies are set in relationship to the earth, the sun being made or appointed to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. The remarkable qualities of light, air and water, although in a measure familiar, have been too readily taken for granted. The more we know of them, the more emphatically shall we endorse the divine sentiment that they are good: *good* because perfectly adapted to the purpose for which they were brought into being? No! The argument from design is not dead: the mysterious modern universe only emphasises with intensity that there is a Designer. Light is the prime essential of all life: without it, life would be impossible, and men are just discovering how good light really is. Baffled concerning its ultimate nature, they have become more intelligent as to its functions and realise, among other things, as never before, that the chemical mechanism of plants depends, not merely upon warmth, but upon light as such. The marvellous adaptation of the air to creature needs, ministering to the opposed demands of the vegetable and animal kingdoms; the perfect correlation of the height of the atmosphere to our physical constitution so that we breathe with ease and are normally entirely unconscious of any atmospheric pressure; its adjustment to the weight of water vapour which it bears on high, so balancing the clouds, are evidences of the work and foresight of an all-wise Creator. Thus early too—be-

fore the experimental verification—we have the assertion of the unification of the seas. Let us observe, moreover, the orderly progress in this work — things inanimate, the mineral kingdom, coming first into view; followed by sentient life in the vegetable kingdom, then conscious life in the animal kingdom, and lastly by spiritual life in the human realm. With the creation of man, the highest of God's works, God rested.

The first chapter gives us, as it were, the architectural design of a stupendous edifice, plain unadorned but magnificent in its proportions. In chapter 2 the writer and artist selects one apartment of this structure as the background for the portrait of the inmate—MAN, and this difference of scale and intention in chapters 1 and 2 explains the difference in style in these chapters. Man is the central theme of the second chapter and of the two chapters immediately succeeding, and the story told therein throbs with human interest. Details are now brought into view which would have been out of place in the bird's-eye view of the first chapter. When, however, we are told that God made man out of the dust of the ground we need not indulge in childish thoughts about the process. The elements of his physical constitution God took from the ground and God breathed into man, divinely fashioned, the breath of life and man became a living soul. In this breathing into man by God "the breath of the spirit of Life" there lies the great distinction between human and animal life. Man thus made and created was set in a "Paradise of Delight" yet was he not placed in it to enjoy idleness. Along with the positive duty to till and keep or guard the garden there was a negative injunction given to man. Of one

tree he must not eat except on pain of death. Our highest moral character, it would seem, can only be realised under discipline involving a test. God has designed that our liberty should be conditioned by our loyalty to His law and we shall do well to reflect that in the mercy of God, temptation was reduced to the narrowest possible limits, one and only one prohibition being imposed; the one thing forbidden to Adam being that which was fraught with incalculable harm. In the garden, conditioned by obedience to God's will, man was given a suitable help. The original status of woman is of interest in the light of present-day movements and tendencies. Although not an absolute equal, she was given neither as a slave nor as a rival; but in the full dignity of humanity, she was set to be his companion and partner in life.

Now, just as Chapters 1 and 2 answer for us questions arising in the presence of the created order, so chapter 3 replies to questions arising from the moral order or disorder in the world and explains, what is otherwise inexplicable, the universality of sin, sorrow, suffering and death. The story of the speaking serpent of course, implies an intelligent agency at work impelled by malicious animosity against man. There is no thought in Scripture of the temptation being of the serpent's own devising; but there is everywhere implied the subtle design of the devil. The subsequent degradation of the instrument in the temptation is a suitable illustration of the degrading influence of sin. The effect of the transgression is not to be attributed to inherent qualities in the fruit of the tree; but the moral effect is to be explained by the moral cause — disobedience to the divine

command. It is a fascinating study and one fraught with profit to observe how the devil seduced our first parents. First of all there is a question raised as to whether God had spoken or not, a doubt swiftly followed by the denial of God's truth, as the evil one asserted "Surely ye shall not die." This denial was speedily followed by the poisonous suggestion that God is not so good as in those days of innocence Mother Eve imagined, but that He withholds that which is for man's highest good. To obey God wholeheartedly and fully he insinuates is to be cramped in style, narrowed in thought, confined in pleasure, and robbed of joy. How confining and restricting only to know the good! Get to know all sides of the question, the good and the evil, such is the road to expansive thought, to freedom, to be as gods — and dismiss the thought that God is a God of judgment for "Surely ye shall not die!" Is not the appeal uncommonly like much that passes for modern thought and alas! the tragic result is manifested on every hand for sorrow, misery, suffering, death, are the wretched entail of Satan's seductive triumph. If in the devil's lie, there is half a truth, inasmuch, as our first parents did not suffer the penalty of physical death immediately, it is equally true that they experienced at once that separation from God, which is spiritual death.

Through the dark shadow of God's inquisition and sentence, there shines that blessed hope which illumines the sky of promise; the hope of a deliverer. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel." Surely here we have an intimation of the Incar-

nation: of the age-long conflict between good and evil and of the ultimate triumph of good: yea of Christ. It is a magnificent pictorial metaphor announcing the triumph of the woman's Seed by way of suffering.

So little did the woman appreciate the enormity of her sin; yet so firmly had she apprehended the import of the prophecy that she called her first-born Cain or Acquisition, saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." And yet it seems probable that early in life Cain displayed those qualities of waywardness, independence and rebellion that break the heart of true parenthood, for Abel's name signifies Vanity. May it not be that God permits the heart of mother and father to be grieved and crushed that we may learn in measure what sin is to Him?

The story of Cain and Abel is abidingly instructive. Both approached God in an attitude of professed reverence and worship; but Cain came in the way that is natural to man: Abel came in the way that has ever been acceptable to God. Cain brought an offering which doubtless had cost him a great deal in the way of effort. He cultivated that which had come under the curse of God and presented the fruit of his labour for the acceptance of God. Abel by his sacrifice acknowledged that his life was forfeited; but he availed himself of a suitable substitute acceptable to God and through the centuries he has witnessed by his sacrifice that approach to God is on the ground of blood. This way of access was pointed out to Cain by a gracious God, who is no respecter of persons when He said "If thou doest (offerest) well, shalt thou not be accepted? and, if thou doest not

well, sin (a sin offering), lieth (or coucheth) at the door.”

And so, dear disappointed sinner, God's appointed way is still, in the grace of God, open for thee.

Two things more, although details, require explanation for the removal of difficulties. When we read “Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth” it simply means that Cain was now cursed from the earth which would no longer yield to him the fulness of its increase. When we read that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord we are to understand — not that he henceforth evaded divine vigilance— but he went forth to regulate his life without reference to the will of God. He became the leader of that great mass of mankind living in a measure of satisfaction, enjoying the arts, crafts and commerce of this world; but living in utter independence of God.

Cain is a remarkable type of the Jew for the guilt of fratricide constituted him an outcast and a vagabond, of easy recognition, the hand of mankind against him; yet providentially protected and preserved by God.

While in chapter 5 we have brought into view the line of promise, in chapter 6 we see such men—for so I understand the term *Sons of God* here—entering into alliance with the daughters of men. Becoming tired of their separatist tradition, they entered into union with those who had left God out of their life. Physically the union was a great success; morally and spiritually it was a dread disaster. The violence and corruption which soon pervaded society was such that God was compelled to purge the earth by a flood, overwhelming scientific evidence of which has awaited our day in the discoveries of Woolley and Langston.

With the resulting trifurcation of the human race in the descendants of Noah, we have the divine explanation of these fundamental ethnographical divisions of mankind—the yellow, black and white races of the earth.

And thus have we the history of the race covering some two thousand years, compressed into the compass of ten short chapters in the Divine narrative, a story of generation and of degeneration.

Nearness to Christ Preserves.

If anyone speaks of *separation from evil*, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply only that which at all times has constituted sects and produced doctrinal heresy. *Nearness to Christ* would keep us from Sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart. Sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

A. J. Pollock.

No. 1: *His Person and Work in Old Testament Times.*

SURELY we should approach such an exalted theme as this with the utmost reverence. The Scriptures tell us who the Spirit of God is, and what and how He works, and it is, therefore, our privilege to draw attention to these Scriptures.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Scriptures take for granted who the Spirit of God is in the first mention of Him in Gen. 1. 2. We are not there told who the Spirit of God is, simply that He moved on the face of the waters. Yet Scripture clearly tells us who He is in an indirect, though none the less impressive way.

Hebrews 9. 14, says, "Christ. . . through the *eternal* Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." Here we are told the Spirit of God is *eternal*. Now that predicates Deity. None but Deity can be from eternity without beginning and without end. The adjective "*eternal*" applied in this absolute sense, ascribes Deity to the one so described.

Some theologians would have us believe that the Holy Spirit is an influence and not a Person. There cannot be an influence apart from a Person. We may talk about the influence of the prevailing winds and such like and come to the conclusion that there can be influence apart from a Person. But on reflection this cannot be so. Agur, the son of Jakeh, knew better when he asked the question, "Who hath gathered the wind in His fists?" (Proverbs 30. 4). He knew that behind the wind was a Person. To try to make out there can be an influence apart from a Person is the stultification of commonsense.

Moreover, read John 16. 13—14, and you will find the Holy Spirit comes, guides, hears, speaks, glorifies, receives, shews—all activities of a Person. Further, in Acts 13. 2, "The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I have called them.*" Here we have a Person giving positive instructions and using language which none but Deity could rightly use. This is fully borne out in 1 Corinthians xii. 11, "All these worketh the one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every many severally as *HE will.*" Here again language is used which is only proper to Deity. Sovereignty is one of the attributes of God. "Dividing. . . as He will" in relation to the assembly of God on earth is the assertion of Sovereignty, and therefore of Deity.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A MEMBER OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

This is indicated in the rite of baptism — "baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is borne out in the threefold benediction in 2 Corinthians 13. 14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." It is seen in the tripartite parable of Luke 15--the Shepherd (typical of our Lord) seeking the lost sheep; the woman (typical of the Holy Spirit) seeking the lost piece of silver; the Father (typical of God the Father) welcoming the returning and repentant prodigal. In the sentence "Let us—be merry" (Luke 15. 24) we have typified the joy of Father, Son

and Holy Ghost in the blessing of sinful men. The same truth is set forth in the first Scripture we quoted, Hebrews 9. 14, "Christ. . . through the *eternal* Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." Here we have Christ, the Spirit and God, all occupied in the work of redemption. We see it in the baptism of our Lord, when the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, rested upon Him, and a voice from heaven, the Father's voice was heard, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3. 17). Father, Son and Spirit in happy relationship!

THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD PERSONS OF TRINITY.

We are accustomed to speak of the first, second and third Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Doubtless the formula for baptism has led to this order, and the wisdom of it can be easily seen. But we must be very careful not to place the Persons in our minds as in order of importance. There have been some of late who have put dishonour on our blessed Lord by declaring that He, His Son, was in the nature of things inferior to His Father, and that in face of the Scripture, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 23).

A document may have to be signed by three persons. They must of necessity be placed in order of first, second and third. But that does not mean necessarily that first, second and third in order of importance. We might illustrate it by a chandelier with three arms at equal distances. If it were necessary to distinguish one from the other, how would we begin? They are alike in appearance and use. They are equally distant from each other.

How would we begin? We should be obliged to number them one, two and three. But that certainly would not designate any difference in importance.

So we must be careful in using the terms, first, second and third Persons in the Trinity, not to think there is any difference in importance. The Father is God; the Son is God; the Spirit is God—the Spirit equal in nature and substance to the Father and the Son. If the three Persons of the Godhead are each of them God, it does not follow that there are three Gods. That were impossible. There can be only one God, supreme and unique. Orthodox Christendom believes in three Persons in the Godhead, yet one God, indivisible and unique—the three Persons in the Godhead with one will, one purpose, each sharing to the full every thought and desire and purpose in the minds of the others. We may not, nay cannot, comprehend this. It is a mystery hidden in the Godhead, yet the Godhead is pleased to reveal Itself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

GOD'S NAME IS IN THE PLURAL 2,500 TIMES.

Scripture indicates from the earliest times the Trinity and the first one to be named is the Holy Spirit. In the English language we have, as we all know, two numbers, singular, meaning one, and plural, meaning two and more. In the Hebrew language, however, there are three numbers—singular, meaning one; dual, meaning two, and plural meaning three or more. Now this is very remarkable. Indeed we see in it a Divine intention to set forth the truth of the Trinity. For in the very first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1, we read, "In the beginning God [Elo-

him, plural] created [singular] the heaven [dual] and the earth." In the light of the full unfolding of the truth in the New Testament do we not clearly see indicated the Holy Trinity? In verse 2 we get it stated that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, the *eternal* Spirit of Hebrews 9. 14.

It is very remarkable, too, that the Old Testament contains the word, God, in the plural over 2,500 times, and in the singular only about 300 times. The Jews, custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures were fiercely monotheistic. What must they have thought of the word God being often repeated in the plural?

THREE IN ONE AND ONE IN THREE.

One passage is very striking, Deuteronomy 6. 4, "Hear O Israel: The Lord [*Jehovah* singular], our God [*Elohim* plural] is one Lord" [*Jehovah* singular]. That is to say in the most impressive affirmative of the one and only God there is the care to preserve the truth of the Trinity.

One last Old Testament Scripture we refer to, perhaps the most remarkable of its kind. Isaiah 48. 16, says, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." The spokesman in this passage is one who speaks "from the beginning" and who refers to Himself as "I am." Surely it is none less than the Son of God who is speaking, for He asserts of Himself as being *sent* by God and His Spirit. We know that our Lord often spoke of Himself as the *Sent One* in John's Gospel. So here we get in Isaiah, seven centuries before Christ came,

the prophecy that He would be sent, by the Lord God and His Spirit. We mention all this to prove the position of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit, a Divine Person, in the Godhead from all eternity. Equal with the Father and the Son—one God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

The first thing we must draw attention to is His Creatorship. We have already alluded to Genesis 1 where the story of creation is told. We read, "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (verse 2). Here the Spirit of God alone of the Persons of the Godhead is specially mentioned as acting. Seeing the word *God*, throughout Genesis 1 is in the plural we find all three Persons of the Godhead, including the Holy Spirit, are engaged in the work of creation.

1 Corinthians 8. 6, tells us God the Father is the source of creation.

Genesis 2. 2, and Job 26. 13, "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens," tells us God the Holy Spirit is the Creator. Look up at the starry heavens, try to number the stars, think of their magnitude, our little planet is very insignificant as to size, and remember the Holy Spirit garnished the heavens.

Colossians 1. 16; Hebrews 1. 2; John 1. 3, tell that the Son of God was the Creator.

No contradiction in all this. If three members of a firm carried out a policy each member could claim he had carried it out, so long as he did not claim thjs exclusively.

THE HOLY SPIRIT STROVE WITH MEN IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

We read, "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh" (Gen. 6. 3). How good it is that the Spirit of God strives with men, and how unutterably sad that they can resist until the awful moment comes when the striving ceases.

THE HOLY SPIRIT USED A WICKED MAN.

"And Balaam," the soothsayer, the spiritist medium, the covetous man, "lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him" (Numbers 24. 2). Was there ever a stronger proof of inspiration when a covetous man, who could have filled his house with silver and gold had he prophesied to please Balak, the King of Moab, was unable to do so? He was obliged to bless Balak's enemies when, left to himself, he would have cursed them. Not only was Balaam so energised but the Lord opened the dumb mouth of his ass to rebuke the madness of the prophet.

THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERED MEN FOR SPECIAL SERVICE.

Pharaoh recognised that the Spirit of God was in Joseph when he said to his servants "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Gen. 41. 38). Then again God called Bezaleel in connection with the construction of the Tabernacle, and said "See. . . I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31. 3).

We read of Othniel, the son of Kenaz, "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged

Israel" (Judges 3. 10). We read that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him" (Judges 6. 34). We read four times that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson in connection with his mighty feats against Israel's foes (Judges 13. 25; 14. 6—19; 15. 14).

In connection with the prophet Samuel anointing Saul the son of Kish to be King over Israel we read that "the Spirit of God came upon him" (1 Samuel 10. 10). Yet when he disgraced himself and David was anointed in his stead we read, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. . . But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul" (1 Samuel 16. 13—14).

This is an interesting passage as showing that the Spirit was not given as a permanent indwelling as in this dispensation, but could be given for a specific act or for a certain period, and could be forfeited as it was in the case of Saul.

Finally we would like to draw attention to a general statement in conclusion. We read, "The prophets . . . prophesied. . . searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1. 11), add to this, "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy" (Revelation 19. 10). How this awakens memories of many foretellings in the Old Testament, whether from the pens of prophets or psalmists, all animated by the Spirit of God, prophesying beyond their own comprehension, but each prophecy dovetailing one with the other, and very many of them already gloriously fulfilled.

“OUT OF THE DEPTHS.” “INTO THY REST.”

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 130, 131, 132).

A VERY rich vein of spiritual instruction runs through these three Psalms. As is so often the case in the Psalms, the instruction is of an experimental sort. We find ourselves face to face not with doctrine but with the spiritual experiences of David; which were real afflictions, but which qualified him to ultimately take up that which from the outset of his career had been his great objective. We shall not go straight through the three Psalms, but begin by drawing attention to the opening part of Psalm 132.

David is brought before us and all his afflictions. In thinking of him we are apt to remember mainly his successes of a military sort by which he lifted his nation into a leading position. After that perhaps we remember his great sins. But here his afflictions are to be called to remembrance, for it was by means of them that God disciplined his soul and made of him the sweet singer of Israel.

Now David's afflictions, as verses 2—5 make manifest, were in some way connected with a resolution, which he formed in his earlier years, that his chief object should be to give God His rightful place in the midst of Israel His people. To find out “a place for the Lord” became the master passion of his life. The historical books—Samuel and Chronicles—inform us that when he had won his successes he wished to build the temple and was forbidden to do it; but we have to travel right on to this Psalm to discover that he cherished this desire from a very early period of his career—that it was in fact the secret purpose which governed his life. The fact here dis-

closed is very illuminating. It sheds light on a great deal in David's history, and goes a long way to explain how it came to pass that God acknowledged him as a man after His own heart.

There have been other conquerors beside David in the world's history, but each of them has been animated by ambition, either personal or national. With all of them the cry has been either, “A place for *myself*,” or “A place for *my nation*.” David stands quite alone in having as his cry, “A place for *the Lord*.” In the midst of his afflictions he took the solemn oath that he would give himself no rest until that place was found.

This is indeed a striking picture. Here is David, not as yet the powerful and successful warrior-king. He is only the shepherd-lad, who though anointed of God is being persecuted and harried by Saul, chased as a partridge upon the mountains. Under such circumstances one could very well understand him praying for a quiet life, and vowing almost anything if only he might have a snug little house and a comfortable bed whereon he might safely give sleep to his eyes and slumber to his eyelids. Nor would it be surprising to hear him vowing that he would find out a place for the Lord, if only such peaceable surroundings might be his. But what would have been so natural for him was not at all what he did.

No. In the midst of these afflictions and distresses he was not thinking primarily of himself at all. He was thinking of what was due to the Lord. It was Saul who was thinking of a place for himself, and as a result

was bent upon destroying David. And David was all the while thinking about the Lord, consumed with desire because the ark of the testimony—which was the throne of the Lord in the midst of Israel—had gone into captivity to the land of the Philistines, and now that it had been returned by it panic-stricken captors, had gone into some obscure resting-place, no one seemed very much to care or know where. But somebody cared. David did.

This place for the Lord that David took an oath to find was evidently connected with the ark, for it is referred to in the little preposition “it” twice repeated in verse 6. Ephratah in that verse apparently stands for Bethlehem, and “the fields of the wood” for Kirjath-Jearim. This being so the little verse sheds a flood of light on the matter. When but a lad at Ephratah, before ever he became famous, he heard of the ark and its vicissitudes, and he realised that if God was to have His right place in Israel the ark, which was His throne, must be recovered and formally re-established. As soon as he was firmly seated in the kingdom he went to Kirjath-Jearim to bring it up to Zion, as 2 Samuel 6 records. In verse two of that chapter the ark is said to be “called by the name of the Lord of Hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim.” David knew that in finding a place for the ark he was in effect finding a place for the Lord.

It is one thing however to have a right objective even as David had; it is another thing to be in the right spiritual state for its accomplishment. This fact is evident as we read verses 1—10 of 2 Samuel 6, and is strikingly illustrated in the earlier Psalms which are before us. The afflictions which David endured

were certainly permitted and perhaps even designed and sent of God, in order that he might gain the needed spiritual education. They are mentioned specifically in the first verse of Psalm 132, but affliction is also mentioned in the first verse of Psalm 129, and we find that Psalm and Psalms 130 and 131 are taken up with either affliction or what affliction is designed to effect in the souls of those who come under it.

The name of David does not appear as part of the heading of either Psalms 129 or 130, but their contents seem to point to him as their human author. How many times was he afflicted from his youth up! Much afflicted indeed, yet never did his adversaries prevail against him. What he could say as to his troubles Israel also will be able to say, for in this respect his life epitomised their national history, and they will never be out of affliction until they humble themselves and make a place for the Lord by enthroning Him in Zion, in the person of the once-rejected Jesus. Again and again through the centuries nations have plowed and made long furrows upon the back of Israel and looked like prevailing against them. They have never done so however. They have been like hammers smiting an anvil, and like an anvil Israel has outlasted her persecutors, and will outlast those who smite her to-day. As verse 5 shows, all those who hate Zion will be confounded and turned back.

David’s afflictions increased until he was brought into the depths—not merely of trouble but of *repentance*. If the first three verses of Psalm 130 be attentively read, it will be seen that here we have the language of a repentant man, who knew he could not stand in the presence of the Lord

as the marker of iniquities. The confession of personal sin and unworthiness is found in this Psalm, and in that it strikes a much deeper note than Psalm 25. 22. There we find a prayer for redemption from all *troubles*, whereas our Psalm ends with the confident expectation of redemption from all *iniquities*.

The spiritual journey that David took, and which we are going to note, began in the depths of repentance, to which no doubt he was helped by the depth of afflictions. We look back into the depths from whence he emerged when his journey began, and we do so feelingly for our spiritual journey began in just the same place. If we have never been in the depths of repentance we have never as yet started on the journey at all. "Out of the depths" is the beginning of the story for each one, who have ever travelled that road which leads to so excellent a finish.

The next thing we meet with in this Psalm is *forgiveness* (verse 4), and thus it ever is in the history of souls. Repentance on our side becomes a door of entrance into the forgiveness which God bestows and the very forgiveness that we receive induces a *reverential fear* of Him from whom the forgiveness comes. It has sometimes been supposed that full and free forgiveness must produce carelessness and license; and so indeed it might be if we were forgiven apart from repentance, and apart from a righteous basis for forgiveness being laid in the work of redemption. But there is no forgiveness apart from these two things, and the Psalm makes it manifest, for it begins with repentance and ends with redemption.

Out of the depths—not only of affliction, but of repentance — the

Psalmist came, and into forgiveness he stepped; only he could not enjoy it in quite the full and assured way that is possible for the believer to-day. He realised the forgiveness of specific iniquities, but he could not have his conscience once and for ever purged and made "perfect," as is stated in Hebrews 10. 1—4. He lived about a thousand years too early for that: he had to look on with hope to the "good things to come."

The language of the latter part of the Psalm exactly fits in with this. The Psalmist is in a waiting attitude, and hoping in the Word of the Lord. He calls upon Israel to hope in the Lord, because there is mercy and plenteous redemption with Him; but he adds that He *shall* redeem, not that He has done so. Mercy, expressing itself in redemption, does indeed lie at the basis of the forgiveness which is preached in the Gospel to-day, but we know redemption by the blood of Christ as an accomplished fact, and the full forgiveness we have received induces in our souls that fear of God which is such a very healthful thing. We fear lest we should grieve the love which has brought us so full a forgiveness.

Then again, there are certain fruits which are produced by the fear of God, when once it has really taken possession of our hearts. One of the first of these fruits is *humility*. Now this is exactly what meets us when we commence reading Psalm 131. We cannot really entertain the fear of the Lord without the Lord becoming the central and controlling object of our hearts. For so long as self is the central object we are bound to be haughty folk, though we may imagine ourselves to be humble.

(To be continued).

OUR GOD.

J. T. Mawson.

THERE is not one of us who knows his own frailty who would care to live a single day without God. We need Him every hour, even though we often forget Him. He has not made us to be independent of Him. We are not equal to the stress and strain of life apart from the succour that His mercy supplies. The breath of passing Time withers up the choicest flowers of this life, and his onward tread shakes and changes things that appear to be most permanent, and we feel more deeply than ever that we must have God as our refuge and resource.

He must be real to us, our knowledge of Him must be personal and practical. We must know Him, not as One who is coldly distant from us, indifferent to our struggles, but as One who stoops in His mercy to consider us, frail creatures of His hand, beset with many trials and perplexities, and who is able to hear and answer our prayers, and do for us more than all we can ask or think according to the mercy and love that are in Him. Only thus shall we be able to call Him our God, and move onward peacefully and with confidence to our destined end.

In a popular weekly review a well-known writer said: "I suggest that the most ambiguous word in the English language is the word God. It stands for many differing concepts of what the word taken as a symbol, or for that matter as a fact means. No doubt in many cases in interest of clearness it would be better if another word was used." He then proceeded to give some concepts and definitions of God put forward by men famous in literary, scientific and religious circles. He is "the creative

process," "the life force," "the universal mind," "the final principle," "the completed harmony," etc., etc. But such vague terms have no meaning for us, they cannot satisfy the longings of the heart or bring peace into a human soul that has faced its deeper problems, and a subtle devil is behind them, whose intention is to put the true God at a distance from men and rob them of Him as God, supreme and beneficent, who is interested in everyone of us, and who has been revealed in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

We turn from these meaningless conceptions of God to the fountain of life, the Word of the living God, and we learn from its pages that He is *the God of patience, the God of comfort, the God of hope, and the God of peace*. These four great titles occur in one chapter in the New Testament. There they shine and coruscate, precious gems in His eternal crown. And that chapter is at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, the foundation Epistle. In it God is revealed in His nature and fundamental character. It is the Epistle of the gospel of God. Having unfolded its great truths the Spirit of God brings us to this conclusion, God is the God of patience, of comfort, of hope, and of peace. These great things are absolutely essential to our well-being and their source is in God; they flow down from Him to us in living streams, nay, more than that, He comes to us as the One in whom they abide, to be with us Himself, for we read, "Now the God of peace be with you, Amen." He is not distant from us, a vague and nebulous being, He is near us, He is with us, He is for us, in patience, comfort, hope and peace, and when

we know this we can face the future with confidence, for "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

How blessedly these four things have blended in God's ways with us, developing and completing our faith, and leading us on to full growth in the knowledge of Him.

Patience! We are amazed as we consider how He endured our rebellious ways in those days when we did not want Him, and since His grace broke down our stubborn will that same patience has continued, year by year, until this very day, undiminished in its endurance and tenderness. To this we can bear a grateful witness, as we exclaim, only the God of patience, infinite and divine patience, could suit such as we are, and this God is our God!

Comfort! Not soothing our sorrows only, consoling us as a mother consoles a distressed and tired child, there is all that in it but more. This comfort encourages the discouraged, it imparts strength to weak and hesitant steps, it cheers the drooping spirit, it makes us more than conquerors through Him that loves us, it is such comfort as David knew when he cried triumphantly "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." And the God of comfort is our God!

Hope. We are in a groaning creation and we groan within ourselves, so chapt. 8 of our Epistle tells us, and we know it well in our own experience. We are beset with infirmity; the enthusiasms of youth soon give way to the burdens of life and the weaknesses of old age, "Change and decay in all around we see." We are permitted to groan, but not to

grumble or grouse, but our God is the God of hope, and He has lit the lamp of hope within our hearts. We are looking on to the day, when our bodies of humiliation shall be changed into bodies of glory like unto Christ's own glorious body, according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

This hope is a living and sure hope, it will never fail us, we rely upon the sure word of our God, the God of hope, and lo, we are filled with all joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost, verse 13. Our joy is greater than our sorrow, our hope lifts us above all trying circumstances, our groanings are lost in our glad praise. We anticipate the coming glory. The God of hope is our God, and He is moving onward to the fulfilment of His purposes of love; nothing can thwart Him or postpone those purposes beyond His appointed time, but apart from us, whom He has chosen in Christ, they cannot be fulfilled; we are necessary to God's great scheme of blessing. He has bound us up in the bundle of life with Christ and His glory, and ours is an inheritance uncorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. As our faith lays its firm grip upon the Word of God and our hope stretches out to the glorious future, joy, peace and hope are ours. How surpassing all other knowledge is this knowledge of God as the God of hope, and He is our God.

Peace! And while we wait the God of peace shall be with us all. Amen, verse 33. If we walk with Him, He walks with us. "How do you know there is a God?" was the question asked of an old saint. "I was talking with Him this morning" was

the quiet and effective answer. What could disturb our peace of mind, if there was ever with us this consciousness of the company of the God of peace? The peace of God that passeth all understanding would keep our hearts and minds by Christ

Jesus, and we would live day by day as those who know in the experiences of life the God of patience and comfort, and hope, and peace, rejoicing in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has reconciled us to Him.

SERVING OUR GENERATION.

Inglis Fleming.

OF David it is written that "after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers" (Acts 13. 36). Other translations of the passage have:

- 1 "David after having been useful to his generation in accordance with God's purpose, did fall asleep."
- 2 "David after serving God's purpose in his own generation died."
- 3 "David. . . served by the will of God."
- 4 "David. . . serving God's purpose."
- 5 "David. . . useful. . . in accordance with God's purpose."
- 6 "David. . . having ministered according to the counsel of God."
- 7 "David—ministered to the will of God."

These various renderings amount to much the same in effect, but a casual reader of the authorised version may miss the meaning. Thus the differing wordings may awaken interest.

If our Lord still tarries on high what can anyone do more than the psalmist of Israel did?

We have not his gift, but *each one of us* has a mission to perform. "To every man his work" (Mark 13. 34). "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. 4. 7).

High honour is this! To serve God's purpose in our little sphere. To be useful to those around us in accordance with the pleasure and will of God. To minister to others as our gracious God counsels us. This is privilege indeed!

That we the redeemed *to God* should be able to glorify God in our bodies and accord with His thought for us while in the world is wonderful favour. And yet by the power of the Holy Spirit it is a glorious possibility.

Our Lord could say "I delight to do Thy will (Thy good pleasure) O my God" (Psalm 40. 8). Of the angels it is written "Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His that do His (good) pleasure" (Psalm 103. 21).

Shall we not cry "Teach me to do Thy will (Thy good pleasure) for Thou art my God" (Psalm 143. 10)? Then shall we be empowered to serve our generation aright.

Be right in the sanctuary, if you would be right in the market place; be stedfast in prayer if you would be calm in affliction. Start your race every day at the throne of God's grace if you would run well and win the prize,

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

A. J. Pollock.

No. II. *Our Lord's Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit.*

THE close of John's Gospel is markedly distinct from those of the synoptical Gospels. The latter at their close is distinguished by the discourse of our Lord on the Mount of Olives concerning Israel and the last days and the kingdom of heaven on the earth. But in John's Gospel from chapter 13 and on our Lord is concerned about His disciples. He intimates that things are about to change, viz., His absence from His own and His presence in the Father's House, and as a consequence the sending forth of the Holy Spirit to dwell with them and be in them. It is sweet to see His tender solicitude for His own.

THE HOLY SPIRIT SENT BY THE FATHER AND THE SON— THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES.

In chapter 14 we read, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom *the FATHER* will send in My name." Here *the Father* sends the Holy Spirit. In chapter 15. 26, we read, "But when the Comforter is come, whom *I* will send from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth." There *our Lord* sends the Holy Spirit. In chapter 16. 13 we read, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth *IS COME*." Here we have *the Spirit* of God coming, not as sent in this passage by the Father or the Son, but, as it were, of His own volition. In all this we see the oneness of God, the three Persons of the Trinity acting in harmony, so much so that the descent of the Holy Spirit can be equally, though not exclusively, attributed to each Person of the Godhead.

THE HOLY SPIRIT ABIDES WITH THE DISCIPLES FOR EVER.

We read, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (chapter 14. 16). This was a new thought. As we have seen in dealing with the truth of the Holy Spirit in relation to Old Testament times, the Spirit acted then with individuals at special times and for distinct purposes in regard to position or service, and did not come to abide. It was not then the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, but largely one of probation and of man's testing. And yet apart from the Spirit there would have been no blessing for men in Old Testament times. But, in this new dispensation the disciples were about to enter upon, the chief feature would be the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORD "COMFORTER"?

The Greek word for "Comforter" is *paracletes*, which is transliterated —*paraclete*. It is the same word used to describe our Lord in 1 John 2. 1, "If any man sin, we have an ADVOCATE [*paracletes*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The meaning of the original Greek word is *One called alongside to help*. Does the word, Comforter, suffice for this meaning? We think not. We have no word in the English language that quite conveys the full meaning, and to use anything more than a single word would be cumbersome, so the translators, in our most

excellent translation, use the word, Comforter.

Perhaps an illustration will help. Suppose a man develops certain symptoms of a disquieting nature. He and his wife confide his fears to a specialist. A thorough examination is made. At its close they anxiously listen to the doctor's verdict. He tells them that he is quite sure if his patient will follow faithfully his treatment in three months' time he will be quite well. The couple have confidence in the skill and judgment of the specialist. He is known as one who does not promise anything he cannot perform. As husband and wife wend their way home, greatly relieved of anxiety, and filled with hope, one says to the other, "What a comforter Dr. So-and-so is!" Yes, but what makes him a comforter? Not merely comforting words, but the knowledge that the skill and ability to fulfil these words of comfort are at their disposal, and will be used to bring about the desired result. He has come alongside to help.

And what makes our Lord a Comforter and the Holy Spirit a Comforter? The knowledge that their power and wisdom and interest are at our disposal to carry us through every difficulty and fit us for every Christian position and activity we are called upon to take.

THE HOLY SPIRIT MARKS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DISCIPLES AND THE WORLD.

It is said of the Spirit of God, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14. 17). There is a great cleavage between the believer

and the world. As our Lord said twice of His disciples in His prayer to His Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14-16).

As to the world when the Spirit came, it was said, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16. 8). How does this happen? He convinces "of sin because they [the world] believe not in Me" [the Lord Jesus] (verse 9). Why is the Holy Spirit in this world in the special way in which He is? Because Christ is rejected. Why is the Holy Spirit given to some and not to others? Because some believe and some do not. This marks the difference between the believer and the world, and it demonstrates the guilt of the world.

The Holy Spirit convinces, "Of righteousness, because," as our Lord said, "I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more" (verse 10). Christ is *the* righteous One, and the world proved its unrighteousness by rejecting Him. Righteousness is with the Father, and the descent of the Holy Spirit consequent on the ascension of our Lord, is the proof of the world's unrighteousness. They rejected Him whom heaven acclaimed. Everything is out of joint in this world to those who love the Lord, just as the affairs of a kingdom would be out of joint to every loyal subject if the lawful king were driven out and a Republic set up in his place.

The Holy Spirit convinces "of judgment because the prince of this world [Satan] is judged." If Satan had really the upper hand there would be no Holy Spirit here, neither the Holy Spirit nor those whom He

indwells would be tolerated in this world. How cheering is the word, "Ye are of God, little children. . . because greater is He [the Holy Spirit] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4). That may be said of the feeblest or youngest believer in whom the Holy Spirit indwells. Wonderful words!

THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, TESTIFIES, GUIDES.

We read, "But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He shall TEACH you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you" (John 14. 26). This was said to the Apostles, who sojourned with our Lord when upon earth, but the principle stretches out to all God's people. The Holy Spirit is the infallible Teacher. How important then is our study of God's Word, which contains this teaching for our learning. We may rest assured that what the Holy Spirit taught the apostles is for us, and all things brought to their remembrance is found in the Word of God.

We read, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall TESTIFY of Me" (John 15. 26). This certainly is the test of the Holy Spirit's activity. The Pentecostals pervert the teaching of the Spirit, leading to believers being occupied with themselves, and with *their* own attainments, with *their* power, with *their* ability, it may be, as they often claim, to speak with tongues and perform divine healing. Christ is lost sight of in this perversion of one of the greatest and most blessed truths of Christianity,

viz., the true office of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Christ. What blessed occupation of the Holy Spirit, it is to testify of our risen Lord. All truth centres round Him. He is the revealer of God, the Father; He is the Mediator between God and man; He is the Finisher of the work of redemption; He is the Giver of the Holy Spirit; He is Apostle and High Priest of our confession; He is our great High Priest and Advocate in heaven; He is the great Head of the church His body; He is the One, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; He is the Bridegroom, soon coming to claim His bride; He is the Judge of all the earth. We know this and much more by the Spirit.

We read, "Howbeit when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will GUIDE you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come" (John 16. 13). Here the Spirit is the Guide. Well for us if we do not bring our pre-conceived notions to the Word of God and endeavour to force Scripture to conform to our pet ideas. Well for us if we reverently take what the Spirit gives and follow His guidance.

There is some question as to what the words mean, "He [the Holy Spirit] shall not speak *OF Himself*." Some think it means that the Spirit will speak about the Father and the Son, but not about Himself. Others think it means that the Holy Spirit will not speak of His own initiation. The latter view is undoubtedly the truth. Greek scholars tell us there is no doubt that this is the force of the original. This is confirmed by the fact of a good deal of teaching concerning the Holy Spirit is found

throughout the New Testament, notably Romans 8, and the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Spirit in the wisdom of the Godhead does not take an inferior position, but becomes the Power for the formation of Christian character, and the inspirer of prayer and praise and worship and of service to the Lord.

Then we read, "He shall show you things to come." What was to come?

Christianity as we know it! The full unfolding of Christ and all that He brings to light, the teaching as to the individual saints, and to the assembly of God upon the earth, the prophecies of the future, whether it be the rapture of the saints of God to heaven, the unfolding of judgments on this world, the millennial kingdom of our Lord and the eternal state of blessedness and all else that was to be revealed.

CHRIST IS LORD.

○WN His divine claims over you afresh. Let not His supremacy in your life and ways be merely theoretical but practical. It was refreshing to hear a Christian woman whose husband had been converted say, "It was a good day when he came home on Thursday. His first words were '*Christ must be the Head of this house*'." The One who had saved him must be his Lord, and not only the Lord of his individual life but of his home-life as well. His household must come under his Lord's authority; his house must be a little

bit of the Kingdom of God.

How much more blessed and according to God is that than the other sort of work that makes people say, "I feel happier now," or "I am different to what I was." Self the centre and the theme, and Christ made secondary and subservient to their blessing and feelings.

May God give us true results, but it is not much use praying for them and preaching the Lordship of Christ to others except He is truly Lord to us.

ONE GOD.

(1 Cor. 8. 6).

F.W.G.

IT is not a question here of the Trinity, or the distinction of persons, but of how God has been revealed to us in relationship, first of all to Christ, and thus to all who are His. God is no more what a mere monotheist might account Him. He is not One from whom, through the very dread natural to man, one might seek rather to escape, but One who is for us; One of whom it is a delight to know that all things belong, and that we also belong, to Him. How different a thing this from the mere question of one god

or many. And so there is for us one Lord, Jesus Christ. God hath made that same Jesus, whom men crucified, both Lord and Christ. He is, moreover, the One by whom are all things, the One who has acted for God the Father, both in creation and in the redemption of those ruined by the fall. We too are by Him. We are the fruits of His love, the work of His power. All is under the control of Him who has loved us, and of that Son Himself who is at the right hand of God.

“OUT OF THE DEPTHS.” “INTO THY REST.”

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 130, 131, 132). Continued.

VIEWED prophetically, Psalm 131 looks on to the day when Israel humbled and born again will at last take their true place before the Lord. Their tendency all through the ages has been to look upon themselves as the head and front and centre of everything, and from this sprang the Pharisaic spirit which was so strongly condemned by our Lord. We can see the tendency working in those who really did fear the Lord, for instance in Luke 24, where the two going to Emmaus betray their inmost thought in saying, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel” (verse 21). Again we see it after the resurrection, in Acts 1, when the disciples anxiously enquired, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.” They had to learn that the Christ is the Centre of all God’s thoughts, and that their business was the simple and humble one of being His witnesses, even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The same tendency works in us to-day, especially in those of us who have minds of a restless and enquiring order. Then it is that we are exposed to the danger of intruding into those things which we have not seen, vainly puffed up by our fleshly mind, or even of being led away as a prey by some man who approaches us with philosophy and vain deceit. Colossians 2 warns us against these things, declaring them to be “after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” All the truth that we need, and that we are capable of receiving in our present mortal con-

dition, has been made known through the Apostles and is recorded in the Scriptures. We do well to rejoice in all that has been revealed to us, and we do equally well to resolutely refuse to exercise our minds in great matters which have not been revealed, and which consequently are too high for us.

In verse 2 David shows us that in his case the humbling process had been followed by a *weaning* process. Formerly he had been like an unweaned child, frequently yearning for the object of its desires, and fretful because unsatisfied. Now his soul was even as a weaned child. He was delivered from the fascinations of former days, and he “behaved and quieted” himself accordingly, or as another translation has it, he “restrained and composed” his soul. His fretfulness was all gone; and even if he did not gain all that he desired he was marked by calmness of spirit.

Thus too it will be for Israel in the coming day. They will be weaned from the love of the old evil things that have ensnared them all through their history, but that will only come to pass when they “hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.” When they find in Jehovah the Object of all their desires the old desires will fade away.

How often, alas! as we pass through this attractive and ensnaring world, we are like fretful children. The Christian who can pass through it like a weaned child, restrained and composed in soul, is all

too rare a sight. If we are unweaned and fretful, let us at least stop making excuses for ourselves. There really is no excuse. Christ is enough. We sing fairly frequently,

Jesus, Thou art enough,
The mind and heart to fill.

and it really is so. If He henceforth and for ever becomes to us the object of our faith and love and hope, we shall not be fretting ourselves over former pleasures which now are left behind. We shall be satisfied.

Now we come back to Psalm 132. David was humbled and weaned from his old loves, finding his hope in the Lord, and this reinforced the resolve he had made to find out a place for the Lord. Ultimately he found a place for the Ark in Zion, where he pitched a tent for it, as a provisional measure, while waiting for the building of the permanent house. David, as we know, was not permitted to build the temple: that was a work committed to the hands of Solomon, his son and successor. As a consequence of this the words, "Arise, O Lord, into *Thy rest*; Thou and the ark of Thy strength" could not be uttered historically until Solomon dedicated the temple, when he used just those words (see 2 Chron. 6. 41—42).

Now it is a remarkable fact that when at the end of his career David recounted the dealings of God with him, and the word that had reached him from the Lord forbidding his building the house and assuring him that his son should accomplish that work, he told the people, that it had been said, "Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be *a man of rest*; and I will give him rest from

all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon." (1 Chron. 22. 9). This shows us that the man who accomplished David's cherished desire and built the house and said, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest," was himself "the man of rest." The Lord entered into His rest, and Solomon entered into rest also. The two things go together in this case, at least in figure.

The two things will go together, not in figure but in fullest reality, when the millennial age is reached. Then at last the Lord will enter into His rest and Israel will enter into a full rest also. It is just the same in principle also for the believer to-day. When the Lord has His rightful place in the affections, the soul reaches a rest which otherwise would be quite unknown. And not only rest is enjoyed, but also the *blessing* of which the rest of the Psalm speaks; and also the *unity* and the *worship*, of which the two succeeding Psalms speak, will be realised.

Therefore, we believe, without doing any violence to the proper interpretation of these Psalms, we may see a picture of a happy experience which is really Christian. Out of the depths do we come when we cry to the Lord in true repentance, for at once a full and free forgiveness may be known by us; a forgiveness as regards all our iniquities, and which reaches us in mercy and as based upon a plenteous redemption. It is a forgiveness moreover which induces in our hearts that reverential fear of God which preserves from sin, inasmuch as it promotes within us humility of a genuine sort. It weans us also from old loves, so that they dominate us no more.

THE NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

T. Oliver.

No. 1. *Introductory.*

“And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali and Shechem in mount Ephraim and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron in the mountain of Judah and on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the Wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh” (Joshua 20, 7-8).

NAMES in secular affairs are largely accidental and hence they are seldom descriptive of what they are intended to denote. But scriptural names are full of meaning relative to the subject of appellation. Some time ago listening to an address on the “Cities of Refuge,” my effort was stimulated to ascertain the meaning of the names. I was astonished to find that they formed in their sequence, a marvellously accurate summary of the progress of a soul in the apprehension of the truth.

The following table sets forth the meanings given by various scholars:

In the land of Canaan.

Kedesh—sanctuary.
Shechem—strength.
Hebron—fellowship.

Across Jordan in the Wilderness.

Golan—(1) discovery, (2) revolution, (3) passage or exodus.
Ramoth—elevations and depressions, or ups and downs.
Bezer—(1) distress, (2) fortification.

The wilderness in the Old Testament typology corresponds in New Testament thought to the realm of time and sense, i.e. relative to the body and secular affairs. The hymn writer could say:—

This world is a wilderness wide,
I have nothing to seek or to choose,
I have no thought in the waste to abide.
I have nought to regret nor to lose.

That was his personal assessment of the world, but it is expressive of normal Christianity. It is open to every Christian to have similar exercises of heart.

The horizontal line separating the two name-lists represents the river Jordan, which is symbolical of the death of Christ in one of its many aspects.

Similarly the land of Canaan in Old Testament type does not represent “Heaven” in New Testament relation, as it is often caused to do in sentimental hymnology. “The Land” has a present bearing in New Testament doctrine with relation to spiritual apprehension of what we possess as being in Christ Jesus, having access to God the Father, and having boldness (i.e. liberty or confidence), to enter the holiest and so on. “In Christ Jesus” has a technical meaning peculiar to the Pauline writings, and denotes the region of spiritual privilege and blessing!

At one time it was the fashion amongst certain Christians to reckon themselves as across Jordan and that the bulk of Christians with whom they came in contact were still in the wilderness. The idea sprang simply

from spiritual arrogance. If there is one form of pride more distasteful to the Lord than another, we submit that it is the spiritual form. The proud never get near to the Lord, whatever may be their pretension of intimacy. All scripture is imbued with the thought: "the proud is known afar off" (Psalm 138, 6), "God resisteth the proud" (Jas. 4. 6) and so on. But Scripture also adduces evidence that the proud are "ignorant, knowing nothing but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, etc." (1 Timothy 6. 4). Hence the averment not only sprang from pride but also from ignorance of spiritual teaching.

In this connection the apostolic doctrine very clearly bears out the dictum of a gifted poetess that

"Side by side, the gladness and the sorrow,
Deepest shadow and eternal sun,
Two lives live we, till the blessed morrow
When the life is one."

We live lives of responsibility collaterally with lives of spiritual privilege, consequently the man who boasts about being over the Jordan in "the land" may be an arrant grumbler in his life of responsibility, just as his prototype the Israelite was in the wilderness. Only the Israelite could not both be in the wilderness and in "the land" at the same identical moment of time. But that physical impossibility is compassed now in the Spirit.

GOLAN.

As mentioned in the introductory section, the meanings of Golan have been severally rendered as:—(1) discovery, (2) revolution, (3) passage.

1. *Discovery.*

(1) Many of our readers may be acquainted with the etching entitled,

"The soul's Awakening." Where a young girl is seen with a book clasped to her breast evidently in an ecstasy. That she should be rapturously seized with extreme joy may be very good sentiment, but the artist failed to understand the truth with relation to God and eternal things. When a soul awakens to the fact that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" and that every member of the human race has sinned and come short of the initial aspect of God's glory, viz. His righteousness, then in place of extreme joy, the soul is plunged in great distress.

But it has been well said that man's extremity is God's opportunity! The ray that brings light from the sun also brings heat. Similarly in the very moment that a man or a woman has reached the bottom of his or her resources and cast himself or herself on the boundless resources of God, there comes the realisation that God is not only of spotless light but also of unconditional love.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3. 16), still stands as an immutable memorial to the unchanging character of God's disposition.

In Acts 2, we read that the Apostle Peter preaching with power at Pentecost brought conviction to his hearers, and they exclaimed "What shall we do?" When they realised that by wicked hands they had crucified the One approved by God and that God had raised Him up from the dead and also the import

of the prophetic scripture "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." They saw they were undone and consequently called on One who was able to save. Peter's answer was "Repent!"

In Acts 16, another aspect is presented in the case of the Philippian jailer, awakened to a deeper sense than his being undone in the eyes of men. He addressed the Apostle Paul and his associates in the exclamation, "Sirs, (lit. Lords) what must I do to be saved?" The erstwhile brutal ruffian, who had shamefully treated them, now approached them with an air of greatest respect. Their answer was simply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

2. Revolution.

The Thessalonian believers "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). Conversion or turning to God is a very real matter. There is a radical change effected in the soul. The revolution which takes place displaces all preconceived notions. There is a turning up-side-down of the whole sphere of our thoughts. The zenith goes down out of sight and the exactly opposite nadir point comes up over the horizon of our thoughts and becomes our new zenith. We rejoice in prospect of the Glory of God! That will mean the displacement of man's day and his glory. What had been hitherto quite legitimate ambitions cease to occupy our attention.

The great Apostle could say in writing to the Philippian Christians "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for

the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them dung" (Phil. 3. 7-8). Judging from secular circumstances one would have expected to hear that a man who had suffered such loss would have been in a very disconsolate frame of mind. But on the contrary he reckoned those worthy credentials in the eyes of men only suitable for the dustbin. It should be kept in mind that he was the premier man of his time. Yet everything of that order became of no account to him. His sole aim was to win an increasing apprehension of the preciousness of Christ to his soul. That is the normal character of the revolution effected in the Christian.

3. Exodus.

In the preceding section we have been dealing with the internal work of God in the soul. It is no mere philosophic change leading the convert to become a hermit in order to ruminate on new ideas. There is an external effect which proceeds collaterally with the internal change. As we grow in grace we shall be found showing that grace to those around. We shall serve the living and true or real God who is a great contrast to all the unreal gods of our imagination, which we served in our unconverted days. But that service has a definite issue, in waiting for the Son of God from heaven. His coming may happen at any moment and will be transacted in a moment or "atom" of time ("a twinkling of an eye"). In the interval that the Lord is pleased to leave us here, we are to put ourselves in line with that moment.

Therefore at Pentecost in the initial proclamation of the gospel, the

Apostle Peter abjured his hearers in the words "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2. 40). The outward symbol of that process would be that they would submit themselves to the rite of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Hence the salvation symbolised by the act could not relate to heaven, since it was antecedent to the reception of the Holy Ghost. Of necessity it must have applied to earth.

Probably no other subject has provoked so much acrid discussion and unkind feelings among Christians as the subject of baptism has done, yet the idea is very simple. Christian baptism is "unto" the death of Christ (not "into" as the authorised version reads), i.e., unto the significance of His death. In this connection the death of Christ implies that the world gave Christ a felon's death and grave. (That it was not a felon's grave in which He was buried was not the intention of the world). Now it is incumbent on those who are associated with His name that they should cheerfully accept the place which the world gave to their new Lord and Master. Baptism then implies dissociation from the world. We can no longer go on with the course of this world. The frivolities which formerly filled our day are not now of interest to us. We cannot enjoy the pleasures of sin, because of our estimation of the riches found in the reproach or special stigma of Christ's name, which we now bear. Baptism then signifies cutting off from the world with the object in view that we should walk in newness of life!

The Philippian jailer's house witnessed a radical change. It was under new management, viz., that of the Lord. That day salvation had indeed come to his house. Henceforward they would be found saving themselves from the untoward generation around. In fact, they would be found proving true to the significance of their baptism.

All this is in view of our passage or exodus from the world. In the book of Exodus, we see that the Israelites were as safe inside the tent with bloodstained lintel, as they were at any subsequent point in their history. But they could not serve God suitably in Egypt, hence they were not only saved by blood but delivered by the power of God from the power and the land of Egypt (the enemy). Moses would have been esteemed an incompetent general by modern strategists in leading the people into a hopeless position on the banks of the Red Sea, when he could quite easily have led them round the end of the sea by the Isthmus of Suez. But Moses did not lead; the people followed the pillar of cloud by day which also as a pillar of fire lighted them by night. God led them so that they might test His resources, and when they came to their extremity and cried out, the injunction of Moses was to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. What was salvation to the people of God became death to their enemies! Similarly God cannot allow His people to remain in the world. He will have them in separation while there, so that they may serve Him and be in harmony with the imminence of the Lord's return.

(To be continued)

THE BELIEVER'S LOVE FOR GOD.

J.B.

IT is exceedingly valuable to our souls to know that God appreciates the love we have for Him, but our love for Him is the fruit of His love for us, when we had none for Him. When we were dead in trespasses and sins His love for us led Him to do for us what Ephesians 2. 5-6, states, "When we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ. . . and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." In verse 4 we are told He was rich in mercy, and then we have the reason why, "for His great love wherewith He loved us." Everything He has done for us flowed from His great love for us when we had no love for Him.

From this we can be sure that He will never cease to love us. His love is eternal. In Romans 5. 8. it is brought out in another way, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that *while we were yet sinners Christ died for us,*" *the ungodly.* Consider that! And this love so manifested and commended has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (verse 5). In 1 John 4. 16-19 we have more statements about the love of God. In verse 16 speaking of believers "We have known and believed the love that God hath for us" and says verse 17 "Herein is love made perfect" or "Herein has love been perfected with us" not our love but God's love "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" and how has this been accomplished?—by making us like Christ therefore he says "As He is, so are we in this world" like Him now. God's love has wrought to set us in absolute righteousness before Him.

This is the perfection of God's love, and the knowledge of it casts all doubt and fear out of the heart, "Perfect love (God's) casteth out fear" for there is no fear in love. Those who fear the judgment of God "are not made perfect in love" (God's); have not reached it; do not know that God in love has made them like Christ. They are occupied with their failings and shortcomings and do not realise that other side of the truth, that they are as Christ is. In the day of judgment it will be as impossible to condemn them as it would be to condemn Christ. This knowledge is to be the cause of present exultation, and the result of it is, "We love because He first loved us." Not only do we love God but all our brethren in Christ, and even our enemies. His love has begotten love in our hearts, so our love is the fruit of His. We can understand therefore that He appreciates our love for Him seeing He has produced it; first working in His heart for us when we had none for Him, and then working (when known) in our hearts for Him.

THOSE THAT LOVE GOD ARE KNOWN OF HIM.

Now see how He expresses His appreciation of our love and how He takes note of it. 1 Cor., 8. 3: "But if any man love God the same is known of Him." The apostle has been speaking of knowledge, verses 1 and 2. Knowledge is nothing to God. That is, a man's knowledge does not make him anything in God's sight. We learn from 1 Cor. 1. 20, God hath "made foolish the wisdom of this world," fulfilling Isaiah 29, 14. "I will destroy the

wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Learned men have a place among their fellows, recognised and looked up to, but no place with God on that account. But not so with a man who loves Him, he is known and appreciated, not lost among the millions of the human race.

It could be said in reply to make little of this "God knows every one as one who knows all things." Surely He does, but not in the sense in which He knows those who love Him. With regard to men's knowledge of each other, a man knows many but there are those (one only it may be) whom he knows altogether differently. Speaking of Abraham the Lord said, "For I know him" Gen. 18. 19; and knowing him, says in verse 17, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do" hence Abraham is brought into the knowledge of what He was going to do regarding Sodom and Gomorrah. In the case of Moses—Exodus 33. 17; because Jehovah knew him He granted him the request brought out in verses 12, 13, 15, 16. In John 10. 3, 14, 16; we have the blessed results of the sheep being known by Christ. In Matt. 25. 12; we get the sad side, namely, not being known. "He answered and said" to the foolish virgins "Verily. . . I know you not." It is a great and happy thing to be known of God through love for Him.

“THINGS PREPARED FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM”

1 Cor., 2; 7, 8, 9, 10 to 13.

These are remarkable scriptures; they bring out among other things the contrast between the princes of the world and those who love God.

The princes of this world are not potentates only but philosophers especially, who expound what is called "the wisdom of this world." There were plenty of them in Paul's day who laid down and taught in their schools doctrine and principles for the regulation of human conduct, but excluded God and the Lord Jesus Christ; it was all outside of the wisdom of God; that wisdom they did not know, "had they known it, they," said the Apostle, "would not have crucified the Lord of glory," for then they would have seen He was the Lord of glory, and the wisdom of God. But the wisdom of God has been made known to those who "love Him," verse 9, by a revelation of the "things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," verse 10. . . First to the apostles and through them to us, by the Spirit, verses 12, 13, 14. Those things comprise the purpose of God respecting us, hence the words, "Which God ordained before the world was unto our glory." As we learn the things prepared, so we see how God has exalted us in Christ.

Those who love Him form the class to whom they are made known. He, so to speak, counts upon the love we have for Him to appreciate the things which He has prepared; we value them because they are the things of Him whom we love; and our love grows for Him, as our knowledge of Him increases by knowing the things prepared or ordained for our glory. Many say that "things prepared" are the future things which we are going to have; but the words "God hath revealed them unto us" prove they are made known in this present time. The words "Now we have received. . . the Spirit which is of God; that we *might know the things that are*

freely given to us of God" show clearly that they are to be known by us now; the Spirit being received for that object and the fact that the apostles spoke or uttered the things as Paul states "which things also we speak" also proves that they are to be known now by those who love God. Since then He makes known to the circle of His lovers these precious things, how plainly He manifests His appreciation of our love for Him, notwithstanding it is the fruit of His own love for us.

"WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD"

Romans 8. 28.

Here we have a different class of things from those spoken of in 1 Cor. 2. These are made up of happenings and not always of a happy character. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." And "we ourselves groan within ourselves." Those who love God are a distinguished company participating indeed in the sorrows of creation and, from the point of view of groaning within ourselves, not apparently distinguished openly from the creation, but in a sense going through deeper suffering inasmuch there is added to the general sufferings of creation, suffering with Christ, which creation knows nothing about. Though there is no apparent distinction, the distinction is made by Him who knows who they are, who love Him, and acts for them by making all things work together for their good. This is practical recognition on His part of us whose hearts are the seat of love for Him.

We know of course, from Genesis 3. 16-19, the cause of creation's

sorrows, and, though He does not remove the sorrows at present; having appointed a future day for their removal by Christ; yet, having as the result of His love and grace towards us, regained and more than regained His supremacy over us by becoming the object of our love He makes the consequences of His judgment pronounced upon man in Genesis 3. 16-19 for our good and blessing. This is the response to the love for Himself which He has planted there for Himself. Beautiful grace to have planted it there. Sweet His recognition which we realise as we partake of the good produced by His working *together* all things for our good. Note the unity of object, namely, "together." Diverse in character as they appear from the outside, and upon the surface, nevertheless working in unity by the control of Him whom we love.

"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION FOR WHEN HE IS TRIED HE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE WHICH THE LORD HATH PROMISED TO THEM WHO LOVE HIM." James 1. 12.

The promise is to those who love Him. The receiving time is the end. Enduring temptation when tried takes us right on to the end—the finish of the trial of faith. Enduring implies that no temptation or trial has weakened my faith in Christ or in God the Father, or in the reality of the Lord's coming and the glory. Chapter 5. 7. This has a special force in its application to the Jew. The believing Jew had hopes quite different to the earthly hopes of the unconverted Jew, namely, heavenly. He had not lost the earthly but had in addition gained the heavenly

through Christ. This raised against him the orthodox Jew who continued to reject Christ and to support Judaism against the truth of Christ: Their opposition working out in persecution (see John 16. 1, 2, 3, especially 2) constituted the temptation and the trial of verse 12. The question therefore came in of "enduring." Would they go back; to do so meant not enduring, but becoming, so to speak, detached from their mooring — Christ, and giving up their heavenly hope in Him.

They might have at times seemed to be giving way. They might have failed here and there, but the point is—had they broken away from Christ and gone over to the other side? If not, then they were enduring, and if at the end of the road, the Christ and the heavenly hope were still what He was, and it was, then they had successfully endured; they had left the course victorious. The crown of life will be handed to them, the fulfilment of the promise made to them "who love Him." To receive the crown is to be brought into the fulness of life. We have life now in Christ, but not the crown.

We are subject to bodily and mental ills, more or less; our divine joys flowing from the life we have now are mingled with sorrow, grief

and pain; but when we receive the crown of life we shall no longer know anguish of heart, nor bitterness of spirit. The life in its movements and joys will be free from all alloy. Those who "love Him" will, because they do love Him, count the crown of life a rich and adequate compensation.

"RICH IN FAITH: AND HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM WHICH HE HAS PROMISED TO THEM WHO LOVE HIM." James 2. 5.

Here we have the kingdom the portion of those who love Him. It is brought in to point out that the ways of God with the poor was, and is, wholly in contrast to their ways (See verses 1-4 of chapter 2 and verse 6). The poor, God had chosen to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom. The Kingdom promised to the lovers of God. In that kingdom there will be no such things as a rich brother and a poor brother. The lovers of God will receive complete satisfaction, for, in that Kingdom they will move in those conditions of righteousness so suitable to God, and will be perfectly happy. This we can understand, for what greater happiness can a lover of God have than in seeing Him in a condition of things so suitable to His nature—Love and Light.

Learn from the way of the Lord with the blind son of Timaeus both the freeness and the style of God's mercy. He who cries to God for mercy, though physically, mentally, morally and spiritually blind and poor—the weakest and most degraded of mankind—is instantly answered by Him who is "rich in mercy." God never has, never can and never will say to the cry of the needy heart, "I have no mercy for thee."

THE TRANSFORMING VISION

A. H. Storrie (Brazil).

THIS world is described by the Christian hymn writer as a "wilderness" and "a waste." And surely a desert is a dull place through which to travel day after day, and duller still must it be to dwell in, for what is to be found there? Sand, barrenness, aridity. Yet, what we think of the world depends on how we view it. Many of our fellow-men find the world anything but a wilderness. They luxuriate in it, seek to make the most of it and intend to remain in it as long as they possibly can. The world is no wilderness to *them*. How is it then that some find the world a place of pleasure and delight, whilst others regard it as a barren waste? As we have suggested, it depends upon our viewpoint. The worldling has never seen anything better than his world and what it has to offer. With the Christian it is different. His eyes have been lifted to gaze upon an Object that eclipses all this world's glory.

How does this come about? Where are we to look for those persons who have seen the transforming vision? Amongst the "holy" men and women in monasteries and convents where the world is shut out? No "holy" monk of wrapt meditation was the youthful John Newton. True, he was reared in a Christian home, his devoted mother's only child, yet before he was out of his teens there was little or nothing of the depths of infamy that he had not fathomed. Then in very early manhood came the vision that transformed his life, as he tells us in his famous hymn:

"I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who turned His languid eyes on me,
As near the Cross I stood.

Sure, never till my latest breath,
Can I forget the look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke."

It was that that changed him and changed the world for him, and made him take up the language of Paul, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world."

It is the cross, rightly understood, that helps to make the world a wilderness for the believer. It was the world's chief representatives, its princes (1 Corinthians 2. 8) that placed Him on the cross; they crucified the Lord of glory.

Therefore the cross stands between the Christian and the world.

Our second example shall be taken from the Transfiguration, for the cross is ever related to the glory: "The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Was not the cross the theme of conversation on the holy mount? A wonderful experience had those three highly privileged disciples! To actually see the glory of God! How graphic is Peter's companion, Mark: ". . . and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Then to look upon the great Reformer who had overthrown the power of Baal in his day, and to be face to face with his even greater companion, the mighty Legislator of Sinai! but the voice from the Shekinah glory relates to neither of these: "This is my beloved Son: hear Him." *They saw no man any more save Jesus only.* We do not wonder

that many years after Peter should write to his fellow believers as strangers and pilgrims in the world.

The case of Stephen next commands our attention. From it we learn that the transforming vision is not something imaginary. Be our circumstances pleasing or adverse, our lives interesting or monotonous as to the material side of them, the vision is open to us all; we ought to all walk in the light of an opened heaven. Our circumstances can hardly be so trying as were Stephen's. He can hope for no mercy from his enemies, religious but violent men, but "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Then he kneels to his Lord, and, praying for his heartless foes, he passes from this wilderness of a world to the glory which he had so steadfastly beheld whilst here below.

Finally, let us consider the experience of one of the outstanding men of all time. Vastly different was the world of Saul of Tarsus to that of John Newton. Saul's was the world of the strict religious zealot. His was an enlightened mind, as men thought, and no gross sin had ever stained his blameless life. With a perfectly good conscience he could agree to the stoning of Stephen. Did not the Law of Moses demand that blasphemers should so die without mercy? Yet he was in darkness and needed the regenerating, transforming vision as much as did John Newton of a later day. And a merciful, loving Saviour granted it to him. Stupendous discovery! The despised

Nazarene, the reviled and crucified Jesus, was the Son of God! Now Saul was enlightened indeed, and the record comes to us with increasing emphasis:

"A light from heaven!"

"There shone from heaven a great light!"

"A light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun"—and that at noon!

"The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!"

Then like the three disciples, "he saw no man." Never more had he eyes for any other object save the glorified Christ and all that concerned Him.

In Genesis 24 we read of jewels, silver and gold and precious things, telling of the wealth and glory of Abraham's son, faint foreshadowings of the glories of the everlasting Son of whom the inspired apostle wrote so much. No mean linguist is Paul, yet clearly he feels the paucity of human language, even of the rich Greek tongue, as he seeks to bring before us the greatness, the excellencies, the glories of the *Son*. What words can adequately describe the surpassing greatness of the power put forth by God to raise Christ from among the dead, which mighty power is towards His saints? And how shall he speak of the glory of His Person? "The Firstborn of all creation"! And the immeasurable heights of glory to which He has ascended? "... far above all heavens!" Light! power! glory! majesty! With all this to occupy his gaze, is it any wonder that Paul has no eyes for this desert of a world? Not even for the religious world which he thrusts aside as loss and dross?—"For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ

Jesus my Lord." It is the transforming vision that holds him; not transient, but permanent, the vision of the exalted Christ: "It is my Master!"

And what about ourselves to-day? We may not all have the experiences of a John Newton (may our young folks be spared his early ones!). That of Peter, James and John on the mount of transfiguration was unique in the circumstances of it. We may

not be called to suffer martyrdom as Stephen was (some of us may be). Nor may we all have Paul's tremendous capacity for spiritual venture; but we may *all* without exception have the vision that commanded their lives, and we may prove its powerful effects in ours: "We all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." "It is my Master!"

Commit thy Way to the Lord.

Of course you cannot see the future, even to-morrow is hidden from your view, but God sees it and He is your God, and waits to be your guide. Commit your way to Him and set out cheerfully on your venture of faith.

Tear into fragments any itinerary that your imagination may have drawn up and let Him choose your way. He will not lead you in any beaten track, but the way He chooses will be a way of righteousness and so a way of peace; for peace, inward, untroubled peace, is the portion of all those who confide in Him.

It may be that the way may be shadowed but your guide will be with you there, and you will be compelled into a thousand intercourses with Him that will make your journey for ever memorable to you, for you could not walk with Him without the comfort and support that His company gives.

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

Live up to thy hope, Christian, let there be a decorum between thy principles and practices — between thy hope in heaven and thy walk on earth.

The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 14).

There is nothing like that! The unspeakable unfathomable love that dwells in that bosom is the love that has visited us. And how surpassing all knowledge is such a thought! Who but the Son who was the eternal object of that love could come forth to make it known? It is the heaven of the heart to be silent and still, and in simple faith to let such a revelation tell its own tale upon us.

“THEY SO SPAKE.”

L. A. Anderson.

(Acts 14. 1).

PAUL and Barnabas were on a journey spreading the gospel and they had been bitterly persecuted. They shortly thereafter went to Iconium and entered the synagogue and we are told they “so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.” From this it is obvious that their speaking had wonderful results.

Firstly there must have been an *earnestness* about what these men said for they “so spake.” They did not talk as though they had an allotted time to fill or to get through a certain discourse. They had a purpose behind them. They spoke with an earnestness that souls were converted and turned from darkness to light.

Secondly, these servants of the Lord were bubbling over with joy. The last verse of the preceding chapter tells us they “were *filled with joy*.” “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8. 10). Young and old would be far more attracted by our preaching if we were more joyful about the good news we have to tell.

Thirdly, they spake with great *power*. There was no uncertain ring about the message these men were filled “with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 13. 52).

These servants of the Lord were in earnest, were joyful, and full of Holy Ghost power — that is abundantly clear from the Scripture itself. But they “so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews

and also of the Greeks believed.” There was something else in their manner of speaking it seems. You will observe that both the religious and the wise people of that day believed. How came it about that there was such a wonderful result to the preaching on that occasion? It would be a good thing if we could discover the secret, for perhaps then we too might be used far more than we are in God’s service.

Did they speak with measured and majestic tones as Isaiah, when he said — “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven into the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord or being His counsellor hath taught Him? . . . Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing . . . All nations before Him are as *nothing* . . . To whom then will ye liken God?” (Isa. 40. 12-18) . . . “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?” (verse 28), — and thus caused their hearers to prostrate themselves before the Eternal One?

Did they speak with the stern tones of a John the Baptist who could speak to the multitudes of the “the wrath to come” — who could reprove the publicans with “exact no more than that which is appointed you,” — and admonish the soldiers “do vio-

lence to man, neither accuse any falsely" (Luke 3. 7-14)?—or as Peter, when he said "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God" (1 Peter 4. 17)?—and by these means save others?

Or did the disciples, Paul and Barnabas, speak with words of tenderness, whilst at the same time upbraiding men for their sin, as the Lord Jesus did when weeping He spoke those searching words to the inhabitants of that city where he had put His name, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . *how often* would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23. 37)—and so cause their hearers to be bowed down like grass before the wind?

To all these questions we can only say *we do not know*, neither can we tell? What *we do know* is that they "*so spake* that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks *believed*?" It is evident that the way and manner in which they spoke was that which was just the most suitable for that particular occasion.

Perhaps *it is as well* we do not know the complete answer to the question, for if we did we might try to imitate someone else instead of just being ourselves and speaking as God has endowed us.

O Lord, keep us near to Thyself day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, and so fit us for Thy service that we *so speak* that many may believe on Thy precious name.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

The Son of Man as seen by Stephen. Acts 7.

I did not think that it was as Judge that Stephen saw the Lord as Son of Man. I have never questioned the commonly held thought that He was standing ready to come in blessing if the leaders of the nation had repented. J.N.D. in the Synopsis says, 'He remained in the position of High Priest standing'—AVALSALL.

THE Lord delighted in the title Son of Man, but no one as far as we know ever addressed Him by it. As Son of Man He came ministering to others and laying down His life for them. This was all grace, but the last time He spoke of Himself as Son of Man was to the high priest (Matthew 26. 64), and clearly that had judgment in view, and we suggest that from that time onward the title is associated with judgment and glory.

In Stephen's speech before the high priest, Acts 7, there was no offer of mercy, no presentation of a gracious Saviour-Messiah, none of

the entreaty and appeal that sounds in Peter's sermons. *The glory of the angel* shone in his face at the end of chapter 6, and not at the end of chapter 7 as is generally said. It was not the glory of the grace of God in the face of Jesus that was reflected in him then, that was seen when he cried, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"—it was the glory of the law, given by the disposition of angels, verse 53, which shone first in the face of Moses, and now shone in Stephen's face as he commenced his withering condemnation of those who boasted in the law but did not keep it, and who rejected the grace of God that alone could deliver them

from the curse of it. It was a light that shone for their condemnation.

They were no longer addressed as ignorant man-slayers, but murderers for whom there was no mercy. There was no hope for them. They represented an apostate generation that always resisted the Holy Ghost.

Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost when he looked up stedfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus and it was by the Holy Ghost that he declared "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Not now as Jesus Christ, the Messiah whom God would send with blessing, but the Son of Man, His world-wide title. The Lord in heaven must be in full accord with the Holy Ghost on earth, and I do not see how the Lord could be ready to come as their Saviour when the Holy Ghost on earth was condemning them as always resisting His power, and being the betrayers and murderers of the Just One of whom the persecuted prophets had spoken. It seems to us that the high priest who rent his garments when the Lord said to him,

"Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark 14. 62 would recall these words and the memory of them would increase the rage of a man with an evil conscience under Satan's power.

What has convinced us is, that after the Cross, when the Son of Man was lifted up, we do not read of Him by that title except as coming in judgment and glory—the sickle, the sword and the sceptre are His. The angel in Luke 24 speaks of Him by this title, but only as quoting His words, and Hebrews 2 makes a reference to Him as Son of Man, but only to say "Not yet" do we see Him thus, instead He is High Priest for a suffering people. And not in any of the other Epistles do we get this title. It is in the Revelation that He is so presented to us.

So we conclude that Stephen's vision of Him was that of the Judge of the guilty Israel; His rights as Messiah utterly refused, His greater rights as Son of Man are in view.

"Let your women keep silence in the Church." 1 Cor. 14. 34.

"Is there any just ground for the statement that the reference to the law in this verse is to the Talmudic law which we know was not authoritative because not inspired of God? And further that verses 34, 35 contain the words of the Judaizers, and that Paul quoted these words, not as endorsing them but in order to answer and refute them?"—J.S.

THERE is absolutely no ground that we know of for saying that the law referred to is the Talmudic law. The five Books of Moses were called The Law, and at the very beginning of them, soon as ever sin came in, God declared to the woman "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" Genesis 3. 16. Timothy 2,

dealing with the same subject, cites Genesis 3 as one reason for the woman's subjection to the man, and that confirms us in stating that it is to this that Paul refers in 1 Cor. 14.

But this God-ordained position of the woman was carried into the law of Moses. It is strikingly given in the last of the Statutes that God gave

to him, Numbers 30. There we learn that even in the things of God, in vows made to Him, the father could annul the daughter's vow and the husband could annul the wife's.

Equally false, we believe, is the idea that Paul is quoting from the Judaizing teachers in these verses. He is giving "the commandments of the Lord" for His assemblies, and emphasising what creation, the law of Moses and New Testament truth all bear witness to, that the woman's place is that of subjection. Does this then mean inferiority or degradation? Not at all. The woman was created to be the glory of the man, his true help-meet; and as such to be a figure of what the church is to Christ. It could not be a degradation but an honour to her to fill her God-ordained place. How beautifully this is brought out in 1 Peter 3. 1-6. Could anything be more honourable and beautiful than "*a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price?*"

The passage in question is instruction for church order. "If therefore the whole church be come together in one place," verse 23. There she must learn in silence and so be descriptive of the church's subjection to Christ as its Head and Instructor, and that in this, as well as in the whole administration of the church, "to the intent that

now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. 3. 10. Then the "asking their husbands at home" would be a double benefit, they would show true womanly modesty and subjection to the Lord in public, and the conversation in the home would be of a profitable sort.

It is in these church meetings, "the whole church be come together in one place," and in gatherings of men that the woman is to be silent and not teach or usurp authority over the man. 1 Tim. 2. The man is in these to be active, to him is given the place of intelligent utterance; but the women may be the *heart* of these gatherings, and nobody can be more active than his heart will permit him to be. The silent, unseen members of the body are by no means the least important. Mary of Bethany poured her spikenard upon the feet of the Lord in silent adoration, while the men talked and criticised.

Apart from these church gatherings the woman may find many spheres of service. She may pray and prophecy, ch. 11. She may serve the church as did Phebe; labour with Paul in the gospel as did some women at Philippi; be a succourer of many as Priscilla, and care for the things of the Lord as the unmarried women at Corinth.

Mark any gathering of saints or individual christian, if there is not the energy of positive testimony which acts on others, there is decline. God in grace cannot be inert in testimony in a world of sin; it would be a contradiction in terms. By this we may test ourselves as to whether we are with God and God with us.

“TOGETHER.”

J. T. Mawson.

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133).

TO whom is it good and pleasant? To the brethren themselves surely, and to all who can admire what is comely, but most of all to the Father of them all. A true father is sorely grieved if his children quarrel, and is never happier than when they gather affectionate and united at the family hearth. God is a father and He has children, and it is good and pleasant to Him when they dwell together in unity. Indeed when they do it is evidence of His love flowing into their hearts and flowing out again to those who are begotten of Him, and by this dwelling together they shew that they are His children and that His own nature is strong and vigorous in them.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is” is a word of first importance. It is necessary for our mutual prosperity in spiritual things; we have not been born of God to be independent one of another, and if we are to hold fast our confession we must assemble together, and consider and exhort one another, and provoke one another unto love of good works. All that is true, but behind it all lies the delight that God our Father finds in seeing His children caring for another and delighting in one another’s company. And such is the delight of the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, when His brethren are gathered together, that He will not, cannot remain away from them, He has said, *“Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them,”* and where He is there the Father is also.

We may not have realised it, but just as a register of the children’s attendance at school is kept, so God keeps a register in heaven in which He records the gatherings together of His children on earth, and who they are that gather together to speak and think of Him. But it is so. That remarkable passage in Malachi 3. 16. certainly teaches this. *“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name.”* And the deep satisfaction and joy that it gave Him finds expression in what follows. *“They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”* As it was so it is; indeed it must be more so in these days than those, for the tie that binds His children to God now is a closer and dearer one than that which bound the saints to Him in Malachi’s days. How profoundly it should affect us, that every time His children gather together to speak of Him it delights His heart, and that He records it in heaven’s indelible, eternal record, and that to Him it is a service that only a son can render to a father. This should constrain us above all other thoughts, but there is this other added for our encouragement: all such are to be distinguished as His special jewels in the day when He manifests His glory. As they have been faithful to Him, and have pleased Him in degenerate days when His Name is derided and blasphemed, so shall they flash forth

His glory when He shall make all things bend to His will.

In musing on this joy of God in the unity of His children there comes to my mind words that deeply move the heart and tell us how only this unity could be. "Jesus should die. . . that He should gather **TOGETHER** in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11. 51, 52). It was the Father's will, yet in no other way could His will be accomplished, and Jesus came that the Father's will might be done. He said, "*That the world may know that I love the Father, and as He hath given Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence,*" and that hence was Golgotha! The darkness, the sorrow, the shame, the judgment of our sins, the forsaking of God, and then death! It was through that that Jesus passed to set the children free from the devil's power, and bind them together in a unity of life that not death itself can dissolve. He died to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad.

Do we consider this as we gather together in holy, happy Christian unity, that it is the death of Jesus that has made it possible? We should have had no title, no desire, no power to gather together, or dwell together, or talk together, if Jesus had not died. How near to the heart of God must this be since He secured it at so great a price. And yet I have heard it argued that divisions among God's children are of God, and so to be sanctioned and vigorously maintained. The word says, "for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith,

I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? (1 Cor. 3. 3, 4); and we know that it is the wolf that scatters what God would unite (John 10). Divisions among the children of God are not of God, but are of the flesh and the devil, and they please well a scoffing world. "He that soweth discord among brethren" is one of the seven abominations in God's sight, He hates him (Proverbs 6. 19), and no wonder, since Jesus died to make them one, and bring them into harmony with God.

What pleases God must be a joy to His children if they are in communion with Him. They do not love a solitary path. Love for their brethren, love in the Spirit is written on the fleshy tables of their hearts, and they seek the company of those they love. This is shewn in a striking way in the life of Paul, in whom all the thoughts of God for a saint and servant on earth were delineated. If he went forth as a missionary where no brethren were he took them with him. On one of these journeys he seemed likely to be left alone and he sent a commandment to Silas and Timothy to come to him *with all speed* (Acts 17). And if on his voyage as a prisoner to Rome he had not this companionship, what a joy it gave him when at ports of call some of them were waiting to greet him. He gave thanks to God at the sight of them, and took fresh courage.

It must be a grief of heart to God when any of His children begin to forsake the assembling of themselves together, and choose the company of the ungodly instead of that of their brethren, for that is a sure sign of spiritual decline and backsliding. I would urge upon all, and especially upon young Christians, to

seek the company of those who love and fear the Lord. God has set you in His family and family affections cannot be developed if one is isolated from his brethren or seeks the friendship of the world.

I know that there are those to whom the gatherings of God's children are impossible, invalids, aged saints, mothers of large families and others, what of these? There is an encouraging word for such in Psalm 69. "The Lord despiseth not His prisoners." He knows how to make up to such what they may lose by their isolation. Though He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy; and dwells in the high and holy place, yet He also dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isaiah 57. 15. It is a wonderful word, but as true as it is wonderful.

Yet these, the prisoners of the Lord, so greatly blessed by the company and care of the Lord will be interested in the gatherings together of the children of God they will be with them in spirit, for they will be in communion with Him.

We are waiting for the complete and final gathering, the gathering that will never be broken up—"Our gathering together unto Him." It is described in well-loved and oft quoted word. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and 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).

Making known to God.

A. M. Chambers.

I spread my needs before Thee—
Needs great and small—
Though to Thy perfect wisdom
Known are they all.
Yet Thou dost bid me name them
Each one to Thee;
Casting on Thee the burden
Too great for me.

And waiting in Thy presence,
How sure I find
The peace that Thou hast promised
Guarding my mind!
Doubts that like mighty mountains
Frowning fronts rear—
Lo! as I kneel before Thee—
All disappear!

The fears which like great waters
Sweep o'er my soul
Vanish, when I but leave things
To Thy control.
Grief that with sighs and weeping
Beset me long,
Finding love's tender comfort
Breaks into song!

Thus in Thy light, my Father,
Can I see light—
Know that my pathway shineth
Wondrously bright!
Bright with the love that spared
not
The best of heaven;
And shall not with Him freely
All things be given?

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. No. 3

A. J. Pollock

The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost

OUR Lord, just before He ascended to heaven, bid His disciples tarry at Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Spirit, which He described as the "promise of My Father" (Luke 24. 49), whereby they would be "endued with power from on high."

He then took His disciples to Mount Olivet, and from thence He ascended to heaven. As He went up, His hands, once pierced on the cross, were held up in blessing. Two angels in white then appeared, giving His disciples the cheering promise, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1. 11).

Thereupon the apostles returned to Jerusalem and abode in an upper room. With them were devoted women, including Mary, the mother of our Lord, and His brethren.

This is the only "tarrying" meeting acknowledged by Scripture. "Tarrying" meetings so-called, as practised to-day, are dangerous, for they are conducted in such a fashion as to open the door to Satanic delusions, and are a practical denial that the Spirit has come.

What a difference the presence of the Spirit made! The disciples behind closed doors, no power for testimony, waiting in prayer before God, tells its own tale. Once the Spirit was given how changed everything became.

In Leviticus 23 we find among the feasts of the Lord two that are

special to our subject. (1) The wave sheaf offering and (2) A new meat offering. What do they signify? First they both took place "on the morrow after the sabbath" (11, 16).

It must have been a surprise to the Israelites to hear this. The sabbath was their great day—every seventh day was "the sabbath of rest—an holy convocation (verse 3). Why then "the morrow after the sabbath?" What two great events happened on that day? for these feasts were all typical and prophetic.

In reply we ask, When did our Lord rise from the dead? The answer is, "On the morrow after the sabbath," that is the first day of the week. If the resurrection of our Lord had meant the continuation of Judaism, how appropriate would the sabbath have been for this resurrection. But rising "on the morrow after the sabbath" meant a new day was dawning. It is not that the ceremonial was set aside. It passed away because all the types and shadows were fulfilled in Christ. He is our true Passover (1 Corinthians 5. 7). He is our true sin-offering (2 Corinthians v. 21). He is our true Peace-offering (Ephesians v. 2). He is our true burnt-offering (Hebrews 10. 5-14). He is our true Manna (John 6. 33). He is our smitten Rock from which flows spiritual refreshment (1 Corinthians 10. 4). In short the shadows were "of things to come; but the body [*substance*] is of Christ" (Colossians 2. 17).

Every thing depends on the resurrection of Christ. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet

in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15. 17). Just as the wave sheaf was a first-fruits of the harvest, so in resurrection Christ has become the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15. 20).

In Leviticus 23 a second feast occurred "on the morrow after the sabbath," fifty days following the feast of the wave sheaf. The wave sheaf sets forth Christ in resurrection, what great event was it that followed fifty days after that great event? We know our Lord was forty days on this earth after resurrection, proving to His disciples—"fools and slow of heart to believe"—that He was indeed risen from the dead, for on that fact the survival of Christianity depended. Then the disciples were bidden to remain at Jerusalem till the promise of the Father should be fulfilled in the gift of the Holy Spirit. They assembled in an upper room till the day of Pentecost was fully come. Now the word Pentecost means the fiftieth day. So that means the disciples tarried in Jerusalem ten days after the ascension, which coincided with fifty days after the resurrection. Then the great gift of the Holy Spirit was poured forth.

Leviticus gives us the symbolical picture of this — "Two wave loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour, baken with leaven. . . the first-fruits of the Lord." May not the two loaves set forth the great triumph of Christianity, the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in spiritual blessing, the breaking down of the middle wall of partition at the cross, the abolishing of enmity, the making of twain, one new man, so making peace? (Ephesians 2. 13-22).

In short the day of Pentecost was the day of the church's birthday. It

had never existed before. Our Lord had declared upon the confession of of Peter that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, "upon this rock [The Person of the Son of God and the confession of it] I WILL [future] build My church" [called-out assembly] (Matthew 15. 18). It awaited His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and taking His place on high. The coming of the Holy Spirit was contingent on His returning to heaven. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you" (John 16. 7).

The Head must be in heaven before the body could be on earth. "The church. . . is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1. 22-23).

The coming of the Spirit was spectacular. This is in keeping with the tenor of Scripture. Whenever there is a new departure in the ways of God, the initiation of it is marked by the miraculous, the spectacular, and this is no exception. Hebrews 2. 3-4 tells us of the "so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and the wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." It is like the coronation at the beginning of a reign—spectacular but not repeated, or like the tolling of a church bell to announce the service, which ceases once the service begins.

The Holy Spirit's descent was accompanied by a sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the house where the disciples were assembled. Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them. The sound would set forth the irresistible power of the

Holy Spirit, the permeating power of His presence. "The cloven tongues like as of fire," speaks of the Holy Spirit calling for separation in heart and ways in the believers, who form the church of God. The cloven foot was one of the distinguishing features of the clean animals in the Old Testament dispensation. "Fire" speaks of the judgment of the flesh in the believer, and the Holy Spirit helping to this end. Separation from the world, and the judgment of the flesh are the two marks of the Christian walking in the Spirit. Alas! how much power is lost by world-bordering on the one hand and carnality on the other.

The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. As we examine the instances of being filled with the Spirit as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles we see that it was the special emergency of the Spirit for special service. On the Day of Pentecost about three thousand souls were added to the church. It is very significant that the last mention of being filled with the Spirit occurs in Acts 13. 52, scarcely half-way through the book. It is very ominous that this is so, showing how decline comes in when things are committed to man's responsibility. For all time we have the exhortation to us all, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5. 18).

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, they "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2. 4). Here was a band of unlettered men, some of them with hands horny from their fishing occupation, speaking the rude Galilean dialect, and behold! every one of the cosmopolitan multitude gathered from all parts of Europe. Asia and Africa heard the gospel in their own tongue. Blank

amazement was the result. The first presentation of the gospel message was thus accredited by divine power. No wonder that in these circumstances we read of three thousand being converted by Peter's sermon on that wonderful day of Pentecost.

Why speaking with tongues? We can see two good reasons at least. First it emphasised the world-wide aspect of Christianity. Judaism was confined to one little nation. Christianity was to know no geographical boundaries, no national frontiers, no distinction of class or caste. If the message had been confined to the Hebrew or Aramaic language, it might have been supposed that this was a continuation of Judaism in an improved form. But here was a new start altogether.

Another reason for the tongues was that here were men of one speech and that a Galilean dialect, who alone had the wonderful message of forgiveness and salvation. The strangers from all parts heard the wonderful message. That it should have been delivered in many tongues showed it was a universal gospel, a message for all mankind, a message of universality and urgency. The news of it would travel far and wide. The meaning of it would be discussed everywhere the travellers went. Those who received the message would carry it to their own circle and nation, and so it would spread far and wide.

And what was the permanent result? The climax of Peter's sermon was reached, when he, who had so lately denied His Lord, charged the nation, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2.

36). What an issue? The nation had treated Christ as a malefactor not fit to live. God had exalted Him to highest glory. They crucified Him. God made Him Lord and Christ—Lord, all should bow to Him, Christ, the anointed of God, the only Mediator of blessing to men. When this was brought home to them no wonder they were pricked in their heart, convicted of their sin and alive to the issue at stake. "About three thousand souls," repented, were baptized and received the Holy Ghost. They did not act now as mere

individuals, who had received spiritual blessing. They had that, but we read, They continued steadfastly in the Apostolic doctrine and fellowship, a walking together, its central expression being the breaking of bread, and prayer, the breath of the church, characterizing them. How helpful then to study the apostles' doctrine as we find it outlined in the epistles. This then was the wondrous descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the formation and initiation of the assembly of God on the earth.

"Many Members in one Body"

No member of the human body claims supremacy; every member fulfils its own function, and the same thing should mark the members of Christ's body. It is this that is meant by "the good and perfect and acceptable will of God," it is to carry out your divinely-appointed function in simplicity and dependence upon Him. Is this difficult? Yes, certainly it is if our own wills are at work and we are desirous of doing some great thing to be conspicuous, but it is the natural flow of the divine life within us if we have yielded our bodies to God as living sacrifices. To encompass all the saints in our affections, and to serve all as the opportunity occurs, and indeed to seek those opportunities, and in lowliness of mind and in dependence upon God to seek the growth and health of the body, this is the will of God for us.

Asking in His Name.

"... That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He may give it you" (John 15). This flows from the fact first of all of His sovereign choice; this is the source of all blessing. We did not choose Him, nor seek Him, He chose and sought us and saved us, and this with a great purpose in view, that we should go and bear fruit and that the fruit should remain. The fruit is His own life produced in us, the bringing forth of what He is where He is not. It is a high honour for which He has chosen us, and the higher the honour, the deeper the blessing, the more need of dependence and prayer. The sense of the greatness of the honour would compel us to draw near to the Father in prayer, and His name secures the answer. Where there is negligence in this, it is clear that the Lord's sovereign grace in choosing us and the purpose for which He has done it, are neither appreciated or known.

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

R. McCallum

Scriptures:—Genesis 12. 1-3; Exodus 19. 4-9; Deuteronomy 30. 1-8; 1st Samuel 8. 7; 2nd Samuel 7. 12-16; Galatians 3. 16 to end.

TO any one who reflects considerably, it comes as an astonishing thought that the Spirit of God has disposed probably of some 2,000 years of human history—or about one-third of the total from its inception to the present day—in eleven short chapters of the sacred record. The entire remainder of the Old Testament, and in consequence the great bulk of this revelation from God, is devoted to a second third of the history, not exactly of mankind, but of a people chosen of God. For, it is worth remembering, that while at the time of Abram's call there were many nationalities upon earth, mankind is up to this point regarded as of one stock, whereas from the epoch of this call, onward to the death of Christ, God regards mankind as divisible into two stocks—Jew and Gentile. With the ascension of Christ, the consequent descent of the Holy Spirit, and the formation of the church upon earth by the baptism of the Spirit, the classification has become three-fold—Jew, Gentile and the Church of God—and in the age to come the twofold distinction of Jew and Gentile will be re-established.

In the period under consideration we have then, the history of one nation, other nations coming under review only, incidentally and in virtue of their relationships with Israel. Of Israel the Psalmist could say "God has not dealt so with any nation." The Jew is indeed an enigma only explained in the light of the Scriptures while he is himself an authentication of the scriptural re-

ords as the Word of God. Even the infidel Renan was obliged to write "The philosophy of history fails utterly to account for the Jew."

The operation of the law of degeneracy, apparently relentless and inexorable in the case of all other ancient nations has left the Jew untouched. Despoiled, dispossessed, dispersed, distressed, the nation has nevertheless survived, and while failing to occupy that magnificent place of beneficent primacy among the nations to which obedience to God would have raised it, the influence of its people among the nations whither they have sought refuge, compels attention and demands explanation. The only reasonable explanation is provided by revelation, and it may be well here to review succinctly the Old Testament history of this unique nation. That history has its origin in the Call and obedience of Abraham, the first Hebrew. There follows the *Patriarchal Period*, that age of promise with which most of us have been made familiar at Sunday School, embracing the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and covering the period from the appearance of the God of glory to Abraham, to the servitude in Egypt. The lives of these patriarchs throb with human interest, and set forth various characteristics of God's elect in all ages—Abraham exhibiting faith and faithfulness, Isaac—sonship, Jacob—pilgrimage, and Joseph—suffering ending in exaltation and glory.

For some two and a half centuries the descendants of Jacob suffered the

ignominy and hardships of slavery in Egypt until God raised up that prophet, mighty in word and in deed, accrediting him by mighty works, to deliver His people. Under the leadership of Moses, God led the people out as a nation. This is the great event designated the *Exodus*. He led them out that He might lead them in to the land promised to Abraham and his seed in an unconditional covenant. And if to-day we see the Holy City trodden underfoot of the Gentiles, it is only until the times of the Gentiles is completed. There is in the purposes of God an inseparable connection between His chosen people Israel and that land of promise.

After 40 years of wandering God brought them again to the very point of failure, to Kadesh-Barnea bordering upon the land and prepared their hearts making them willing to enter upon their possessions. They entered under Joshua and in the land there followed the phase of their national life known as the *Times of the Judges*. The government was in fact a theocracy, administered at first through elders, but subsequently in the days of national declension and when the enemies of Israel made their power felt, exercised by men of courage and ability raised up as special deliverers and known as Judges. Some fifteen of these ruled, from Othniel to Samuel the prophet-judge and including such well-known names as Gideon, Barak, Samson and Deborah, a woman.

Influenced by the nations round about, the people became dissatisfied with an invisible King, and approached Samuel with the desire that a king should be set over them. "But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us.

And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Thus there was inaugurated *The Monarchial Period*, commencing with the reign of Saul and reaching its highest glory under David and Solomon.

In the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, the people revolted against the burden of taxation, and there commenced the period of the *Divided Monarchy*, two tribes remaining loyal to the throne of David and retaining Jerusalem as capital and the temple as the centre of their worship: ten tribes breaking way under Jeroboam to form the Northern Kingdom, his seat being at Shechem and centres of idolatry being established at Bethel and at Dan. The history of the divided Monarchy is the story of endless feuds between Israel and Judah; it is the sordid story of gross idolatry leading to the captivity of Israel and the servitude of Judah. It is a period the darkness of which is only relieved by the illustrious ministry of the prophets.

With the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in the days of Jehoiachim, King of Judah, there began that period known in Scripture as *The Times of the Gentiles*. This period, continuing until this present hour, has served to display all the God-like qualities of man and all his bestial propensities. Every form of human government from the most absolute monarchy to complete democracy has been tried and has been found wanting, and the end will come as with a flood, when the stone cut out without hands smites the image, as seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and it falls in ruin.

After seventy years a remnant of Jews under Nehemiah and Ezra returned to rebuild the city and the temple. The remnant was never wholly free from Gentile domination, but remained in the land until the dispersion under the Roman Titus in the year 70 A.D. following their re-

jection of Christ their proffered King. The history of the Jew from then onward to the present hour, scattered, peeled, persecuted, has been the literal fulfilment of the prophecies of cursing and blasting consequent upon disobedience to God.

(To be continued)

Our Great High Priest.

Christ's present, unchanging love to us is shewn in His priestly service for us. It is because He loves us that He makes intercession for us, and it is not in the mass that He intercedes but individually. "I have prayed for *thee*," He said to Peter. Two things mark our great High Priest—strength and affection. These were typified in the breastplate and shoulder plates of the high priest of old upon which the names of Israel's tribes were inscribed. With Christ there is affection for each one of us, and strength to bear us home.

Peace.

There is no place so full of peace as heaven—no jar there; myriads of worshippers all in concord, while there are a thousand harmonies round the centre of God's glory.

*Every knee to Jesus bending
All the mind in heaven is one.*

The soul in communion with God will live in peace. There is nothing more important to meet the turmoil of the world, than getting into this spirit of peace.

Nothing keeps the soul in peace as settled confidence in God, without this a man will be continually excited, in haste, and full of anxiety.

You may have found peace of conscience about your sins through the blood of the cross, but your communion and *peace of heart* will be destroyed if you like anything that God does not like.

He says "*My peace* I leave with you." Have I earned it? No, He has earned it for me. Mark the extent of the peace, *My peace*—How thoroughly well He knew what He had that He could give to His disciples and to us.

J.N.D.

TELL IT TO THE CHILDREN.

J. T. Mawson.

“And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say, “What mean ye by this service?” That ye shall say, “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed and worshipped” (Exodus 12. 26, 27).

IT should be an encouragement to us all, and especially to those who have families, to know that God thinks of the children and desires that they should hear of Him and His saving grace and power. Whether in the old dispensation of the passover or in this in which the Lord’s Supper has superceded the passover it is the same, the children of His people have an importance in His thoughts that is often overlooked.

So much would depend upon the way in which the Israelites looked forward to the passover; if they were eager for it, and celebrated it with reverence and fervour the children would most surely be interested and ask, Why? If it were treated with indifference, or as an irksome ordinance they would not. But when the interest was aroused, what an enthralling story the parents would have to tell of God’s care for them, and how He delivered them from slavery and made them a free people. Their homes on those occasions would have a joyous, evangelical ring about them, and songs of praise to their Redeemer-God would break forth, in which the children’s voices would join. The interest of the children would revive and stimulate the interest of the parents and re-awaken their gratitude to God.

And since Israel’s deliverance from Egypt was but a shadow of the greater deliverance that God has wrought for us, and the Lord’s Sup-

per is the commemoration of the way that He has done it, ought not this “telling to the children” to be a matter of even greater importance to us? One thing is sure, that which vitally affects the parents will make an impression upon the children. If the children see that the Lord’s Supper is highly prized and prepared for by the parents they will want to know the meaning of it, and what a story it is the parents have to tell them. “This is My body which is given for you. . . My blood which is shed for you.” “This do in remembrance of Me.” The whole story of the great love of our Lord and Saviour lies in those words, and the story must be told from generation to generation, and how it warms the hearts of parents to see the eager way in which the children listen to it. Thus the spirit of gratitude and worship which must go with the Supper is carried from the assembly to the home, and the children will realise in the gladness of it how good a thing it is to be redeemed by the Lord, and that the Lord who redeemed the parents does not overlook them.

If on the other hand this matter is treated as a formal thing, done because it is usual to do it, and other things are looked upon as of greater importance, the children will be adversely affected. The meeting will be an irksome occasion to them and they will come to dislike it thoroughly with sad results.

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE No 1.

Summarised Notes on Monthly Bible Readings in London (Sutton, January 9th).

PAUL'S prayer in chapter 1 and that of Epaphras in chapter 4 give us the subject of the Epistle. It is *The will of God*. Paul prays that the saints at Colosse might be filled with the knowledge of it, and Epaphras laboured fervently in prayer that they might stand perfect and complete in it.

The will of God in this Epistle is not the same as the will of the Lord as we get it in James 4 .13-15. There it is the Lord's control over our individual lives. Each one of us ought to recognise the Lord's rights over us and acknowledge Him in all our ways, and continually confess our dependence upon Him. The whole tenor of our lives ought to be a sincere "If the Lord will." But the will of God in this Epistle is different to that; it is His great purpose for His own glory; what He has willed and will bring to pass in spite of every hostile power. He cannot be thwarted in His will.

We see the will of God in its completeness in verses 19-20 of this 1st chapter. "For in Him (Jesus Christ) all the fulness (of the Godhead) was pleased to dwell, and *by Him to reconcile all things to Itself*, having made peace by the blood of His cross—*by Him, whether the things on earth or the things in the heavens*" (New Trans.). That is the great end in view, everything in earth and in heaven is to be brought into reconciliation to the Godhead, all under the headship of Christ.

This is beyond the elementary Epistles of Romans or Thessalonians, or such corrective Epistles as

Galatians and Corinthians. It is not here the question of our need being met by God's infinite grace, but what He has willed for His own glory and satisfaction, about which He would draw us into fellowship with Himself.

We might notice the spiritual condition of those to whom the Epistle was written. They were saints and faithful brethren in Christ (verse 2). The gospel they had heard and believed had brought forth fruit in them; they had *faith* in Christ Jesus, *love* to all the saints, and the *hope* which was laid up for them in heaven (verses 4-5). The three Christian graces, faith, love and hope, were evident features of their life. They were not like the Galatians who were substituting the works of the law for faith in Christ Jesus; or like the Corinthians who were putting cliques and parties in the place of love to all the saints, or like the Hebrews who were letting slip the heavenly hope.

Only living things grow and bring forth fruit, and since the word of the truth of the gospel was doing this among them it proved how alive it was. It was no mere dry doctrine, or correct creed that they had embraced, it was a living word that had laid hold of them. The word of God is quick and powerful; it liveth and abideth for ever.

Epaphras had declared the results of the gospel amongst them to Paul, and had particularly emphasised their love in the Spirit. This is the only time that the Spirit is mentioned in the Epistle and is impor-

tant. They had learnt and were holding fast what the Corinthians were forgetting, that the Spirit had bound up all the saints into one body. Their love was from that standpoint. It was love in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Love in the flesh was a sad feature in the church at Corinth, they were acting towards each other according to their natural inclinations, choosing their company, and consorting with those they liked naturally and who thought exactly as they did and pleased them. "Ye are carnal and walk as men" is the charge the Holy Spirit brings against them. Love in the Spirit flows out to all the saints of God and receives those whom Christ has received to the glory of God. It is divine love in the saints. It is a question whether it is any use ministering Colossian truth to those who are in the Corinthian state.

Because they were going on well the Apostle prays for them. We should have thought that they would not have needed this as much as those did who were going on badly, but they evidently did. Paul gives a place to prayer in the Ephesian and Colossian Epistles that we do not find in the others. Here in Colossians "He had great conflict for them" (chapter 2), and Epaphras laboured fervently in prayer for them (chapter 4). He knew that a subtle foe was bent upon spoiling and beguiling them, and that nothing but their intelligent entrance into the will of God would preserve them.

The Epistle is preventive. These brethren had not been drawn away from the truth, but they were in danger. The devil's object was to displace Christ as pre-eminent in their thoughts. In all things He must have the pre-eminence, and the

enemies ruse was to induce them to add philosophy or ritual to their faith with the idea that it would be enriched thereby. So it is that the Spirit unfolds the glories of Christ in this Epistle as nowhere else, that they and we might learn that nothing can be added to Him. What is the best that man can bring in comparison with the fulness of the Godhead? That fulness dwells in Him.

The things for which Paul prays for them would make them very practical Christians and arm them against the enemies' wiles. If they were filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding they would be no more *babes*, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine; they would be men in communion with God's will and fired with zeal for His great purpose. "In all wisdom and spiritual understanding" shews how truly they might enter into God's thoughts.

"Walking worthy of the Lord" would fit in with the latter part of the Epistle; from verse 17 of chapter 3 *the Lord* is prominent. We walk worthy of the Lord as we fulfil the relationships of life as pleasing Him. "*Fruitful in every good work*" stresses that it is not God's intention that we should be theologians, but practical Christians, like the Lord whom we confess, and "*growing by the true knowledge of God,*" indicates the way by which we are preserved from chronic babyhood and stagnation. The knowledge of God is to our spiritual being what food is to us physically. Of course God is only known in Christ.

"Strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory" should make us think; especially as

it is not to make us able for great deeds, but unto all *patience and long suffering with joyfulness*. God's glory will be fully manifested when He subdues everything to His will and reconciles all things in heaven and earth to Him. But meanwhile the power of His glory would work in us, enabling us to wait with patience for that time, to be long-suffering towards those who oppose God's will and to do it with joyfulness. God endures with much long-suffering those who oppose themselves to Him and we are to be strengthened to be like Him.

Then follow great things for which the Apostle gives thanks unto the Father, for He had graciously wrought in these saints. He *had made them fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints* in light. Not by the judicial clearance which was theirs through the work of Christ only, but by a work in them, they were washed and clean every whit; a new nature had been given to them suited to the light, they were born of God, upon them had been put the best robe. We have not entered into the inheritance yet, but we are as fit for it through the work of

Christ and the Father's grace as though we were already in it.

Who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." What a translation that is! Out of the oppression and bondage of darkness into the liberty and joy of the kingdom of the Son of His love. The Son of His love came forth to reveal what God is, and it is under His authority that we have come. There His commandments are not grievous, His yoke is easy. There is freedom in that kingdom. "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed."

Then "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." This is the basis and beginning. It seems to be like Revelation 1. 5. As soon as the Lord Jesus Christ is named there is a burst of praise. "To Him who loves us and has washed us from our sins in His blood." Here the Son of His love is our Redeemer. We must think of this if we think of Him. It is in Him that we have complete deliverance from the bondage in which we were, and that deliverance involves the forgiveness of our sins.

"Without Me ye can do Nothing."

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15).

Nothing simpler than the fact outwardly, nothing surer in our experience than that it is so inwardly. He and He only, is the dwelling place of the soul in this world of snare and danger, in this desert where no water is. Make Him our resource and our object, and the sap of life flows without hindrance, and fruit is borne. Without Him no teaching avails, and all religious excitement fails; bring Him in, confide in Him, and no matter what the difficulties, the opposition, He sustains the heart, and fruit bearing follows.

There can be no failure in Him, but it is easy for us to fail in dependence and become self-sufficient. To abide in Him supposes distrust of self and cleaving to Him, counting at all times upon Him.

THE GREAT HALLELUJAH CHORUS.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 146—150)

THERE is very much encouragement for us in the assurance that as the outcome of all God's ways with men there will arise a great outburst of praise. There will be a chorus of Hallelujahs in which all creation will join, as is made very manifest in the last five Psalms. It is true that in all their intricacies "His ways" are "past finding out" (Rom. 11, 33); it is true also that they involve much trial and suffering and exercise for His saints as is shown in detail in Psalms 1—145, yet the end of it all shall be for the highest glory of God and the highest blessing of men. As His ways reach their close, and the bright millennial scene unfolds itself, the universe will reverberate with the great Hallelujah chorus.

The five closing Psalms form a group by themselves, and each begins and ends with the word, Hallelujah, rendered in our Authorized Version as, "Praise ye the Lord." Each Psalm calls for praise, yet each furnishes different reasons why the praise should be rendered to Him; and there seems to be an increasing fervour in the call until the climax is reached in Psalm 150. The earth and Israel are mainly in view, as befits these Divinely given poems which date from a thousand years before Christ came, yet incidentally they introduce many a thing which we can in the happiest way apply to ourselves.

In Psalm 146 the call for praise is addressed to those who have learned two things: on the one hand that man, even those who are princes, are not to be relied upon; on the other, that it is a blessed thing for men to have God for their help, and

to find their hope in Him. In verse 4, "*the son of man,*" does not refer to Christ. It is rather, "Put not confidence in nobles, in *a son of man,* in whom there is no salvation" (New Trans.).

Most of us find that it takes us a long time to pass the vote of no confidence in man. It is not particularly difficult to distrust one's fellows. Indeed many of us may feel a good bit of sympathy with the Psalmist who said in his haste or agitation, "All men are liars" (Psalm 116. 11). The difficulty is to lose all confidence in the man who is nearer to us than any other—oneself. The point here does not seem to be the wickedness of man but his helplessness. The best of men may be in view, entertaining the kindest of thoughts. Yet suddenly he dies, and in that very day his thoughts perish. It is folly to put the weight of our trust on such a one as that.

But what help and hope we have in God! The rest of the Psalm presents Him to us in His character and actions. To begin with, He is the Creator: to end with, He will reign for ever. In between these two things we learn that He keeps truth for ever; He executes righteous judgment; He extends mercy in various ways to the needy, while turning the way of the wicked upside down. Who would not set his hope in a God who bears such a character as that? In this God will we trust and, when He reigns in Zion unto all generations, Hallelujahs will fill the earth. In anticipation of His reign our hearts are saying Hallelujah today.

The Hallelujahs of Psalm 147 are called forth more particularly by

God's dealings with Israel and Jerusalem. His glory and might expressed in creation are contemplated, yet all that seems to be a background against which the kindness of His dealings with His people shines the more brightly. There will be the building up of Jerusalem and the gathering of the outcasts of Israel at the beginning of the millennial age. Then it is that He will cast down the wicked and lift up the meek, healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds.

The grace that is expressed in such actions is enhanced to our minds when we remember His greatness. He can tell the number of the stars. Some six thousand stars can be detected by human eyes in both north and south hemispheres. Long since, this number has been expanded into millions by the aid of telescopic powers. With the monster instruments in use to-day the astronomers begin to talk not merely of stars, but of galaxies of stars running into millions; and of unimaginable depths of space which can only be measured in "light-years," that is, the distance that light, travelling at 186,000 miles a second, covers in a year. Our God has counted all the stars, for He made them; and not only so but to each He has given a name. Now the names that God gives mean something, because they describe the person or thing that He names. Every star is distinctive: He knows its distinctive feature and He names it accordingly. So great a God as that is ours.

But if verse 4 presents the wonder of His *greatness*, verse 3 shows us the wonder of His *grace*. The God who names all the stars stoops to heal wounds and heal broken hearts upon earth. The broken hearts, like the stars, are beyond our counting;

yet we judge that what is contemplated here is "the broken and contrite heart," of Psalm 51. 17, and that is a much rarer thing than a heart merely broken by the trials and adversities of this sinful world.

By-and-by Israel will have the broken and contrite heart, when they look upon their Messiah whom they have pierced, and then it is that they will be gathered together and Jerusalem built up. While we wait for that day God is healing broken hearts by the gospel of His grace. He lifts up the meek by the gospel. What pleases Him is not mere animal strength but the right moral condition, as verses 10 and 11 show; and that is why He has shewed His word unto Jacob, according to v. 19.

The possession of His word and statutes and judgments was one of the great privileges conferred upon Israel; for we are told in Romans 3. 2, that one of the chief advantages they had was that "unto them were committed the oracles of God." He had not dealt in this manner with any other nation, and when His word at last has its proper effect upon them, producing the meekness and brokenness of heart that He desires, they will be blessed and break forth in a heartfelt Hallelujah. Through God's goodness His word is available for us to-day, and if it properly humbles us we shall be blessed and enabled to take Hallelujah upon our lips.

In verse 18 God is said to send out His word and melt the snow and ice; in verse 19 He is said to shew His word unto Jacob, in order that the melting power of His word might be experienced by him. Jacob was his name according to nature, whereas Israel was his name according to God's grace conferred upon him.

Alas, their hearts were not melted, and when our Lord Jesus was here He had to look round upon men with holy anger, "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (Mark 3. 5). The day is coming however when the true Israel of God will have their hearts melted; then they will be marked by meekness and the fear of the Lord, and their broken hearts will be healed.

It is very possible for us to misuse the word of the gospel just as Jacob misused the word concerning His statutes and judgments. We may pride ourselves on the light that shines upon us, and our hearts remain cold. If however we are melted by the truth that we know, our state will be pleasing to God.

To recapitulate then, Psalm 146 voices Hallelujahs which spring from our turning away from feeble man to trust in a God, whose righteousness and mercy and power are known. Psalm 147 utters Hallelujahs based upon His word running very swiftly upon earth to accomplish the melting and humbling of human heart, the necessary moral preparation for His intervention in healing, in gathering His people, and in building up Jerusalem.

Psalm 148 follows with Hallelujahs which seem to reverberate throughout creation. It contemplates the glorious praise which will fill the millennial scene. Verses 1 to 6 are occupied with the praises that will fill the heavens. The Lord is to be praised *from* the heavens and *in* the heights. We can hardly dismiss this as being a poetic allusion to the angels, for they are specifically mentioned in the next verse. We venture to think it is another of those Old Testament sayings purposely left vague for the moment. Now that

we have the added light of the New Testament we can see that God will have a mighty host of heavenly saints in their appointed place when the millennial age is reached, and that we through grace shall be among them. An innumerable host will be there to praise the Lord from the heavens.

Then the angels will praise Him, and all the hosts of those mighty spiritual beings that are spoken of as "principality, and power, and might, and dominion" (Eph. 1. 21), and after that the sun, moon and stars and all else that has been created and established to fill the heavens. So we see in these verses just that which is revealed in a much fuller way in Revelation 5. Moreover we see that just the same order is observed, for in that chapter we have first the worship of the heavenly saints, represented by the twenty-four elders; then the voice of many angels round about the throne; and then every creature joins in the praise.

The creatures who praise are said in Revelation 5 to be, "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea." So things terrestrial as well as things celestial will join in the chorus. In our Psalm the things celestial are contemplated in verses 3 and 4, the things terrestrial in verses 7 to 12. The word "dragons," in verse 7 is rendered by some, "sea-monsters," so the sea as well as the earth is in view in the Psalm as it is in Revelation.

The saints are not yet planted in the heavens, glorified in the likeness of Christ, as they will be. They are on earth amongst the kings and people and princes and judges, of whom verse 11 speaks, and their Hallelujahs are faint and feeble as yet. The kings and people are not

yet brought into subjection to God, and all is disorder. The root of the trouble is there, for we have to confess that there is nothing much wrong with the snow and wind, with the mountains or trees or beasts or fowl, apart from the blight that the fall of man has placed upon them. When Satan is cast out of the *heavens* any blight that exists there will be gone; and when man is set right on *earth* the curse will be lifted off the face of creation.

The blight will be gone and the curse lifted when, as verse 13 tells us, the name of the Lord alone shall be excellent and His glory revealed. We know how that will come to pass. Psalm 8 had told us. It will be when the blessed Son of Man is visibly manifested with everything under His feet. Then the shoutings will wake the heavens! Hallelujah! And again, Hallelujah!

In that day the saints will be exalted, and Israel His people will be in their appointed place on earth as the people who peculiarly and specially are "near unto Him." Again we can say, Hallelujah!

In Psalm 149 the great King has been manifested in His glory, and the effect of this is twofold, as verses 2 and 4 show us. The children of Zion are joyful in their King, and the Lord takes pleasure in His people. In that day Israel will have been brought into the reconciliation of the Cross. We have been brought into it *now*, as we are told in Colossians 1. 21: they will brought into it *then*. But in both cases the effect of it is the same—God can find His delight in His people, and they find their delight in Him.

How this will work out we can see in the latter part of the Psalm. First,

it will mean salvation for God's people, and that in the fullest sense. They will be in a fit state of heart and mind to receive the salvation when they can be described as "the meek," and the salvation they will receive will beautify them. To-day God's earthly people—the Jews—are neither meek nor beautiful, if we consider them in a national way; nor were any of us in our natural condition. If there is anything about any of us that is beautiful, it is the fruit of the salvation that has reached us. When Israel at last is humbled and meek she will be like her King, who was meek and brought salvation (See Zech. 9. 9; Matt. 21. 5). His salvation will have beautified her.

Salvation will be like a vestibule to the glory of which the next verse speaks. There will be a glory on earth as well as glory in the heavens, and in it the saints will exult and be very joyful. Their joy will be expressed in song and in the high praises of God.

Verse 6 is indeed remarkable. We may find it difficult to put together the high praises of God on the lips and a two-edged sword of vengeance in the hand; and regard the two things as quite incompatible. But that is because we are not Israel but Christians. At the beginning of the millennial age Israel is going to be used of God in the subjugating of rebellious peoples. We are called to set forth the grace of God before that age dawns, and so the only two-edged sword that we are called upon to wield is the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. But having said this much, we have also to remember that we too shall have our part in judging the world in the coming age, as 1 Corinthians 6. 2 tells us; though this is not in the way of executing vengeance, but rather of ad-

ministering the affairs of the world to come in a righteous manner.

"This honour have all His saints," is what our Psalm says. It is an honour to be used of God in any way, whether in grace or in judgment. But very specially is it an honour to be used in grace. This honour is ours to-day. Oh! that we esteemed it at its true value.

So in this Psalm we have salvation, glory, joy, praise and judgment. No wonder that it too ends with, Hallelujah!

Psalm 150 brings this series to a finish. There is in it only one reference to what God has done: God Himself in His excellent greatness is before the Psalmist's mind. This is of course always the great ultimate theme of praise and worship.

God is to be praised "in" certain things: — *in* His sanctuary, *in* the firmament of His power, "for" or *in* His mighty acts. The first indicates His inner dwelling place: the second the vast expanse of creation where-in His power operates: the third the actual doings in which His power is expressed. In the world to come Israel will have the sanctuary of God established in their midst, and there they will praise Him. We shall be amongst the heavenly saints. Our part will lie in the heavenly city of Revelation 21 and 22, where "the Lord Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." What praise will ascend from the sanctuary on earth! What endless praises from the sanctuary in the heavens!

In the firmament of His power dwell those bright unfallen spirits, who will as ever be filled with His praise, though they cannot strike the

note of redemption as we do. They will have been the delighted observers of His mighty acts, not only acts of creation but acts of GRACE, which will provoke their Hallelujahs; and yet,

"One string there is of sweetest tone,
Reserved for sinners saved by grace;
'Tis sacred to one class alone,
And touched by one peculiar race."

As observers however they will praise Him to the full.

He is not only to be praised "in" but "*according to*" His excellent greatness. Now, who is sufficient for this? The creature, however highly blessed and exalted, can never rise up to the level of the Creator, and yet doubtless there will be an adequate uprising of praise in that day; such praise as will be satisfying to the heart of God.

The following verses show us Israel praising their God "with" all kinds of instruments of music. These instruments, the work of men's fingers, are used to-day, like all the other works of their fingers, for their own gratification and praise. Then they will be wholly for God. But even when they are thus used to His glory, they will be but lifeless instruments, men may praise *with* them, but the instruments themselves do not praise.

Praise can only spring from those that have the "breath" of *life*. In the coming age at long last there will be an adequate outburst of praise to the Lord, proceeding from everything that hath breath. The curse will be gone, and praise will fill the scene. The Hallelujah chorus will be universal and complete.

It is ours to catch the spirit of it even to-day.

NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

T. Oliver.

No. 3: Ramoth in Gilead

THE name "Ramoth" means "elevation and depressions" or "ups and downs." Very soon after the young Christian starts his pathway as a stranger and pilgrim, he feels disappointed with himself. The happy day of which he had sung so lustily in the glow of the new affection seems to have become clouded over in the experience of his soul. In presenting this section of the subject there would seem to be three distinct phases of the matter.

(1) With reference to *spiritual apprehension* it is often a long time before we arrive at the conclusion expressed thus, "For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing ——— for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. . 17-19). Until that is formed as a distinct conviction in the soul we are constantly being disappointed with ourselves. As every wave of expectancy lifts us up we find ourselves in the succeeding trough of disappointment. It is only when we come to the end of our looking the wrong way, in the exclamation "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 24), then immediately our eyes are turned to behold the Deliverer, and there bursts from our enraptured lips "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." No one but He can help us. There is great advancement in the realisation of that fact!

(2) With reference to *dignity and philosophic esteem*, we see Saul of Tarsus, the choice man of his time, making an ignominious exit from Damascus as he was let down over the wall in a basket (2 Cor. 11. 33).

What a striking contrast that scene must have presented to those who had witnessed his approach to Damascus in the prime of cultured manhood, the object of admiration on every hand. A curious freak of fortune indeed had evidently intervened. But the man who was "let down" was the same man who was "caught up," according to the record immediately following, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. . . . caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12. 2). Whether in the body or not was quite irrelevant to the question, Because "a man in Christ" signifies a condition outside that of responsibility. He heard unspeakable words. These were not unlawful words in the sense of being dreadful, but in the sense of the inability of human language to express them.

Obviously that unique experience must have tended to exalt the apostle. So to prevent his being exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations there was given to him an intelligible counterbalance; i.e., a thorn in the flesh. It was evidently something which the apostle thought he could do well without, because he besought the Lord thrice to have it removed. However, the answer received was "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." So as the strange enigmatic scroll of the Lord's providential dealings with him became opened out, and on his realising the great gain of the process, he gladly acquiesced in the administration. Most gladly therefore he boasted in his infirmities rather than in his exaltation, that the power of Christ might rest on him.

So he began to take pleasure in the deficits of life, viz. infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses, for Christ's sake. In secular affairs, men do not like to have discounts taken from their substance. They all want to be on the premium line at compound interest. But that is the experimental direction which leads to what he unfolded earlier in the epistle as "we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor. 4. 7). What was that treasure? The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Subsequent to the passage was the apparent paradox of being troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed. That is fully explained by the apprehension of its context.

(3) With reference to *material supplies*, in the Old Testament the man who was true to God as a general rule was blessed in a temporal way. His harvests were bountiful. His flocks and herds multiplied greatly. But when we come to the New Testament we find that rule by no means of universal application. Indeed the Philippian Epistle was written by the apostle from a Roman dungeon. So that his loyalty to the Lord had not advanced his circumstances! A Roman prison was a wretched place, well calculated to break down the strongest will. Yet we do not find the writer of the epistle despondent or in a grumbling mood. He said, "Not that I speak in respect of want for I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." "... I can do

all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 11-13). the expression 'to be content' is used in the classics with reference to a country not requiring imports. That is a phantasy in secular affairs conjured up by political philosophers to the present detriment of the nations. Recent events have proved that no nation or individual can live to itself or himself. It is only in Christianity that all the supplies come from another region. It was no hallucination of a diseased imagination which led the apostle to be so confident about his resources.

Later on he wrote "my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by (in) Christ Jesus." Now observe he does not say "our God" he says "my God." That is the One he had proved amply sufficient for himself. But he was not concerned about himself. He was concerned about the needs of the Philippians. In the old dispensation the man of God had at his hand the cattle on a thousand hills; because the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof. But the Apostle invoked help from a far more transcendent sphere than that of creation. He appealed to the wealth of God in glory in Christ Jesus, i.e., the sphere of blessing and privilege.

The Christian blessings are all spiritual and so cannot be counted. The evangelical hymn which invites the Christian to count his blessings, may be good sentiment, but is futile. Simply because blessings and statistical method are in different regions altogether.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Women's Ministry.

"As scripture places a difference between a virgin and a wife (1 Cor. 7. 34), and speaks of women praying and prophesying (1 Cor. 11. 5), it is noted that in the passages forbidding women to speak it is always coupled with those married (1 Cor. 14. 34; and 1 Tim. 11. 12 and 15) and in view of Acts 21. 9 would it appear that a virgin should be allowed to speak in the assembly?

"I should be grateful of your help as I am completely ignorant of the original Greek and the only solution I seem to be able to offer is that the Greek word for women must include unmarried as well as married women."—GILBRALTAR.

THERE is no difference made between married and unmarried women in 1 Cor. 14. 34-35. The contrast is between men and women. The men are to give audible expression to the mind of the Lord in the churches, and the women to be in silence; and it requires more grace and lowly submission to the will of the Lord to be in silence than to speak, consequently the reward will be greater in the day when the Lord says "Well done," not prominent and eloquent servant, but "good and faithful servant." As stressed in *Answers to Correspondents* in our February Issue, it is *in the churches of God when gathered together* that this injunction is in force. These assemblies are where the Lord's will is to be supreme; they are where His rights are to be maintained—rights that were denied Him when He was in the world. They are not gatherings where the rights of men or the rights of women are to be maintained, or where we can practice our own notions as to what is best. All thus gathered together should be subject to Him, owning His authority alone. In this 1 Cor. 14. His commandments are clearly given and one of them is that the women be in silence. Even if we do not understand why, we should not set the commandment aside, and no one who is spiritual will. His commandments are given to be obeyed (verse 37).

As we have said before, this does not imply any inferiority in women, but it shews in figure the place of subjection that the church occupies in respect to Christ. Nor must we infer from it that the men are more spiritual-minded than the women. When the Lord was on earth the women were always in advance of the men in spiritual intuition at times of crisis. It was not a man but of a woman who anointed Him for His burial, and of whom He said, "Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her" (Matthew 26).

The woman stood by the cross, when only John of the disciples dared to stand with them. They went forth to His sepulchre and were the first to know of His resurrection, and to the Magdalene was the most wonderful message ever carried by mortals committed by the Lord Himself. He valued the devotion of the women to His person and He does still, and this devotion of heart and faithful obedience to His word is more to Him than the most spectacular service and has greater influence in His work in the world than we imagine. But be it noted He did not choose a woman to be an apostle among the twelve, nor did His apostles, though full of the Holy Ghost, appoint one of them to prominent office in the

church, though we may be sure that many of them like Pheobe, served the church in a way that the men could not, and their record is on high. So it is to-day. But the woman cannot rightly fill the man's place, nor can the man fill the woman's.

If we let one word of the Lord

slip, why not another? Wise are they, we believe, who take the word of the Lord as it stands, and look to Him for grace to obey it. Thus may we count upon His approval, "Thou hast a little strength, *and hast kept My word*, and hast not denied My Name" (Rev. 3. 8).

Quickening the Mortal Body.

In September, 1936, No. of **Scripture Truth** there is a short article, "A two-fold lack," at the end of which the writer quotes Romans 8. 11. Does he mean to imply that this quickening is by resurrection as I have sometimes heard it preached? If so, I think he is wrong, and does not see that the quickening is in contrast to the body being dead because of sin (verse 10). The one is dead towards God and the other is quickened towards God. Mortal bodies will not be raised at the resurrection but bodies of glory."—N.Z.

WE think you will change your view of this passage if you consider it more carefully. It looks on to the future. It is not "hath quickened," but "shall also quicken." It is not hath quickened you, that is Eph. 2, but "shall also quicken your mortal bodies." The body is the subject. First, "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," Why the personal name? Because He was raised up because of who and what He was. It was not possible that He should be held by the power of death (Acts 2. 24), but the passage continues, "He that raised up *Christ* from the dead." Why the change from Jesus to Christ? Because while He must stand alone as Jesus in all His personal perfection. He is also the Christ, and as the *Christ* in resurrection He is the Head of a new race; there are those who are in Christ, and as He, the Head, was raised up, so must all who are of His race be raised up also. "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 24).

But it does not say, shall raise up your *dead* bodies, but, shall quicken

your *mortal* bodies. Why is this? The mortal body is not a dead body but one liable to death. The Christian is not taught to look for death but for the coming of the Lord, when if alive and remaining he shall be caught up (1 Thess. 4); his mortal body shall be quickened when the dead are raised. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15. 51). "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3. 21). It is to this that the passage refers, but the power that will bring about this mighty change is the power of resurrection; and it will be wrought by the Spirit of the God of resurrection, who dwells in the Christian now, proof that he is already quickened as to his soul while waiting for the quickening of his mortal body. It will no longer be a mortal body when quickened, for mortality will be swallowed up of life (2 Cor. 5. 4, and 1 Cor. 15. 53-54). In Romans 12 where the Christians present privilege and responsibility is described it is simply "your bodies," and not *mortal* bodies.

The Non-fruit bearing Branches.

"In your booklet 'Fruit of God' you say the non-bearing branches of the vine are 'mere professors.' I am not clear as to this. I was under the impression that they were Christians whose lives were barren as regards bringing forth fruit. Though I quite recognize that if a man does not act like a Christian we are not justified in calling him one"—
TORONTO.

WE admit that the passage in question is not the easiest to explain. But the difficulty arises chiefly from carrying the figure too far, and viewing all the branches as being saved souls in vital contact with Christ. It is not that at all, but the manifestation of true divine life in those who are truly Christ's. Fruit for God is the proof that that life is there no matter what the appearance may be. Judas Iscariot was as a disciple as any other to all appearance, but he was cast out. Those disciples that are spoken of in John 6. 66, started well and appeared to be real disciples, but they did not abide in Christ, they turned back from Him. There are some referred to in Hebrews 6 whom it was impossible to renew to repentance. They had joined in with the Christians, sharing their portion and pursuits, but they did not abide in Christ, they turned away from Him and apostatised to their old positions as Jews; they were no longer in the Vine; and the same thing is said of them as is said of lifeless branches in John 15. 6. "Whose end is to be burned." They perished, for they never were vitally in Christ.

If you can see the significance of the figure, the passage will be clearer to you. It was not a new figure, as, for instance, was the body of Christ. Israel is spoken of as the Vine. (Psalm 80. 8; Isaiah 5. 2, etc.; and Matthew 21. 33-39). God had

separated the nation from all other nations that they might yield fruit to Him in response to His culture, they brought forth nothing but wild grapes, and consequently they were set aside and rejected. The profession of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ has taken the place of Israel in the world, for the purpose that failed in them, to bring forth fruit for God. Here we learn that the source of all true life for God and the power for bearing fruit is not in the branches but in Christ. He is the true Vine; only in cleaving to Him and in continual dependence upon Him can fruit be produced by us. Without Him we can do nothing, but fruit is certain if there is this abiding in Him, and all those who are vitally in Him will bear fruit. Notice the change from "Ye" to "a man" in verse 6. It is not "if ye abide not in Me," but "if a man."

Yet the Lord's solemn words are needed by us all, for we are prone to carelessness and self-sufficiency, not that any true disciple should have doubts as to his final preservation, this we know is sure from many a faithful word, but to make and keep us watchful, prayerful, dependant.

There are thousands who are in outward association with His name; having been baptised they are part of a great profession, but not in vital association with Him. Verse 6 is a solemn warning to all such.

OUR GOD.

J. T. Mawson

"The God of patience and consolation," verse 5; *"The God of hope,"* verse 13; *"The God of peace,"* verse 33, Romans 15.

THE knowledge of God has enlightened our darkness, and we have it as our treasure in our earthen vessels, 2 Cor. 4; it is our glory, Romans 5; but not that only, it is of the greatest practical value to us in the trials of life. I turn again to Romans 15 (see February issue) to see how it works out for us when we are faced with things that test us. The subject of this part of the Epistle is how we may help one another who are members of one body in Christ, ch. 12, and consequently in the closest possible relationship one with another. It is recognised that difficulties do arise among brethren; temperaments differ, spiritual attainments and knowledge are not the same, some are weak in the faith and of a legal mind, others are strong and in the liberty of grace, some are not very careful of their walk, and others would set up their own opinions and prejudices as the standard for their brethren and imagine that they were serving God. The devil is a watchful foe and is always ready to take advantage of these differences and sow discord among brethren, and nothing poisons Christian life like that, and brings such misery into it, and robs God of His joy in us. What is the safeguard against this evil? God is the God of patience and consolation, or as another translation puts it, the God of endurance and encouragement: that is the answer.

God has come to us as the fountain of these virtues. He has poured out His patience and consolation upon us, or if we have not yet experienced this which is the portion of all who believe, He is waiting upon us that we may. I question whether anything should impress us

more than this twofold way in which we may know our God. We know in part our own waywardness and selfishness. He knows us through and through. Yet when we turn to Him in confession of our folly and sin, as we often must, how wonderfully we learn that He is the patient God and the God of consolation. He has never failed in these qualities, they are divine, and His ways with us in them often make us wonder.

We are His children—through grace, and it is His will that we should be like Him and bear this twofold character in our ways with all who are with us the object of His love and tender solicitude. Our knowledge of Him, (I speak of experimental knowledge), will strengthen us to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. The prayer of the Apostle was *"the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus."* According to Christ Jesus! What a standard is this! Yet God will have no other, and He is able to make us like-minded one toward another, according to that standard. Christ Jesus is our pattern; we must consider Him. In Him we must see what God is to us, and in Him we must learn what we ought to be towards one another. So we read, "Let every one of us please his neighbour for His good to edification. *For even Christ pleased not Himself.*" Is there a more moving statement than that in the whole of Scripture? He was the only one who ever lived upon earth who had a right to please Himself, and if He had done so, everything that He did would have been perfect, but it was not on that principle that He ordered

His life. "Lo, I come to do Thy will. O my God," He said, and "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business," and "I do always the things that please Him." To do the will of His Father in serving the needy sons of men was the motive and the joy of His life. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

He shewed what the patience and consolation of God were, and was reproached for it, as we learn from this quotation from Psalm 69, "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee have fallen upon Me." That is the second half of a verse, the first half is "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up." This is quoted and applied to the Lord in John 2, when with a whip of small cords, He drove from the Temple those who had turned it into a den of thieves. He did that alone, we could have no part in such divine and holy indignation, but in these reproaches we may share, and shall if we are like Him, and that which causes the reproaches is as necessary to the well-being of God's house on earth now as was the zeal that cleansed the Temple then.

For what was He reproached? The continual taunt of the despicable religionists of His day was that He companied with sinners. "Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" they ask in Luke 5. "A friend of publicans and sinners" they jeer in Luke 7. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," is their taunt in Luke 15, and in Luke 19 they murmur, "He's gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." They could not endure the grace that refused to recognise class and sectarian distinctions, and that laboured for the good of the weakest and the worst. They re-

proached Him for His condescending mercy. it exasperated them; but it was God's mercy. He was shewing forth God's nature and ways, and it was their hatred of God that fell upon Him. We must be like Him and not like them. He was the great burden-bearer, and if we are strong in the grace that is in Him we shall bear the infirmities of the weak and not please ourselves, we shall reach out to the ignorant, and to the babes in God's family, and seek the edification of everyone of them, and if reproached for it we shall have the compensation of the Lord's approval, and the support of the God of patience and consolation.

And see the result of this, instead of discord among brethren, which is one of the seven abominations to God, we read, "Ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We must be like-minded to do this, but is it not a state of things most earnestly to be desired? and not desired only but sought after in self-sacrificing whole-hearted energy? It is the patience and encouragement of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that can make this holy happy unity a fact, and produce this praise which is the answer in us to what we have learnt Him to be to us. It is this that the devil would spoil, but God is greater than the devil and we may ever count upon His patience and His encouragement.

But mark well what follows, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." If our praise springs upward to God, our love must flow out to all whom He loves, and it will and does if we receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Our reception of one another glorifies God equally with our

united praise; indeed, how can we praise Him with one mind and one mouth if we do not receive one another? And again Christ is the pattern; if He has received me to the glory of God, I must also receive those whom He has received. There is not room here for partiality; sectarianism, "the natural weed of the human heart" is outside of this; cliques and parties, the dead sea fruit of the carnal mind, are utterly condemned by it, but there is plenty of room for the operation of the patience and consolation of God. These divine qualities can bring about what it is impossible for our fallen, selfish nature to secure.

Now the GOD OF HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, v. 13. If there are difficulties in the Christian circle, that can always be met and overcome by the patience and comfort of God, what of our life in the world? One of our poets has written:

"This world is a wilderness wide."

and if it is this to us what shall our lot be in it? Well, God is the God of hope. He has set before us a great destiny. He will not allow either the power of the foe or our weak faith to thwart His purpose for us, and He has told us what this purpose is in ch. 8 of this Epistle. We are to be "conformed to the image of His dear Son, that He might be the First born among many brethren"; we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, waiting to be glorified together with Him. We were saved in the hope of this and God would have us filled with all joy and peace in believing this. No matter how great and many are the difficulties, we may abound in hope, for the Holy Ghost has come to us and indwells us as the earnest of that great inheritance,

the pledge to us that we shall most certainly enter into it. The pressure upon us may be great, our circumstances very testing, but this only makes the hope more real, and above all these is the love that rests upon us from above which draws us onward to Him whose love it is. So we sing:

"'Tis the treasure we've found in His love
That has made us now pilgrims below,
And 'tis there, when we reach Him above
As we're known all His fulness we'll know.

Till then 'tis the path He has trod,
Our delight and our comfort shall be;
We're content with His staff and His rod,
Till with Him all His glory we'll see."

We are more than conquerors through Him that loves us, when we abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now the GOD OF PEACE be with you all. Amen. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. chs. 15. 33; 16. 20.

"He hath said I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and it is the God of peace who has said it, and this is the portion of all who love God and are the called according to His purpose. What blessed company—the God of peace! Life has its downs and ups, its nights and its days, its sorrows and joy, but who would be afraid if the God of peace is with him? "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Only let the heart be set upon Christ, let there be joyful obedience to His word and through every phase of life and in all its vicissitudes the God of peace will be with us, keeping the heart and mind in confidence and peace.

"And the GOD OF PEACE shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" ch. 16. 20.

Then we look forward to God's triumph and ours over Satan himself, he is to be bruised beneath our feet shortly; we are to share in the triumph of the woman's Seed, Gen. 3, and it is the God of peace that will bring us into this. Satan is the adversary; his name means that. Every bit of trouble that ever came on the church of God was engineered by him; all the persecutions that the saints of God have ever suffered lies at his door; but he has a more subtle way of working. He is not Satan only, but that old serpent, who "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Verse 18 describes his way of working well. "I fear" wrote the apostle to the Corinthian church, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11). So here these Roman christians are warned against those who would bring in divisions

and offences contrary to the doctrine they had learned; such were the ministers of Satan and not the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be avoided. They abound to-day, men who preach another gospel, who despise the gospel of God, who tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and have done despite to the Spirit of grace. It is Satan's work, and those who would be faithful to the Lord must suffer because of it, but the end is near. God's triumph will soon be complete and we shall share it. Then strife and conflict will give place to peace, for the God of peace will establish and display His righteousness in the heavens and the earth, and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and peace. Meanwhile we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is **THE GOD OF PATIENCE AND CONSOLATION, THE GOD OF HOPE AND THE GOD OF PEACE.**

Bind the Sacrifice with Cords.

A. M. Chambers.

"Bind the sacrifice with cords," Psalm 118. 27; *"Then the band. . . took Jesus and bound Him,"* John 18. 12.

Did they bind Thee in that garden
When they came with staves and swords?
Bind the mighty God incarnate
With a knot of hempen cords?

Cords indeed, my Saviour, bound Thee.
Strong, unbreakable, divine!
Twined were they in long past ages
Out of love for souls like mine.

There is nothing in the whole universe to be compared with the Scriptures of Truth, nothing that will so enrich the mind, nothing that will so benefit the soul. To treasure them up in our minds should be our daily and most delightful employment. Not a day should pass without adding to their blessed store—and not only in memory and mind but in *heart and soul*.

HOPE.

"We glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us," Romans 5. 3-5.

HOPE does not hide in some dark and forgotten ruin, she sings, and what a song! It is the song of the lark; she sings as she soars and soars as she sings, and the nearer she reaches heaven the sweeter and richer her song. She sings because she trusts. Faith is the breath of hope; God has spoken and His word cannot fail. Job, of that ancient day, did not know the end of the Lord, the love of God was not shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and so tribulation made him groan and complain, it worked irritation, he had no song, for he had no know-

ledge of the meaning of it all, but we know that the present light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4). Our prospect is full conformity to the image of God's dear Son, that He may be the First-born—for ever pre-eminent—among many brethren; and what if every stroke of the tribulum—every test and trial works to that glorious consummation of all God's ways! It must be so. So hope spreads her wings in the light and warmth of this glorious prospect and sings her song that glorifies God.

A Lover of the Word.

CHARLES Simeon, who died a hundred years ago, loved the Word of God, and preached it at Cambridge for nearly 60 years. "At an early period of his ministry, and when he was suffering severe opposition, he was in much doubt whether it was his duty to remain in Cambridge. He opened his Greek Testament, as he thought and intended in the epistles, and finding the book upside down, he discovered he was in the Gospels, and his finger on Luke 23. 26: 'They laid hold on one Simon (Simeon), and on him they laid the cross.' 'Then,' said Mr. Simeon, 'lay it on me, Lord, and I will bear it for Thy sake to the end of my life; and henceforth I bound

persecution as a wreath of glory round my brow'."

Never did Scripture fail this great lover of the Word. It sustained him to the very end. Ten days before he died he roused himself to whisper to those around him, "If you want to know what I am doing, go and look at Ephesians 1. 3 to 14, *there* you will see what I am enjoying now." And the 31 verse of Romans 11. occupied the last conscious moments of his life. For hours together he dwelt upon and repeated the words, "For *of* Him—and *through* Him—and *to* Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

"Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. 1. 2.

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE. No. 2.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Kingsland, Feb. 13th).

THIS part of this first chapter of our Epistle unfolds the glories of Christ in a way that is unsurpassed in any other part of Scripture.

The reason for this is that these saints at Colosse were in danger of being diverted from Christ by the notion that philosophy—Gentile wisdom; and ritual—Jewish religion, and other emanations of the minds of men, would enrich their faith and lives, and it was necessary that they should know how infinitely above all these false things He was. And we need this knowledge of His divine greatness even more than they did, for that which was being insinuated then has all but swamped the church to-day—modernism and ritual seem to hold the field, and Christ, the church's glorious Head, has little place. The will of God is that in all things He shall have the pre-eminence and every loyal heart will say Amen to God's will.

We begin with "the Son of the Father's love," verse 13 N.T. That is what He always was, is and ever will be. It is His personal glory, His eternal relationship with the Father, before and above and independent of all that follows, though what follows surely springs out of it.

"He is the image of the invisible God," verse 15. Image is representation. It is not said that He is the likeness of God, for He is God, but He is the image of God, He is the one person in the Trinity that has stepped forth to represent the Godhead to the created universe.

There are three great chapters in the New Testament that shew us His

glory. John 1. There "the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," That is *declaration*. Here the image of the invisible God is *representation*. In Hebrews 1 He is the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His substance. (N.T.) is *expression*. We see God in Him in all that He said and all that He did. God will always be invisible to mortal eyes. All that is to be known of God is in Christ. Outside of Christ all is darkness.

He is "the First-born of all creation." Here we have His place in creation: it is not a question of time but of dignity and pre-eminence. What follows shews that this must be so: if He created all things and they are upheld by Him and subsist in Him, He must have the first place in creation when He comes into it, He must be Head over all. Men did not recognise this when He came in lowliness and humiliation, but the angels did, for we read, "when He bringeth the First-begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him. He has not yet taken up the rights of the First-born, but faith recognises Him as such.

The old heresy, that He was the first of all created beings, and not essentially and eternally God, has been revived of late years, it is built up on this expression isolated from its context and misinterpreted. It is said of Solomon, "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," and that is the figure. It is the place that He takes in creation, because of who He is. He is the Creator. He is the Son and Heir.

“For by Him were all things created.” The preposition here is really *in* Him, or by virtue of Him. It appears to mean that He did not create as an agent, using the power of another who had appointed Him to do it. The power was inherent in Himself, He called everything into being by the word of His power and He upholds all that He has created, and yet He did not act independently of the Father and the Spirit; when a Man on earth the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him, so we may say in creating all things the fulness of the Godhead acted in Him.

“And He is the Head of the body, the church.” The body, the church, does not belong to the old creation but the new, it had no existence until Pentecost; yet just as He is Head of the old creation, for it all came from Him and is maintained by Him, so the body, the church owes its existence to Him, it subsists in Him and must derive all from Him. He is the beginning of the new creation, and the church is the first fruits of the new creation and has a special place in it as being His body — that in which He will give the full expression of His own life. And “He is the First-born from the dead.” He has overthrown the power of death by resurrection from among the dead, others will share in His victory, for “Christ is the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming,” but as in creation so in the church — in all things He must have the pre-eminence.

“For in Him all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell,” N.T. This describes what He was here on earth. God was manifest in flesh. He said, “the Father dwells in Me, He doeth the works,” “He that hath seen Me hath

seen the Father.” “If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.” The glorious fulness of our God is in our Lord and Head. We know the Father, but it is because Christ revealed Him; we have received the Spirit, but the fulness of the Spirit was in Him, and He has given the Spirit to us. In Christ in incarnation the Godhead had come into the world to reconcile it unto Itself. The Father’s grace, the Spirit’s power, and all the blessedness of the Son were here in Jesus, but all failed to bring about that reconciliation; the alienation of the mind of the world was not changed, indeed all the grace that was shewn to it only deepened its hatred, so that the Lord had to say, “Now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.”

“Having made peace by the blood of His cross.” His death was a necessity. The world was in rebellion; the heavy mortgage of death lay upon the inheritance; a great price had to be paid if that mortgage was to be cleared away: that price was the blood of the cross. What a thought it is for us, that the Heir to the inheritance has paid the price of its redemption in His own blood! The reconciliation of all things in heaven as well as on earth is not yet accomplished. Peace has been made by the blood, the basis has been laid, but the power has yet to be put forth that will bring all things in heaven and earth into harmony with the Godhead, according to the value of the blood.

“And you, who were once alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now has It [the Godhead] reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and irreprouchable before It” (NT). Creation

awaits reconciliation, but not so the believers, they are already reconciled. The alienation and the enmity have been removed, and the Godhead has done it, but it is through the body of the flesh of Christ through death. There are two arresting expressions "*the blood of the cross*" and "*the body of His flesh through death.*" His death is brought before us in its twofold character. In the blood of the cross the price was paid, the efficacious sacrifice made; in the body of His flesh through death" there seems to be borne away the condemnation and judgment that rested upon us as enemies of God. May not Paul have arrived at this in his soul's experience when he said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me?" That would be the effect of reconciliation in him, his entering into that which God has done through the death of His Son. It was not by the life of Jesus but by His death that God has reconciled us. The enmity that was in our hearts is gone and we know that God is love and we can make our boast in Him.

Justification has to say to our offences, because we were sinners we needed to be justified, but because we were enemies we needed reconciliation; it goes right down to the nature. The reconciliation was necessary for God's pleasure. To have been forgiven would have

satisfied us, but not God. The father was not satisfied to forgive the prodigal, he would have him arrayed in the best robe, with ring and shoes, so that his eye might rest upon him with complete complacency. So here reconciliation has been effected that we might be in the sight of the Godhead, holy, unblameable and irreproachable. The distance in which we were could not have been greater, the nearness could not be improved, and God has done this through the death of His Son. We receive the reconciliation, we believe what God has done. We shall know it in its full blessedness in the glory, but it is real now to faith, it is what we are in the sight of the Godhead in Christ.

"If indeed ye abide in the faith, founded and firm and not moved away from the hope of the glad tidings." The warning is needed, for we cannot be careless and escape the wiles of the enemy. Continuance is proof of reality, and as at Colosse so now there are those in whom there is no vital work, all such are tested sooner or later. Every true believer has the assurance however that he will be kept by the power of God. Yet we need the warning. Modernism would rob us of the faith and turn our thoughts entirely from heaven to earth, from the great future to the present. Our safety lies in being founded and firm in the revelation of the Godhead in Christ.

Choose Thou for me my friends,
 My sickness or my health;
 Choose Thou my cares for me
 My poverty or wealth.

Not mine, not mine the choice
 For things or great or small;
 Be Thou my guide, my strength.
 My wisdom and my all.

BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM.

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM" John 8. 58.

HOW manifest it is, that nothing but the gift of faith could, even in a single tittle, understand or know the truth in the person of Jesus! while yet, by the perfection of its manifestation in the flesh, every soul was put under the responsibility to receive it as the true word of God, our God, in love. The broad penetrating fact, "I am," the all-embracing word, must at once close all controversy. We must be opposers or bow before the throne of God. We must stand in awe of Jesus. Well may it be said, "Kiss the Son!" Lord Jesus! what sort of subjection is this we owe to Thee? We have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now our eyes see Thee, we abhor ourselves. Oh! can we see this in Jesus? Have we seen it? None can see it out of Him. It is the truth only in Him. Surely we should remove mountains if we believed it: yet it is simple truth.

Dwell on it, my soul! Jesus, that thou knowest, that Stranger in the world among His own, is "I AM." Henceforth let us be dead to all but this. I do indeed stand incapable of utterance. I do read and talk with Jesus, I watch Jesus in His ways, a sèrvant, and, behold, He, even He, is "I AM," with whom I am, whose way I follow, whose grace I adore. Christ is the union of these two things: the man, the rejected man, whom I look at now with most thankful sympathy, and, behold, the presence of God! How low it lays men's sympathy, and, behold, the

presence of God! How low it lays men's thoughts, experience, judgments, notions! The perfection of God was there — God rejected of men. What can meet or have a place along with this? Let this be my experience. Glory be to God most high. Amen. Yet to me it is Jesus; in truth it is "I am." Here I rest; here I dwell; to this I return. This is all in all. I can only be silent, yet would speak what no tongue can utter, and no thought can think before it. This we shall learn and for ever grow in—more beyond us for ever, for here is God revealed in His essential name of existence—God revealed in man, in Jesus! I know Him, am familiar with Jesus, at home with God, honouring the Father in Him, and Him as one with and in the Father, yea, delighting to do it. But I say, do we believe it?

I do believe it all: and yet, as it were, believe nothing. I am as nothing in the thoughts of it, yet alive for evermore by it, blessed be God and His name. All shall praise Him so. Yea, Lord Jesus, God most high, so shall it be. Lord Jesus! Thou art "I am," Thou art "I AM"; yet didst Thou take little children in Thine arms; yet didst Thou suffer, die, and be in the horrible pit—yea, for our sins! Thus I know the mercy-seat: I know there is no imputing sins to me, that I am reconciled to God, and that God is the reconciling One.

J.N.D. Collected Writings, Vol. 21. p. 208.

NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

T. Oliver.

No. 4. Bezer.

THE name "Bezer" bears the somewhat contradictory meanings of (1) distress, (2) fortification. But it is indicative of the "Pilgrim's Progress." These apparently anomalous conditions go hand in hand. Turning to the Scriptures we read therein that subsequent to the Christian being justified by faith, having peace with God and rejoicing in hope or prospect of the glory of God, that the Apostle continues "and not only so. . ." Both anomalous conditions are well set forth in that passage in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Christian pathway is not an easy going progress. It is beset with obstacles, which defy human ingenuity to overcome or circumvent. The trials are abundant and all the time we are here we are continually being presented with problems which appear to be insoluble. There can be no cessation from spiritual exercise, in order that we may be overcomers.

It should be observed that the Apostle associated his readers with him in the process, "We glory in tribulations, etc.," it is the normal portion of the Christian to glory or boast in what the world seeks to avoid. The Latin word, "tribula" meaning a harrow, is the source of our English word, "tribulation" and the Greek word so translated is derived from the idea of being thrashed with a flail." People may seek to evade the contingency by classifying the expression as being merely a figure of speech, yet true observation will amply afford evidence that the expression is aptly descriptive of Christian experience

under the administration of the Lord. He does not make any mistakes in His administration or discipline.

There is great gain if we answer to the advice of the Apostle Peter when he said: "Wherein we greatly rejoice, through manifold temptations (or trials); that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 7). The trial or tribulation is only for a season and only comes to us if need be. But the necessity of the trial is not in our assessment but in the Lord's judgment. He sees the need, and subjects us to the process if necessary, and He knows best.

On one occasion a preacher put the phases of discipline very succinctly with mnemonic help as: — (1) *punitive*; we may have incurred the discipline through our conduct; (2) *preventative*; if it had not been for the discipline we might have been following a self-willed course to our lasting loss; (3) *promotive*; all discipline is with the object in view that we should be making progress in grace and being of greater service to the interests of the Lord.

Much discipline comes to us privately so that we may not require to be under discipline by our Christian associates in the external sphere. Now it is good that we should be in harmony with the Lord's mind as to the bearing of discipline in the external sphere. ("Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are

spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted (or tried)" (Gal. 6. 1). If it were not for the abundant mercy of God we should be all overtaken in faults and thus we are not to adopt any superior attitude to the person under external discipline. Moreover, we are to realise that the Lord intends that restoration should be the result of discipline, and we are not to raise insuperable barriers to the consummation of that end. Again observe that the one who essays to assist in the restoration is to be spiritual. That is not necessarily the one best versed in Scriptural quotation or with the longest experience. Then the word "restore" is elsewhere used relative to the desirable end of the Corinthian Christians being "perfectly joined together" in the same mind (1 Cor. 1. 10). In the prophetic Scriptures, a body hast Thou "prepared Me" (Heb. 10. 5). Again the worlds "were framed" by the Word of God" (Heb. 11. 7). These examples are indicative in an emphatic way of the perfection in articulation of a joint without rheumatic action, so that the restoration to fellowship of a Christian ought to be as complete as the welcome given by the Lord.

In Roman 5, the writer says that we glory or boast in tribulation as the fundamental basis of spiritual advancement. What the world assesses as a discount the Christian is entitled to reckon as a premium. The logical sequel to "tribulation" is "patience"; i.e., the essential quality in the apprehension of the administration, because His rule is in connection with the Scriptural term "the kingdom," which is associated with His patience (Rev. 1. 9). The pilgrim's path is no "sprint" race but a

"marathon" or long distance race. It is as a rule of considerable duration and calls for patience which is developed by trial or discipline. Patience leads to "experience" which is literally the proof of the experience, because experience itself is all along the way, but the proof of the Lord's gracious and merciful dealings with us ultimately emerge and the result is "hope" or prospect. In human affairs hope is associated with uncertainty because necessarily there is nothing in the future here which is certain, as we have no control over our circumstances or our tenancy. So we rightly say "if the Lord will," as to the future.

There is a development in the idea conveyed by the second mention of the term "hope" which makes us not ashamed, i.e. not easily upset by untoward conditions. At first we were rejoicing in prospect of the glory of God, i.e., the objective presentation of the goal; but the second mention of the term conveys a subjective bearing. The process through which we have passed will confirm the settled conviction in our souls of the certainty of our goal or destiny. We are not then merely repeating an answer to a catechism. But we are established in the sense of the perfection of the Lord's administration.

But running parallel with all the trials is the administration of the love of God which is shed abroad (literally, "poured in a deluge") into our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. When we try to empty water out of a bottle with a narrow neck there is some difficulty because only when a bubble of air goes up the neck can an equal volume of water come down, but when we tilt up water in a tumbler with a wide mouth

the whole contents of the vessel are precipitated downwards in an instant. The former process is descriptive of the working of human love. There is a good deal of condition implied and hindrance introduced to its outflow; but the latter process conveys the idea of the love of God in its unconditional outflow.

The pouring out of the love of God into our hearts is the fortifica-

tion of which the name "Bezer" speaks; so the problem of the apparent conjunction of anomalous conditions is solved. Parallel with the distress of secular circumstances from which the Christian is not immune, he has the fortification of the love of God which lifts him above the trials of "the way" and occupies him with a prospect "bright, unflinching!"

(To be continued)

Unity and Truth.

THE Spirit of God is gathering souls out of the world, but He is gathering them to Christ. Christ Himself is the centre of Christian union. It is good and pleasant when brethren dwell together in unity, but *outward* unity without Christ as the centre would be a mockery, a human organisation; it would not be of the Spirit; it would be making unity of more importance than Christ. Then everything depends upon having Christ, the true Christ, Christ as the Word reveals Him to us. And here we need vigilance for if in Paul's day there were those that preached "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11. 4) there are more that are doing it in these.

What unity of thought and heart could there be for instance, between those who worship the Lord Jesus as God over all, and those who deny His Deity, between those who confess that they owe present salvation and eternal glory to His expiatory blood, and those who make light of it?

What do we know of Christ? Only that which we have revealed in the Scriptures, but that is enough to fill our hearts with eternal peace and satisfaction; but suppose a man

claims to be a Christian and yet denies the authenticity of the Scriptures, can a true and faithful Christian be united with him? Impossible, for He rejects God's record and revelation of Christ and must have instead his own conception of Him, which will most certainly be false.

So vital is this matter to all true unity and fellowship, that the Spirit of God saw fit to make an Apostle write a letter to a lady warning her to close her door upon any man, no matter what his pretension might be, if he did not bring the doctrine of Christ (2 John). That may seem to be a breach of hospitality, and would be called "unchristian" by some, but there it is, and the Spirit of God knows better than we. Would any mother of a family welcome to her home a man whose purpose was to poison the children's food? Certainly not. Then for the sake of the children of God we must keep those who preach another Jesus at a distance; but most of all in loyalty to Christ we must purge ourselves from these vessels to dishonour, for true unity of which the Spirit of God is the power must be unity in the truth, it must have the Christ of God as its centre.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. No. 3

A. J. Pollock.

No. IV. As Seal, Anointing and Earnest.

NEEDLESS to say that the Holy Spirit comes to a believer once and once only. He comes, as our Lord said when near the end of His life on this earth, "that He may ABIDE with you *for ever*" (John xiv. 16). This was in contrast to Old Testament times when the Spirit might come and go, as for instance when "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul" (1 Samuel xvi. 14). With this agrees Ephesians iv. 30, where it is said to the believers, "Ye are sealed *unto the day of redemption*," that is until the glad day when our Lord shall raise His sleeping saints and change His living saints, when redemption shall even touch our bodies as it has our souls, and the flesh and mortality and corruption shall be left behind for ever.

There is then only one coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer, though the one coming is looked at as from three different points of view as Seal, Anointing and Earnest.

We read, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath *anointed* us is God; who also hath *sealed* us, and given the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1. 21-22). Again we read, "In Whom [*the Lord Jesus Christ*] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1. 13-14).

Again we read, "Ye [*believers*] have an *unction* [same word as

anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (I John 2. 20). "But the *anointing* which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (I John 2. 27).

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS SEAL.

We all know what idea a seal presents. It speaks of authority, ownership, a complete contract not to be put aside but legally binding. There is the Great Seal of the British Government. Once it is affixed to a document that document has binding force. We seal a valuable package going through the post to make sure it gets into hands for whom it is meant. The chief priests and Pharisees sought that Pilate should make the sepulchre on our Lord sure to hinder His disciples from snatching His sacred body, and putting forth the statement that He was risen from the dead. Pilate acceding to their requests, we read, "So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch" (Matthew 27. 66). Anyone breaking that seal would have to reckon with the authority that put it there.

But what shall we say of the Seal that God puts upon the believer? What power can break that Seal? That Seal is no less a Person than God, the Holy Ghost, who indwells the believer in that character. It is God by that means claiming the believer for Himself and for ever. How blessed this is! How it lifts the matter outside the region of uncertainty or doubt.

WHEN DOES THE BELIEVER RECEIVE THE SEAL?

Ephesians 1. 13 gives us the answer in a very definite way. We read, "In whom [the Lord Jesus] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise." Here we find after they believed they were sealed. The important point to grasp is what they believed. We are told, "The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." What is meant by "The gospel of your salvation?" The answer is the good news that enabled them to know in trusting Christ that *they were definitely saved*. When a man or woman can say as the outcome of believing on Christ and receiving the testimony of His Word, "*I am saved*," that person is sealed by God's Holy Spirit. How many there are through hearing a defective gospel are brought to trust Christ as Saviour but are not clear as to their soul's salvation.

Ask such, Can you say your sins are forgiven, your soul saved? They reply in somewhat after this fashion, "I hope so. I am not so presumptuous as to take the ground that I am saved, only I do trust in Christ, but I cannot say I am saved." Such persons have not received the gospel of their salvation, and are therefore not sealed.

A further question arises. Our text says, "*After* that ye believed, and were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." How long *after* believing is the Spirit given? The writer well remembers an answer to this question, "*After* is not a question of time, *but of order*." Receive the gospel of your salvation, receive the Spirit, the one is the consequence following on the other. A recruit in

the army could say, "*After* I took the King's shilling I became a soldier." The becoming a soldier was consequent on taking the King's shilling. *After* the blow the sword cut. How long after? It is simply a case of cause and effect. When once a man or woman receives the gospel of their salvation, that moment God gives the Seal of the Holy Spirit, claiming the believer for Himself for ever.

FOR HOW LONG IS THE BELIEVER SEALED?

Ephesians 4. 30 gives in the answer, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed *unto the day of redemption*. Grieving the Spirit is a serious matter, but we cannot grieve Him away. Believers are sealed "unto the day of redemption," that is till the Lord comes and redeems our very bodies, when in a moment in the twinkling of an eye we are with Him and like Him for ever.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS ANOINTING.

The word, anointing, as a symbolic word carries with it a definite meaning. There were three classes anointed in Old Testament times—priests, prophets, kings. Of course they were anointed by oil being poured upon their heads. But though it was a rite in Old Testament times, it carried with it a definite result. This is plainly indicated in 1 Samuel 16. 13: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." Scripture thus links anointing with oil with the bestowal of the Spirit. With the priest, it was to enable him to take the priestly position and service; with the prophet the prophetic position and service; with the king the kingly position and service.

In the New Testament there is no anointing with oil in this connection, but that which anointing with oil typifies takes place, viz., the bestowal of the Holy Spirit as the anointing, enabling the believer to take up the Christian position for walk, worship and service.

The anointing is the power for the understanding of the Christian position, and the ability to take it up. Romans 8. 15-16 tells us, we "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The Spirit gives the believer the understanding of relationship of children to the Father, the Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit, so that there comes from the lips of the believer the cry of conscious divine relationship, "Abba, Father." "Abba" in the original is the word first uttered by the newly-born babe. It is an easy word to pronounce, and shows that this sense of relationship is given to the youngest believer, as the Apostle John addressed the youngest class in the family of God, "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father" (1 John 2. 13).

And further! Why "the Spirit of adoption?" Adoption as men understand it in human affairs means the receiving of a child, begotten by other parents into your home, and giving it the status of your own child and bestowing upon it all the care and love you would give to your own child. But, however fully this is carried out the adopted child cannot be the *real* child of his foster parents. But believers are the *real* spiritual children of God. They are born from above and are partakers of the divine nature. Why then "the Spirit of adoption?" Simply because we

were once sinners, and as such were "children of disobedience" . . . "children of wrath even as others" (Ephesians 2. 2-3). And then came the quickening power of God bringing us into a new life in association with Christ who died and was raised, and ascended to God's right hand, so that the believer in the estimation of God is "quickened. . . with Christ," . . . "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So transferred from Adam to Christ, brings us the word, "adoption," but the transfer being affected by the introduction of a new life by the quickening power of God's Spirit, we become real children of God in the spiritual sense.

To this Galatians 4. 6 agrees, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." How wonderful! How blessed! The Holy Spirit can be described as "the Spirit of His Son" so that the Holy Spirit can bring us in an intelligent worshipful spirit in the Father's presence.

As we often sing,

"Thou gav'st us in eternal love,
To Him to bring us home to Thee.
Suited to Thine own thought above.
As sons like Him, with Him to be."

J. N. Darby.

The Apostle throws light on this interesting subject, we read, "Ye have an *Unction* [*Anointing*] from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2. 20). At first sight this seems staggering. Can a week old convert claim to know all things? Can the writer, saved for sixty years, claim to know all things? Surely not! Why the very increase of true knowledge only enlarges our realization of how little we do know, and what vast tracts of knowledge have not been explored by us, and above

all how very much we can never know, for we are but creatures and in the creature's place. But in having the Unction or Anointing we have One who surely knows all things, and who is able to communicate all knowledge to us as we need it and seek it.

Again we are told, "The Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John 2, 27). Again we may be surprised. We need no man to teach us. So says this Scripture. We have known a Christian, alas! tainted with communism, who seized upon this sentence, and in a bold unspiritual harsh way declared he needed no man to teach him: that no longer would he condescend to listen to servants of Christ ministering the truth, nor read books written by such. But surely this is far from the meaning of the passage. Common sense revolts from such an interpretation. The very fact that the apostle John is teaching the little children in the family of God by these words shews that the meaning is far otherwise than our communistically minded friend put upon it.

What does it mean then?

We believe it means that man *as such* cannot communicate the mind of the Spirit. The Spirit can alone teach, but the Spirit ever uses men in this service. We can look past the instrument to the One who uses him. The whole service of Paul, John, and Peter bears testimony to this. The natural man finds the things of the Spirit of God foolishness to him. He cannot understand them. They are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians

2. 14). To refuse the ministry of the gifts is to put a serious slight on the One who led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. But whatever I may get *through* gift, I get **FROM** the Spirit. A child gets no nourishment from the cup in which the milk is contained. The milk sustains, but the cup does not add to the sustainment, but it is very necessary as a container.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS EARNEST.

What is the meaning of the word "earnest"? The Greek dictionary tells us it is a Semitic word, meaning *an earnest, earnest money*, a part of the payment, given in advance as a security that the whole will be paid afterwards.

Suppose you buy a house whose price is a £1,000. The estate agent will say, If you have decided to buy this house, you will be prepared to pay 5 per cent deposit. £50 is paid to show that you are in earnest. As the estate agent takes the cheque for £50 he remarks that it is the pledge that you fully intend paying the balance, a much larger sum, £950, to complete the purchase. No one would be so foolish as to pay £50, earnest money, unless he were decided to carry the transaction through.

So the Spirit is graciously given to the believer as the Pledge, the Earnest, that God will bring us into the fulness of blessing. The Holy Spirit is "the Earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1. 14). If we want to know what that inheritance is we are told we are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8. 17).

To continue

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

R. McCallum.

(Continued)

FOLLOWING the skeleton of Jewish history given in our last issue it will be instructive to consider the Books of the Old Testament. *Genesis* is the book of beginnings; the seed plot of the Bible, and as we have already seen answers questions arising from the natural order and the moral order in God's universe. The central figure is Abraham.

Exodus tells the story of the slavery in Egypt and of a deliverer raised by God. Moses is the central figure and the theme is redemption by blood and deliverance by power.

Leviticus discloses the way of access to God and of acceptable worship by means of a suitable sacrifice and by a divinely appointed priesthood, Aaron being prominent throughout the book.

Numbers, as its name suggests, relates the numbering of the people. It shows that God's worshippers are called upon to be warriors and relates what God is to His people in their wilderness circumstances.

Deuteronomy sets forth God's will for the people in the land, the demand being for obedience.

Joshua tells of entrance into the land under this new and divinely appointed successor to Moses. Miriam, Aaron and Moses are dead. The book emphasises that possession is by dispossession and suggests in type the conflict that must ever be engaged in by the people of God.

Judges is the story of conflict given up and narrates departure and failure ending in anarchy when every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Ruth. This delightful book, placed between the rejection of God as King, as disclosed at the end of *Judges*, and the setting up of the Kingdom as set forth in *1st Samuel*, tells of a Gentile bride brought into blessing through association with her Kinsman redeemer, a mighty man of wealth, Boaz. She is surely a type of the Church brought into blessing, between the rejection of Christ by the nation and the establishment of the Kingdom upon earth in the age yet to come.

1st Samuel is the story of the Kingdom as established in Saul.

2nd Samuel narrates the wresting of the Kingdom from the apostate Saul, and the usurper Absalom, and its establishment in David.

1st Kings relates the glory of Solomon's reign and the departure of that glory in the divided Kingdom.

2nd Kings continues the history of the divided Monarchy down to the last of Judah's kings, namely Zedekiah.

In *1st* and *2nd Kings* we get the mighty ministry of the prophets Elijah and Elisha.

A reference to the headings in the Authorised Version will show that

1st and 2nd Samuel are otherwise called the First and Second Book of Kings, so that there are in reality four books of Kings.

1st and 2nd Chronicles, one book in the original, close the Hebrew Canon. Written probably during the captivity they cover practically the same period as that dealt with in the books of the Kings — Judah being prominent and the temple occupying the foreground, David's preparations being related in the first book, and Solomon's erection and dedication in the second.

Amos, Hosea and Jonah are pre-exilic prophets who prophesied in Israel.

Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah are pre-exilic prophets whose mission is to Judah. *The Exilic Prophets* are *Jeremiah (in part), Daniel, and Ezekiel*. *The Post Exilic Prophets*, all of Judah, are *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, the first two prophesying to encourage the work of rebuilding the temple in the days of Zerubbabel and the last strengthening the hands of Nehemiah in reforming abuses. The prophets were men raised up in the days of national declension to recall the people to God—their ministry being partly for their own time and partly predictive of God's purpose for the future. Speaking broadly the theme of predictive prophecy is the fulfilment of the Abrahamic, Palestinian and Davidic Covenants of which more will be said in what follows.

Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther are historic books dealing with the post-exilic period, Ezra treating of the rebuilding of the temple, Nehemiah with the rebuilding of the city. Ezra,

we might say, gives the religious aspect of this period; Nehemiah the civil aspect, and Malachi the moral aspect. Esther bears witness to the providential care of God over His dispersed people. The book discloses what only the eye of faith can see—the divine factor in human history and probably on this very account in this book alone, of all the books in the Bible, the name of God is not mentioned.

The remaining five books — *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Songs of Solomon* constitute the poetical books of the Bible, comprising that portion designated "The Psalms" by our Lord when He divided the written word of the Old Testament into those three divisions, The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24. 44).

Reference has been made above to various Covenants, attention to which is directed in the Scriptures heading this article. It will be apparent from a reference to these that the Covenants are of two kinds—conditional and unconditional. In a conditional Covenant God says, as it were, "If you will, I will." In an unconditional Covenant God discloses what He proposes to do apart from man's co-operation, and what He will effect in spite of man's failure and hostile opposition. The unconditional Covenants are (1) The Abrahamic Covenant which secures a seed and a land, (2) The Palestinian Covenant in which God pledges with all His heart and might to restore the people, wheresoever scattered on account of disobedience, to the land of promise and to plant them in that land of inheritance, (3) The Davidic Covenant securing to David a posterity, a throne or royal authority and a kingdom in perpetuity. Disobe-

dience has been visited with chastisement, but this promise, never abrogated, is blessedly secured in Christ, who in the opening verse of Matthew's Gospel is described as "Son of David, the son of Abraham."

It must be obvious however, that the national history of Israel as related in the Scriptures is the record of their failure to fulfil their part in the Conditional Mosaic Covenant. The entire period from the 19th chapter of Exodus to the death of Christ can be described as the Age of Law. The whole range of time can broadly speaking be broken up into three main Ages or Dispensations—The Age of Law, wholly past—the coming Kingdom Age, to be again characterised by Law, and wholly future: and the present Age of Grace in a sense, a parenthesis in the Law period. To place oneself under Law and seek on the basis of effort to secure the favour of God or to transport oneself into the future and seek the reformation of society, the amelioration of world condition, the setting right of economic wrongs as the fundamental work of the Christian, is to miss the whole character of this present Age of Grace.

The Age of Law.—In a sense God never imposed the Law upon man. It is true that He proposed it. In doing so He reminded them of His gracious intervention in their deliverance from Egypt and His merciful sustenance of them—bearing them as upon eagle's wings—in their wilderness journeyings and there can be no doubt that had the nation pleaded for the continuance of such gracious dealings in lieu of accepting the Divine proposals under the Law, the desire of their heart would have been granted. For God delights in dispensing grace. But, instead of

exclaiming, "None of these things can we keep," in that self sufficiency and pride which is natural to the human heart, they exclaimed, "All of these things will we do." The burden proved intolerable, not only under pure law, but under that admixture of pure law and grace which succeeded the breaking of the tables of stone, God making merciful provision for the hopeless weakness of man.

The very kernal of the Law is the ten Commandments, setting forth His righteous requirements in relation to right and wrong. The judgments which follow the rehearsal of the ten Commandments set forth God's supervision of the social life of the people, and the ordinances which succeed those, set forth the religious requirements and provisions for them.

The hall-mark of all that may be designated as Law is just this, that the fulfilment of an obligation is the basis of blessing. From this aspect, it is the very antithesis of grace, under which we find ourselves by the sovereign grace of God, through the redemptive work of Christ and the regenerative power of the Spirit, blessed with all blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. It is the recognition of this unmerited favour of God that creates an obligation to live worthily. The blessing under grace, precedes the obligation. No clearer example of living under Law can be observed, in this age, than the endeavour of an unregenerate soul to live the Christian life in the unaided power of the flesh. But even the Christian who undertakes service for Christ with a view to securing His favour rather than as flowing from the realisation of the blessed position of favour in which he stands

before God in Christ is placing himself under Law, the outcome of which can only be disappointment and condemnation. For the Law has ever proved to be a ministry of of condemnation. Partaking of the character of the Law-giver, and therefore holy and just and good it could never give life.

If it be asked "What end did it then serve?" the answer must be "It was added because of transgression." Law has completely changed the character of sin. Always evil in the sight of God, sin now partakes of the character of transgression, that is of positive and flagrant disobedience, yea of rebellion, in those who are under Law. It was given to a peculiar people for this peculiar purpose that sin might be-

come exceeding sinful, and it is surely the height of folly for those whom God never put under Law, to impose it upon themselves. But it was only given for a restricted time. It reigned from Moses to Christ, and the believer "is not under Law, but under grace." The Law was our schoolmaster, but after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Every claim of the Law has been righteously met by Christ who has borne its curse by submitting to its penalty, God bestowing righteousness upon the believer, while under the Law He demanded it. Blessed it is that we can now sing "Free from the Law, O happy condition, Jesus has died, and there is remission."

The Word of the Cross.

W.B.D.—y.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Galatians 6. 14).

Sometimes when this poor heart is turned away
To some false glamour in this false world's day,
Then will the glowing sky grow overcast,
Sombre the scene, and borne upon the blast
The sound of shouting and a blatant clamour
And the ringing clangour of the hammer,
Where gay crowds jostle on a hill to see
Jesus my Lover, nailed upon a tree.

Then do I know that those who seek His face
Can find no comfort here, no resting place,
No home where He contempt and sorrow knew,
No honour in a world that scourged and slew
God's gentle Lamb—to dabble in its dross
But praises that which nailed Him on the cross.
This much we lose, but in Him we have learned
Our loss to overflowing gain is turned.

"But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord," Phil. 3. 8.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE "WATER" IN JOHN 19 and 1 JOHN 5?

Inglis Fleming.

A FREQUENT answer to that question is "The washing of water by the word of God."

A little consideration however should show that that answer is incorrect.

Referring to John 19. 34, we learn that *both* the blood and the water flowed from the side of our Lord when He was dead. No one would say that the Scriptures came from that spear-pierced side.

The Scriptures tells us of *what took place* at the cross of Calvary, and unfold for us the *value of the precious blood*. This all true Christians recognize.

Do the Scriptures bring before us *the value of the water also*? We believe that they do. And the association of the two, of the blood and the water, in the passage referred to, would show the *equality* of their importance. Why is it that as a rule we hear so little of the latter? We do well to enquire.

Is it not evident that we have *two views of the death of Christ* in the use of these two expressions. Both are clearly associated with our Lord in His death. He had cried the triumphant cry, "IT IS FINISHED." Bowing His head He had yielded up His spirit to the Father.

Thus He was *dead* already when the soldier pierced His side. *Then* both the blood and the water flowed evidencing *the fact of His death*. Therefore:

- 1 The blood speaks of His death.
- 2 The water speaks of His death, likewise.

Thus *two aspects of that same death* are presented.

1 The blood speaks of *propitiation by death*.

2 The water speaks of *purification by death*.

1 The one is Godward, heavenward,

2 The other is manward, earthward, shall we say?

1 The blood *expiates* — It meets *the holy claims of the majestic throne of God*. It opens the way in righteousness for God to fulfil the good pleasure of His goodness, and (clearing us of all our sin) have us in happy relationship with Himself in His holy presence. With this and much more most of us are familiar, happily so.

2 The water *purifies*. In the death of Christ, as brought before us under *that figure*, for God and in His account, and to faith, we are *separated from all that we were in our sinful state*. "Our old man has been crucified with Christ." We "are *dead with Christ*." Our Adam standing is ended. We live now in Christ risen.

The two aspects are seen typically in the book of Exodus, in the saving of Israel from Egypt.

1 The blood of the passover lamb, a type of the death of Christ, met the *holy claims* of God, and sheltered them from His judgment.

2 The waters of the Red Sea (another type of the death of Christ) which they crossed, cleared them from their former condition of slavery.

1 The death of Christ *for us* is figured in the one, and

2 Our death *in His death* — *with Him* is brought into view, on the other.

It is in this latter truth that so many of the beloved saints of God

are deficient. And this to their great loss. The absence of teaching upon the subject, or the non-reception of that teaching, leads to uncertainty and distress of soul on the part of many true believers.

The figure of baptism may help us (Romans 6) "So many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized *unto His death*. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism *unto death* (verses 3.-4). This is the *figure* of the glorious fact that in Christ's death we have died—and that now we live in Him risen. Thus in Colossians 3 the *fact* is stated "Ye have *died*. In Romans 6 we are exhorted in faith to "reckon" ourselves "dead indeed unto sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verse 11). This does not mean pretend to be dead, but to hold oneself as dead to the old sinful life. So the fact, the faith and the figure all indicate the purification by death witnessed by the water flowing from the side of our Saviour in death.

The believer has been removed (not improved) in that death, as to his former standing, and death is the end of a man's will, so that now having life in Christ risen he may "walk in newness of life" in a way well-pleasing to God.

The Epistle of John confirms this. There we read "This is He that came by water and blood even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. . . There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit and the water and the blood and these three agree in one . . . And this is the record (the witness) that God hath given us eternal life and this life is *in His Son*. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John 5. 6-12).

Four glorious facts are presented here:—

- 1 The Son of God has come into manhood.
- 2 He has died and by His atoning blood has made atonement—glorifying God.
- 3 In His death we have died (have been ended as to our Adam state and standing) and now live in Christ risen. We have the Son and have life.
- 4 The Holy Spirit has come anointing us for power and intelligence.

The three witnesses—"the Spirit, the water and the blood," fully concur in the witness that the Adam life has been *condemned and closed in death on the one hand, and on the other hand that eternal life is ours in the risen Son of God.*"

To sum up then,

- 1 The question of sins has been met by the blood being shed in Christ's death.
- 2 The sinful state has been ended in that same death and a new life conferred.
- 3 The Holy Spirit has been given to enable the believer to walk in newness of life.

What part have the Scriptures in the matter under consideration?

Indited by the Holy Spirit they bring before us both aspects of the death of our Lord. And they are for our moral cleansing as we answer to both presentations. They are the very truth of God, and by hearkening to them our feet are kept from the paths of the destroyer and led in the ways of righteousness. They search out and discern for us the inward motives and intentions of the heart, and grace from God enables us to turn away from all that they condemn and to walk in what they approve.

This paper is suggestive and not didactic.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The bodies of the Saints that arose at Christ's Resurrection.

When the saints come out of their graves at the Resurrection of the Lord, was it the first Resurrection? Will you please give me some light on Matthew 27. 52-53, and Revelation 20. 5-6? I was asked if the resurrection of these saints was the first resurrection, and said, 'No,' but on considering it since I am not sure whether I was right or wrong.—TORONTO.

THE first resurrection (Rev. 20) will include all that are Christ's (1 Cor. 15. 23). It will cover a period of time, for those who will be slain during the great tribulation for the witness of Jesus and the word of God will have part in it, as Revelation 20. 5 shews. The tribulation period will run its course between the catching away of the church (1 Thess. 4), and the appearing of the Lord in glory (Col. 3. 4. etc.). The resurrection of these saints whose bodies came out of their graves after

the Lord arose was special. It was the immediate witness to the efficacy of His sacrifice and His complete triumph over the power of death and the grave. Of course they will have their part in the blessedness of those who have part in the first resurrection. They were a sample sheaf of the great harvest that the Lord will reap at His coming, when every saint that has died from Abel onward will be raised in glory by the power of the Lord.

Faith Healing and the Beginning of Christianity.

I am in touch with a young man, truly converted, but a strong believer in faith-healing claims. I gave him a good pamphlet on the subject but he definitely rejected what the author says as to the gift of healing having ceased and that the Apostles have no successors. His great text is Mark 16. 17-18. I said that this was for the establishment of Christianity, but he would not have it limited to that. If you think the matter of sufficient interest and will say something about it, I will pass it on to him.—CORRESPONDENT.

WE believe you were right in saying that the commission given to the disciples in Mark's Gospel had the inauguration of Christianity in view. The whole passage confirms you in this. Take the 16th verse. "He that believeth and *is baptised* shall be saved" Salvation in the sense in which the Lord there speaks of it is clearly dependent upon believing and being baptised, and not upon believing only. We should have a serious controversy with anyone who preached that baptism was necessary to salvation in these professedly Christian lands. But it was a necessity to the Jew to whom the

Apostles were *first sent*. So Peter said to them "Repent and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins," and "save yourselves from this untoward generation," Acts 2; and to Saul of Tarsus, it was said, "Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," Acts 22. 16. Not only did they shew the reality of their faith by submitting to baptism in the name of the Lord, but they *in figure* died out of their old standing as Jews and stood upon entirely new ground in subjection to Jesus Christ as their Lord. This was also true for the

heathen, but had its special application to the Jews who had rejected and crucified the Lord. A *new sphere* on earth was opened up to men in which the blessings of the kingdom were to be known, and believing and baptism were the door of entrance into it. The signs that were to follow believing were to call attention to this new sphere of blessing for men (1 Cor. 14. 22), and the healing of the sick is the last in the list of these signs, are those who claim this Scripture carrying out the others? The commission was fulfilled as the last verse states, "And they went

forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following."

The commission at the close of Matthew's Gospel will be fulfilled when the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all nations after the catching away of the church; that given in Mark was fulfilled in the apostolic days; those in Luke and John are now being fulfilled. We come into them and it will be noticed that neither baptism nor sign gifts have any place in them.

"These things I command you."

Love is emphatically the Lord's injunction to His disciples. It is by this that they are known as His disciples. Whatever else the Lord may enjoin, this is His commandment. He loved them and would have them love one another accordingly. His love to them is the pattern. Have we sufficiently weighed His words. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." His love was unsought, it is boundless and everlasting, the fickleness and failure of His disciples did not change it, and it is the standard and pattern. Do we appreciate His love to us and cherish His will for us? This will test us, this will prove our sincerity, this will shew how much we love Him, for this is His will, expressed as a commandment, the One commandment He has given.

Giving.

If the Lord has His right place in our hearts we shall honour Him with our substance in temporal things. Many saints of God are positively shrivelled up by a selfish and covetous spirit. They reap sparingly because they sow sparingly (2 Cor. 9. 6). If they give at all it is because they feel obliged in conscience to do something, but they keep their giving within as narrow limits as possible.

Let not the poor think that they are excluded from this privilege of honouring the Lord with their substance. What are the brightest examples of this in the Scriptures. Do we not read in the Old Testament of a widow who had but a handful of meal and a cruse of oil who gave it all to the servant of God? Do we not read in the New Testament of a widow whose whole fortune consisted of two mites which make a farthing, who cast it all into the treasury? The greatest gifts in God's account are those that are given with the fragrant incense of love.

THE LAW AND GRACE.

J. T. Mawson.

CORRESPONDENCE has been proceeding in "*The Christian*" on the intensely important subject of the Law given by Moses, its meaning and use and its value in this day of Grace. We venture to pass on to our readers some thoughts gathered up from the study of the subject. In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord said, "Think not that I am come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5. 17, 18). It had not been kept until He came, but now it was to be more than kept, it was to be fulfilled, and that meant much more than the mere keeping of it in the letter. It meant to fill it out, to shew its full and proper character. The law was like a beautiful portrait, the portrait of a perfect man, and there were those who could appreciate its beauties, like the Psalmist who said, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." When Jesus came every feature of it found living expression in Him. *He was the original*. He filled out every jot and tittle of it, brought out all its beauty and made it instinct with life. Now the anointed eye can look upon His life on earth and see in Him the blessed Man whose delight was in the law of God, and in whose law He meditated day and night. He loved the Lord His God, with all His heart, and His neighbour as Himself, and in His life He shewed that "the law is holy, just and good." Having done that He could bring in the grace that saves those whom the law could only condemn, but to do that He had to suffer its full penalty, which

He did when He suffered for sinners upon the cross.

It has been urged by some that the Lord's words in verses 21, 27, 33, 43, "Ye have heard it said of them of old time . . . but I say unto you," give a warrant for discarding the Scriptures and substituting for them something up to date. It is a scandalous and immoral procedure. He was shifting the searchlight from the outward actions to the unseen inner nature. One reason for which the law was given was to check and curb the lusts and passions of man, to hold within bounds the evil acts of his fallen nature. This is shewn in Paul's first letter to Timothy. "But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully: knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers etc. (chap. 1. 9, 19). Thus had it been rightly interpreted, but the Lord went deeper and dealt with the hidden desires of the heart, with the nature that lies at the root of every transgression and from which all evil deeds spring, and declared that God required truth in the inward parts. David learned in his great repentance, that more terrible than his deeds was the nature that produced them, and the law taught Saul of Tarsus the same necessary lesson (Romans 7). This did not make void the law, it established its use as a searching, convicting power.

In the law God declared that He required righteousness from men, and the law was the measure of that

demand, but the early chapters of Romans shew that God's demands received no answer or satisfaction from men. "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." God knew that that would be so, but it was necessary that it should be demonstrated. The law brought condemnation upon all who came under it, as Rom. 3. 19 states, "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth might be stopt and all the world become guilty before God." Instead of bringing a blessing, it inflicted a curse, for "it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3. 10).

Instead of justifying men it condemned them, for while it is good and justly demands goodness, men were utterly bad, they would not nor could bring forth any good. So we read, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3. 20). It exposes and convicts the sinner and leaves him entirely hopeless as to being right with God on the ground of his own works. That is its work and it does it truly and well.

It is at this point that God intervenes, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," and His righteousness without the law is manifested. He has found a way by which men can be justified without the law, and to this the law and the prophets bore witness. The way that God has found is that men should be justified by His grace freely, through FAITH, instead of by the works of the law.

Is then the law set aside as though it were of no consequence? Are its claims ignored or treated with indifference by God when He justifies men through faith? Certainly not, or God Himself would be unjust. The Apostle anticipates such questions when he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW" (Romans. 3. 31). But how can this be? The awakened soul feels the absolute necessity of a righteousness before God; if he goes to the law to obtain it, he finds that it only condemns him, for he has broken it. He does not ignore it, he owns its just demands and that he lies under its condemnation and curse. Then he learns in the gospel that its dread penalty has been met to the full by the blood of Jesus, and that God can now account all those righteous who without works believe in that Saviour. This is the way that God, according to His own righteousness, has taken to justify men, to place them in righteousness before Himself. They are "justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

God would not be righteous if He treated the claims of His own law as of little importance, and yet it is He that justifieth the ungodly; He does so because every claim of His holiness, which goes far beyond the law, has found its satisfaction in the death of Jesus; it is because of this that His grace flows freely forth; and the law *as a way of righteousness* is closed for ever. Men could not tread that way, and now righteousness, divine and unchanging, is found in Christ instead of in the law. He is "*the end of the law for righteousness* to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4).

The believer's position as justified—*i.e.* as righteous before God—does not depend upon his doings, either before his conversion or after, but upon the grace of God, and he is "*not under law but under grace*" (Rom. 6. 14). Can then a man live as he pleases? May he be indifferent to righteousness? This question also was anticipated by the Apostle when he said: "What then, Shall we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you" (Rom. 6. 16-17).

Obedience is to characterize the justified man, but it is not now obedience to a law which is irksome to him, but to the gospel of God's grace; this has reached his heart, and won his affection, so that he delights with every fibre of his renewed nature to yield himself to the will of God, who sent His own Son to be his Saviour. In the Holy Spirit which has been given him he has a power which the law never gave, by which he can as God's servant, have his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. So that when we come to the eighth chapter of Romans we find *that the righteousness of the law is*

fulfilled IN us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5. 16).

The law itself could not produce this, for "it was weak through the flesh," the material that it had to work on was utterly bad; but grace produces it, for the evil, sinful flesh has met its judgment in the cross of Christ, and now the believer has a new position, for he is in Christ; he has a new condition, for he is in the Spirit, since the Spirit dwells in him; and he has a new life which is divine. The nature of this life is love, and "love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13. 8-10).

Here we see the triumph of grace, and all boasting is taken from men. It is of God from first to last, and He must have all praise; and in this matter, as in every other, we can take up the language of Romans 11. 33-36: "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."

Self likes to be served, love delights to serve. The true glory of the divine nature in the children of God is lowliness, human pride is selfishness.

If we know ourselves we shall not speak of humbling ourselves, for we are nothing.

“IF ANY MAN THIRST.”

WE do not drink for others, and others cannot drink for us. I must *feel* my own want and I must bring my own want to Christ myself. There must be the thirsting before there can be the drinking. Have I a want in my heart that Christ cannot meet? No. Is there a spiritual want in the soul that goes to Christ that does not find relief? Not one. *‘If any man thirst.’* No matter what the need. He says *“Come unto Me and drink.”* “If ye knew the gift of God and who I am ye would ask of Me and I would give you living water.” Think of Him sitting at that well.

Which of us would not go to Him and open our hearts and let Him read out of them all our need. He is not to be put off. He knew that sinful woman’s need, and left her not until she felt it and He had met it.

If we are to be useful to sinful men we must be more like Christ. Why we help them so little is we do not come down low enough to them in grace. Think of the place that Christ ever took towards them and follow Him, being partakers of His grace and remembering the word. *“If any man thirst.”* J.N.D.

A Morning Prayer.

A. M. Chambers

Lord, in the stillness of the dawn—
 Before the world breaks in
 To flood the mind with its concerns,
 Its hurry and its din—
 Let me breathe deep of heavenly air,
 And may my inner ear
 The music of the heavenly land
 In all its sweetness, hear.

Oh! may my very soul inhale
 The fragrance of that place,
 So that my every thought to-day
 Be clothed in peace and grace!
 And may there echo in my voice
 That music from above,
 That every word that I shall speak
 May be in truth and love!

Jesus! Thy name the perfume is
 That charms that blissful air!
 The harmony that name calls forth
 Is all the music there!
 Oh! may Thy name so fill my heart,
 And such true worship raise
 That I may walk this day with Thee
 For Thine eternal praise!

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

A. J. Pollock.

No. IV. As Seal, Anointing and Earnest.

I CORINTHIANS 12. 13, tells us, "By one Spirit are we all baptised 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 Holy Spirit not only indwells the believer as an individual, but here we learn that He brings him into a new relationship to his fellow believers as well as to Christ. The Holy Spirit formed "one body in Christ" (Romans 12. 5)—Christ, the Head, in heaven; and on earth all believers, as members of the one body of which He is the Head. No doubt the simile of a body is chosen as showing the vital connection and nearness of the spiritual association thus formed.

It is well to see that this is organism and not organisation. Organism is a matter of life, of every part necessary to the whole. Organisation may descend to the soullessness of a mere machine. Christendom is a glaring example of this. It is super organised. Popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, presidents, moderators, generals, reverends, deacons, elders, superintendents, etc., etc., testify to this evil. The men holding these offices may or may not be good men. Some may be converted. Many, alas! may not be converted. It is a monstrous thing that organisation may put forth as servants of Christ, men who are utterly unconverted—men undermining the very faith of Christianity, whilst receiving a salary for the purpose of upholding it.

Organism is different. It counts for nothing if it is not living. For that the Spirit is necessary. So we get in Ephesians 4. 4, "There is one body

and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." We must lay emphasis on the one Spirit in relation to the one body. Who form this body of Christ? Every believer, who has received "the gospel of his salvation" and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is in virtue of the one Spirit indwelling each believer that the body is formed. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the day when this took place.

As men and women in the world we have different spirits; as believers the one Spirit of God indwells all. Thus whilst each member differs from the other, and each may have a different Christian activity, there is harmony and all tending to one common end.

How wonderfully simple is the divine method! And yet it calls for real spiritual life in each member. For our verse in 1 Corinthians 12. 13 not only says believers are baptised into one body by the one Spirit, but it adds "and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This is where the practical side comes in. Just as James 2. 26 says, "The body [the human body] without the spirit [the human spirit] is dead," so we can say there could be no body of Christ without the one Holy Spirit of God. If a believer gets only a mental apprehension of the one body without this drinking into the one Spirit, his mental apprehension will result in the most flagrant and subtle sectarianism, and only produce havoc and ruin in the church of God.

We see this in the assembly at Corinth. There were, doubtless,

those too enlightened to say, "I am of Paul," or Apollos or Cephas. They would not attach a human name to their party. But what shall be said of those who said, "I am of *Christ*." To confine Christ to their little following, and refuse His connection with other believers, this is, indeed, sectarianism of the worst sort. Is this not possible to-day? If it were possible in Paul's day, surely it is more possible in our Laodicean age. So we see the necessity of drinking into the one Spirit. If each believer were doing this according to their measure what happiness and harmony there would be.

You may say it is a wonderful conception but impossible of being carried out. Alas! the carrying of it out has broken down and failed and there never will be again an unbroken front of Christianity to the world. Yet it is true there is "the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4. 3), and we are exhorted to endeavour to keep it. In what way can we endeavour to keep it? The inspired writings speak of things as they are. Alas! as long as the flesh is in us and there are different mental angles natural to us there will be difficulties. So we are exhorted to walk "with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4. 1-3).

We begin with *lowliness*. It is a most important beginning. Without it all is in vain. Diotrophes stands at the other end. He "loveth to have the pre-eminence" (3 John 9). What trouble he occasioned! What trouble his all-too-numerous descendents occasion. "Lowliness!" There comes up before one's mind the *Perfect One*, who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11. 29). If

our Lord could say this in the perfection of His true manhood, it may well be the moving example to be followed. "Lowliness!" that is

"Low thoughts of self befitting
Proclaimers of His praise."

It is like the spirit of John, the Baptist, who said, "He [our Lord] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30). The order of these words is beautiful. If he had said, "I must decrease and He must increase," it would have been as foolish as suggesting that a farthing dip should cease to burn to enable the light of the sun to be seen. His way of putting was equivalent to saying, The rising light of the sun completely eclipses the shining of the moon and stars. They continue to shine, but in the light of the great sun their shining becomes invisible. Lowliness! what a beautiful Christian feature, the fruit of the Spirit of God.

Meekness! What is meekness? Lowliness is low thoughts of self, the reverse of self-love, whilst meekness is the virtue that is not disturbed when others belittle or undervalue or asperse the character of the possessor of that virtue. It characterises one not ready to resent an injury, or retaliate when ill-treated.

So much for the character of the believer. What of his conduct? "Long suffering!" That does not mean to suffer for a *little* time, but *LONG* suffering, it may mean long years, a life-time, as we say. "Forbearing one another **IN LOVE**." How touchy we generally are! How we strike back and resent what we do not like! "**IN LOVE!**" That is the difficulty. We need, indeed, to be in the Spirit to do this. In these ways we endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

“THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY.”

This wonderful formation of the Spirit, the one body of Christ, was a mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Roman xvi. 25). True it is that in the Old Testament times there were types of Christ and His bride, such as Adam and Eve, Isaac and Rebekeh; the type of the new meat offering, fifty days after the feast of the wave sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest, setting forth the church on the day of Pentecost. And even these types would not be understood till the fulfilment made them clear. But there was no hint whatever given of the church as the one body of Christ, thus was a mystery kept secret from all ages.

But now the secret is out. There is “the fellowship of the mystery. . . . to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3. 9-10). Surely if all Christians walked together in lowliness and meekness, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, it would be a wonderful sight for principalities and powers in heavenly places to look upon. Well for us if we have the vision of what was in God’s mind from all eternity, this wonderful mystery, this masterpiece of eternal counsel, and seek to fill our place in the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit of God being the power for this.

The Air We Breathe.

“Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth and that that cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein,” Isaiah 42. 5. *“He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things,”* Acts 17. 25.

“FORGET not all His benefits.” For spiritual gifts we shall thank Him for ever, but for natural gifts we should thank Him every day. *He giveth breath.* We live by breathing. It is our life. We require some twenty breaths a minute, every breath needs a renewing of the delicate compound upon which our life depends. There are sixty minutes every hour, and twenty-four hours in every day, and three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. More than ten millions of breaths in a year. Why, I shall want miles of air for myself! And there are hundreds of millions like me, each defiling that which must be renewed. Where can it come from? *He giveth breath.* This breathing has to go on whether we are busy or not — how can I

manage to be always thinking about it? And whatever shall I do if I fall asleep! Ah, so our timid thought would have whispered. But this great mystery of breathing goes on so easily there is always enough breath—so common and abundant it is, and so free, that we never stop to give it a thought. But *God gives it.* Day and night, summer and winter, in crowded cities, amid all kinds of defilement, the supply is kept up every moment, and we are so confident of its coming that we lie down and sleep untroubled. It is the gift of God—a God-like gift, so vast, so free, so perfectly adapted to its purpose, unfailing, wonderful! For this great gift we bless the Name of the faithful Creator, in whom we live and move and have our being.

CHRIST THE SON, THE SERVANT, THE SOVEREIGN.

Philippians 2. 5—11.

W. Bramwell Dick.

(i) Christ the Son.

IN these verses we have one of the many instances in the Holy Scriptures where we discover great truth in an unexpected place. The Epistle to the Philippians is a charming letter addressed to a happy assembly that was born in affliction, and that seemed to be characterised by real joy in the Lord. There is no unfolding of doctrine; nor did there appear to be anything that called for correction. Judging from various remarks throughout the Epistle, there may have been a tendency for some to assert themselves, and to press their views in opposition to that of their fellow believers. We have a sample of this in chapter 4, verse 2. In fact, it was apparently something of this sort that called forth the sublime statement that we invite our readers to join us in considering. Let us do so in dependence upon the Holy Spirit; and may an inflow of worship be the result. In verse 5 of our chapter we read:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”

The inspired Apostle proceeds to show that the mind of Christ was to go down. How much trouble would be avoided in companies of the Lord's people if all were prepared to go down. It is so easy to expect it of others, and while exhorting others to do this, to see no necessity for doing it ourselves. That which will enable us to do it, will be our contemplating the down-stoop of the Lord. That we may the better appreciate the immensity of that stoop, the greatness of His Person, is declared. It may be objected that this verse does not speak of Him as

Son. That is at once granted. It will be admitted, however, by all who own His eternal Sonship, and thus seek by grace to abide in “the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9), that this verse can apply to none other than the Son of God eternal.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

He was in the form of God. Could we have language more expressive; As the Apostle is urging those to whom he wrote to have the mind of Christ, he does not enlarge upon these words. We have to turn to John 1. 1-3; 14-18; Colossians 1. 13-19; and Hebrews 1. 1-3, in order to understand its significance. In past eternal ages our blessed Lord was “in the form of God.” He, by Whom and for Whom all things were created, and by Whom all things consist, or subsist, and Who was “before all things” (Colossians 1. 16-17); by Whom “all things were made” (John 1. 3); and Who upholds all things by the Word of His power; (Hebrews 1. 3) is He who was “in the form of God.” It was because He was so great that He “did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God.” His part and place in the Godhead was eternally and unchangeably His own. He was God (John 1. 1); as the Son He could say “I and the Father are One” (John 14. 30), so that for Him it was “not robbery,” it was “not an object of rapine,” it was not something to be grasped after, to claim equality with God. The first man Adam aspired after that and leaving his first estate

in order that he might reach it he was guilty of apostasy. Our Lord thought not of Himself, He made Himself of no reputation, yet when He became Man He did not cease to be God. When found in "the form of a servant" He had laid aside His outward glory, the form of God, but He was the same person, unchangeably the same. When He announced Himself

as Son of Man He ever remained the Son of God eternal. Gracious Lord! How we love to view Thee thus! How we rejoice that Thou who art so great art our Saviour and Lord! Son of the Father, Son of God, our All in All. We bow at Thy feet and worship and adore Thee.

To be Continued.

A WORD TO EVANGELISTS.

IN answer to the enquiry of the daughters of Jerusalem, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou does so charge us?" (Song of Songs, ch. 5) she immediately replies, and gives a full length portrait of her well-beloved. And there is all that sharpness in outline, and minuteness in the detail, which strong and mingled passion alone could give. Her strong affection is made doubly strong through self-reproach. Her recollection of Him is vivified through having slighted Him; and all her feelings are intensified through not finding Him. In this state of mind she portrays Him to the daughters of Jerusalem from head to foot. Oh! to be ready—always ready, on the spur of the moment to speak of Jesus! She needed no time for premeditation. She asks for none. Delighted with the opportunity, all she wanted was the listening ear, and the believing heart. Like the woman at the well of Sychar, her own heart was overflowing. Her love had grown, through disappointment, into a passion. It is relief to her heart to speak of Him.

Love is the best gift of the evangelist—love to the Saviour—love to the sinner. But when that love rises into a passion, there must be true, burning eloquence. Never, never, O my soul, be content with

less than this. Love to the Saviour—love for souls is good, but the evangelist needs more. Seek that thy love may rise to a fervent flame. The work demands it. Art thou an evangelist? Let everything that would hinder thy work be consumed on the altar of entire consecration. Preaching is not teaching remember, neither it teaching preaching. Appeal to souls, plead with them, lay hold on them, agonize for them. It is a matter of life or death—of ineffable, eternal blessedness; or unutterable, eternal woe. Realise the future in the present, and raise a cry to the God of all grace, that not one soul may go away unimpressed, unblest, unsaved.

More temperate hearts, and wiser too, it may be, in many things, may say, "There is much of nature in such zeal, and not a little unbelief; remember the work is the Lord's." Fully admit thine own failure, and that the work is God's from first to last; but let nothing slacken thy zeal, or damp thy energy. May the flame of thy love be unquenchable. Oh! be in earnest; heaven is in earnest, hell is in earnest, and be thou in deep, deep earnest. The Master wept over a city, thou hast a world to weep over. Love with *His* love, and let *His* tears flow through thine eyes.

From "The Song of Songs" by A.M.

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE. No. 3.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Forest Hill, March 13th).

THE "hope of the Gospel" is more than heaven, it would include the presentation of the saints of God, "holy and unblameable and unreprouvable" before the Godhead, verse 22. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory," ch. 3. 4. "When He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is," 1 John 3. 3 That glorious consummation of God's reconciling grace lies before us. The Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—will find Its satisfaction in having us entirely according to Its pleasure. That will be one of the great results of the death of Christ, and it is proclaimed in the gospel.

This gospel is world-wide in its scope, it is proclaimed to every creature, or "to the whole creation which is under heaven." We have brethren here from their labours in Central Africa; this gospel is as much for the natives there in the degradation of their superstitions and heathenism as it is for the most civilised and cultured people of Europe and America; it goes forth to all alike, and is the power of God unto salvation for all.

And it is effectual; our brethren can tell us that the same results are produced in Africa and India as in England. Natives believe the gospel and are sealed by the Holy Ghost and become witnesses in word and life for Christ and are able to edify one another, they appreciate the truth, and rejoice in this grand hope.

We must not be moved away from the *hope of the gospel*; present results are to be looked for; Christ in

you is very real. His life is to be manifested in His saints, this is God's present purpose but His eye is also on the future, He is working in view of it, and we must learn His thoughts and think with Him. It was Paul's boast that he was made a minister of this gospel, and the servants of the Lord follow in his steps; but he bound up with it a further ministry—the ministry of the body of Christ, the church, which is the mystery, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints, verse 26. The second ministry follows the first, and the first is in view of the second; they are distinct but we must not separate them. The two combined in Paul, he was the greatest evangelist and the most faithful churchman that ever served the Lord. The two things impressed themselves upon him at his conversion; The grace of the exalted and crowned Jesus of Nazareth, whom he owned at once as his Lord, was the grace of the gospel, but He said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me"—the saints on earth were Himself, members of His body. From that time onward those same saints whom he had so ruthlessly persecuted had a place in Paul's heart only second to the place they had in the heart of Christ. Hence he suffered for their sakes.

In the world where Christ was crucified His body must suffer. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," is the individual side of it, and the Apostles, and Paul in particular had to bear the brunt of this suffering, for they were the pioneers. To Paul the ministry of the mystery had been specially committed, and it should be clear to us

all that the devil would not quietly stand by and see the life of Christ formed and manifested in those whom the gospel reached. He is dead set against that, and since Paul had been his chief instrument in persecuting the saints, he was now his chief object of enmity and attack. But Paul rejoiced in his sufferings for the Gentile saints. The sufferings he speaks of were not of course atoning sufferings. The sufferings and death of our Lord in this respect could not be shared by any, they stand alone and are complete; but if the Lord suffered in that way that He might have His body, the church, Paul suffered intensest persecution and conflict in ministering the truth of it among the Gentiles. "Therefore I endure all things for the elects' sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2. 10). And just in that measure in which the body of Christ, with all its members, has a place in our affection so shall we suffer for it. Christ and His members cannot be separated, their sufferings are His. "Why persecutest thou Me," is still a true word for all who persecute His saints, and a great comfort surely to all who are persecuted.

It was given to Paul to fulfil or complete the word of God, by the great truth of the mystery. That does not mean that he was the last writer, John wrote after Paul, but his writings were the full development of that with which the saints were more or less familiar, but the mystery had been hidden in God from eternity (Eph. 3. 9), and was now brought out to be the completion of the revelation. We might call it the crowning truth.

The mystery does not mean something mysterious, but something that

was hidden, but which is now revealed. There are two sides to it: in the Ephesians Epistle it is presented from the side of the saints being *in Christ*; Jew and Gentile, quickened, raised up and seated in Christ in the heavenly places; but here in Colossians it is *Christ in the saints* as their life before the world. These are the two sides of the mystery.

Paul preached *Christ*; and that is our business, Timothy was exhorted to preach the word, but the theme of the word is *Christ*; the gospel of God is concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. When Paul preached to the pagan philosophers at Athens, he began with their ignorance and spoke of God as Creator, but his end was Christ, risen from the dead, the Judge of the world. It is a mistake to read the Word for texts and subjects for gospel sermons. Read the Word for its own sake, search for Christ in it for your soul's blessing, then out of the good treasure of the heart bring forth that which is good. Paul wrote, "It pleased God. . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen," Gal. 1. 15-16. The great verities as to Christ—His sacrificial death, resurrection, exaltation at God's right hand, and His coming again in glory—we must preach. We tell men that He is the only Saviour, their only hope, and it is most essential that we should press His rightful claims upon men. He is Lord of all. Paul preached Christ, warning every man and teaching every man. Both are needed; we warn the indifferent, and teach the obedient, and the teaching calls for more patience than the preaching.

We shall be effectual in ministering the truth, only in that measure that we are under its influence and power.

PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED!

FROM the pulpits of Christendom to-day there proceeds a strange medley of sound. Discourses are preached by the thousand, covering innumerable themes. The majority are concerned with problems that agitate the world, with matters that have to do with good morals, the more righteous distribution of money, with the promotion of a more peaceable spirit among the nations. Some deal with the practice of religious observances, or the defining of Christian doctrine. How few there are that have about them a true gospel ring!

And further, it seems to be a fact that where the true gospel ring is present, there is sometimes throughout the whole address no mention of the great fact that lies at the basis of the gospel. Sin is spoken of, God's grace is declared, forgiveness is emphasised, sinners are urged to come to Jesus; yet *Christ crucified and risen from the dead* is hardly mentioned. Paul could speak of the Galatians as a people, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3. 1); and to the Corinthians he said, "We preach Christ crucified. . . . the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1. 23-24).

That the power of God goes with the preaching of Christ crucified the following extracts from a Missionary's diary, recently published in America, bear witness:—

"Swing shut the city gates; run and tell the sentinels to stand guard and let no one pass in or out till we have made away with these preachers of other gods."

It was in the walled city of some twenty thousand inhabitants in the kingdom of Hyderabad, within twenty miles of its capital, as we were on a gospel preaching tour, the first ever made through the kingdom of the Nizam, years ago.

We had been travelling since early morning preaching in all the towns and villages on our way, and arrived before the gates of the city during the heat of the day, and camped outside of its walls.

About 3 p.m. my four native assistants went into the city to offer Scriptures and tracts for sale, I promised to join them when the heat should be a little less.

Just after entering the gate, I met my native assistants returning, with a hooting rabble following them. Speaking to them in the Tamil language, not understood by those people, they told me that it was not safe to attempt to do any work within the city. They had sold a few gospels and tracts to both Mohammedans and Hindus.

Some of the gospels were bound in yellowish buff bookbinder's muslin. The Mohammedans sent messengers running through the streets saying that they were bound in hog skin, and warning the faithful not to touch them. The Brahmans sent messengers to tell the Hindus that they were bound in calf skin, and skin of the sacred cow, and telling them not to be polluted by them. They had not only prevented the people from buying, but had incited the rabble to drive the preachers out of the city.

"Have you preached to the people?" said I. "Have you proclaimed the gospel message?"

"No; we have only sold a few books and tracts."

"Then we must do so now. I, at least, must go to the market-place and preach. You need not accompany me unless you think it best."

"We will go with you," said they.

The rabble had halted and quieted as they heard the foreigner talking in a strange tongue, waiting to see what would come of it. We walked with slow and firm step up the street to the market. The crowd followed, increasing by the way. Seeing a foreigner boldly walking up the street, the Brahman and Mohammedan zealots joined the throng.

We reached the centre of the town where the main streets crossed, and where was the market-place, with a roof supported upon large masonry pillars. Stepping up the steps, I said in Tamil to my assistants, "Place your backs against these pillars, so that no one can attack you from behind, and keep a sharp watch on all, but show no signs of fear. The Master is with us; His promise is good."

As we stood there we could see three of the four city gates open, with the armed gate keepers sitting upon the arch of the gateway. Turning, I spoke politely to the people in Telugu, which was understood by all.

"Leave this place at once," was the angry response.

"Friends," said I, "I have come from far to tell you some good news. I will tell that to you, and then will immediately go."

"No," said some, who were evidently leaders, "we will not hear you."

We had seen the angry mob tearing up the cobble-stones and gathering them in the skirts of their garments to stone us with.

"We have no desire to abuse your gods," said I, "but have come to deliver a message."

Then came the order, "Swing shut the gates; make away with these preachers of other gods."

I saw one nudge another, saying, "You throw the first stone and I will throw the second." But all who had stones to throw were in my vision, and they quailed a little under my keen glance, and hesitated. I seemed to feel the presence of the Lord as though He were standing by my side with His hand on my shoulder, saying, "I am with you. I will tell you what to say." I was not conscious of any anxiety about my personal safety. My whole soul was wrapped in the thought, "How shall I get God's offer of salvation before these people?"

"Brothers," said I, "it is not to revile your gods that I have come this long way; far from it. I have come to you with a royal message from a King far higher than your Nizam; I have come to tell a story sweeter than mortal ear has ever heard. But it is evident that this multitude does not wish to hear it." They thought that I was weakening, and quieted down to see what was going to happen.

"But," said I, "I see five men before me who do wish to hear my story. Will you all please step back a little? I will tell these five who want to know why I have come here and what is my message, and then you may stone me. I will make no resistance then." I had been carefully scanning the crowd and had selected my men, for I had seen five honest countenances who had shown no sympathy with the abuse that had been heaped upon us.

"Brother with the red-bordered turban," said I, addressing a venerable Brahman who stood among the people at the right, "You would like to hear what my wonderful story is before they stone me, would you

not? Be frank and say so, for there are four others like you who wish to hear."

"I would like to hear what your story is," said he, speaking courageously and kindly.

"Brother with the gold-bordered turban at my left, you, too, would like to hear,—and you with the yellow turban,—and you with the brown-bordered,—and you with the pink."

I had rightly judged those men, for each assented. They were curious to know what I had to say.

"Now will you five men please come forward and I will tell you alone. All others step back, as soon as I have told these five the story, you may come forward and throw your stones."

The five came forward; the rest reluctantly stepped back a little. I had purposely chosen Brahmans, as I thought I could win them the better.

"Brothers," said I, in a subdued tone, "what is it you chant as you go to the river for your daily ablutions? Is it not this?

'Papoham, papakarahan, papatma, papa sambhavaha,
Trahi mam, Krupaya Deva, Sharana gata vatsala',"

said I, chanting it in Sanskrit; "and is not this its meaning?" said I in Telegu:

"I am a sinner, my actions are sinful. My soul is sinful. All that pertains to me is polluted with sin. Do Thou, O God, that hast mercy on those who seek Thy refuge, do Thou take away my sin."

These five Brahmans at once became my friends. One who correctly chants their Vedas and their mantras they always look up to with respect.

"Now, do you know how God can do what you ask? How He can take away the burden of our sin, and give us relief?

"We do not know. Would that we knew."

"I know; I have learned the secret. Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, tell us."

The multitude seeing the Brahmans conversing with the foreigner with evident respect, quieted still more and pressed forward to listen.

"Step back! step back!" said I, "it is only these five to whom I am to tell my story. If the rest of you listen it is on your own responsibility. Step back! and let me tell these five alone." This only increased their desire to hear, as I went on:

"Brothers, is it possible for us by our own acts to expiate our sins? Can we, by painful journeys to the holiest of all your holy places, change those sinful natures that you bemoan? Does not your own Telegu poet, Vemana, say:

'The Muslim who to Tirupati goes on pilgrimage,
Does not thereby become a saint of Sivia's house.
Becomes a dog a lion when he bathes in Ganges stream?
Benares turns not harlot into pure and trusted wife.'

Hearing their own language chanted, the people pressed forward still more intently.

"Nay, brothers, it is not by these outward acts, even to the utmost austerity, that we can attain to harmony with God. Does not your beloved Vemana again say:

"Tis not by roaming deserts wild, nor gazing at the sky;
'Tis not by bathing in the stream, nor pilgrimage to shrine;
But thine own heart must thou make pure,
and then, and then alone,
Shalt thou see Him no eye hath kenned, that thou behold thy King."

"Now, how can our hearts be made pure so that we may see God?

I have learned the secret; I will tell it you."

Then I told the story of stories; the story of redeeming love. Gradually and imperceptibly I had raised my voice until, as I spoke in the clear resonant Telegu, all down those three streets the multitudes could hear, and as I told them that it was for them, too, far away here in India, that He had suffered this agony on the cross, down many a cheek of those who had been clamouring for my life I saw tears coursing and dropping upon the pavements that they had torn up to stone us with. Far earlier in the story I had seen them stealthily dropping their armful of stones into the gutter and press back to listen.

How they listened as I went on to tell them further of the love of God in Christ!

"Now," said I, folding my arms and standing before them, "I have finished my story. You may stone me now. I will make no resistance."

"No, no," said they, "We don't want to stone you now. We did not know whose messenger you were, nor what you had come to tell us. Do those books tell more about this wonderful Redeemer?"

"Yes," said I, "this is the history of His life on earth—His death, His resurrection and glory."

With this their wallets were produced, and they purchased all we had of the Gospel of Luke. They purchased all the gospels and tracts we had with us, and appointed a deputation of their best men to escort us to our camp.

Verily, the story of the Cross has not lost its power. Preach it, brother, anywhere, everywhere.—Preach it in the regions beyond and in your own homes, with a tongue of fire and a

heart burning with the mighty, melting love of God."

Having read this story, your mental observation may be, that it was *obviously* the right thing to tell the story of the Cross to a crowd composed of Pagans or Mohammedans; but that it is *not needed in the same way* in lands that are nominally Christian. This idea we believe to be wrong. Such preaching has *always* been in season; it *always* has been needed, and never more so than today when so large a proportion of the young are being brought up in quite pagan environment.

Do not for one moment take it for granted that the fact and meaning of "Christ crucified" is known to your hearers. If an appreciable number of unconverted are listening to you, *some* will hardly be aware of the *fact*, and *none* of them will understand the *meaning*. And more than this, if by some combination of circumstances all of them were aware of the fact, and could possess some slight understanding of the meaning, it would still be necessary to preach the Cross. Not exactly "the Cross," but "the **PREACHING** of the Cross. . . . is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1. 18). The Cross must be preached, and with the preaching of it there is *power*.

If Paul preached it thus, only twenty years after it had taken place, there is the more reason that we should proclaim it now that nineteen centuries have passed. Whatever else you emphasise when preaching, *preach the Cross*. Tell the story! Let Christ crucified be portrayed faithfully before the eyes of the people. God will verify His Word—"it is *the power of God*."

CALVARY marks the true division between the Old Testament and the New. The recognition of this elementary truth goes far to get rid of confusion of thought concerning the mission of Christ and His teaching.

God, who since the days of His servant Malachi, had kept silence for some 400 years, spoke again through John the Baptist, the messenger sent before the Lord to make straight His paths. The Old Testament prophets foresaw this dawning of a day of glory for the earth. When Israel's King would sit upon the throne and administer blessing to the world. A day when economic inequalities would be levelled out; when the inspiration of the King's presence and the knowledge of God characterising the least as well as the greatest would be features of an age of righteousness and peace fraught with richest blessing not for man alone but for the whole groaning creation. When we turn to the first page of the New Testament we find an account of the birth of Him who was Son of David and Son of Abraham, and who had come as "a minister of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

While it is probable that we have been taught to regard the Gospels as the simplest of the New Testament books, it is the case that they are complicated beyond all others, and real spiritual insight is needed to distinguish between things that differ in them. With Christ upon earth, a man amongst men, subject to the demands of law, the Age of Law had not as yet passed. Where all others had only dishonoured God and broken His law, Christ was here to

glorify Him by walking in a pathway of undeviating obedience to His will. With the King here in person, a bona fide offer of a Kingdom and Kingship was made to the nation of Israel; but the King being refused the Kingdom was postponed; and until His death the Age of Grace could not be inaugurated. Transcending in His words the law of Moses, and yet as identified with the nation submitting to its claims, and as perfect man honouring God's law in every detail; presenting in the Sermon on the Mount the manifesto of the King, and yet for the glory of God, "and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" permitting the nation's derisive rejection of His kingly claims, as evidenced in the crown of thorns and in their cry "We will not have this man to reign over us." We find Him completely misunderstood in His own day and know that the centuries have not dispelled the grossness of man's ignorance.

How easily and how well the disciples sent out by the Master apprehended the import of the message "Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go preach say, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." The whole dynamic of their national hope and training lay behind their message. By way of contrast, how slow were they to take in the significance of the cross and the import of the resurrection. Even after the blessed Lord had companied with them forty days after His resurrection, instructing them in things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, their supreme inquiry was this, "Lord wilt thou at

this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" But it was not given to them to know the times or the seasons pertaining to Israel's blessing.

As we have already remarked Israel derisively rejected her King and crucified Him and this rejection involved the postponement of the promises made to the fathers. It was in the upper room on the very eve of His betrayal that the Lord spoke to His own of a New Commandment. And on the same occasion, as indicative of the changed relations for His disciples, He said, "But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled in *their* law (not your law), they hated me without a cause." Their inexcusable hatred, their senseless repudiation of His claims, culminating at Calvary, terminate the Age of Law. Man is no longer under law or probation. Nor is man, as such, under grace. He is under sin.

It is, of course, true that in all the ways of our Lord we see grace and truth manifested, for we are privileged to behold "His glory, full of grace and truth." But the supreme display of grace, the very thing which made the exhibition of Divine grace to men possible, was the cross of Christ. For grace is the unmerited favour of God, dispensed in righteousness. Grace is not merely favour, it is help. It is not merely an attitude, it is action. It is divine favour, proved by His gift. The grace of God in Christ which is sovereign grace, is saving grace. From the outset to the end, salvation is of the Lord. The Apostle writing to Titus declares "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present

world: looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." This comprehensive declaration, in a sense embraces the scope of the New Testament. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared," covers the Gospels and the Acts: the teachings of grace setting forth the suitable walk, form the content of the Epistles, while the glorious appearing is the outstanding theme of the Revelation.

Let us again remind our souls that salvation is of the Lord. Grace it was that proposed salvation: grace that purchased it: grace that proclaimed it. No works, no effort, no merit of man effected or elicited it. Our need or demerit provided the occasion for its display, although the love and wisdom that purposed and planned blessing for man were antecedent to man's need and had their origin before the foundation of the world, as we read "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." All is of God. As in creation, the order is "In the beginning God" and God, through the Spirit has been careful in all the teachings of grace to preserve this order — first, the blessing and then the obligation, first doctrine then duty, first revelation and then responsibility. "We are His workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Satan has ever sought to confuse the simple at this very point by pressing the responsibility of suitable walk before there has been a clear apprehension of standing in Christ. The

teachings of grace are not for the promiscuous multitudes but for those who have been quickened together with Christ, and saved by grace. Only grave harm can be done by presenting Christian responsibilities to mixed congregations of saved and unsaved as if applicable equally to all. Just as the requirements of the law were imposed upon a peculiar people during a divinely appointed period, so the teachings of grace are for a peculiar people for a limited period. Meantime the appeal to the unbeliever is not for an improved manner of life but to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Under grace we have not only a new standing as "accepted in the beloved" but every condition in the new life being supernatural we have, thank God, a new sufficiency. Human limitations have been perfectly provided for by the indwelling of the Spirit of God, the believers' enablement for all the responsibilities of the pathway. While as we have already emphasised, the believer is in no sense under law, it is nevertheless true that all the moral values of the Law are carried into this Age of Grace and restated in terms of grace. For example at Lystra, the apostles exhorted the people that they "should turn aside from these vanities unto the living God." John's first Epistle, probably the last to be written, concluded with these words, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." If these be indeed the last words penned, then the book of inspiration opens, "In the beginning God," and ends with the exhortation, "Keep yourselves from other gods." James in his Epistle has not merely exhorted us not to take the name of the Lord God in vain, but instructs "Swear

not at all." Children in the Lord are reminded by the apostle Paul to honour father and mother. "No murderer," says John, "hath eternal life abiding in him." To the Ephesians, Paul writes "Let him that stole, steal no more," and to the Colossians, "Lie not one to another"; while in the exalted epistle to the Ephesians he exhorts against covetousness. The only commandment of the ten, not restated under terms of grace, is the fourth, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." "This" then "is a faithful saying and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." Works, yes, but not with a view to securing God's favour, but because so richly blessed, for remember, "Ye are not under law, but under grace."

In conclusion let me remind you most briefly that God has a new purpose in this Age of Grace. From both Jew and Gentile He is taking out a people for His name. This heavenly body, the church, spoken of in anticipation by Christ Himself, awaited its existence for the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the consequent descent of the Holy Spirit. Originating at Pentecost it is growing or increasing during this age until perfection of stature be reached, when the church completed, we shall each one be changed into the image of Christ and collectively as His bride be with Him for ever. Meantime the promises to Israel are delayed, but the church's hope and prospect of the coming Christ being realised, the Age of Grace consummated, God will again deal with that nation to whom pertain the Covenants and the promise.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Town of Martha and Mary.

My dear Brother,

“The town of Mary and her sister Martha.” The Apostle lovingly connects the place with the dear ones who lived there. He cannot mention the town without recalling the well-known faces. It was a way of his. Does he not speak of Bethsaida as “the city of Andrew and Peter?” reminiscences must have crowded to his mind as he thought of the old days by the lakeside in Galilee!

It is a thing we instinctively do. There are certain towns that are inseparably associated with greatly loved friends, they were the first to greet us when we visited those towns, and the last to speed us on our way when we departed.

But there is a reason for the description of Bethany as “the town of Mary and her sister Martha.” The Apostle is going to relate a deed utterly incredible to the ordinary reader, but something which with his own eyes he beheld. He must be careful to give data for verification. So first he identifies the place. There was another Bethany (John 1. 28, R.V.) but *this* Bethany was the one where Mary and Martha lived.

He must afford means, too, of identifying at least one witness. Who shall be the one? It was Mary who before the crucifixion anointed the feet of the Lord with sweet perfume (John 12. 3). Her name would be on every evangelists' lip, for wherever the gospel was preached her deed of devotion was to be told for a memorial for her. Yes, she would be a suitable one to identify as a witness. “It was *that* Mary,” says John.

Do we ever ponder the fact that when the personal love of Jesus is spoken of, Martha's name comes first? “Now Jesus loved Martha.” He loved her equally with Mary, and if Martha failed at times to understand what pleased the Saviour most, we may well believe that she loved Him just as much as Mary did. And, as we shall learn from this chapter, there were times when she surpassed her sister in intelligence and practical devotion.

But let us come to the heart of the story. Lazarus was ill. We have often dwelt on the lovely wording of the message sent by the anxious sisters to the Lord. But let us notice what *He* said, when the messenger reached Him. He immediately spoke of the end, and that end was not death, but a testimony to the glory of God. A “New Translation” puts it beautifully “This illness is not to end in death; the end of it is the glory of God.” The Lord did not say that Lazarus would not die, but that death would not be the end.

The glory of God is that He is the God of resurrection. Satan has so wrought that death has necessarily come upon all. It was at this that he aimed. But he did not reckon with the power of resurrection, which brings all his devices to nought. And the case of Lazarus was selected as setting this forth.

It is similar to the case of the man, born blind in chapter 9. The disciples sought a reason for his affliction. But the Lord replied: “it was to let the work of God be illustrated in him” (verse 3).

Christ is the Administrator of this unique glory of God. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5. 21). He was marked out as the Son of God in that He wielded the power of resurrection (Romans 1. 4). So that the outcome of what would transpire in the case of Lazarus would not only be for the glory of God, but also "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Wherein lies the relevancy of the Lord's reply in verses 9 and 10 to the anxious question of His disciples? What has walking in the day and not stumbling, or walking in the night and stumbling, to do with the matter?

Do you not think, that it was *the light of divine purpose* to which the Lord referred? His disciples misunderstood, they were not in the light of purpose, so they stumbled.

I think this is important. I once heard a well-known minister of the Word say that one can hardly render a greater service to the saints than to help them to get from the ground of fulfilled responsibility on to the ground of divine purpose. He meant, of course, in the apprehension of their souls. If our souls are in the light of divine purpose, we shall be saved from a lot of stumbling.

"I am glad . . . I was not there." Does it sound harsh? Remember that infinite love uttered the words. Have we ever longed for the presence of the Life-giver by the bedside of some loved one who seemed about to leave us? Can our faith rise in assurance that what the Lord has done is the best that infinite wisdom and infinite love can do? Can we realize

a little why He should be *glad* not to be there, where we should have given worlds for Him to be?

It was not for the sick man's sake, and not so much for the sake of his sisters, but for the sakes of the disciples that the Lord said He was glad. "I am glad *for your sakes.*" He was teaching them lessons, and this was to be one.

The Book of Job makes it abundantly clear that God may pass His saints through sore trials, not primarily for their own sakes (though He always brings blessing out of the trials to them) but for the sake of spectators in the heavens, who are learning of God by His ways with His children. So it was in the case of Lazarus. The Lord was about to give His disciples an object lesson.

Martha seems to be the one who excels in faith and understanding in this narrative. It is she who goes forth, at the first news of the Saviour's approach, to meet Him. Mary did not go, she "sat still in the house." It is good to sit quietly sometimes, but one may overdo this. It is lovely to sit at the feet of Jesus *when He is there*, but not such a lovely thing to sit still in the house when He is outside. If we had been there, I think that you and I would have been off with Martha to reach the Saviour as soon as possible. At least I hope so!

The Lord missed Mary, and called for her, and Martha had to return to find and fetch her. It was like Simon. We speak and hear much more about Simon Peter than about Andrew. But it was Andrew who came to the Saviour first.

Martha, without any prompting from the Lord, breaks out into a

magnificent utterance of faith: "I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." What sublime confidence! Mary, when at length she comes, repeats Martha's first sentence word for word. She utters no saying of faith and courage, but sinks down wailing at the Saviour's feet, so that He groaned in spirit, and was troubled.

So it was Martha, and not Mary, that got the cheering promise of verse 23 and the wonderful revelation of verse 25.

"Thy brother shall rise again," says the Lord, and Martha shows the utmost faith and intelligence in her reply. For frequently the Lord had spoken of raising up those who are His *at the last day*. No less than four times these words of His are recorded in John 6. "Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him . . . *I will raise him up at the last day.*"

Martha had evidently heard this, and treasured the saying in her soul, as she replied: "I know that he shall rise again . . . at the last day." And the Saviour rewards her faith, by making an astounding revelation to her. The "I" of verse 25 is emphatic "I am Myself resurrection and life." He is this to all who believe, spiritually now; literally by-and-by, at His coming.

Matthew, Mark and Luke do not give us this more intimate view of the Lord's coming. They speak of His coming with the angels, with great glory, and with the clouds of heaven. It is only in John that we read of His coming in connection with the Father's house and the prepared place there. It is fully in accordance with this that He communicates the great truth to Martha that He is sup-

erior to the power of death, both for the soul and the body.

Martha's confession of verse 27 goes much beyond her earlier one, and with the glow and wonder of what she has learned shining in her heart, she goes off to find her sister.

Meanwhile Jesus remains in "*that place where Martha met Him.*" Oh, wonderful name for a place. We do not ask its geographical name. It lingered in John's memory (for he was there) as "*that place,*" that place where Martha met Jesus and had her soul made radiant with unfoldings of Himself.

Can we also not speak of places like this? Can you ever think of that busy Yorkshire town, but as "*that place,*" where you met HIM? Can I ever think of the quiet little town where my eyes first looked up to Him other than as "*that place,*" where I met Him?

The Saviour's sympathy was so manifestly real, that even the Jews exclaimed: "How He loved him!" But what a natural question they ask! "Could not this Man . . . have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Yes, yes, He could. Then why did He not? Their question caused Jesus again to groan. They were not in the light of God's purpose; they were stumbling in the night.

Oh, the glorious reason! The Lord was going to let Martha (and others, if only they would) SEE the glory of God (verse 40). Do you not think that *this* glory transcends even the glory of that earlier promise (John 1. 51)?

Yours affectionately,

Tertius.

Dear Tertius,

Many thanks for your interesting letter. Thanks, too, for setting Martha in a fresh light for us, she has had so many critics. I had almost said traducers, that it is good to have some one to stand up and speak well of her. She was a woman of energy and faith. I suppose if we were spiritual enough we should discern the many-sided work of God in those who came into contact with the Lord; especially so in John's Gospel, for there He deals particularly with individuals and we should see the glory of God, and the Son of God glorified in the spiritual work wrought in the souls of these men and women just as really as in the healing of the man born blind and the raising up of Lazarus.

Martha was the subject of this gracious work and was a vigorous result of it, but Mary—I am sure that she would have agreed heartily with your view of the matter, and have been glad to have hidden behind the energy and faith of her sister, but I for one do not feel inclined to allow her to do so. There is that about her, here as everywhere that moves the heart. She met Him where He waited for her, there *she fell at His feet*. See her prostrate there. Listen as she pours out her sorrow in His ear. See her as she looks up through her tears into His face, and lo, He weeps. Amazing words. JESUS WEPT. Is

there anything in the whole of Scripture that describes God's dealings with men that can surpass that? What wonder must have filled Mary's soul as she beheld tears upon His cheeks! How beautiful He must have seemed to her that day! What a revelation of His heart were those tears! How His sympathy must have swallowed up her sorrow! What intimacy with Him did her sorrow yield! She had known Him better than any other mortal, but she had never really known Him until then. And He walked by her side to the raising of her brother, and I believe it was those tears, and that revelation of Him to her soul that produced the alabaster box of ointment and not the power that raised the dead. Martha knew His power and saw His glory, Mary saw His heart and learnt the love that passeth all knowledge.

So I would put them side by side. The two sisters manifest the work of the grace of our Lord in its different phases. Both are needed, and both ministered to the heart of the Lord and glorified God by the response that they gave to the word and work of His beloved Son. The two together complete the picture. May our souls be as sensitive and responsive to Him as theirs were for His Name's sake.

Every your affectionate brother

QUARTUS.

Every Man Perfect in Christ.

What a blessed thought that you and I are tending to see the Lord and be with Him for ever! It is often a happiness to me to know that we shall not only have Christ—which is the great thing—but that then not one of the saints will be anything which is not perfectly pleasing to Christ. It is this we have to seek earnestly *now*, and He is our strength and wisdom to carry it out; only let our eye be single and Christ everything. We have need of Him and His precious thoughtful grace every moment on to the end.

J.N.D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God.

“Will you give some light on the difference between the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God and similar expressions?”—LIVERPOOL.

THE Kingdom of heaven” occurs only in Matthew’s Gospel, and if you consider the parables that describe it you will see that it is a state of things in the midst of the world, consequent upon the rejection and during the absence of the Lord—the King. Its rule is from heaven. It describes the Kingdom of God in its dispensational aspect, and as to its extent it would be wherever the word of God is acknowledged and the Name of the Lord professed outwardly. Hence there is the mixture of good and bad—the wheat and tares, the leaven and the meal, the good and bad fish, the wise and foolish virgins, and so forth. When the Lord returns as Son of Man in judgment it will be developed into *His* Kingdom, He will take the throne of it and out of it everything that offends shall be cast (Matt. 13. 41). It will also become “the Kingdom of their Father,” but that is pro-

bably the heavenly side of it, in which those shall shine who have suffered with and for Christ during His absence (Matt. 13. 43).

“The Kingdom of God” is more general. It was here on earth when the Lord was here, for He was the King, so He could say to the Pharisees “the Kingdom of God is among you,” not *in* you, as the Authorised Version renders it. It is in this present time, spiritual and moral in its character. So we read “the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14. 1). It is the sway of God over the souls of men; the power of it is exercised in grace and salvation; “grace reigns through righteousness” describes it. The Lord Jesus is the Administrator of it, and all who have confessed Him as Lord are in it.

The Leaven and the Meal.

“Can you give some light on the passage Matthew 13. 33? A number of commentators’ interpretations seem at variance with the usual symbolical meaning of leaven”—S. DEVON.

IT would be a strange thing, if while in every other mention of leaven in both Old and New Testaments, it is a figure of evil, it should in this instance represent what is good, and strangest of all that it should represent the gospel, as many commentators make it out to do. The two things that leaven does are, it corrupts and puffs up, and that should be enough to prove that it cannot be a figure of good.

The parable must be taken in its setting; it is one of a group of three. The first is that of the tares, sown in the field along with the wheat. These tares are the children of the wicked one mingling with the children of the Kingdom (verse 38-43). It is the unholy mixture known as Christendom, in which the children of the wicked one have been more prolific than the children of the Kingdom, for they certainly predominate and that in

high places. The inevitable result of this is that the Kingdom of heaven that began small as a mustard seed has become like a great tree, verses 31-32, in the branches of which the fowls of the air lodge (for meaning of the fowls of the air, see verses 4 and 19). The great tree is a symbol of political influence and power in the world (see Daniel 4). This character of things is specially evident in the history of papal Rome, but it is not wanting in other sections of Christendom, for both State churches and Nonconformist bodies clamour for influence in the affairs of the nations, which is utterly inconsistent with the profession of the Name of the rejected, crucified Christ.

New doctrines must be made to conform to this state of things, hence a false gospel has been introduced and is proclaimed from perhaps the majority of pulpits in Christendom.

The leaven has been introduced into the meal. It does not suit the modern religious man who is a mere professor, to be told that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" and that nothing will avail him but redemption by the blood of Jesus, and that he must be born again by the word of God and the Holy Ghost. He rejects the truth that he is a fallen Adam, and prefers to think of himself as an exalted progressive ape. So the leaven of the false gospel of biological evolution is permeating almost all preaching; it puffs men up with pride of fancied attainment, and it inevitably leads to corruption of life and morals. That we believe is the true interpretation of the parable of the leaven. The ultimate result will be the Laodicean phase of Christendom which the Lord will spue out of His mouth (Rev. 3. 14-2).

THE GUIDANCE OF THE LORD.

J.N.D.

THE steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah. This is a vast and precious blessing, to think that in this wilderness, where there is no way in the midst of confusion and wickedness, our Father directs our steps.

A young Christian may, in confident zeal, not so much see the value of this; but through how many experiences will he pass? But when one has seen the world, its snares, what a pathless wilderness of evil it is, it is beyond all price that the Lord directs our steps.

Also the humble young Christian is directed through grace, if he waits on the Lord, though he may not see the wisdom of it, nor the great-

ness of the privilege and mercy, till afterwards. But this not all. Being so directed, the path is a good, a divine, path. There is indeed no other, and the heart is directed in it.

We have then to wait on the Lord, and to keep His way. The end of the perfect and of uprightness is peace. And so it is, practically, with a Christian; he may be chastened for particular faults, for God's ways are through mercy unbending and right; but when a man walks with upright purpose of heart in his life, that life closes—if it close this side of glory—in peace.

The fear of God and walking in His presence is a great means of peace.

ADORATION.

LORD, we would consider Thee, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Thou art the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of Thy power. Yet because we were partakers of flesh and blood Thou didst take part of the same; Thou wert made a little lower than the angels, that being man Thou mightest die. Only thus couldst Thou make purgation for our sins; only thus couldst Thou destroy him that had the power of death, which is the devil, and deliver us, who through fear of death were all our life-time subject to bondage.

We consider Thy way from the eternal throne to the cross. We wonder as we see Thee, Emmanuel in the manger, the great Creator without a place to lay Thy head; the eternal I AM yet despised and rejected by Thy people; the King Eternal crowned with thorns. How wonderful in our eyes is that grace that was seen in Thee, when Thou didst permit men whose breath was in Thy hands to spit upon Thee, and crucify Thee; only thus could their desperate hatred of God be exposed and God's love to them revealed, for Thy cross has brought everything into clear manifestation, but most of all and most blessed of all what God is. A body was prepared for Thee with this great end in view. Thou didst say "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God." That will was our salvation, our sanctification, our eternal blessing. Thou hast not failed. Thou alone, in the wide universe, couldst undertake and finish the great work, and Thou hast done it perfectly. Not by the blood of bulls and goats are we redeemed, not by silver or gold, but by Thy blood, the

precious blood of Christ. By Thy blood God's justice is magnified, the accuser of the brethren is silenced and we are saved.

But no creature mind can comprehend the cost to Thee, the price that Thou didst pay is beyond our powers to tell. Thou didst become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; its shame, its unspeakable degradation were Thine, but more than that, Thy soul was made an offering for sin. When men had done their worst the darkness shut them out, and then Thou wert wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Jehovah chose to bruise Thee instead of us; Thou hadst to cry "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We can give the answer to that cry, "It was for us." Every ransomed soul can say, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me." We love Thee for that shameful cross, endured so patiently. We exult in Thine exaltation. We rejoice that Thou art crowned with glory and honour; we acclaim Thee worthy of the highest place in the glory of God, but it is not Thine exaltation and glory that has won our hearts, but Thy suffering, the shame of the cross, Thy death for us.

Thou hast triumphed, and Thy Father has signalled Thy triumph by raising Thee up from the dead and seating Thee at His own right hand in glory, and soon the whole universe will recognise and confess Thy glory, for every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth shall bend the knee to Thee and confess that Thou art Lord to the glory of God the Father. We do this now and we are admitted to the

innermost place, for we not only know that Thou art great and glorious for ever, but we know Thy love. It surpasses all knowledge and yet we know it. It is a love that will not be satisfied until we are with Thee in Thy glory, then shalt Thou see of the travail of Thy soul and be

satisfied, for when Thou presentest Thy blood-redeemed Church to Thyself, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, Thou wilt say the prize is worth the price. We adore Thee, Saviour and Lord. Worthy art Thou of eternal praise. Amen and Amen.

NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

CONSIDER this saying, "With men it is impossible," and yet remember, preacher, that to save men you are sent. **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE**; it is impossible for a man to stay the tide as it rolls in upon the shore, or to create an angel; it is equally impossible for him to save a soul. With men it is impossible. Impossible to make a man prefer faith to sight, choose the wealth of heaven instead of the gold of earth, abandon self for Christ, and choose God's way for his own. But the saved man according to God, does these things; and this means that his very nature is changed. But it is impossible for a man to change his own nature or that of his fellows, just as it is impossible for him with a few magic words to change the spots of the leopard or the skin of the black. Let the word *impossible* sink into our soul; we have surely not sufficiently considered it, or our grasp of its meaning has been very superficial. It is impossible, *impossible*, **IMPOSSIBLE**.

The preacher who realises this will not vaunt himself, he will not be puffed up. He will be a humble man owning his nothingness, and withal dependent, as he goes forth on his

mission. He will not go forth lightly; certainly not to make a parade of his powers or display himself, for he is powerless; "with men it is impossible."

"Who is sufficient for these things?" God, and God alone, "for with God all things are possible." Ah! the knowledge of this turns a man to God. The preacher must turn to God, wait upon God, go forth from God with God's message, knowing that God can lay hold upon the most unpromising of men and transform them into His saints.

But here lies the great hindrance; if the preacher refuses to let self go and rely upon God, how can he expect his hearers to let self go for Christ? If the preacher shrinks from owning that he has no power, and that every effort he puts forth as of himself is independence of God, and so sinful, how can he expect his hearers to own that they have no power to save themselves, that their best efforts are sinful, and that God is their only hope? One of the chief causes of powerless, fruitless preaching, is the failure to understand the significance of the words of the Lord. *It is impossible*.

THE TRESPASS OFFERING.

J. T. Mawson.

“Then I restored that which I took not away” (Psalm 69. 4).

THE Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5 and 6) is usually looked upon as a sort of secondary sin offering and passed over with little notice, but there are features about it, so it seems to me, that give it a character entirely its own and shew that it is not a whit behind the four great offerings in its importance.

In the sin offering we learn the guilt of sin, but the trespass offering teaches the injury that sin has done; the sinner not only suffers himself but his sin causes others to suffer. Every sin is a trespass against others.

Three directions are indicated in which sin operates:—

In the holy things of the Lord, ch. 5, verse 15.

Against the commandments of the Lord, verse 17.

Against the Lord in an offence against one's neighbours, ch. 6. 2.

To get a right view of these different aspects of sin we must go back to the start of man's history. When Adam sinned God was the first to suffer; he committed a trespass and sin in the holy things of the Lord. We learn how dear man was to God by the counsel He took as to him before He created him, and the care He exercised as He formed him in His own image and after His likeness, drawing so near to him that He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Adam must have been impressed with God's affectionate interest in him; most certainly the devil was, and he planned to spoil it all and to make Adam sin in the holy things of God, to injure God in His holy love for him. He

succeeded, perhaps more easily than he had hoped; distrust and disobedience thrust out of the hearts of Adam and his wife the happy confidence that God's goodness had created in them, and God lost them,—He lost the choicest and best of His creation, the crown of all His work. Have we sufficiently considered His cry in the Garden when He came down to commune with Adam in the cool of the day, “Adam, where art thou”? Wounded love throbbed in those words. I say it with the greatest reverence, Adam's sin was a stab at the very heart of God. God was the first to suffer. The story of the prodigal (Luke 15) is the New Testament answer to Genesis 3 and the Father's joy in the return of His son in that chapter teaches us how keen His sorrow must have been at his departure.

Adam's sin was also *against the commandments of the Lord*. His act of disobedience was rebellion; it meant, “I'll be a god to myself; who is the Lord that I should obey Him?” it was a challenge to God's supremacy. Let us have no doubt about this, sin would dethrone Almighty God if it could. If there had been any weakness in God and He had condoned the sin because He loved the sinner, and sacrificed His justice for His love, it would have meant the abdication of His throne; He would have ceased to be God. It is necessary that we should realise that sin is not only a stab at God's heart but an attempt on His throne. God is love: that is His nature, and He is a just God; that is His character, both His nature and His character were challenged and at-

tacked by Adam's sin and are still challenged by all the sin of his race.

With what hurried steps sin advanced to *trespass against man's neighbour*, which is counted as a trespass against the Lord. As soon as there was a man to sin against, the trespass was done, and the startled earth drank the blood of the first man slain, not by a demon from a nether hell, nor by a wild beast from the forest, but by his own mother's son. In the murder of Abel, Cain had trespassed in that "which was delivered him to keep," and he had "taken away by violence" his brother's life. His sullen retort to God's enquiry as to his brother, "Am I my brother's keeper?" shewed clearly that he knew that he was.

The next thing to notice is that the trespasser was not left to estimate the extent of the injury his trespass had done. Moses, who represented God, had to measure it after the shekel of the sanctuary (ch. 5. 13). We may be sure that the deplorable laxity of the day and the shallow conviction as to sin, even in those who profess God's Name, is because God's estimate of sin is neither known nor desired. We set up our own standard, or compare ourselves with others and excuse ourselves, because in our judgment we are better than they; and worse, we

"Compound to sins we are inclined to
By damning those we have no mind to."

It is only in God's presence that we begin to learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin in its challenge to God and the injury it does to our fellows, and then, and not till then do we realise and acknowledge the need of a great atoning sacrifice.

It will be noticed that while the offerings for atonement for sin, ac-

ording to the law of the sin offering, were graded, ranging from a young bullock to a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, there was only one offering that could adequately meet the trespass and make atonement for the trespasser, no matter what the trespass was, the offering could not be less than a ram without blemish. The first time a ram comes into the divine picture is in Genesis 22, where one caught by its horns in a thicket died instead of Isaac. That gives the thought of substitution, but who could be a true and adequate substitute for sinful men whose trespasses have not only filled the earth with violence and corruption but risen up to heaven in defiance of God?

There is only one answer to that, it is *the Son of Man*. And He, in the greatness of His love has taken this place. He said "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must *the Son of man* be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3. 14). "Even the *Son of man* came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10. 45). The ram also signifies strength and determination. It typifies the Lord as coming forth from heaven saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Nothing could divert Him from that will, "He set His face as a flint." "He was not rebellious, neither turned away back" (Isaiah 50. 5). But further the ram would indicate full growth and maturity. There was no immaturity or lack of knowledge in the Lord. In the full knowledge of God's estimate of sin, and the demands that eternal justice must make upon the One who stood as substitute for the transgressor, He came, and when the

suggestion was made that He should seek an easier path His answer was, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art an offence unto Me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God." And again, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it." Finally, as with all the sacrifices, the ram was to be without blemish. The Lord was the sinless substitute; no trespass did He commit either against God or His neighbour. "He loved the Lord His God with all His heart and His neighbour as Himself."

What a great day and to be remembered is that on which for the first time it dawned upon the sin-convinced sinner, that Christ died for his sins, according to the Scriptures and that through the perfect and complete atonement that He made by His blood, his trespasses are forgiven. "The priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord: and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein" (ch. 6.). "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin."

We come now to that part of the type which must fill every one of God's children with joy, as it will fill heaven with everlasting praise. Restitution will fill heaven with everlasting praise. Restitution had to be made for every trespass and *a fifth part added thereto*. The injured party had to be recompensed by far more than he had lost. Certainly no sinner could do this, and yet it is in and through ransomed sinners that this added part is gained; but the One who brings it to pass is the One who made atonement for the sin. It is the voice of Jesus that says in the Psalm, "Then I restored that which I took not away." Consider the injury done to God in His love for

men, so terrible was it that the Lord had to say, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," and "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Could such deep rooted enmity be removed and the enemies reconciled? The answer is, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son," and we read now of "*them that love God*" (Romans 8. 28; 1 Cor. 2. 9). And mark well the character of the love, it is not now the love that Adam might have had for a beneficent Creator, but the love of children to the Father. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." Thus has God Himself been enriched and will be glorified for ever as He could not have been if Satan had not succeeded in making man a trespasser, for the very trespass gave the Son of God the opportunity of bearing the judgment, and in adding infinite wealth and glory to God against Whom the trespass was committed. And God has even now, as He will have for ever, a response to His great love from the hearts of His redeemed children.

Then the trespass against the commandments of the Lord has been met, and the fifth part added thereto, in that we who once yielded our "members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" and were "not subject to the law of God" now find that "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5. 3). We can thank God that through His grace, we have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine that was delivered unto us (Romans 6. 17), and that God gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him, and that we "delight in the law of God after the inward man." We are spoken of as "obe-

dient children," and it is wonderful how often willing obedience to God is spoken of in the Epistles. It were well for us to be in continual exercise of heart that we may not fail in this, lest we be found holding back from God that which Jesus died to secure in us for Him.

Finally, as to the trespass against our neighbour. "When we were in the flesh" we affected and influenced others by our words and ways, and lived in the spirit of Cain, saying, "Am I my brother's keeper"? We lived to please ourselves often to the hurt of others. In the type a man might trespass against his neighbour by lying unto him and deceiving him, and must not we plead guilty to that? But what must be the answer to that in us now? "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4. 25). A man might trespass in taking away a thing violently as Cain took away Abel's life. Now hatred of another is incipient murder, and to speak evil of another is really a blow at a man's life, and these things were easy for us in those former days, but now the answer to all that in us is "Hereby perceive we the love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3. 16); a man might trespass against his neighbour in denying that a thing was delivered

him to keep, as Cain denied his responsibility for Abel, the answer to that in us is, "the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12. 25). Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works (Hebrews 10. 24). "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Romans 15. 2). "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6. 3).

In this way has God triumphed and does triumph as we, to whom the very life of Christ has been imparted, manifest that life in practical living. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on love, which is the perfect bond. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." What glory to God there must be in such a life!

The poor man who is conversant with his Bible, needs not go to the philosopher to consult him, nor need he regard the maxims current in the world. With the Scripture as his guide, the Holy Spirit as his instructor, he needs no caustic but an upright heart; no director but a mind bent upon doing the will of God.

Simeon-

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE. No. 4.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Norwood, April 10th).

Chapter 2.

THE great conflict of which Paul speaks would be in prayer. This conflict was necessary if his ministry was to be effectual. He had been made a minister of the gospel and of the riches of the glory of the mystery, which is Christ in you, Gentiles, the hope of glory; but it was not enough that he should preach and teach, there was great opposition to his ministry. The devil opposed all his power and wiles to it, for it was the invasion of his kingdom of darkness and the deliverance of his captives, hence Paul's agony of prayer. Then it was a divine work and could only be done by divine power, not by Paul's natural ability or wisdom could it be done, the power of God was alone sufficient for it, and prayer, true prayer is the expression of dependence upon the power of God. The word of God and prayer are bound up together in the Scriptures and we must not divorce them. May not the lack of this soul conflict in prayer account for the present day weakness in the ministry? The devil does not oppose prayerless preaching and teaching no matter how orthodox it may be, for there is no power in it.

Paul prayed for all who had not seen his face in the flesh and that brings us in, his prayers are still being answered in that the great truths of which he was the minister have reached us. We must not overlook Epaphras, he joined with Paul in this severe conflict of prayer. These two were agreed in this matter. The fervent prayer of one righteous man availeth much, James 5, 16, but if two of you agree touching anything

they shall ask the answer is sure, "it shall be done for them by My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18. 19).

His earnest longing was that they might be comforted or encouraged. There never was a saint of God going on well whom the devil did not harass, and never a church making progress that he did not endeavour to spoil. Paul knew this and it made him pray. They were like a garrison attacked by a subtle foe and they needed the comfort and encouragement that the truth only could give; they needed to be relieved from fears and anxieties and doubts; and then to be knit together *in love*. The truth of the mystery can only be known and become a practical power as the saints of God are knit *together* in love. It is more than individual blessing. It is the life of Christ in *all* the saints; Christ morally in them and manifested through them in their ways with one another. When a man believes the gospel, and so becomes a Christian, he is one with every other Christian on earth, but he may have that fact as knowledge in his head and be unmoved by it. It is not knowledge that binds us together but love, the love that forgets self in the joy of this wonderful divine unity—Christ in everyone of you the hope of glory.

But the mind as well as the heart must be in exercise. There are inconceivable riches in the mystery of God, all His wealth of wisdom and knowledge are in it; and the Apostle's conflict was that the saints might not have poor and limited

views of it, but have the full assurance that the knowledge of its completeness and inevitability give. We shall need to pray too, and be dependent upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit of God if we are to enter into that.

The mystery of God in this verse is probably wider than the mystery in the first chapter. That is fully revealed and complete now; it is Christ in the saints of God, their life and hope of glory, but the mystery of God embraces the future. It is revealed in Ephesians 1. 19 23. God will bring everything into subjection to Christ, He has made Him to be Head over all things to His church. He is to give character to the whole universe, and every part of it will derive its force and direction from Him. When we think of the opposition to Christ in the world, and how supreme the power of evil appears to be now, we feel that to displace all that and fill it with Christ will call for great wisdom and knowledge; what assurance it gives when we know that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in the mystery of God of which Christ is the Head and centre, and His body, the church with Him there.

They had begun well and Paul could rejoice in their order and the stedfastness of their faith in Christ, but now his warnings begin; they were in danger of being beguiled with enticing words. To draw them away from Christ was the devil's purpose. The suggestion was that their faith would be enriched by Greek philosophy, and Jewish ritual, and the traditions and ordinances of men; what the Scriptures speak of as "beggarly elements" even at their best. And if we contrast these with all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge that are hid in the mystery of God, we can see how terribly spoiled they would be if they gave heed to the beguiling words.

This Epistle was to be read in the church at Laodicea, and they did not heed the warning that Paul gave, so that while they were beguiled into believing that they were rich and increased in goods, the Lord says to them "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, blind, and naked" (Rev. 3. 17). That was the result of not heeding the warnings of Scripture, and turning to things not after Christ. It is the state in which Christendom is drifting, overrun as it is with ritual and modernism.

Our safety lies in going on as we began. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, verse 6. When we came to Him at first we did not want any one to help Him to save us, we knew that no one could help Him. "Neither is there salvation in any other," we were entirely cast upon Him. But there is more in it than that, the One who received us when we came as sinners, *we received* as the Christ the Lord, the risen and exalted One; now we are to walk *in* Him. What a joyful deliverance it was for us when the truths as to what He is shone in our souls and we received Him, our whole lives have now to be ordered according to that delivering truth.

We have been rooted in Him, that is the past tense, and we are being built up in Him, that is the present tense, and established in the faith, *as ye have been taught*. There can be no advance from the beginning, for Christ is the beginning. The great error of modernism is that what was taught at the beginning is out of date and they must advance

with the times, but if it is God's beginning it cannot be improved upon, it is perfect from the start. In all men's works improvement and advance there certainly is. The motor car of 1937 is a very different machine from what it was in 1900, but with God's things it is the beginning that is perfect and Christ is the beginning. "He is the Head of the body, the church: *who is the beginning*, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Christ risen from the dead is God's beginning and ours, and in the truth of Him we are to be established, abounding therein with thanksgiving. The Christian assembly is to be a thanksgiving assembly, conscious of the immensity of the favour in which it stands before God the Father in Christ. In Christ all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. He became man that the fulness of the Godhead might be brought to men, and He retains His manhood in resurrection life and and glory; the fulness of the Godhead dwells in the man Christ Jesus. All that God is is revealed in Him, and apart from Him we cannot know anything of God.

What need have we of the philosophy of men, or their traditions, or of the elements of the world, that leave men in bondage to their sins and to Satan, and cannot set them free, when we have the fulness of God in Christ? In Him we are com-

plete; we have no need to go outside of Him, and He is the head of all principality and power. All the resources of God are in Him for us, and there is not a power in the universe can prevent those resources reaching us, for He is the Head of them all. Our part is to hold the Head (verse 19). But we cannot hold Christ as Head and hold on to the flesh at the same time, and by the flesh in this connection we mean the life that men live as children of Adam and upon which they bring to bear their rules and regulations and restrictions and ordinances to keep themselves respectable and give themselves a standing in one another's eyes. God has nothing to say to that, He is not dealing with men on those lines *now*, the cross of Christ was the end of all that, and we who are now *in Christ* and in whom Christ is, have been circumcised in the circumcision made without hands (verse 11). That is, we are cut off as having our part in that life in the death of Christ. "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world" (verse 20). Verse 11 should read, "in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." We acknowledge this cutting off—death with Christ—in our baptism, but it could have no reality for us if we were not risen with Him, so we read "If ye then be risen with Christ" (ch. 3). Christ is now our life.

To continue.

"*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her*" (John 8. 7).

"The law is useful as a weapon, but it is one that has no handle; for if I, a man in the flesh, take it to use against others, it pierces me through quite as much as those against whom I wield it."

J.N.D.

OUR NEED AND GOD'S NEED.

J. L. Donaldson.

EVERY Christian knows that it was his need that brought him to the Saviour, but it may not have occurred to all that God also had a need. That the two needs are entirely different is allowed. Our need was the result of our sin and folly. God's need is the need of divine love. "God is love." It is necessary for the satisfaction of His own heart that His lost ones should be recovered. No attempt to explain this, the unexplainable, is made. But it is blessedly true we know on the declaration of the only-begotten Son, who alone could make such a declaration, and the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

OUR NEED. In Luke 10 the Lord Jesus answers the lawyer who would justify himself and asks "And who is my neighbour?" In His answer He reveals the compassion of God towards one who is helpless and in sore straits through his self-caused need, and the activities of divine mercy in meeting the need and caring for him. But the revelation does not go further than that in that beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan. It is there entirely a question of our need.

How good it is when we can say that the Lord has acted in mercy towards us! How good too, when, like the psalmist, we can say "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," and with him can speak with assurance of never failing protection and care until we "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Very precious are our experiences by the way and very blessed are His communications as He enlarges to our souls the greatness of that which He has done,

is doing and will do for us so that we sing the hymn, "I've found a Friend, Oh, such a Friend."

HIS NEED. But what we are to Him is more precious and more blessed than what He is to us. We may be certain that His side will be better than our side. It is the realisation of what we are to Him that so satisfies the heart that there is no further desire and causes it to overflow with supreme joy.

This side of things is the theme of Luke 15 where we have another of the Lord's wonderful answers. It is not now the necessity of exposing the self-righteous to himself, but of justifying God. And, be it noted, not in His showing mercy merely, but in *receiving* sinners and *eating* with them. In this three sectioned parable the Lord reveals to the Pharisees and scribes that God finds His own pleasure and gratifies His own heart in receiving sinners and eating with them. This is grace. Without submitting definitions we can say then that the activities of mercy are in relation to our need but that the activities of grace go further, being in relation to His need.

The first section of the parable brings the Lord Jesus before us as Shepherd. He is seen firstly as the good Shepherd who giveth His life for the sheep in going after that which was lost until He find it. He had to endure the cross for this. Then as the great Shepherd of Psalm 23 in laying it upon His own shoulders. How secure is the position of His own, for one shoulder can sustain the government of the universe. But we are so dear to His heart and so valuable as the trophies of His passion,

that no place less secure would satisfy Him. Then thirdly as the chief Shepherd in coming home. Here we learn that He found us not we found Him, and that the joy of the recovery is His. What a glorious and triumphant home coming! All heaven is called to celebrate it.

In the second section the Holy Spirit, as the woman, is seen down here consequent upon the exaltation of Christ as indicated by His coming home. Now it is not the plight of a sheep but the dead state of an inanimate piece of silver, which is nevertheless presented as of supreme value. The Lord Jesus is the propitiation for the whole world and "gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Thus the Holy Spirit lighted the gospel candle on the day of Pentecost and ever since has, by means of the preached word as broom, been sweeping and seeking diligently. The work of the Spirit by the word (the water and the Spirit of John 3. 5) results in the recovery of the dead. Again it is the Holy Spirit who finds, and divine joy and heavenly celebration marks the recovery of that which was lost.

In the first two sections the work is all God's and is to recover for Himself what He had lost, for not only is man's state that of lost, but he is lost to God through sin. The third section follows. In it we see the result of the work of the Holy Spirit by the word in the lost son coming to himself and returning to his father to say "I have sinned. . ." This is what the Godhead in the need of Its heart (wondrous revelation to our souls) has worked to bring about. There is now no longer any hindrance to the outgoing of the father's heart, he, who had been under affectionate observation all the time, is seen returning a great way

off and the father, running to meet him, gives expression to his love so long restrained. Thus is the receiving of sinners justified.

It is admitted there is compassion as in Luke 10, but love is supreme. The compassion was in respect of the prodigal's degradation, but the kiss which was not given in Luke 10, was the expression of the Father's love. Every Christian should have the consciousness of having been kissed as a son and this is one of the things the reception of the Holy Spirit should assure them of. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

This consciousness makes ready for the ministry of the servants (bondmen) who are the "us" of 2 Corinthians 5. 18, and their ministry is the ministry of reconciliation. This ministry brings the found one into the realised gain of how he has been set up according to the exceeding riches of God's grace, replete with all that is suitable to the Father and His house and that should grace a son, to the admiration of the universe when displayed in the ages to come.

Being now a lover of God (what else could he be?) there is the bringing hither of the fatted calf, the divine preparations now revealed to us by His Spirit, and the killing of it to usher in the feast.

This brings us to the climax. "Let us eat and be merry." Eating has different significations in Scripture such as appropriation and communion. Here it is the latter. God and the sons who were lost but have been found will have merriment and gladness together in the joy of what He has prepared in sweet communion for eternity. Thus and thus only is His need met.

CHRIST THE SON, THE SERVANT, THE SOVEREIGN.

Philippians 2. 5—11.

W. Bramwell Dick.

(2) Christ the Servant (verses 7 and 8).

IN these two choice verses we have seven steps in the great journey of our blessed Lord from the glory to the Cross. Let us note them at once:

- (1) He "made Himself of no reputation";
- (2) "And took upon Him the form of a Servant";
- (3) "And was made in the likeness of man";
- (4) Was "found in fashion as a Man";
- (5) "He humbled Himself";
- (6) "And became obedient unto death";
- (7) "Even the death of the Cross."

What a mighty stoop was that! May the Lord graciously control our thoughts as we seek to consider it. (1) He "made Himself of no reputation." A well-known translation renders it "He emptied Himself." This is perhaps better if we use it wisely. He did not empty Himself of Deity, He could never be less than He ever was, over all, God blessed for ever. He divested Himself of the insignia of His glory, the outward form of it. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, not having anywhere to lay His head, there was nothing to suggest that the Creator was tabernacling among His creatures. Yet His glory could not be hid. He who was born in such lowly surroundings was "EMMANUEL—GOD WITH US" (Matthew 1. 23). He who had nowhere to lay His head was the One of Whom the Apostle said "we beheld His glory" (John 1. 14); and He who died on a malefactor's cross was He of Whom the centurion said

"Truly this Man was the Son of God" (Mark 15. 39).

(2) He took upon Him the form of a Servant. Does not this fill us with wonder? The Lord of the Universe, He who had myriads of angels at His command, whose glory fills the heavens, yea, He who was "in the form of God," took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and came into Manhood that He might be the Servant of the Godhead. In the council chamber of Eternity He offered Himself saying "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Psalm 40. 7); and "When He cometh into the world. . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10. 5-7). How perfectly He did it. The Gospel according to Mark is essentially the Gospel of the Servant. Introduced as "Jesus Christ the Son of God"; its keynote is 10. 45, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." In the shortest Gospel we have packed the life of Him Who was the Servant of all. In chapter 16 we find that, His work done, "He was received up into heaven, and *sat* on the right hand of God"; and yet His service was not finished, for His disciples "Went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord *working* with them" (16. 19, 20). Such was, and is, the remarkable history of Him who "took upon Him the form of a Servant." The next sentence, (3) should read "Taking His place in the likeness of Man" (New Trans.). All that we have in

these verses was His own voluntary act and is consistent with the greatness of His Person as set forth in verse 6. He was a real Man—sin apart—but He was a unique Man. As His enemies in the synagogue at Nazareth fastened their eyes upon Him, they “all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4. 20, 22). When, on another occasion, officers were sent to take Him, they came back without Him and reported “Never man spake like this Man” (John 7. 46). He attracted the children, He welcomed the outcast, He was the friend of the needy, He was at the service of all. The delight of the heart of God, the object surely of heaven’s wonder, the centre of the interest of all. Such was He who was “a Man approved of God” (Acts 2. 22). “Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10. 38). Such was “the Man Christ Jesus.”

(4) Being found in fashion (or in figure) as a Man. It would seem as if, when presenting the manhood of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit is at all times careful to safeguard the glory of His Person. He who became very man was, and is, very God, He took His place in the *likeness* of Men; He was “found in *fashion* (or *figure*) as a Man.” Never before, nor since, has a man trod this earth like our Lord Jesus Christ. We follow His footsteps, watch His acts, we note His gracious mien, His tender ways, every detail of His life, and we wonder and worship, while, in all sincerity, we say to Him,

“We wonder at Thy lowly Mind,
And fain would like Thee be,
And all our rest and pleasure find
In learning, Lord, of Thee.”

(5) “He humbled Himself.” A well-known writer has remarked that “As

God, He emptied Himself; as man, He humbled Himself.” It might be asked: Could He have stooped lower than He did when He became “A homeless stranger in the world His hands had made?” He actually did so as we shall see presently. How very different to the first man! He sought to exalt himself and he was abased, he aspired to get up, and he was brought down. What was true of Adam is characteristic of his posterity. The ambition of men and women to-day is to have the first place. Some are not too scrupulous as to the method of getting there, nor do they show much consideration for those whom they know to have a prior claim. How perfect was our Lord Jesus! The first place, the highest place, belonged to Him, yet “He humbled Himself.” Blessed Lord! Our souls adore Thee! Thou didst indeed humble Thyself and

(6) “became obedient unto death.” once again, we see the contrast. The first man died because of his disobedience. Our blessed Lord, upon whom death had no claim, “became obedient unto death.” How we delight to view, though it be with chastened spirits, the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane when the cup of wrath was presented to Him. In the perfection of His holiness, He shrank from it; in the perfection of His obedience He took it; and in the perfection of His love He, on the cross, drained it to the last dark drop. Such was His obedience. Was it possible for Him to go lower than that? Yes. He did go still lower. “Even the death of the cross.” That meant contumely and shame for Him. He was the object of the malignity of Satan and his hosts; of the derision and reproach of the creatures of His hand. There He plumbed the depth of the

degradation of the natural heart; there sin in all its hideousness was laid bare; there the incomparable love of God was manifested.

There, as nowhere else, could the incorrigible nature of man be exposed on the one hand; and the matchless love of God be expressed on the other hand. He took that mighty stoop, and

“Came from Godhead’s fullest glory,
Down to Calvary’s depth of woe.”

Thereby God has been glorified; Satan has been defeated; sin has been put away; death has been annulled; we who were lost, ruined sinners have been brought to God; and the Holy Spirit has given us this wonderful presentation of the Mind of Christ that that Mind may be found in us. May it be so!

If God be for us, all the power of evil is as nothing; what can it do against God?

Human planning is a snare, it shuts God out. If we wait upon God in a testing time He will come in in His own time and at the right moment.

Endurance till deliverance is the path of the one who trusts wholly in God.

There is no divine understanding in the man whose heart is so set on the glory of the world.

We are not to fret, which is distrust, nor to be envious, which is even worse, and shews a heart out of touch with God.

We owe it to Christ to gain ground upon the world where Satan reigns—to stand in such a position as to be able to go forward and deliver individual souls from his power in every shape. There is not the looking to His grace and the holding fast of His Name, if it is not so.

Are we really content to have the approval of Christ alone? Let us test ourselves. Are we not too desirous of man’s commendation of our conduct? or, at least, that he should give us credit for the motive which actuates it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us?—even in the church to be thought nothing of? Christ will give the white stone of His approval with a new name engraved upon it, known only to the receiver of it, to those who overcome the world’s allurements and praise. Are we content to wait for that?

THE GOD OF JACOB.

Inglis Fleming.

“**H**OW could God love and care for Jacob, seeing he was such a man as he was?”

The question had been asked of a young Christian. Not being able to give an answer herself, she put the query to an older Christian.

“I have a greater difficulty than that,” was the reply. Why did God love and care for *me* seeing *I* was such as *I* was?

A short conversation followed in which Deuteronomy 7. 7, 8, was turned to. There we read the words of Moses to the people of Israel, “The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you.”

So it was with Israel as a nation. So it was with individual saints of old. So it is with every believer of the gospel to-day. *He loved them because He loved them. He loves us because He loves us.* There is the secret.

It was not because of what was in Jacob that God loved him. It was because of what God was in Himself. In sovereign love He chose to love. In spite of what Jacob was naturally God cared for him, and saw him through all his difficulties and distresses. And Jacob on his part had valued the birthright, and the blessing of God, that went with it. He was willing to forego the pleasure of the present in view of the future. On this account he gave up the red pottage to Esau, who

proved himself “a profane person,” not appreciating the God-given privilege of birthright blessing, but selling it for a basin of soup. Every child of God to-day may rejoice in the fact that God in His Almighty-ness, cared for Jacob. We find so much weakness in ourselves that we are encouraged to place our confidence in God, as we read the life story of the patriarch, and know that “the God of Jacob” is *our* refuge also (Psalm 46. 11), and He is “the Lord of hosts.” It is to be remarked that in the picture gallery of faith (Hebrews 11), Jacob has a place as well as Abraham and others. In the tenth chapter occur the words, which have been the source of gladness to so many, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (v. 17). And so it is that in chapter 11 there are no sins or iniquities recorded of the worthies named, in the list of those who “all died in faith.” If one had that chapter only one would never have known of any failure or deceit on the part of Jacob. He has nothing but honourable mention there.

He is seen as a *pilgrim*, a dweller in tents (v. 9).

He is seen as an *heir* of the promises of God (v. 9).

He is seen as a *worshipper* (v. 21).

He is seen as a *blessor* (v. 21).

In this fourfold way he pictures the believer in this day of gospel grace. As a

PILGRIM

he is viewed looking for “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” No city of earth has moral foundations. All here is shakeable and will be shaken.

As of old the call comes to us who have found our refuge is Christ," "Arise ye, and depart: for this is not your rest: because it is polluted" (Micah 2. 10). We are to "seek a country." Thus Peter exhorts us "as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." Our Lord Himself when here was but a pilgrim in the world of His creation. And He calls us to follow Him in the path He has trodden, having left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Peter 2. 21).

Redeemed by His precious blood "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," we are called to have our loins girt and our staff in our hand, as Israel on the passover night in Egypt. Our home is in the Father's house, where our Lord has already gone before us. We are pilgrims on our way there.

Then Jacob was an

HEIR

And we are heirs of God. Can aught be greater than that? Yes! we are joint-heirs with Christ. In the wonderful counsel and purpose of God we are linked with His beloved Son for ever. We are to share with Him the inheritance which soon will be placed under His control. "We see not yet all things put under Him." But we see Him seated in highest heaven "crowned with glory and honour," and soon we shall see Him come forth to take the dominion which is His. And "His own" are to have part with Him in those Kingdom glories. He died "that we might live together with Him." His sufferings have secured companions for Him for the days of His glory. It is ours to suffer with Him now that we may reign with Him when He comes.

Then as a

WORSHIPPER

Jacob is seen at his highest. He "worshipped leaning on the top of his staff." His worship is connected with his pilgrim-staff. And so it is in Hebrews 13. We are seen first as having "no continuing city" but seeking a coming one. And then "by Him," by Christ, we are viewed as offering up "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of lips confessing His Name. The wanderer becomes the worshipper.

Jacob, the pilgrim, had had his altars. He had called on the name of the Lord and now in his last hours he worships the God which fed him all his life long. And the God who cared for Jacob throughout his life is "our God for ever and ever." He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Well may we pour out our hearts in praise before Him who delights in the worship of His people, "He that offerth praise glorifieth Me," He has said. And so we join the Apostle as we say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jacob was blessed and in his turn he became a

BLESSER

In the sense of the favour of God which rested upon him he had blessed Pharaoh, the mightiest monarch of his day, probably. And in his last days he blessed both the sons of Joseph. He was made the channel of blessing to others. And for this in part at least we are left here. Great indeed is the privilege of being allowed to be used of God as vessels of help and profit to those about us. To Abram God made the promise, "I will bless thee and make

thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." Applying this to ourselves, we can rejoice in the wealth of blessing which has been made ours. Great indeed has our name been made as being linked with Christ, as sons before the face of His Father. And in the power of the Holy Spirit, given to us, we may become succourers of the sons of men with whom we come into contact day by day.

Happy and honoured are we in being numbered among the children and servants of God. May our course be such—our confession so plain that we "seek a better country that is an heavenly" that God may not be ashamed to be called our God (Heb. 11. 16).

Let us ever bear in mind that God loved us, and loves us because He is love.

Approved of the Lord.

W.B.D—y.

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write. . . . I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Rev. 3. 7-8.

Oh to be thus beneath these barren skies
 Where frigid Sardis in her deadness lies,
 And heavy, sombre shadows loom apace
 Of coming dark Laodicean days;
 To hear His voice, so quick to give award,
 "Thou hast a little strength" (How little, Lord!)
 Yet know in weakness the almighty power
 Of God, and see the ever-opened door.

To walk in patient meekness at His side
 Though all the world be running after pride,
 And know in deepest gratitude the grace
 That offers everything, and still gives praise
 To man's mere taking. . . "Thou hast kept My word";
 Oh grant us strength of Thine abundance, Lord,
 As Christendom falls crashing in the night
 To cling unshaken to Thy word of light.

Oh to be near in these dark days to Him
 Though through deep failure our poor light be dim,
 And walk with them that His shed blood has bought,
 In grace and kindness, as brethren ought;
 To bear in loneliness, reproach or shame
 This honour "Thou hast not denied My Name";
 And in the teeth of passion and of fear
 Raise up a banner to His glory here.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

A. J. Pollock.

No. VI. The Holy Spirit and the Assembly.

1 CORINTHIANS 12 is the great chapter that throws a flood of light on our subject. If the chapter is read carefully it will be seen that the great worker in connection with the assembly of God is the Holy Spirit. And because the Holy Spirit permeates and energizes, it speaks in verses 12—31 of the body of Christ and its members, for it is by the Spirit that believers are joined to the Lord and each other, forming thus the body of Christ, the vehicle by which this life of Christ can be manifested on this earth. Perhaps the pivotal statement of the whole chapter is found in verse 11, "But all these worketh the one and the self-same Spirit, *dividing to every man severally AS HE WILL.*" What a contrast to this verse Christendom is, rent into numerous denominations, sects, parties, divisions and sub-divisions; God would have the unity of the Spirit kept, and all believers walking in happy accord with the Lord and each other. And instead of the Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will, these bodies organize and arrange matters according to their judgment. A special class is set up, and believers are divided most unscripturally into clergy and laymen.

It may be there is a lip confession that all believers are priests. The Apostle Peter writing to Christians says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood [*believers without distinction*] to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2. 5). The Apostle John writes, "And hath made us [*believers without distinction*] kings and

priests unto God and His Father" (Revelation i. 6). Happy it is to acknowledge with the lips that all believers are priests to God; but sad and dishonest, if this is realised, to refuse it *in practice*. For what is the assertion of a religious class as clergy or ministers, but to do this. Expediency in many cases sets aside the word of God. Let any Christian read 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Romans 12, as the divine teaching and he will see how far removed from Scripture is the present condition of Christendom.

One most gladly and thankfully recognizes the devotion and gift and sincerity of very many Christians who are involved in this state of things, but that is not bestowed by the laying on of man's hands, but by the only true ordination, that of our Lord, who "ascended up on high . . . and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4. 8). We are told what these gifts are — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. 1 Corinthians 12. 4—6, tells us the different gifts are by the same Holy Spirit, the different administrations by the same Lord — He controls His servants,—and the different operations, the effect of this working, is by the same God, the spring and source of everything.

And where the saints of God gather there the Lord is in the midst, "for where two or three are gathered to My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18. 20), are our Lord's own words. Our Lord was corporeally in the midst of His own in "the large upper room furnished" on the night of His be-

trayal, when He instituted the Supper in remembrance of His death. What would be thought of a suggestion that one of the Apostles should be set aside to conduct the service: would this not be an insufferable insult to our Lord? Then what of today? Though not corporeally, is He not present in the midst?

1 Corinthians 12. 8, says, "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit," etc. How sovereign is the action of the Spirit of God. Yet if one were set aside to conduct the service in the assembly of God would his appointment not set aside those of the Holy Spirit? Can we think of the one with the word of wisdom, doing everything as appointed of men, and the one with the word of knowledge being condemned to silence as a mere layman. How Scripture speaks for itself.

Take the much discussed question of tongues and healing. It is taught that every believer who receives the baptism of the Spirit shows it by speaking with tongues. But that is not the teaching of Scripture. 1 Corinthians 12. 9, 10, says "To another

[*not to ALL*] the gifts of healing by the same Spirit . . . to another [*not to ALL*] divers kinds of tongues." People, who claim as teachers to be filled with the Spirit, would, we should judge, prove it by the correct exposition of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that infallible Teacher.

We read that it is God who sets the gifts in the church. Apostles and prophets are the foundation on which all is built spiritually, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. Then teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues—all under divine arrangement and control.

There we are shown the more excellent way in 1 Corinthians 13. Love, divine love, is the divine oil that lubricates the machinery in all its parts, and 1 Corinthians 14 would emphasize that this would result in edification, real building up. The best help is to read the Scriptures for ourselves and see what God's order is, and in a day of ruin and confusion and Laodicean lukewarmness seek to answer to the truth of God for ourselves.

"Set your affection (marg. mind) on things above not on things on the earth (Col. 3. 2).

"Whatever the mind is most fixed upon and is ever turning to, gives its impress to the mind; if my feelings and thoughts are fixed on Christ, I get the impress of Christ."

G.V.W.

"Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good, sing praises unto His name for it is pleasant" (Psalm 135. 3).

"How far do we live in an atmosphere of praise ? There is nothing like the inspiring power of praise to set the heart free from all the shackles and bands of the world. If you once begin upon it, you will find a thousand things to call it forth that never struck you before in connection with the Person and offices of the Lord Jesus."

G.V.W.

NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

T. Oliver.

No. V.: Hebron.

THE name "Hebron" is invariably taken as conveying the idea of association or fellowship. This is illustrated beautifully in the service of the Tabernacle, so minutely described in the book of Leviticus. The priests had at all times access to the Holy Place, wherein they accomplished the service of God. They had happy association of fellowship in that service. Moreover, the furniture of the Holy Place comprised a table, on which were placed the loaves of shewbread. On these the eye of God rested with supreme satisfaction, whilst His priests were nourished by feeding on the bread. Once a week the bread was changed by the priests, who ate what was removed. The bread could not be taken outside the Tabernacle, the priests had to eat it in the Holy Place.

Again, in Leviticus 3, in describing the peace offering there is no thought of making peace with God. It conveys the idea of a fellowship offering, marked by thanksgiving and praise. Hence it introduces the thought of spiritual prosperity. Indeed, J.N.D.'s French Translation renders the peace offering as the "sacrifice of prosperity"!

In the Old Testament there is evidence to show that the altar of wood and the table of the Lord were identical (vide Mal. 1. 7, and Ezek. 41. 22). 'Behold Israel after the flesh! Are not they who eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?' (1 Cor. 10. 18). This could quite well have been rendered "partakers of the table"!

The twelve loaves of shewbread were figurative of the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection and in all the unleavened perfection of Himself. The absence of leaven showed that He was absolutely apart from sin and evil. The New Testament analogy of this is seen in the saints of this dispensation. They are so called in 1 Corinthians 11. 17, "For we being many are one bread [or loaf], one body." They, too, are maintained before God in all the unleavened perfection of Christ and in the unity of the mystic body, just as the grains of wheat are held together in the loaf.

The Greek word, *koinonia*, and its cognate words occur 39 times in the New Testament and are translated variously as fellowship, communion, distribution, partner, partaker, companion. All the ideas conveyed in these English words are embodied in the original word. The main thought is "sharing in common," i.e. partnership.

In this connection we may refer to the scriptural precision in distinguishing between two phases of partnership. In Luke, chapter 5, verse 7, a different word is translated "partners" which describes merely sharing the privilege of fishing in the lake, since the fishers were in different ships. But in verse 10 of the same chapter our word is used to describe partners in a more intimate relationship, as being associated in the ownership of one ship and its nets, and hence they shared the fish actually caught. The word of verse

7 is used in Hebrews 6. 4, and is translated "partakers of the Holy Ghost" as describing people who shared in the external privileges of Christianity and yet were not in the intimate circles described as "in Christ."

In European countries favoured at one time or other by the widespread proclamation of the gospel, all are described in a general sense as Christian. Yet many so described have not acquired a living interest in Christ as a personal Saviour. However, it is not generally recognised that these countries owe a great debt to the gospel. The grace of domestic life, the friendly relations between people, and the measure of good government extant, have not evolved from Pagan origin. They have arisen from the influence of the object lesson presented by the Christians in holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

In the great epistles of local responsibility (viz. the Corinthian) there are three occurrences of our word in three different connections.

(1) God is faithful, Who has called us to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1. 9). All Christians are called to that fellowship. We are partners sharing in common with all Christians the blessings of being associated in a living way with the Son of God in resurrection.

(2) "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10. 16). We bless (or literally) speak well of the cup of which God has spoken well.

We are partners sharing in common with all Christians, the blessings flowing from the death of Christ.

(3) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (2 Cor. 13-14). In the ritual of Christendom this has come to be recognised as the orthodox formula or benediction to wind up an oral service. It has a much deeper meaning than that! We are partners sharing in common with all Christians, the results of the Holy Ghost dwelling here and of His power to make good the truth of God in our souls.

Perhaps there are few other subjects which have provoked so much controversy as that of fellowship. These phases of the matter are foreign to what we are considering. Fellowship is essentially enjoyed in the spiritual sphere (typified in the Old Testament as "in the land"), the region of all Christian blessings. The objectionable phases to which we have alluded relate to contact with wilderness conditions.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a well-known teacher caused much stir by saying that there would not be any fellowship in heaven. He said that the word implied a special bond in a scene of contrariety and there will be no need for such a bond in heaven, because the opposing elements will be absent. Such a startling statement is true if we restrict the idea of fellowship to the above definition. Our English word "fellowship" has come to us through the Anglo-Saxon channel of language and puts emphasis on the fact of being drawn together. Our cognate word "communion" has come to us

through the Latin channel of language and puts emphasis on the purpose of being drawn together. We submit that the foregoing definition only sets forth the first idea. We prefer to adopt the language and idea of the hymn writer, when thinking of the glory yet to be:

“Close to Thy trusted side,
In fellowship divine;
No cloud, no distance, ere shall hide
Glories that then shall shine.”

Although it is quite true that we shall not require any bond of fellowship in that blissful scene, it is also certain that the burnings of heart stirred up within us as He has talked to us by the way will go on throughout eternity, while we shall hear His voice without interruption.

Christian fellowship is essentially the fellowship of the death of Christ. That distinguishes it from all material considerations. The one who participates therein recognises that he can have no peace or soul prosperity apart from the death of Christ as a basis. That fellowship is not defiled by the idolatrous associations of the world. That fellowship is also invested with the character of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apprehension of the excellencies of Christ on the part of one becomes the property of all. Hence prosperity of soul is shared by all in the fellowship. The fellowship of the church of God is worldwide. It comprises all Christians. There are people who restrict the thought of fellowship to a local company of Christians. There are undoubtedly phases of the matter which relate to local responsibility. But the essential aspect is relative to the whole church of God.

If a business partnership is formed, the members are bound by the Articles of Partnership. It is realised that what one member does will compromise every other member in the partnership. As time has gone on men have had less confidence in their own judgment and in the acts of others. So legislation has been introduced to limit the liabilities of partners and unlimited liability partnerships have become less numerous in human affairs. But Christianity knows nothing of such arrangements. Christianity is an unlimited liability partnership, and hence the action of the individual tends to compromise the whole fellowship.

If a Christian partook of food in a temple of idolatry he necessarily compromised those with whom he was associated. Those who partook of the sacrifices were in communion with the altar. If we are in fellowship of Christ's death we must be separate from idolatry. His death, the basis of fellowship, shuts out all considerations of the flesh. The fellowship is marked by what we enjoy together in separation from a world marked by idolatry. If a Christian is occupied with the enjoyment of the world and its frivolities he relinquishes the normal happiness which is his as a partner in the Christian fellowship. It is impossible to enjoy both properly. Then we are contributors to the joy of others who are associated with us in the fellowship. We are always throughout the week partners in the fellowship.

“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1. 18).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Women's Ministry.

"Would you mind letting me know, in a few words how you dispose of 1 Corinthians 11. 5. 'Every woman that prophesieth, etc.?' Chapter 14. 4, 22, says, 'He that prophesieth edifieth the church' and prophesying serveth not for them that believe not."—MIDDLESBROUGH.

WE do not dispose of 1 Corinthians 11. 5 at all; we leave it there for all to whom it applies to act upon it under the Lord's direction. All it states is that if a woman prays or prophesies with her head uncovered she dishonours her head. It neither commands nor condemns the prophesying of women. But we can tell you where she must not pray or prophesy—she must not do it *in the assemblies of God*, there she must be silent (1 Cor. 14. 34); and further, if she does prophesy, it must not be as teaching, or usurping authority over the man (1 Timothy 2. 12). Every woman who transgresses these commands is disobedient to the expressed will of God, as surely as Eve was disobedient in Eden, and being disobedient she cannot have the support of the Lord, and consequently is as liable to be deceived by Satan as Eve was. We have no doubt that this is why we are told in this latter passage that "Adam was not deceived, but the

woman being deceived was in transgression" (1 Tim. 2. 14). "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15. 22). But as we have endeavoured to shew in our *February and March issues* the obedient silent members of an assembly are not the least important.

The New Testament prophesying was giving communications directly by the Spirit: the Spirit of God spoke through the prophet. This was necessary then as they had not got the New Testament; it is not necessary now for the Word of God is complete, and we have in the completed Scripture the full and final revelation of His mind and will. So that the prophetic gift, if there be such, can only be of a secondary character, namely taking up the already revealed will of God and applying it to the condition of the assemblies for edification.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

THE manifestation of the Spirit's power at Pentecost, was a partial fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, as should be easily seen. Not then did God pour out of His Spirit on all flesh, and the wonders in heaven above: the sun turned to darkness and the moon to blood, etc., did not appear; but it will all be fulfilled before the great and notable day of the Lord, which is yet to come. The

sons and daughters prophesying has to do with that day, with the coming of the Kingdom of the Lord in manifested power. It would have come then if Israel had accepted the Holy Spirit's witness to the exaltation of Christ. They did not do it, and their rejection of it made way for the bringing in of the truth of the church, the mystery hid in God, and not revealed in the prophetic

Scriptures. Old Testament prophecies have to do with the Kingdom and not the Church, with kingdom order and not church order; and church order is given in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. We are sure that God's handmaidens will prophesy in the day of which Joel's prophecy speaks, and happy will they be, but happier still are those women, who now have their place in the assembly of God, and who realise that God is teaching the principalities

and powers in the heavenly places His manifold wisdom by the church, and are subject to His holy will in these matters, and shew by their submission and silence in the assemblies the place that the church has in regard to Christ, and what the grace of God can do in them. It is not said that an eloquent tongue is of great price in God's sight, but He has told us that a meek and quiet spirit in Christian women is.

Deliverance.

"It seems to me that in Romans 7. 25, we have Paul giving thanks for nothing, the full stop does not seem to me to be right there and the sentence should run on, then the Apostle would be giving thanks that with the mind he served the law of God, even though with the flesh the law of sin. I wonder if you will pen a few lines to let me know if you agree, or to give the true meaning of the passage."—NEW ZEALAND.

WE cannot agree with your reading of this very important passage. The Apostle could hardly have given thanks that he served the law of sin with the flesh for that would be included in his thanksgiving if your reading of it were correct. In that closing sentence he is making an abstract statement, it is his summing up of the experience through which he had passed; he was able to distinguish between the nature of the renewed mind that was in him and the nature of the flesh which was also in him. But being able thus to distinguish was not the deliverance, nor does it describe the state of liberty. Deliverance from the bondage and conflict that the chapter describes is brought about by God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The exclamation as it stands seems to us to be more telling than if he had said what he was giving thanks for. An exclamation can mean more than an explanation.

It has been pointed out many times that the deliverance came

when he reached the point of despair. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Through all his trying experience he had talked of himself. "I," "me," and "my" occur more than 40 times, but at last he ceases to talk about himself and his struggles, and cries out for a deliverer. "Who shall deliver me," and immediately he can give thanks. If "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," so also it is true that whosoever cries to God for deliverance shall be delivered. The opening verses of chapter 8 are necessary to show us how deliverance can really be, and this must be laid hold of by faith. Sin in the flesh has met its condemnation in the cross of Christ. God is not now labouring to bring a clean thing out of what is unclean; He finds all good in Christ Jesus, in Whom He has set us beyond the reach of condemnation, and in *the power* of the Spirit of life in Him we have practical deliverance. We are drawn away from occupation with unworthy self to a greater and better object.

DISCIPLES, FRIENDS, WITNESSES.

J. T. Mawson.

John 15. v. 16.

DISCIPLINES, Friends, Witnesses. These are the words that stand out arrestingly in this great chapter. It is the Lord Himself that speaks of His disciples in this threefold relationship with Himself. "My disciples," "My Friends," "Ye shall bear witness." And He sets forth in them the qualities of the faithful servant whom He loves and approves. The honours will not be withheld from the youngest Christian, yet they must be won, for it will be noticed that they are conditional, and the order in which they are placed in the Lord's words are the order in which we shall come at them in our experience. May I call them the preliminary, the intermediate and the final to full graduation in our responsible life for the Lord.

First we must learn the supremacy of our Lord. He says "*Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.*" That lies behind all else; it reveals His sovereign grace, but it also calls for subjection to His sovereign will. "Ye are Christ's." Whatever weakness there may be on our side as to this will react disastrously in our lives for Him. That popular superficial Christianity that sings lustily, "Jesus is mine," does not fit in here. Many things are ours, indeed so enriched are we who belong to Christ, that the Scripture says "All things are your's; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come all are your's." And may we not add, "and best of all Jesus is our's?" No, we may not, for that is not the way Scripture speaks, what it says is "*And ye are Christ's.*" "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have

chosen you." He is Master, He is Lord; His claim is paramount, His will must be supreme.

He has chosen us and ordained us with a great end in view, "*that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.*" I would urge that upon those who have recently come under the gracious authority of the Lord. If His purpose in choosing and ordaining you is realised you will not have lived in vain. You might spend your time and talents on the world and climb high on the ladder of fame, but all that would come to nothing, for the earth also and all the works that are in it shall be burnt up, but if you are subject to the Lord's will your fruit will remain; time shall not spoil it, death will not destroy it, it will abide for ever. For this you have been chosen and ordained.

But the Lord who chose us must also cleanse us, or we shall not be vessels sanctified and meet for His use, and here He says, "*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you,*" verse 3. This is not *judicial* cleansing, the blood of Jesus Christ alone secures judicial cleansing; this is *moral* cleansing, which His word brings about. By it the whole bent of the life is changed and a nature compatible with Himself is produced within us. It is a great help if we can find an illustration of a statement not far away from it, and I find these words of the Lord illustrated in chapter 6 of our Gospel. The test came for a multitude of would-be, fairweather, disciples; they did not like the path that the Lord clearly indicated for them

and they turned away from Him. Then He said to the twelve "Will ye also go away"? And Peter answering for the rest spoke out and said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We can see what those words of eternal life had done for Peter. Once he had gone to the temple and the priests and the sacrifices for his soul's need, and looked to his own efforts for righteousness, and had sought in the world or among his friends for some substantial thing to fill his heart and life. Now he had turned his back on all else but Jesus; everything else had failed, but Jesus had not, every need of heart and soul were met and satisfied by Him, He had become the one supreme and only Object of his faith and affection. It was the word of the Lord that had brought about that transformation; that had cleansed him from every other confidence and hope and drawn out his whole life to Himself. He was born again. It is that that the Lord meant when He said, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The choosing and the cleansing go together. They are the work of the Lord and must go before anything that we can be for Him.

DISCIPLES.

The disciple is one who bears fruit. "*Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be MY DISCIPLES*" verse 8. Fruit is nothing less than the life of Jesus manifesting itself in those who are His, as the life of the vine is manifested in the fruit that the branches bear. Now everybody knows that unless the branch abides in the vine it cannot bear fruit, "no more can ye," says the Lord, "except ye abide

in Me," for "*without Me ye can do nothing.*" This does not mean that you have a good knowledge of Scripture, valuable as that is, but that you are in constant, continual dependence upon your Lord. You have no resources, no power apart from Him, but you have all you need in Him, as Peter confessed when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." You need the Scriptures; they testify of Him, we could know nothing about Him apart from the Scripture; but this dependence upon Him, this abiding in Him, brings in true prayer, and could not be apart from the indwelling Spirit of God. It is by the Spirit that we are in vital association with Christ. And we must test ourselves as to this. What is the bent of our lives? Is it towards the world or towards self, or towards Christ? What cheer and strength there is in those words. "*If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.*" What possibilities lie within the reach of the dependent soul! "So shall ye be My disciples." The one thing needful for discipleship is *dependence*.

FRIENDS.

The disciple is one whose confidence is in the Lord, he depends upon Him at all times, but what an advance is made when the Lord calls His disciples His friends; in this He confides in them and *depends upon them*. It is a wonderful thing. "Ye are *My friends*," but mark well the condition, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." We delight in the Lord as our Friend, the One to whom we can tell our deepest secrets and be sure that He, knowing all, will never betray the trust we put in Him, but will make all things work together for our good. But now He

turns round to us, if we are obedient to His commands, and calls us His friends. He identifies us with His interests, communicates His thoughts to us and entrusts us with some precious charge for Him. Can we find this illustrated in this Gospel? We can. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother . . . When Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John 19). Of all the disciples there was one who was the friend of his Lord, and to him He could commit a precious legacy. That disciple had leaned his head on the Lord's bosom at the supper. He wholly trusted in the Lord; unlike his friend, Peter, he was without self-confidence, and having leaned upon the bosom of Jesus, he could stand by the cross; he was maintained by divine power in his faithfulness to his Lord, a friend of Jesus, one whom his Lord could trust. How highly honoured and honourable was John!

Afterwards, when Peter had been delivered from his pride and self-confidence by a terrible fall, the Lord made him His friend also, and committed to him His sheep and lambs, and these still need to be shepherded and cared for, and if we are obedient to the Lord's word He will bestow upon us the high honour of having an interest in them; He will communicate to us His thoughts and feelings about them, and sharing these thoughts with Him we shall love them and care for them also. If dependence on the Lord is the secret of discipleship, the secret of friendship is *obedience*.

WITNESSES.

The disciples having been with the Lord from the beginning were very special witnesses. They had heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes, and with their hands had handled the Word of life, they bore witness to what they had heard and seen, the Holy Ghost being the power by which they did it. We may thank God for their witness, for we now can have fellowship in those things that they heard and saw, and have recorded for us. But we are not excluded from this witnessing, for we may keep our Lord's company and speak of that that we learn experimentally with Him. A witness may preach, but not every preacher is a witness. A witness is one who has been impressed by what He has seen and heard as he has kept company with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3. 18 explains it, "We all beholding the glory of the Lord . . . are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" and Stephen was the outstanding example of it, not when he exposed the obdurate hearts of the Jews, but when he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," when they were battering him with stones in their murderous hatred.

For this witnessing the Holy Ghost is indispensable. He has come from Christ in glory, and He bears witness to His glory, and makes Him real to us whom having not seen we love. The revelation to us of His victory over death by resurrection, and His exaltation to the Father's throne has set all things for us in a new and true light, and it is that light shining in and shining out that constitutes us witnesses to and for Him. The secret of witnessing is *Company with Him*.

These great things, the highest honours that the Lord can bestow upon mortal men may be ours now, in this brief life, and in this sordid

world. May we have grace from God to seize the opportunity and be disciples, friends and witnesses to the end.

“JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR.”

A. M. Chambers.

“Jesus Himself drew near and went with them” (Luke 24. 15).

Dismayed, depressed, and thoroughly down-hearted,
Two men were walking down a dusty road,
Enthusiasm quenched—all hope departed,
Dark sorrow lying on them like a load.

Then at this lowest ebb—this zero hour—
(Their hearts within them failing them for fear;)—
In fulness of His resurrection power
JESUS HIMSELF—the Risen Lord, drew near!

O happy sorrow!—since it brought their Master!
O sweet discouragement that drew Him nigh
To shew that seeming failure and disaster
May but be heralds of His majesty!

Discouraged soul: though shattered hopes lie round thee
And lowering clouds ahead no good forbode,
Let not mere circumstances thus confound thee,
But listen for His footstep on the road!

So shalt thou find no terror shall alarm thee,
No road dismay however dark it be!
There is no power in earth or hell can harm thee
Thy RISEN LORD doth bear thee company!

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15. 11).

“Happiness comes not from our measure of knowledge but from our measure of subjection. To live in His presence ‘in the heavenlies’ is one lesson, but to find His presence in every duty, to live on Him in them, is a further lesson; we are apt to look with panting heart for the time of communion, but to walk with God is to dwell in communion, to have the soul stayed on Him.”

Lady Powerscourt.

THE LORD ON EARTH.

J.N.D.

THE Gospels relate to us the history of the Lord's life, and present Him to our hearts, whether by His actions or by His discourses, in the various characters which make Him in every way precious to the souls of the redeemed, according to their need. These characters together form the fulness of His personal glory, so far as we are capable of apprehending it here below in these our earthen vessels, saving always that which concerns the relations of Christ with the church; for, except the fact that Christ would build a church upon earth, it is only by the Holy Ghost, sent down after His ascension, that He made known to the apostles and prophets this priceless mystery.

The Lord, as is evident, had to unite in His Person upon earth, according to the counsels of God and according to the revelations of His word, more than one character for the accomplishment of His glory, and for the maintenance and manifestation of the glory of His Father. But in order that this might take place, He must also *be* something, whether we consider Him as walking down here on earth, or from the point of view of His real nature. Christ must needs accomplish the service which it behoved Him to render to God, as being Himself *the true Servant*, and that as serving God by the word in the midst of His people, according to Psalm 40, verses 8—10 for instance, Isaiah 49. 4, 5, and other passages.

A multitude of testimonies had announced that the Son of David should sit, on the part of God, upon His father's throne; and the fulfilment of God's counsels as to Israel

is connected, in the Old Testament, with Him who should thus come, and who on earth should stand in the relation of *Son of God* with *Jehovah God*. The Christ, the Messiah, or, as is but the translation of this name, *the Anointed*, was to come and present Himself to Israel, according to the revelation and the counsels of God. And this promised Seed was to be *Immanuel*, God with the people. The expectation of the Jews scarcely went beyond this character of Christ, Messiah and Son of David; and they looked even at that in their own way, merely as the exaltation of their own nation, having no sense of their sins, nor the consequences of their sins.

This character of Christ, however, was not all that the prophetic word, which declared the counsel of God, had announced about Him whom even the *world* was expecting. He was to be *the Son of man*, a title which the Lord Jesus loved to give Himself, a title of great importance to us. The Son of man is, it appears to me, according to the word, the Heir of all that the counsels of God destined for man as his portion in glory, of all that God would bestow on man, according to those counsels (See Dan. 7. 13, 14; and Psalm 8. 5, 6; 80. 17; Prov. 8). But in order to be Heir of all that God destined for man, Christ must be a Man. The Son of man was truly of the race of man (precious and comforting truth!) born of a woman, really and truly a man, and partaking of flesh and blood, made like unto His brethren, sin excepted. In this chapter He was to suffer, and be rejected, that He might inherit all things in a wholly new estate—raised and glorified. He needed to

die and rise again, the inheritance being defiled, and man being in rebellion against God, the co-heirs of Christ as guilty as the rest.

Jesus, then, was to be the Servant, the great Prophet, though the Son of David, and the Son of man, and therefore truly a Man on the earth, born under the law, born of a woman, of the seed of David, Inheritor of the rights of David's family, Heir to the destinies of man, according to the purpose and the counsels of God. But in order to this He must glorify God according to the position man was in as fallen in his responsibility, meet that responsibility so as to glorify God there; but, while here, bearing a prophet's testimony — *the faithful Witness*. But who should unite all these characters in one person? Was it to be only an official glory which the Old Testament had said a man was to inherit? The condition of men, manifested under the law, and without law, proved the impossibility of making them, as they were, partakers of the blessing of God. The rejection of the Christ was the crowning proof of this impossibility. And, in fact, man needed, above all, to be himself reconciled to God, apart from all dispensation and the special government of an earthly people. *Man had sinned, and redemption was necessary for the glory of God and the salvation of men*. Who could accomplish it? Man needed it himself: an angel had to keep and fill his own place, and could do no more; otherwise he would not have been an angel. And who amongst men could be the heir of all things, and have all the works of God put under his dominion, according to the word? It was the Son of God who should inherit them; it was their Creator who should pos-

sess them. *He, then, who was to be the Servant, the Son of David, the Son of man, the Redeemer, was the Son of God, God the Creator.*

To these different aspects of Christ is due not only the special character of each of the Gospels, but also the difference that exists between the first three Gospels and John. The former present Christ to man, in order that man may receive Him, and they shew His rejection by man; whereas John, on the contrary, has this rejection as the starting-point of his Gospel, a Gospel which is the display of the divine nature, and that in presence of which man and the Jew were, and which they rejected: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not"

Matthew is the fulfilment of promise and of prophecy. We find in his Gospel, Immanuel in the midst of the Jews, rejected by them, who thus stumble at the stone of offence; and then Christ is presented as being really a Sower; fruit-seeking was in vain; then come the church and the kingdom, substituted for Israel blessed according to the promises that they refused in the Person of Jesus; but after the judgment, when they shall receive Him, the Jews are recognised as objects of mercy. We do not find the ascension in *Matthew*; and we believe that it is for this very reason that Galilee, and not Jerusalem, is the scene of the interview of the Lord with the disciples after His resurrection: Jesus is with the poor of the flock who owned the word of the Lord, there where light had sprung up to the people sitting in darkness. The commission to baptise goes forth hence, and applies to the Gentiles. *Mark* gives us the Servant-Prophet, the

Son of God. *Luke* presents the Son of man, the first two chapters affording a lovely picture of the remnant of Israel. *John*, as we have said above, makes known to us the divine and incarnate Person of the Lord, the foundation of all blessing, and a work of atonement which is the basis even of the sinless condition of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteous-

ness; at the end, the gift of the Comforter; and all this in contrast with Judaism. Instead of tracing the Lord's pedigree up to Abraham and David, the stocks of promise, or to Adam that, as Son of man, He might bring in blessing to man, or of relating His service in ministry as the great Prophet that was to come,—John brings into the world a divine Person, the Word made flesh.

"When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12. 10).

"Our strength is just our weakness, as our weakness realized will be our way to strength—a strength not our own." F.W.G.

"Let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4. 6, 7).

"Is God ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake His throne? I go and carry it all to Him and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed." J.N.D.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God" (Psalm 43. 5).

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55. 22).

"How much of the burden that we carry belongs really to the morrow, a burden not yet legitimately ours, for who can tell what shall be on the morrow? . . . By borrowing trouble not yet come, we not only necessarily make the burden of the day too heavy, but we cannot reckon upon divine grace for that which is not come.—How often has love in the most undreamed of ways disappointed all our fears." F.W.G.

"Sing my soul! He loved thee,
Jesus gave Himself for me."

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE. No. 5.

Summarised Notes of Bible Reading in London (Sutton, May 7th).

CHAPTER 2. The middle part of this chapter shews us what had to be cleared out of the way before we could have part in the grace and truth of this Epistle. Verse 11—"the body of the flesh"; verse 13—our trespasses; verse 14—"the old covenant that was against us"; verse 15—"principalities and powers that were opposed to our blessing." All these have been met and dealt with in the cross of Christ.

The body of the flesh, as it should be, is not of course the physical body, but describes perhaps the whole condition of things in which a man lives in independence of and at enmity with God. That was dealt with in the judgment of death at the Cross, and we accepted that judgment in our baptism. God raised up Christ from the dead, and of course as being quickened together with Him we have complete forgiveness of all our trespasses. In resurrection our Saviour left death and the weight of condemnation under which we were lying behind Him, and as raised up with Him we are free also.

The handwriting of ordinances was specially against the Jew for he had signed the covenant, but whether for Jew or Gentile, whatever the law's demands were they have been taken out of the way, all our obligations were taken up and answered at the Cross.

The principalities and powers would represent the whole power of the enemy that stood between us and the blessing; they would have separated us from the love of God (Romans 8. 38, 39), but the Lord has triumphed over them; He has swept

them aside as having any right to us; He has bruised the head of the enemy.

Verse 16. The ordinances to which these Christians were urged to turn to enrich their faith by those who would have beguiled them were only shadows of what was to come. They were shadows of Christ; He is the substance. We can understand the folly of going back to the shadows when the substance — Christ — had come.

Verse 17. Another danger was from the working of the imagination in things not revealed. They imagined that angels must have a place in this system of blessing, and being higher beings than men should be worshipped, probably putting them between the soul and the Lord. Putting the dead "saints" so called between the soul and Christ, as is done in popery would amount to it. They were not holding the Head, the body needs no intermediary between it and the Head. To hold the Head would be to derive all direction and nourishment from the Head, from Christ. He is all-sufficient.

Verse 19. We must hold the Head in individual faith, but we are not doing it unless we have in mind *all the body*. Christ is not Head to a few members only, but to all the body, every member has its place in this unity and in the increase of the body through the ministry from the Head.

The increase of God would be divine life and strength flowing from the Head throughout the whole body.

Verse 20. We are dead with Christ from all the elements of the world, and so those doctrines and commandments of men, that they feel to be necessary in order to maintain a standard of respectability do not apply to us. Against the fruits of the Spirit there is no law, and a dead man needs no restraints.

Chapter 3. But if we are dead to all these religious ordinances and exercises that are in themselves dead, in chapter 2, we are alive in chapter 3 to heavenly realities. As risen with Christ we are to set our minds on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The things above are a great range of blessings of which Christ is the centre. The Father is there and our home and our hopes are there, and from thence Christ will appear. The things of earth will come to naught and disappear when He appears. And He will bring into public manifestation the things that are in heaven—the wisdom, the righteousness, the power of God. These things will surprise men; we must be getting acquainted with them now. It is the mind rather than the affections that are to be set on these heavenly things. The affections will be where the mind is. Our affections are surely where Christ is, but we need to have the mind which controls our actions absorbed with heavenly things.

To all those things that men would bring in and mix with faith to make a fair shew in the flesh we are dead; now in ch. 3. v. 5—9 we have the evil propensities of *the old man* that have to be dealt with. Mortify means put to death. The thought seems to be, hold it as being done.

They are deeds that belong to the old man, the old man is what Adam

is, in all the evil things that characterise the race—violence, corruption, falsehood — but the Christian is of the *new man*; he is now of Christ, and has put off the old man, that was done professedly in baptism, and has put on the new man. If he has his part in the new man, it would be a disgrace to wear the rags and do the deeds of the old man; he must put on the characteristics of the new.

Verse 12. We are addressed in the very way that Christ was addressed. He was the elect One, He was holy and beloved, and the things given here were all seen in perfection in Him, they describe the life of Christ in its manifestation in the members of the body one towards another. The man who isolates himself from his brethren cannot shew these beautiful traits.

We must begin with bowels of mercies, for our conduct flows from what is within, and there must be these inner qualities of kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, if there is to be longsuffering and forbearance one with another.

In Ephesians we are to forgive one another as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us, but here it is as Christ has forgiven us. The measure and the manner of His forgiveness is to be ours.

Nothing could be more complete than the forgiveness that is ours. He has made us members of His body, then He surely has nothing against us, everything must have been cleared out of the way if He has brought us into this living unity with Himself. But in making us members of Himself He has united us to each other, and as the Head has treated the members so are they to treat one another.

CHRIST THE SON, THE SERVANT, THE SOVEREIGN.

W. Bramwell Dick.

Philippians 2. 5—11. (3) Christ the Sovereign (verses 9—13).

WE have had the holy privilege of following our blessed Lord in the seven steps of His descent. Now, with glad hearts, we follow Him in the seven steps of His ascent.

(1) "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and

(2) "Given Him a Name which is above every name: that

(3) "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

(4) "Of things in heaven, and

(5) "Things in earth, and

(6) "Things under the earth; and that

(7) "Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It is as we contemplate His glory as God the Son; and as we behold His present glory as Man, looking on with delight to His coming glory as Sovereign, that we marvel as we recall His glory as Servant. We are not surprised at His glory as Son of God eternal, and it fills us with joy unspeakable to view Him in His exaltation to-day, and to look on to His coming glory, but it seems to us that the glory of His humiliation is the greatest of all. As we think of the glory that was His, the height from which He came; as we consider the glory that is His and will yet be His: the height to which He has been exalted; then, and only then, can we form some faint idea of the immeasurable distance that He travelled, the unfathomable depth to which He went. We remember His Word: "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14. 11).

(1) "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." We at once connect this with verse 8 of our chapter. Let us bring the two together. "He humbled Himself, *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him." The first was His act, the second was God's answer. How low He went, to what a height has He been exalted! Lower He could not have gone, higher He could not be. "And

(2) Given Him a Name which is above every name." A name of fame, of greatness, of distinction, of glory, a name that speaks of His Godhead glory, for it means Jehovah the Saviour; that sets forth the beautiful graces that were seen in Him as a Man upon earth; that tells of His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; that has been given to Him in His present place of exaltation; and as to which God has decreed that

(3) "At the Name of Jesus every knee should bow." That name shall resound to the utmost bounds of the Universe. All heaven adores that Name to-day; and myriads of believers on earth prostrate themselves at the mention of it, but God will have more than that, He will insist that "At the Name of Jesus *every* knee should bow:

(4) "Of things in heaven." We can understand that

"Grateful incense this, ascending
Ever to the Father's throne;
EVERY KNEE TO JESUS BENDING,
All the Mind in heaven is one."

The world universally refused Him: heaven has unanimously acclaimed

Him. But God will have more than that:—"And

(5) Things in earth." Here He was rejected. No sooner did He come into the world than Herod sought His life. As soon as He stepped out on His public ministry, His hearers thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill . . . that they might cast Him down headlong" (Luke 4. 29). Throughout His pathway they were ever plotting for His death; and, at length they crucified Him. After nineteen centuries the attitude of the world as such remains unchanged. But every creature on earth will bow the knee at that peerless Name. But God will have more than that:

(6) "Things under the earth." Infernal beings of whose rage He was the Object, and who rested not till they had compassed His death, who have never owned His supremacy, will be obliged to join with all and bow at the mention of His Name. Does it not make our hearts rejoice when we know that God has determined that "At the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that

(7) "Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Just as Joseph was raised from the prison house, exalted to Pharaoh's right hand, and set in the place of supremacy and administration over the land of Egypt; so our Lord Jesus has been taken from the prison-house of death and set at the right hand of God, in the place of supremacy and administration over the universe. There is this great difference: Joseph was put in the place of humiliation, our Lord went there in His deep devotedness to the will of God.

Therefore it is that we rejoice in His exaltation, and while we gladly hail His coming glory, we rejoice to sing:

"But oh! Thy Grace has taught us now
Before the Lord the knee to bow."

We have heard the Word that

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10. 9.

We, who have believed in our heart, gladly confess Him with our mouth, and we know the joy of being saved. Those who do not confess Him in this day of grace will most certainly confess Him in a coming day, as will the hosts of darkness, only to share the same doom in an eternity of woe.

In conclusion, let us seek to review the ground over which we have travelled. We reverently contemplate Him as God the Son; we wonderingly view Him as the perfect Servant; we hail Him as the Mighty Sovereign. We note the striking connection between verses 6 and 11. He who, as the Son, came into Manhood that He might be the perfect Servant, now exalted as Man is to be acknowledged by all "to the glory of God *the Father*," showing that He who is Man *is*, as He was, and ever shall be, the Son of the Father. As we meditate upon these verses 5—11, let us pass on to verse 12, then read once more the whole Epistle, pray that it may be built into our spiritual being and wrought out in our life. Then, as we once more read these choice verses, let us sing to our adorable Lord:—

"Royal robes shall soon invest Thee,
Royal splendours crown Thy brow,
Christ of God, our souls confess Thee
King and Sovereign even now!
Thee we reverence, Thee obey—
Own Thee Lord and Christ alway."

NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

T. Oliver.

No. 6: Shechem.

ALL linguistic authorities seem to agree in attaching to the name Shechem the meaning of shoulder or strength. All through Scripture the idea is very intimately connected with the thought of fellowship, presented in Hebron. In the history of Abraham we see that he pitched his tent in Hebron subsequent to his being at Shechem. Both names also obtain significant mention in the history of his descendants.

But the most prominent typical allusion to the ideas is conveyed in the Law of the Peace Offering in Leviticus, chapter 7. 30—33. "The offerer's own hands shall bring the offerings of the Lord made by fire; the fat with the breast for a wave offering before the Lord." This passage speaks typically of the presentation of the excellencies of Christ to God the Father. That is a process which cannot be done in a second-hand way. It calls for personal exercise of heart, typified by the stress laid on the offerer's own hands.

The breast speaks of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge or comprehension. Yet the trend of the Apostle's second prayer for the Ephesians was that they might know that love, i.e. in the way of quality what cannot be comprehended in the way of quantity.

Christ was daily ever the delight of the heart of God (Prov. 8). The contemplation of His qualities always occupied the eye of God. We, too, become absorbed in this as we enter into the love of Christ. Thus we are stimulated in our exercises

as to what contribution we are making to give joy to God and to increase the sense of fellowship.

First, the breast was waved before God and then the priests ate thereof. So that the people of God assimilate the love of Christ, in relation to the joy that God has found therein. The breast was the common portion of Aaron and his sons. When eaten it formed the one who ate. So to-day the love of Christ is the common portion of all the saints in conjunction with Christ. When assimilated the individual is formed or nourished on the love of Christ spiritually. We shall love in the way that Christ loved. His commandment is that we love one another as He has loved us (John 15. 12).

But the right shoulder became the portion of the priest that offered the blood of the peace offering (Lev. 7. 33). So that the offerer was reinforced in his strength for walk by eating. There is thus a singular reflex action between our assimilation of Christ and our strength for right conduct in the responsible sphere of our lives.

Since the shoulder is connected with the leg therefore the walk is affected. John the Baptist looking upon Jesus as He walked exclaimed "Behold, the Lamb of God" and his two disciples hearing him speak followed Jesus. One would infer from the incident that John's contemplation of the Lord's walk called forth the expression as a reflex action. At once John's disciples left their master and followed a new Master, seeking to walk even as He walked (1

John 2. 6). We can only walk as Christ walked by being fed on what is set forth in the shoulder of the peace offering.

So as we survey the pathway of the Lord as clearly depicted in the Gospels, in measure we are helped to do things as He did them, loving as He loved, and in general, conducting ourselves as those who have been with Him. The process will cause us to be very sympathetic (not harsh) with the erring and the wayward. All the reinforcement of soul is with the object in view that fellowship may be rightly maintained.

There is a further thought in being strengthened than that we may be able to overcome our natural sluggishness, which prevents us from appropriating what is ours in Christ. There is a real enemy in opposition, seeking to neutralize in our own souls the effect of the revelation of God. So there is a war with the devil, the enemy of our souls. Many excellent people of God seem to think that the war with the enemy is external. Thus they expend much time, effort and material substance in seeking to find a remedy for the unequal prevalent social conditions.

Men say if the slums could be eradicated then the devil would be defeated and people would turn to God. To look around the suburbs of our great cities is sufficient to afford evidence to explode that theory. The vast housing estates and the slum clearance settlements do not exhibit much evidence of desire for God. Gross secularism is usually dominant. People use the Lord's day as convenient for gardening, playing games, and doing all sorts of trivial things.

However, the real war with the enemy is in the Christian's own heart. Therefore the Apostle Paul in concluding the Ephesian Epistle (Eph. 6. 10—18) exhorted them to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and to put on the whole armour of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The subtlety of the enemy is such that we need the whole armour of God, nothing less will do. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood (the struggle is not a test of muscle and physical strength) but against principalities and authorities (angelic agents in the spiritual realm analogous to the real agents in the spiritistic seance) against the rulers of this world's darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (This should really read "heavenlies" because high places would tempt us to think that the Apostle was inveighing against the bad conduct of officials in high political administration. There is nothing of that order implied. The statement refers intrinsically to something far more subtle than evil doers in the visible sphere).

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" (i.e. the Truth, we need to be established in that with which all Scripture resounds, viz. the revelation of God in Christ). "Having the breast-plate of righteousness" (we require to have our hearts protected by and established in the righteousness of God). "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The only peace for this harried world is not coming through the operation of the League of Nations but through the One of whom the Gospels speak. There is no peace for mankind except that which is the fruit of accepting the gospel. The Christian's

walk should be fitting preparation for the gospel.

“Above all taking the shield of faith with which ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.” If the devil does not succeed in seducing from the path of loyalty to the Lord by subtle means we can be certain that he will try direct attack and we shall need the ample protection which faith only will give.

“And take the helmet of salvation.” People look on salvation too much in the aspect of the deliverance which is to come to us at the end, but salvation in Scripture more often refers to the present phase, viz. preservation. That is well described as a

helmet or protection for the head. As we go on in the Christian pathway being overcomers through the rich mercy and goodness of God, we are apt to get inflated notions about ourselves and thus to be rendered useless for God’s service. Hence we need protection for the head.

“And the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication (the more intense aspect of prayer), in the Spirit and watching with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” We shall need to be vigilant. It is not a business demanding the regulation eight hours a day attention, but one which will absorb our whole interest.

Public Prayer.

Public prayer should be direct, a real utterance to God, *for* the assembly—avoiding sermonizing and contemplations which the assembly would not use; then there would be direct prayer. Direct prayer is not a thing that necessitates a long time. Long prayers in public neither glorify God nor bless our brethren. A great deal can be prayed for in five minutes. John prayed a very good prayer when he said, “Lord, who is it?” A beggar gives a good example of prayer. He never takes his eyes off you. He is thinking the whole time of the effect he can produce on you. You cannot escape giving if you pay attention to a beggar. The only way is to avoid his story unless you are hard-hearted. Blessed be God He is not hard-hearted and He delights to give when we are ready to receive.

Christ Magnified.

“*Christ shall be magnified in my body.*” What a triumph! My body that Satan had dominion over through sin, this very body, brought back, by grace to God, becomes the medium that is to set forth Christ. He says it is Mine now, if it goes into the grave I will raise it up again; and while it is here, I will so work in it by My power and grace that, whatever be the character of this perilous world, it shall be in it a representative of Myself. “The life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh.”

TRUE THOUGHTS.

“We find admirable affections in the Apostles and especially in Paul; we find works, as Jesus said, greater than His own; we find exercises of heart, and astounding heights of grace; in a word we see a marvellous power developed by the Holy Ghost in this extraordinary servant of the Lord; but we do not find the evenness that was in Christ. He was the Son of Man who was in heaven. Such as Paul are chords on which God strikes and on which He produces wondrous music; but *Christ is all the music itself.* J.N.D.

I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. (Josh. 1. 15).

The shoals that are met with in our Christian voyage may perhaps be safely crossed at high tide; but at low tide skilful pilotage is needed to avoid them, and to float always in the full current of the grace of God in the channel it has made for itself. But there is a sure and steadfast pilot; and we are safe if we are content to follow Him. God has given us what we need for this. Perhaps we must be satisfied with a very little boat; the unerring pilot will be in it. J.N.D.

He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights—Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him. (Exodus 34. 28, 29).

“God does not reveal Himself hurriedly to the man on the jump. He does not unveil His heart to the man who wants only a curious, casual glance. He does not manifest His glory to the spiritual tourist, but to the one who comes up to Him on the Mount. The reflected glory on Moses’ face as he came from his forty days communion with God was not produced by a snapshot, but by a time exposure.

Zealous of good works (Titus 2. 14). *Ready to every good work* (Titus 3. 1). *Careful to maintain good works* (Titus 3. 8). *Learn to maintain good works* (Titus 3. 14).

“Much good work has been hindered by such anxiety to do better as deters one from promptly doing one’s best. When we so set our hearts on doing well that we practically do nothing, we are paralysed not by humility but by pride.”

“Do not wait to do great things; be content with little ones. Do them as they come to hand. Out of the smallest seeds arise the noblest trees. Do not shrink back before great opportunities for He who gives them waits to supply all needed grace and power. Do not stay counting your five barley loaves and two small fishes; it is true that they are nothing among so many, but put them into His hands, and they shall satisfy five thousand men besides women and children.”

MELCHISEDEC.

A. J. Pollock.

" made like unto the Son of God."

LITTLE as is said in Scripture of Melchisedec, he stands forth as a most remarkable and unique personality. Very little indeed is said of him in Genesis 14. 18—20 — two short verses, — whilst one verse makes a very remarkable allusion to him in Psalm 110. 4, throwing a flood of light on his typical significance. It remains for Hebrews 6. 20; 7. 1—10, 15—17, 21, to complete the picture, which it does in an astounding way, establishing fully what we say, that Melchisedec was a most remarkable and unique personality. Indeed so much is this so, that it demands from us the most careful consideration of him as presented in Scripture. In one way he demands more careful consideration than any character in the Bible outside that of our Lord Himself.

The two verses in Genesis 14. 18—20 refer to the time when the Kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela, five Kings, fought with Chedorlaomer, the King of Elam, Tidal King of nations, Amraphel, King of Shinar, and Arioch, King of Ellaser, four Kings, typical doubtless of the great conflict that will take place in the last days at Armageddon. In that conflict of the Kings, four against five, Abraham's nephew, who lived in Sodom, was taken captive with all his goods. Abraham, hearing of this, armed his trained servants to the number of three hundred and eighteen, pursued after the enemy, smote them, and rescued his nephew and all his goods, his women and his people, no doubt illustrative of our Lord delivering His people by the victory of Armageddon and the deliverance of Jeru-

salem, when His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives, cleaving it in two, and making a way of escape for His people.

There then appears without any previous intimation whatever this mysterious individual Melchizedek. We are told he was the King of Salem—Melchizedek meaning King of righteousness, and Salem King of peace. His name and title shed light on Melchizedek as a type of our Lord. A King connotes invincible rule. Who can unite righteousness and peace? No mere earthly monarch can do this. This King of righteousness and peace approaches Abraham fresh from conflict, the very reverse of peace, and ministers bread and wine to him as the priest of the most high God. So Melchisedek is not only a King but also a Priest — a King speaking of righteousness and peace, and a priest speaking of approach to God and ministry from God. Who then can bring righteousness and peace to this troubled world? Only One, the Son of God. On what ground can He do this? That of the cross. There "righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85. 10)—there "the righteousness of God" (Romans 3. 21) is manifested—there He "made peace by the blood of His cross" Colossians 1. 20), and, on the ground of that, the day is coming when war will end war, and our Lord Jesus, King of Righteousness and King of Peace will in His kingly and priestly characters minister righteousness and peace to this world (what we call the millennium), and reign as King and Priest upon His throne. So Zechariah gives us the

beatific vision, "Even He shall build the temple of the LORD: and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne [*Here is the KING—righteousness and peace*]; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne [*Here is the PRIEST*, representing the people before God] and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (chapter 6. 13).

Melchizedek ministered bread and wine, *bread*, sustainment; *wine*, joy. Abraham paid him tithes showing how great was this person.

We come now to Psalm 110. 4. In that Psalm David, the writer, says, "The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord, sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (verse 1). This clearly points to Christ, the Son of God. Lower down in the Psalm the Son of God is thus addressed, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (verse 4). Here we get a most important and illuminating statement. This unique and extraordinary person coming upon the scene with no previous intimation, in the fulness of his power and position is now nine centuries later identified by the shepherd-King of Israel as a type of Son of God in Psalm 110. 4.

We come now to Hebrews 6. 20; 7. 1—22. Here we get a flood of light on Melchisedec.

It is remarkable that in chapter 3. 1 we are bidden to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Moses is then spoken of as a type of Christ as the Apostle, and yet in contrast, for Moses at best was but a ministering

servant, whereas our Lord was not only a Son, but *the* Son over God's house. We might expect then next in order to have Aaron brought forward as typical of our Lord, as the High Priest, but instead of that we find Christ introduced as the High Priest, not after the Aaronic order but after the order of *Melchisedec*. The writer of the Hebrews argues that as Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, and Levi was yet in the loins of his father, the superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood over the Aaronic was established. That there should be a Melchisedec priesthood proved that perfection did not come by the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood played its part inasmuch as our Lord, though a high priest after the Melchisedec priesthood, functions during the present time after the Levitical order, till the moment comes when He shall come King and Priest upon His throne, fulfilling the type of Melchisedec.

But now we come to another point. In the Old Testament Melchisedec was a *priest* of the most high God; in the New Testament our Lord is presented as a *high priest* after the order of Melchisedec. Does this not associate us as priests with our blessed Lord? Whilst the display of His priesthood awaits the millennial age, the ministry of worship and supplication is our portion. As we enter into the holiest we find our blessed Lord there, our High Priest over the house of God.

Now we come to the very important statement that Melchisedec was made "like unto the Son of God"—*like unto a Person WHO ALREADY EXISTED AS THE SON OF GOD** How was Melchisedec made like unto the Son of God?

First he was "without father and mother." This could not apply to Adam, he was without father and mother certainly, but the verse goes on to say, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life," and Adam had beginning of days and end of life as told us in Scripture. It could not apply to our Lord in incarnation. If He only became the Son in incarnation, as the Son He had beginning of days. Moreover as born into this world He had in infinite grace a mother, but the unique character of His real manhood is guarded in that He had no earthly father as He had an earthly mother.

Speculation may work and we may say that Melchisedec had parents, but that they were unknown, that he was born and died, but his birthday and death-day are not recorded. This may or may not be. Let us not explain away this mystery that surrounds this exalted person. He was made "like unto the Son of God." If that be the case the Son of God was "without father, mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Hebrews 7. 3). Only a Divine Person can fit this description in an absolute sense. Melchisedec may be "*made like* unto the Son of God," He was "made like" he was the type, the figure, the shadow, but the Son of God was the Antitype, the Substance, the Reality.

Only *Deity* can answer to Hebrews 7. 3. The Son of God had neither earthly father nor earthly mother, He was uncreated, He was from all eternity. It is true that in the unity of the Godhead there was the Father, Son and Spirit--one God, but

the Father did not beget the Son in the earthly sense in which we use the term begetting. There was ever the Father. There was ever the Son. There was ever the Spirit. There was ever one God in His absoluteness—Father, Son and Spirit. The Son of God had no beginning of days and will have no end of life. He is the Son of God from eternity to eternity. It is to be noted by those who teach that the Lord was only the Son in incarnation that it never says in the accounts of His birth in Matthew and Luke that He was begotten of the Father, but Joseph was told "that which is conceived in her [Mary] is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1. 20); and the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

We have in another Scripture (John 5. 18), the Holy Spirit's own comment that sonship in our Lord means *Deity*. We read that the Jews sought to kill our Lord because He said that God was His Father. The Holy Spirit's comment on this claim is found in the words, "*making Himself equal with God.*" Now there can be only one God—unique, undivided, eternal, from whom emanates all the wonders of creation and the still greater wonders of spiritual creation, the Source of all good. If our Lord spoke of God as His Father, He claimed sonship, and if He is in that claim equal with God, it establishes the great truth of eternal sonship. The only true answer of this is that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God—one God, unity in trinity, three in one, and one in three, incomprehensible to us in its mystery, yet the revelation of

*"He was made a priest like — in his priestly character—to the Son of God; but as yet, the latter [the Son of God] is in heaven." Synopsis, Vol. v. J. N. Darby, p. 281.

which feeds our souls and fill our eyes with the glory of God. Our Lord is the eternal Son.

So "Melchisedec . . . was made like unto the Son of God" in such a fashion as to present the Lord Jesus as eternally such.

No wonder we sing triumphantly,

"Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son;
God manifest. God seen and heard,
The Heaven's beloved One;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should
bow."

PSALM 133.

Dr. Warren.

PSALM 133 according to the title was written by David and has been thought to refer to the time of his coronation at Hebron, when the men of war came with a perfect heart to make him king, and "all the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king" (1 Chron. 12. 38-39). It is reasonable to suppose that after having been established in Zion, he looked back on those three happy days and wrote this song to commemorate them; but however good and pleasant those days were, the conditions for their repetition never occurred again. The hearts, in that day one, were in no long time stolen by Absalom (2 Sam. 15). A sad illustration of the fading of all that is of God when left to man's keeping. Yet the unity which finds its centre and bond in God's beloved would be lasting if the figures employed in this Psalm were translated into spiritual realities. The holy anointing oil, fragrant in itself, is viewed as binding together the High Priest and his garments; so Christ and His saints, with whom He clothes Himself in testimony before men, are sharers of the same anointing, by which the saints are bound together and to Him (2 Cor. 1. 21-22). The dew, type of the grace of heaven, falls alike on the mighty Hermon and

the little hill of Zion, illustrating the unifying power of grace, which when received produces the lowliness and meekness of Jesus, whereby unity is practically maintained (Eph. 4. 2). Alas, other means more easily wielded by the flesh have been constantly employed to achieve so desirable a result; especially has the discipline and authority of the church been pressed into this service, but in vain; human devices inevitably widen the breach they assay to heal, and the power which may be needed to maintain holiness (1 Cor. 5) if invoked to promote unity becomes, in result, the weapon of one party to oust its opponent.

The last verse shows that the realisation of the good things of this Psalm awaits the setting up of the kingdom in power, for the Zion of David became covered with the cloud of the anger of Jehovah, for her iniquity was greater than the sin of Sodom (Lam. 2. 1., and 4. 6). Nevertheless in its own time "life for evermore" will be ministered from that centre, and in the meantime wherever the children of God find His centre in the Name of the Lord (Matt. 18. 20), there blessing will be ministered by the Spirit as surely as from Zion in a future day.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Obeying from the heart that form of doctrine.

“Will you please say what you consider is the force of obeying from the heart that form of doctrine (Roman 6. 17). What is the form of doctrine?—STAFFS.

IT has been said that the form of doctrine is baptism, but we question whether that is satisfactory. It may be that baptism, having the important place it has in the chapter, is *in part* the result and proof of the obeying from the heart; but there is much more in it than that. Here is something that frees us from the slavery of sin, and makes us yield ourselves slaves to righteousness, which of course, is the only life of liberty. What is it? Surely it can be nothing less than the Word of the gospel. It has won its way to the heart. Here is the obedience of faith; the doctrine has not commanded a mental assent only, but it has become living and operative in us, giving our lives an entirely new form. It has revealed the misery and the end of a life of sin—disobedience to God,

and it has made God and a life of righteousness—obedience, attractive, and we have turned from one to the other, and henceforth a life of obedience is ours, which is really the life of Christ in us. He was the obedient One doing always His Father's will, and His life has become now the pattern for us. The word of grace that has set us free from sin does not give us licence to sin, it has produced within us the heartfelt desire to obey, and instructs us in the path of obedience. Baptism is in figure the ready acceptance of death with Christ in regard to the old life of disobedience, that we might reckon ourselves alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But being alive unto God means obeying His gospel from the heart.

The Significance of “the tails” in the Revelation.

“What is the significance of ‘the tail’ in Revelation 9 and 12. (1) The locusts had tails like scorpions with stings, 9. 10. (2) The 200,000,000 horses had tails with heads which hurt, 9. 19. (3) The dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven”?—NUNEATON.

J. N. DARBY and others interpret this symbol as being lying, Satanic teaching, and the effect of it left behind in the minds and souls of men; and we do not question this interpretation. Isaiah 9. 15 gives the warrant for it. “The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.” We would suggest, as being a help to the understanding of the Revelation that under the *Seals*, we see men left to the perfecting of their own devices for their own glory and preser-

vation, and by which they destroy themselves; under the *trumpets* we see them oppressed and tormented by Satan their chosen leader; and under the *vials* the direct judgments of God are poured out upon them. If this is so, and broadly speaking it seems to be so, we can understand locusts with the stinging tails under the trumpet terrors. Nobody will question that these that come out of the smoke of the bottomless pit are demons. The malignity and power

for evil that these spirits possess is clearly seen in the Gospels, and modern Spiritism is compelled to bear witness to it; its victims broken in body and tormented in mind are many. But what will it be, when not a few as now, but countless multitudes of them under Apollyon, their king, break out upon men infecting their whole beings with hellish lies and doctrines! It will be hell upon earth. The only protection from them then will be to be sealed by God, verse 4, and this is the great protection now from doctrines of demons, which are already prevalent and which destroy the soul (1 Tim. 4; 1 John 2. 21—27). You will notice that the first appearance of these locusts is inspiring, they have features that are attractive to men, it is the tails that hurt, all Satan's delusions have this character.

The 200,000,000 horsemen of this chapter seem to be actual armies from the East of the Euphrates, the might of four idolatrous nations, that are to invade Europe. All invading armies since the world began have left desolation behind them, but these armies will have the very power of hell with them, and the unspeak-

able miseries that they leave behind will be planned and directed, for the tails have heads, and it will be Satanic, for they are like serpents. There is no mercy, no pity with the devil.

As to the power of the "great red dragon's tail," in chapter iv., which draws a third part of the stars, again we can only suggest. Satan is the prince of this world, and his efforts to keep "the man child" out of His inheritance and to continue his usurpation of power over men is recorded in this chapter; in this he has followers and supporters, for he is not only "the prince of the power of the air," Ephesians 2. 2, but he has under his control, principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies," Ephesians 6. 12. These powers, deceived in the first place by Satan's lies, are confederate with him in his fight against God and Christ, and are one with him in his efforts to keep Christ out of His inheritance, even now their war on the saints is very real and we need to have on the whole armour of God in order to withstand them.

The Gospel preached to the dead.

"Will you please give me some light on this verse, 'For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that were dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit' (1 Peter 4. 6)."—CALIFORNIA.

THIS passage gives no warrant for the doctrine of "the larger hope," i.e. that the dead will have another opportunity of hearing the gospel and being saved. It does not say the gospel *is* being preached to the dead, or will be, but *was* preached; it was preached to them when they were living men on the earth. The difficulty arises in the last half of the

verse, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh." The Jews to whom Peter was writing were familiar with the truth that the Lord at His coming would judge the living, the Old Testament is full of that, but little or nothing is said about the judgment of the dead; but verse 5 tells us that He will judge both quick and dead. On what ground will He

judge them? They will be dealt with as men who in their responsible lives heard the gospel, which was preached to them with an ever growing fulness from Adam's day.

That is true, and would appear to be the simple and plain meaning of the passage, but the last clause of the verse creates the difficulty, "but live according to God in the Spirit." From F. W. Grant's *Numerical Bible* we gather the following. Those to whom Peter is writing had heard the gospel and had turned from their fleshly self-willed ways to live unto God in the Spirit, the result was that they were judged and spoken evil of by men in the flesh, but they were living to God, who would judge those who judged them. There was nothing

new in this, from the beginning it was so; those who heard the gospel and believed it had to run counter to the whole spirit of their day and were judged by men for it, but they lived to God in the Spirit. This seems to fit in with the context, and we give it for your consideration. But whether "judged according to men in the flesh" refers to the judgment that men passed upon those that believed while they lived, or the judgment that God will pass in the day of judgment upon those who did not believe, the Scripture does not give any warrant for saying that the dead will have the opportunity of hearing and believing the gospel — "After death" — not the gospel — but the judgment.

"There is a River."

"Where and what is the river that makes glad the city of God, and what is the city of God? spoken of in Psalm 46."—WALTHAMSTOW.

THIS psalm looks on to the blessings of the Millennial reign of Christ, when after Israel has passed through Jacob's trouble and the judgments of God have been poured out upon the rebellious nations of men, He will make wars to cease in the earth. Then Zion—Jerusalem—shall be the city of God and the centre of blessing for the earth. It would appear that there will be an actual river which will flow out from the temple of God which will be in the city; here it will make glad the city itself; in Ezekiel 47, it will flow outward throughout the whole land carrying life and healing everywhere. It will be the symbol of the spiritual

joy and blessing that will abound during that reign, but it will carry with it also in the fullest sense the blessings that any river contributes to a land.

The city will be the centre of Christ's administration not only for Israel and Canaan, but for all the nations of the earth, and the lesson we may learn from the psalm is that when men are subject to the rule of the Lord joy and blessing for them is the result, to refuse to own His Lordship, means no peace, no blessing now and the judgment of God in the future.

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3. 9).

The Spirit of God in Romans 8.

"I don't understand Romans 8. 9. Why should the Spirit be called the Spirit of God and then the Spirit of Christ? then in verse 11, why the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, and then He that raised up Christ from the dead"?—CALIFORNIA.

THERE is, of course, *one Spirit*, but spoken of from different points of view. He is the Spirit of God and dwelling in us frees us from the domination of the evil flesh, but more than that, we have by His indwelling, what has been called a new state, which corresponds with our new standing in Christ. We are not now in Adam but in Christ—that is our standing; we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, that is our state—the flesh is the old Adam nature that lives its life without reference to God, *and not the body of flesh and blood*. The Spirit works in us as the power of the new standing and relationship, "He instils Himself into our whole moral being." He is the source and creator of all right thoughts and affections in us towards God and Christ and others. He produces in us as the Spirit of God what is of God. But He is also the Spirit of Christ; if we wish to see a life lived wholly in the power of the Spirit we must consider the life of Christ; His whole life, death and resurrection were in the power of the Spirit; and now as the exalted One He has imparted the same Spirit to us. He is the Head of a new race, and gives His Spirit to the whole race that has derived its being and life from Him, that we might bear His character. If

a man has not His Spirit, he is not of His race, he is still a member of Adam's race, under condemnation, in the flesh.

The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead is the same Spirit, but now with resurrection in view. It was by the power of the Spirit that Jesus was raised up, He was raised up as *Jesus*; because of who He was and because of what He had done; if not another had been raised He would have been, for it was *not possible that death could hold Him*, but it was by the Spirit that God raised Him and, amazing fact, that Spirit dwells in us. We have this immutable, indestructible bond with Him already; well what must be the outcome of that? "He that raised up Christ," for Jesus is the Christ; and as the Christ He is, as we have said, the Head of a race—the last Adam, "shall also quicken your mortal bodies, for if the Head is raised up the whole race must be. Only here it is not said He will *raise* our bodies, but *quicken* them, for we are not looking for death, but for that change at the coming of the Lord of which we read in 1 Corinthians 15. 51—58; Philippians 3. 20, 21; and 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17.

"I am among you as He that doth serve" (Luke 22. 27).

Are not our affections occupied and assimilated in dwelling with delight on what Jesus was here below. We admire are humbled, and become conformed to Him through grace. Who could be proud in fellowship with the humble Jesus? Humble, He would teach us to take the lowest place, but that He has taken it Himself, the privilege of His perfect grace. Blessed Master, may we at least be near to, and hidden in Thee!

J.N.D.

TRUE THOUGHTS.

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2. 5).

We tend continually to follow human authorities and traditional teachings which God has continually to break through for us, sending us afresh to His word, that our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Thus alone true spiritual health is realized and presented. F.W.G.

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1. 24).

Power is not stored in us apart from God's presence. It merely passes through as He has sway. Once the connection between Him and you is disturbed, the flow of power is interrupted. We do not run on the storage battery plan, but on the trolley plan. Constant communication with the source of power is absolutely essential. S.D.G.

Sir, we would see Jesus (John 12. 21).

Dost thou wish to see Jesus?—to sit like Mary at His feet, hearing His word?—to lean like John upon His breast? It is not impossible: it is not even hard of attainment. "The word is nigh thee." Here is the door; here is the presence chamber. It is in thine opened Bible! Urquart.

I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3. 12).

Occupation with our *state* will never bring us one whit nearer the Lord; it will only distress, enfeeble, and enslave our souls. Occupation *with Christ* will produce every moment increasing conformity to His image. The true remedy, therefore for a hard state, is Christ, so completely filling our vision—Christ, in what He is and in what He has done—that self cannot be seen in the light of His glory. *State* is not everything; but *Christ is* everything, and in proportion as we learn this lesson will our state meet His mind. J.N.D.

My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12. 9).

"The day may be one of trial, a hot day; the way, weary, not a green thing there on which the eye can rest; the land a dry and thirsty one, where no water is, not a single spring to the new man from the ground; but at the same time, there is the rain from heaven. Nothing can intercept that. God, who commands the heaven, can make the valley of Baca a well, and the rain also to fill the pools. All our fresh springs are in God. J.N.D.

There is more happiness in the fact of being in communication with God than in the things He communicates. J.N.D.

THE ABOUNDING GRACE OF GOD.

J. T. Mawson.

DID you ever study the latter half of Romans 5? If so I am sure you found it to be one of those parts of Paul's writings that Peter said were hard to understand. That certainly was my experience until I discovered three priceless gems in it, and the discovery was to me like that of a man who suddenly comes upon diamonds in a rocky field. Verse 15 speaks of *the grace of God*, verse 17 the *abundance of grace*, verse 20 the *much more abounding of grace*. I called these three gems the positive, comparative and superlative of the grace of God, and what had been to me a barren part of the Word became beautiful in the light of them. I don't know exactly why, but Noah of the ancient ark, came at once to my mind, and I was delighted to find that he fitted into the picture most naturally. The first time the word *grace* occurs in the Bible it is bound up with Noah—"But Noah found *grace* in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6). He was a man who believed God when all the world was infidel, and that meant that he was righteous in the midst of disobedient men; they were a condemned race, he alone was justified.

Is the gift of Romans 5. 15 righteousness or life? Some may think it the one and some the other. One thing is certain, they go together; just as sin and death go together so righteousness and life are inseparable. So that while all the world of Noah's day lay under the sentence of death, he was placed by the grace of God in the sphere of life; the gift of righteousness meant life to him. But how? God shut him in the ark. There was death for every creature, both man and beast, out-

side the ark; there was life for all within its closed door.

Now there was one very interesting feature in that ark, it was "pitched within and without with pitch," and that was not only to make it watertight, it would do that of course, but to teach us a great truth, even if Noah did not understand. The word "pitch" in our translation is the same word that is translated "atonement" seventy times in the Old Testament, only in this one instance is it translated "pitch." It means, *a covering*, a God-ordained and provided covering for the man who had found grace in His eyes. Wherever Noah looked *inside* the ark he saw this covering, wherever God looked outside the ark He saw the covering, atonement within, atonement without.

Now the ark was a type of Christ, undoubtedly it was that, and Noah shut in that ark tells us in typical language of the safety of all those who are *in Christ*. The grace of God shut the man who believed His word in the ark, the grace of God has set all who believe to-day *in Christ*. It was Adam's disobedience that brought his whole race under condemnation and death; it is Christ's one great obedience to the will of God even unto death, that has opened the door of righteousness and life, and provided a perfect atonement for all men, and those that believe enter in and are safe for ever; they are in Christ and no longer in Adam. That is the grace of God to them — the positive of the grace of God.

But Paul gloried in this grace and goes on to tell of the abundance of

it; he speaks of "they which receive abundance of grace," and without a doubt it is life that he has in mind, a life that death cannot touch, for he says, "they shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." The life we received from Adam we must lose, it was forfeited at the very beginning of it, but this new life we can never lose; that life must be submerged by death, this, our life in Christ, rises superior to death's highest waves. We see it pictured in Noah, the higher the waters of judgment rose, the higher rose the ark, and in the life of the ark, Noah was superior to those waters of death. In *figure* he had a life that was supreme over death. We who are in Christ have *the reality*; death cannot touch the life we have in Him; it is His risen life. As the risen and glorified Head of a new race He has communicated to every member of His race, a life that cannot be marred or besmirched by sin; it is "justification of life." Every believer has this life, a life as pure as the Source from whence it flows. I do not say a believer cannot sin, I know only too well that he can, but if he sins it is the old flesh within him shewing itself and not the new life that he has received as being in Christ. To reign in life means life triumphant. It may not yet appear that we are thus reigning; when He shall appear then it will be manifested to the whole universe, but even now when "we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us," though for His sake killed all the day long, we are reigning in life by One, Jesus Christ; and when we can thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the presence of death, we are reigning in life by One, Jesus Christ.

And if the knowledge of God and communion with Him be the chief

features and joy of this life we have these most truly. The multitudes that perished outside the ark were made to learn what the judgment of God was—His justice and wrath against their unrighteousness; but Noah inside knew His grace and His care; and as He looked up through the one window in the roof of the ark, he looked up to the God who had justified him, and blessed him and given him life instead of death. We look up to God, who has shewn His beneficence towards us in Christ Jesus, we know Him as revealed in Christ. We know that we were subject to His judgment, but He commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; and we joy in Him now, we make our boast in Him, it is the nature of our new life in Christ to do this; and as we thus live unto God, we are living the life that death cannot touch, we reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. And that I have called the comparative of the grace of God.

But there is more even than this, Paul carries this grace to the highest point; he can be satisfied with nothing short of the superlative, for God will be satisfied with nothing short of that. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." We understand the reign of sin, its kingdom is a kingdom of bondage with death for all within it. All the activities of men within that kingdom lead to death, for God is not the end and aim of them. But grace reigns, and that means that God reigns according to His own heart's desire and in complete and eternal consistence with His righteous character and the end of that is eternal life and the glory that

belongs to it by Jesus Christ our Lord. God is greater than the devil, and grace is greater than sin.

The day came when the flood subsided and Noah came forth from the ark and offered a burnt offering unto the Lord, while His bow spanned the heavens. The sweet savour of the burnt offering went up to God, figuring the acceptance in which Noah stood and the basis of it, and the bow shone brightly above him, pledge to him that the judgment was passed and that he stood in God's favour. And that I believe looks on to the day of glory when the earth purged by judgment, men repentant and saved by the grace of God shall appear before Him on the ground of the great sacrifice that Jesus made at Calvary, and shall rejoice in Him as the glorified and exalted One. He is not only the burnt offering but the bow in the clouds. That millennial age for which we wait and for which all creation groans shall be "life for evermore."

But it means much to us who are *in Christ* now. The burnt offering

has been offered for us. We read, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," Eph. 5. 2. And we are before God in all the value and fragrance of that sacrifice. We stand by faith beside the altar, and we look up and see Jesus crowned with glory and honour—the bow in the clouds, and the consequence is we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That we should live unto God is the great end of the reign of grace, it is eternal life. Only grace much more abounding towards us can bring it to pass. No matter how we fail now to respond to this grace, it shall all be perfected in the glory, where for ever and ever and ever we shall live unto God. In those coming ages He will display the surpassing riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus, for as sin has reigned unto death, so shall grace reign unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord—and that will be the superlative of God's grace.

It is important for our present blessing whether we are occupied with the *present*, and with the Lord where He is. We cannot forget the past; this is true even in natural things; but to know the object of your heart in the *present moment* is the greatest satisfaction. Everyone can dilate upon the past but you must come fresh from Himself to speak of the present.

Everyone is characterised by the object that controls him. Thank God Christ claims our hearts and we could have no greater object before us. Nothing satisfies love but love, but love to be enjoyed must be a present, living reality. To know His love is the chief thing, but remember it is only near to Him that you can know His love, and the better you know His love the more you are drawn to Him. It is the assurance of His love that satisfies the heart, and everything goes right then, like the fir tree, the top shoot taking the lead, and then every branch following the leader.

DEPENDENCE.

J.B.S.

SATAN at the fall introduced into man's heart the lie that he could depend on himself — that he could depend on himself more advantageously than on God. That was the real point in the fall. Into the wonderful circle of favour in that garden Satan came, and told the woman that eating of that fruit they should be as gods; she took and ate, and so self-dependence came in and renunciation of dependence on God—that dependence which is what faith in the soul is. The prodigal when he came to himself did not begin to think of what *he* was, but of what the *father* was. His thought was of what was in his father's house. All dealing with God must be of faith. Ananias heard that Saul of Tarsus was a changed man: "Behold he prayeth." Instead of everything around you in this world expressing the favour and interest of God, it is "a famine," it is the very opposite of the garden of Eden. But when this is discovered, the light of God dawns in the soul. The prodigal said, "No man cares for my soul;" and then he thought of God: "I will arise and go to my father" was the result.

You have no dependence upon God when you have dependence on yourself. Man lost dependence upon God and got in its place self-reliance, which is so greatly thought of among men. When you are in the presence of Christ it is not your cares nor your sins that occupy you; they all vanish; go they must where *He* is. You have not really learned what the presence of Christ is, unless you can say, I knew that *He* was there, I did not think of myself. Spiritual ministry brings Christ to your soul, and so brings Him to you, that, whilst it re-

bukes *you*, it gives you *Christ* instead of yourself. This is the grand characteristic of being in the presence of God, and I press it, for people often think they are in spirit with Christ simply because they are, as they say, "so happy." Look at the disciples going to Emmaus; their hearts burned within them; and they did not know that He was there at all.

What is needed to keep us in His presence is practical dependence. See how it comes out in 2 Cor. 12, the apostle came down from paradise, from not knowing whether he was in the body or out of the body, and what did he find? why that Satan is here, and that he had the flesh within him. What did he need then? He needed to know the power of Christ down here as he had known it up there, and for that he had to be as clear of his flesh down here as he was when up there. People say, I was very happy in my room reading, and I came out and immediately lost my temper. The fact is you were trusting to your enjoyment of the Lord, instead of to the Lord Himself. I was in a scene up there where I so enjoyed Him, but having come out to act down here, I find that I have this flesh, and I get wearied and put out. I have, then, to learn now that by dependence I can be free from the power of all this down here, for I was free of it when I was in the presence of the Lord. That is the lesson I learn. I find the Lord sufficient to sustain me.

In Matthew 14 you will see the way in which the Lord introduces us to the wonderful place of dependence in which He would have us.

The Lord is here as rejected, and two things come out as the consequence: one, that He feeds the poor of the flock in the desert; the other, that He walks on the water. Upon this, faith in Peter leaves the ship that was made for water and walks with Jesus on the water. That is the place of dependence, that is the new ground.

When the apostle came down from paradise he found he had a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. "For this thing," he says, "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me," but, He said, No; "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness;" My power shall be shown out in you. Hence Paul came out with that extraordinary paradox, "When I am weak then am I strong." I ask you whether any natural man on earth could explain that? When I am weak then am I weak, is what man would say. But the fact is when I am weak in myself and have got nothing to depend on, then I depend on Christ. This being so, I ask Peter, What then makes you sink there? Why, it was Simon made me sink, is his answer. Is it possible for you to be kept up in such a place? Yes it is, if I have my eye on Christ my Lord.

The Scripture is careful to tell us that he *did* walk; it was not in the majestic way that the Lord did, but he did walk, at any rate a little. Wonderful to see a person superior to circumstances wherein he himself is the thing that would sink him, but, instead of sinking, superior to them all. Just look at Stephen; he could look up to the bright glory and was thus superior to the whole thing down here, his soul perfectly free to intercede for his murderers; a wonderful prodigy of divine power in a poor

earthen vessel here; Christ's strength perfect in his weakness.

Well, I am set in His presence absorbed in the joy and delight of it. Would we knew more of it! When I come out from that presence I find that I sink; I discover my susceptibility to all things that are here. It was not that Paul was conceited about what he had had revealed to him up there, but the thorn was given to him for fear he should be. It is all very well for anyone to say, I have been enjoying such a time with the Lord. I say, It is all very well to do so, but come down now and live it out here. Yes, but I find nothing here to support me in any way.—You do not; but that is just that you may keep your eye on Christ. It is confidence in self that is the ruin of the believer. Peter would not have gone into the high priest's house and denied his Lord if he had not had confidence in himself. Therefore it comes to be a question of *power* here. While I learn up there the sweets of His presence, I learn down here His power, so the Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man whose *strength* is in Thee, who passing through the valley of Baca makes it a well." Go to any believer you like and he will tell you that he wants power.

You never get a supply of power; you have it only as you keep your eye on Christ. So Peter was walking very well one moment, but the next his eye was off Christ and he sank. "Without Me you can *do* nothing." Many persons quote it as if it were *be* nothing. It is when you come to do an act that I see where you are, because the act always declares the prominent power. If you have lost your place with Christ you sink. The act always discloses your state. Just as with Samson. He said, "I will go

out, as at other times before, and shake myself." Ah, but he could not, it was no use: "He wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

When you come to act, you find you are in a scene from which you can get nothing, and the power for action must come from above. The Lord has gone to prepare a place for me, and says, I make you acquainted with the Owner of that place—the Father; and everything you shall "ask in My Name I will do;" it is *do* there. But it is only as I am dependent upon Him that I learn the goodness of Christ there in His own scene, and learn Him here in His power because of my need of it. It may be humbling to say so, but it is true, that the measure of the strength of any person is the measure of the strait he has gone through with God. The *water* will not bear you up. Well, what sinks you? It is *yourself*. There is no acquiring of Christ but by the displacement of self. The moment Peter saw the water boisterous he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, "Lord, save me!" The Lord said, Where is your faith? He did not say anything else about him; the point is that he was not really dependent. So it says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God;" why? "That He may exalt you in due time."

Turn now to another Scripture, as a kind of rule for prayer which the Lord has given us. Luke 18. I will just trace through the characters that we find in this chapter. First there is the widow, with an adversary from outside. Then the publican. Then the little child. And lastly, the young ruler who has kept the law, and who is very rich: he is neither publican,

little child, nor helpless and oppressed.

Now what is it that the Lord would teach us here? It is as if He said: When you are resourceless you are better off than when you have resources; or, in other words, you are better off without a boat than with one. Here is a young man who *has* a boat; he has everything both within and without to depend on, and yet he cannot get on a bit. He turned away very sorrowful. With all his resources he cannot go. On the other hand, what could be worse off than a widow with an adversary? Where could you find a more pitiable sight? And yet she got her desire; she was avenged of her adversary. Then the publican; he was better off than the Pharisee who had a boat; he went down to his house justified rather than the other. Then the little child, whom the disciples would have thrust away; the Lord says, These are the very ones I want: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." Mark adds, "He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." It is the very helplessness of the objects that is their attraction in His eyes. In another place He tells us, "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." Poor, helpless little things, says God, they cannot take care of themselves, so I will. Do the angels always take charge of them? you ask. I do not know; but this I know, while they are helpless, God does just because they have no boat. The lesson of the whole chapter is, the one on water without a boat is better off than the one who has one, for he will depend upon the Lord.

FELLOWSHIP.

J.N.D.

OUR fellowship is indeed with the Father—in its highest expression a redeemed people are participating with God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (*THEIR* Father) in His love and delight in the beloved, perfect, patient Fulfiller of all His will. What blessedness to be brought by the Holy Spirit to this concord, this harmony of heart and mind with His Father and our Father—nothing more precious than this fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, in the light and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Brought into the light and walking in it individually, consciously in the presence of God, Christians have fellowship one with another in real

heart enjoyment of Christ as their common portion and their one object—walking with God in personal communion, personal, joyful submission to all they know of His will and readiness to learn of Him as they feed upon His Word.

Christian fellowship is not heartless traffic in certain favourite doctrines held in common. It is not mere sympathy with those who think with us on certain themes. It is something quite different from all this. Alas! alas! there may be a vast amount of intercourse that is nothing more than the useless soul-withering chit-chat of a religious world without a particle of the divine thing called FELLOWSHIP. Let us beware of this.

The Objects of the Love of Christ.

IT is inconceivably blessed to think that the Lord Jesus has those on earth whom He loves with an unvarying love. His sheep and His lambs are here, and having loved "His own" which are in the world He loves them to the end. If faith is operative by love, the direction love will take will be towards those who are precious to Him. How otherwise could any one prove his love to Christ? Mary of Bethany had the opportunity of pouring out her love on the Lord's own person when He was here; He is not here now, but "His own" are here. "Feed My sheep." "Shepherd My Lambs" said the Lord to Peter, and Peter shewed his love to the Lord by carrying out the Lord's command. We are waiting for the coming of the Lord, mean-

while we are left in the world to walk under the influence of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us, that our love to Him might flow out to those on earth who are precious to Him. Paul had hated and persecuted Christians in times past but when faith came in he was willing to spend and be spent for those who were Christ's. You could measure a man's love to Christ by his love to those who are Christ's. Let me see what you are to those who are Christ's in your service to them, and I shall know the reality of your love to Christ. "These things I command you, that ye love one another." Now is the time and opportunity of letting your affections go out to those who are the objects of the love of Christ in the world.

THE COLOSSIAN EPISTLE. No. 6.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Kingsland, June 12th).

CHAPTER 3., v. 10. Image is representation. Adam was made in the likeness and image of God, but the likeness was so utterly defaced by sin that all true representation was lost. How completely man is fallen from his original creation is shewn in verse 8 for there we have the characteristics of Adam—the old man; but we are said to have put off the old man with his deeds and to have put on the new man—which is Christ characteristically — the new man is entirely a new creation, and will never grow old. The knowledge of God is the source and power of it in us. The new man knows God. All true knowledge of God was lost when man sinned, but now God is revealed in Christ. He is the full and complete image of the invisible God, (ch. 1) and He is *in us* so that now we are to represent God by shewing the character of God as unfolded in verses 12, 13, 14.

We do not put on these beautiful Christian graces as we put on a coat that can at any time be put off again, but as a bird puts on its plumage, or a tree puts on its foliage. The birds and the trees shew their nature by what they put on. So these things appear from what we are inwardly; it is Christ in us manifested in our ways.

The new man includes every Christian, for Christ is in every one of them, and in it all the distinctions that belong to the old man disappear—neither Greek nor Jew—national; circumcision nor uncircumcision—religious; Barbarian, Scythian—intellectual; bond nor free—social: but Christ is all, and in all. He is the

object of faith to all and is in all as their life.

It is as being “elect of God, holy and beloved,” that we put on these Christian graces. We have Christ’s place before God. We are in His favour, and Christ is in us. What Christ is can only be developed in us as we are consciously in Christ’s place in the favour of God. We shew these things in our contact with one another. They must be developed in us individually, but if we isolate ourselves from our brethren we cannot shew longsuffering, forbearance and forgiveness.

We may think that some of our brethren are very irritating. We look upon some as troublers, but they may be our greatest blessing. An old Christian said of one such, he has been our greatest blessing for we have been compelled to turn to God more than ever we did before. We should also bear in mind that perhaps we try our brethren as much or more than they try us, but which ever way it is, there is the opportunity for longsuffering and forbearance and forgiveness, which graces will not be forthcoming if there are not within us “bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind.”

There are kind men in the world outside the new man, perhaps a trace of the original nobility of man, which has not been altogether stamped out of human nature. We often meet amiable people, kind to one another but indifferent to Christ and God. When tested, as was the rich young ruler, they only shew that self is their one motive and centre. This is some-

thing different to that; because Christ is all and in all to the new man these graces are put on and if they are there at all they will be in equal development. The bond of all is love, which is described in 1 Corinthians 13. It is God's nature and is holy. We are told to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. It is a very wonderful thing that this can be; it is His own peace. Whatever opposition faced Him He was never ruffled, He met it all calmly for He always walked in the consciousness of God's favour and approval. We are in His favour and He is in us and as we live in the power of this we shall be like Him.

And the word of Christ may dwell in us richly. Mary of Bethany would be a pattern of this for us, the word of Christ was more to her than service and everything else, His word was first with her, so she was able to do the right thing at the right time. If we have the word of Christ dwelling in us abundantly we shall act aright when a crisis comes, and we shall have the right word when needed. To attempt to admonish another, if the word of Christ does not dwell in us richly, may be disastrous.

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs should be in our homes as well as in our assemblies, and they are a great help in what may be called our social life. If there was more of this singing with grace in the heart to the Lord, there would be less unwholesome gossip and back biting and evil speaking. Those are happy homes in which the praises of the Lord are sung from the heart.

Thanksgiving is most important. In Romans 1 it is said of the heathen that they did not glorify God as God, neither were thankful, and the same

charge is laid against men in the last days, in 2 Timothy 3. 2, but the true Christian must stand out in contrast to that. Whether in the assembly or the home, we are to do all things in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father by Him.

Verse 18. Now we pass definitely into the domestic circle, and it should be noticed that there is the significant change from Christ to Lord. Christ is Head to His body and His life is to be manifested in the members of His body, but when we come to the individual responsible life we are specially under His authority—He is Lord. Definite subjection to the Lord would solve every difficulty. Wives would be loyal to their husbands; husbands would be affectionate; children obedient; servants submissive and masters just, if all were subject to the Lord and conscious that they were responsible to Him who is their Lord. And here alone in the Word *He* is called the Lord Christ*, verse 24. The combination of these titles is significant. He is the Lord, and what gracious authority lies in that title; and He is the Christ, our pattern, our Head, from whom comes direction, nourishment, life, and all that we need as members of His body. The slaves were His servants, and there is no unrighteousness in Him, even they were to receive the reward of the inheritance for they were heirs of God, and so are we. There may be servants whose work is hard and whose masters are unreasonable, let this word be an encouragement to them. Let them do their work heartily as unto the Lord.

*The New Translation, J.N.D., gives "Lord Christ" in Romans 16. 18.

THE WORD OF GOD.

A. J. Pollock.

Letter to a young friend.

My dear W——,

You say that you would like me to take up the question of the authority of Scripture from the point of view of my own spiritual development. I will endeavour to tell you what helped me, though, in the main, help on these lines comes mostly imperceptibly, though none the less surely.

I made a confession of Christ when very young. Looking back I can see how feeble and shallow was my hold on divine things. The enemy soon took advantage of this and I was faced with posers. Smart avowedly infidel writers produced arguments that well nigh bowled me over. However one bit of Scripture helped me at that time. That was the history of the Jews. I could not explain their history apart from divine arrangements. I saw clearly there was something quite supernatural in the Jew maintaining his nationality spite of living in foreign lands for centuries where assimilation and absorption in all similar cases would have done their work or incorporated them tracelessly in the nations with whom they dwelt. I saw all this foretold in the Scriptures and have ever been thankful for this help in days of immaturity and of peril. This was my first conscious touch with Scripture when faced with a crisis.

Then all through life I have recognized personally what the Chinese convert said: "The Bible knows all about me, so I conclude that the One who made me made the Bible." The Chinaman did not mean that the Bible knew all that he had done, but

it knew the inner working of man's heart, even the exemplary Apostle Paul said, "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7. 7). The word of God, the law, came to him and revealed himself to him. What could do this but the word of God?

Should man have ever known that he had spirit as well as soul but for the Scriptures? But once we are informed as to this we can detect the working of spirit and soul in our bodies. Does not Hebrews 4. 12, 13, bear this out, where the passage glides from the word of God to its Author, thus declaring that when the word of God comes in searching power to my soul, it is God Himself who is speaking? Hence the deep importance of the practice of reading the Scriptures.

Another thing impressed me much, and that was the saintly lives of Christians I knew. Dr. Graham Scroggie says, "Books may inform and reform,—the Bible *transforms*," and it is the only book that does. Transformation comes from outside and above oneself in every particular. I found the Word of God exerted this force in many lives I knew, and it impressed me greatly. A tree is known by its fruit, and the fruit of the Spirit manifested in human lives convinced me of the goodness and divinity of the Bible. One could expatiate on this theme till volumes were filled, so ample is the testimony all down the ages.

I found many things in the Bible that I could not understand or ex-

plain, and this in two ways; (1) things manifestly beyond the creature's grasp, and (2) historical events such as the wiping out of the Canaanitish nations, the slaying of Agag by Samuel, the whole population of the world save eight persons being destroyed by the flood, and many things on this line. There were disconcerting to me as a young Christian, especially No. 2.

As to things manifestly beyond the creature's grasp one would not have it otherwise. On reflection I thought if a man could understand all in the Bible it would prove that it was written by a man. The fact that the Bible presents as revelation much that is beyond my reason and capacity proved to me its supernatural origin.

Who by searching can find out God? Who can understand the mystery of the Godhead? Who can fathom the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God? Far sooner ask an ant to understand the working of the mind of a man, than for a man to fathom the mind of God. In the former case the ant is finite and so is man: in the latter case man is finite and God is infinite. In the former case you can measure the distance; in the latter it is impossible to do so.

What has helped me much in relation to the word of God is to see how things visible illustrate the invisible, how the natural illustrates the spiritual. There is a danger in this, if we *force* divine things to conform to nature. But nature often furnishes a legitimate illustration of what is divine.

Take the sun in the heavens. I cannot understand or explain why

and how it is suspended in space, any more than I can understand space. I cannot understand how it can be a mass of glowing fire for centuries — "Nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Psalm 19. 6), as Scripture eloquently and tersely puts it. I know these things are. I believe them. I cannot understand or explain. I once read a book by the late Dr. Alfred T. Schofield in which there was a diagram showing the extent of scientific knowledge and of ignorance. It took the form of rings radiating from a common centre. The ring of knowledge was very attenuated; that of ignorance was very broad. This is one illustration out of thousands. If the most advanced scientist does not know much about such a material thing as the sun, is it any wonder we know nothing of the Creator of the sun, unless He chooses to reveal Himself?

As to being troubled about historical events such as wiping out of the Canaanitish nation, the slaying of Agag by Samuel, the flood involving the destruction of the whole world save eight persons, etc., etc., what has helped me is to see that the word of God makes no attempt to explain anything. I had to say to myself, *you* do not know the good and valid reason God had in so acting.

One has to understand the exact circumstances of the case in question to come to a right conclusion, and these the Bible does not always furnish. When the Canaanitish tribes were exterminated God had waited four hundred years till the cup of the Amorites' iniquity was full. Then He struck.

These are questions whose answer lies with God in His supreme wis-

dom. We know what He commanded or allowed was for His glory, and the good of mankind. There are many questions I can never solve. It is a good thing not to keep troubling about them as a dog keeps gnawing at a bone, but having faced them and found the questions insoluble to leave them in quietness of spirit in God's wise hands.

You feel that nothing can be God's message until you are in the right spirit to receive it. Surely this is not right. Take an illustration. An evangelist preaches the gospel. He quotes the text, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 14. 30). Does this not apply to all men, irrespective of their condition of mind? You would reduce the scope of this passage to those who are in the right spirit to receive it. But what right have you to do this?

You say again, "Until therefore, I have felt the power of particular scriptures, they are no more to me than a good book—the reading of which gives mental exhilaration." Apply this to common life and you have the breakdown of civilization. Could an officer treat the detailed plan of campaign from the commander-in-chief in that way? Would he say that the orders and disposi-

tion that appealed to him as right and sensible were authoritative, and all else not, however appreciated as a literary production? Surely not. And to treat God's word thus is to treat it with contempt, however little this is your intention.

The authority of Scripture has to do with its *source*. If God is the source of Scripture it is authoritative.

For instance King George's proclamation to the army has the King's authority behind it, and is addressed only to the army. If God commands all men everywhere to repent, you have God's authority behind it, than which none can be greater, and it is sent to all men everywhere, whatever their condition be. *You confound response with authority*. Good it is to be in the state of mind to make a ready response, but the authority lies entirely in its source and it is well to keep this in mind.

After all, if God has given us the Holy Scriptures surely they are faultless from beginning to end. This is the attitude of faith. And thank God the copies of the original and the translations therefrom are so good and reliable that we may rest content that we have God's own veritable word in our hands. Hoping this may help you.

We are not called only to love one another. There is a nearer tie, "We being many are one body." The pattern described is surely an active practical devotion to the Head of every member of the body. Living to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him *outwardly*. This is what makes a happy assembly, each one to be living Christ all the day long. It is that which every part supplies according to the effectual working of the measure of every part that produces upbuilding, increase, strengthening, fellowship of the whole body. Why should this Christian fellowship be a rare thing in our day?

REMEMBRANCE.

A. M. Chambers.

"This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 23).

Lord, in this sweet and solemn hour,
 Let there not be
 One thought that is not, by Thy grace,
 Fragrant of Thee,
 But may we in simplicity
 In very truth remember Thee.

Show once again Thy hands and side
 That faith may see
 Those seals of love that Thou didst win
 At Calvary—
 Those marks that shall through endless days
 Call forth adoring, grateful praise!

Speak to our souls, we pray, and give
 Some sense within
 Of what it meant to Thee to be
 For us made sin,
 For us the wrath of God to bear,
 Alone, abhorred, abandoned there!

Yea, Saviour, touch these hearts of ours
 So cold and hard,
 And break them down that there may flow
 The true spikenard,—
 Its preciousness, its odours sweet
 Be emptied at Thy pierced feet!

Submission.

B.V.M.

Thou knowest what is best, Thy will be done
 Unknown to us how long the course we run.
 We only know the present and the past;
 Thou knowest all things from the first to last.

In everything we would by Thee be led;
 On earth the body, ruled by heavenly Head.
 Jesus be Thou our everlasting guide,
 We'd ever follow closely to Thy side.

We thank Thee for the Comforter Divine
 Who dwells within each chosen one of Thine:
 A ceaseless source of power to help us be
 Continually living, Lord, for Thee.

NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

T. Oliver.

No. 7: Kedesh.

WE have already seen that the name "Kedesh" bears the interpretation "Sanctuary." That sets forth the climax of all progress in the history of the soul, viz. reaching where God is adored. From the outset God has worked with the end in view that he might have a people at home in His presence, and thus constituted worshippers.

In the history of God's chosen people in the Old Testament the thought of the sanctuary did not appear until after redemption was typically completed (Exodus 14). In the song of victory immediately following, Moses and the children of Israel delivered from Egypt, spoke of preparing a habitation for God, and later in the fifteenth chapter they spoke of the place the Lord had made to dwell in, viz. the sanctuary.

In Exodus 25. 8, the further thought is conveyed in the words: — "let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Then a minute description is given of the golden vessels to be placed therein. The constitution of the tabernacle is described in Exodus 26., as being formed of a curtain of various significant colours. There are various other curtains and structures, but these are all subsidiary to the first mentioned curtain. The Tabernacle contained the Sanctuary, thus the former term was more comprehensive than the latter which was descriptive of the inmost shrine, where God's presence and majesty were displayed. That distinction was confirmed in the New Testament in Hebrews 9. 2—3. Obviously the sanctuary was where God could derive pleasure from having His people dwelling with Him-

self, consistent with the display of His own attributes. He could not satisfy the desire apart from being consistent with His eternal characters of righteousness and holiness.

There are two great lines of manifestation, viz.: — (1) God reveals Himself in coming out to man. (2) Man has the privilege of going in to meet God. Of course that is a direct consequence of God's revelation of Himself. So throughout the Mosaic books the expression "tabernacle of the congregation" (lit. "the tent of meeting") is ever recurrent.

Then in the vessels of the holy place, God in Christ is revealed in the Ark and the Mercy Seat, which although together forming one piece of furniture they are distinct as to allusion and significance. Then man in Christ is set forth in the Table and in the Candlestick.

These pairs of articles of furniture were separated by the veil in the Tabernacle. The second pair were placed in the "holy place" while the first pair were in the "holiest of all." The two compartments were together described as "the holy places" (Hebrews 9). In Exodus 25 there was no veil mentioned in the description. Apparently God's original thought was that man in Moses at least should have unrestricted access to the inmost shrine of God's presence. "There will I meet thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat" (Exodus 25. 22).

The restriction arose through the presumption of Nadab and Abihu (sons of Aaron) offering strange fire

before the Lord, contrary to His express command, and summary judgment fell upon them (Lev. 10. 1—2). Afterwards access to the holiest was limited to the annual entrance of the high priest who sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat as indicative of the perfect work of Christ, who would make propitiation for the sinner, i.e. the man who failed in responsibility to God (Lev. 16. 1—2). When the greatest man could not survive essaying to enter the presence of God, then it was positive proof that man after the flesh could not approach God. The Tabernacle and its arrangements testified to God's desire to dwell in the midst of a people on the ground of redemption. But at the same time they indicated very definitely that God could only be approached with due reverence to His character of holiness. The process was repeated year by year. But the repetition showed unmistakably that the question was only provisionally settled. In bringing the matter annually to remembrance, there was also the indication that the problem would be settled perfectly in God's own time and way.

From the beginning of Hebrews 9 we see that each of the two compartments of the Tabernacle was typical of a different order of worship. The first or outer was typical of the worship appropriated to Israel according to the old covenant. While the second or inner part was peculiar to the Christian order of worship, according to the new covenant. The former was marked by distance. The priests could not go further than the outer part of the sanctuary (Hebrews 9. 9). The service was a ritual wherein neither the meaning of the place nor of the articles of furniture was understood by those performing the service. They never knew God. The

way into the holy places was not then made manifest!

The meaning of the second compartment and its contents are realised in faith on the ground of the new covenant. The new things are marked by life and nearness to God, not by mere formality. The Christian has the blessed privilege of understanding the meaning of everything in the place where God displays Himself in accordance with His glory and majesty.

Christ is the minister of the sanctuary (Hebrew 8. 2). The term "minister" in this connection signifies "public administrator," who has a double ministry, i.e. (1) He ministers to the Christians what God has revealed Himself in. (2) He takes up the worship of His people and presents it to God, who lives in an atmosphere of everlasting praise and joy.

Even as the veil is not mentioned in Exodus 25, so in Hebrews there is no statement of the veil being rent. Indeed the veil is only twice mentioned in that Epistle; viz.:—(1) relative to those who fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope which entered within the veil (Hebrews 6. 18—19). (2) "Having therefore brethren boldness (liberty or confidence) to enter into the holiest (Lit. the Holy Places), by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . . . through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Heb. 10, 19—20).

As previously stated, at first Moses had access into the presence of God without a veil. Even after the veil was erected it would appear that Moses still had access within the veil (Numbers 7. 89). Moreover, until the sin and death of Aaron's sons,

the priest could go within the veil without restriction. But afterwards the high priest alone was allowed to enter once a year but not apart from the blood.

Now the blood of Jesus forms the new and living way through the veil into the holiest. The blood is the means by which we shall be in the holiest for ever. By faith we avail ourselves of the privilege now. Thus the privileges of Christian worship are permanent and superior to those of the Jewish system. The blood of Christ has brought us back to the original idea, revealed in Exodus 25. God's presence fills the holy places, and man is there without a veil in the sanctuary.

We are not yet in heaven. But as to our connection with God, the veil has been rent from the top to the bottom,* and we have liberty to enter into the holy places by the blood of Jesus. Our veil or body is not rent, and that prevents our seeing with our eyes the revelation of God in heaven. But the body of Christ is rent and that constitutes our title to go in. Yet we need faith to enter (Hebrews 10. 22).

In the holiest, the articles connected with the display of God in Christ, were: — (1) the ark setting forth the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which life and incorruptibility were brought to light. The acacia wood of which it was made was completely covered with gold indicating the righteousness of God. The golden crown above the ark spoke of glory. Christ glorified God

in every word and action. The first covenant which man neither knew nor kept was put in the ark typifying that Christ alone fulfilled the covenant of man with God.

(2) The mercy-seat forming the lid of the ark was of pure gold. It is typical of Christ in resurrection. Where there is a demonstration of the righteousness of God in His forbearance in remitting the sins of the past dispensation and moreover demonstrating the consistency of God in justifying the believer in Jesus (Romans 3. 25-26). Every attribute of God is in perfect accord with mercy. Thus His throne can openly declare the character of a mercy-seat and God is glorified in doing so. The panorama spread out before the eye of faith claims the adoration of every heart with that endowment. Thus the cherubim did not look outward to contemplate man's ruined condition, but their whole attention was concentrated downward on the pure gold plate bearing the blood sprinkled thereon.

In the outer compartment of the Tabernacle, the table with the shewbread thereon displayed in type the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection in all His unalloyed perfection. The food and delight which God derived from them figuratively became the food of the priests. In the New Testament time, the one loaf represents all God's people on earth maintained before Him in a similar way. The other article of display in the outer chamber was the candlestick which represented the ascended Christ as the object and supporter of all ministry in the sanctuary. The oil represented the Holy Ghost, who bears testimony to the glory of Christ. The candle shed its light on

* The types in Hebrews are relative to the Tabernacle, the veil of which was not rent. It was the veil of the Temple which was rent, in which the whole Jewish system was superseded.

the beauty of the candlestick and illuminated the table as well, so that there is a complete display of the glories and beauties of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who receive the testimony are brought into conformity to His image and fruit-bearing for God.

Man's failure will never render invalid the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He will raise up others to take the place of those who have failed. We see from Scripture that there is a direct testimony of the Holy Ghost and also an indirect testimony through men acting in the power of the Holy Ghost. "When the Spirit of truth is come, He shall bear witness concerning Me and ye also shall bear witness" (John 15. 26-27).

As minister of the sanctuary, He presents gifts to God. "For every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices. Wherefore it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer" (Hebrews 8. 4). From hearts filled with the precious-

ness of Christ, He takes the elements which are the fruit of His own ministry and presents as gifts to God. We receive the credit of these gifts to which is added the fragrance of His precious name. The reflex action on us is that we are led into more intensive worship.

The ministry of Christ as the ark of the covenant brings every heart into the presence of God. At the same time the process sets us free from all considerations of arrogance and ecclesiastical superiority over others, who may not have been favoured with such clear oral ministry of the things concerning Himself. We worship where all other Christians worship, in the holiest. God is a Spirit and they who essay to worship Him can only do so in spirit and in accordance with the truth, i.e. the light of Holy Scripture. Every other process, no matter how pretentious and apparently well-founded, is futile. The holiest where God is worshipped is now a spiritual sphere!

"Unite my heart to fear Thy name" (Psalm 86. 11).

"This is what is the great lack among the people of God. How much of our lives, if not spent in positive evil, is frittered away and lost in countless petty diversions which spoil effectually the positiveness of their testimony for God! We are on the road—not at least intentionally off it—but we stop to chase butterflies among the flowers and make no serious progress. . . . Concentration of purpose is what most of all the devil dreads for us as Christian."

F.W.G.

"Except ye utter . . . words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" (1 Cor. 14).

"Don't puzzle your hearers with doubtful speeches. 'Well,' said one, 'I had a new idea the day. I did not enlarge upon it; but I just threw it out.' That is a very good thing to do with most of your new ideas. Throw them out, by all means; but mind where you are when you do it; for if you throw them out from the pulpit they may strike somebody and inflict a wound upon faith.

FROM GLORY TO GLORY.

W.B.D.—y.

From
Heaven
To Earth
Earth

Lowly and meek
His Own to seek
The Lord Whose glory none can speak
Humbly this dark world's pathway trod
With wondrous gifts of grace from God:
Blessing, and joy, and matchless love,
The living water from above,
Freely displayed that all mankind
Might freely take, and mercy find.
But they with stony hearts of pride,
Raised their harsh voices to deride,
Jeered at His gentleness, and spurned
His loving grace; in hatred burned,
Lifted the stinging lash to smite,
And in the darkness of the night
Mocked as they murdered on the tree
God's Son, Who came to set them free.

On
Earth
to the
Cross

Gentle and mild
As little child
The King of kings hangs there reviled,
With iron spikes through feet and hands
Where the dark cross of Calvary stands;
Patient the pathway that He trod
As mercy's messenger from God,
His witness faithful still and true—
"Forgive, they know not what they do."
And then the loud, exultant cry
" 'Tis finished!" Jesus deigns to die.
Creator of the creature slain,
And all creation groans in pain;
Black as a thunder-cloud the heaven;
The temple veil in twain is riven;
Now the sharp spear that cleaves His flesh
Sets free the water to refresh,
Brings forth the sacrificial blood
Pure and acceptable to God.

From the
Cross
To the
Grave

Silent and cold
The Saviour, sold,
Whose love no tongue can e'er unfold,
In tender, reverent hands again,
Is lifted from the cross of pain.

God Whom He praised with every breath
 Now tends His well-loved Son in death,
 About His body they entwine
 The righteous linen, white and fine,
 With costly spices rich men gave,
 And in the rich man's costly grave
 Jesus with heavy hearts they place
 And roll the stone before its face.
 Now by the tomb, with gleaming spears,
 To calm the furtive Jewish fears,
 The Roman soldiers stand on guard
 Where lies the body of the Lord.

From
 Earth
 to
 Heaven

Sad and forlorn
 At early dawn
 A woman comes her Lord to mourn,
 With stumbling steps towards the cave
 That is of all her hopes the grave,
 And searching through the falling tears
 To catch the glitter of the spears
 Her footsteps falter in amaze,
 No Roman sentry meets her gaze.
 The watch is fled, the guard is gone!
 The seal is broken from the stone!
 The mighty boulder flung aside,
 And lo! The cavern gapeth wide. . . .

Jesus is risen!
 Jesus is risen!
 Sundered the bars, and burst the prison!
 The bonds of death and hell are riven!
 Shout the glad news to highest heaven:
 Jesus is risen!
 Risen! Risen!
 And Satan's devils cringing listen.
 Snapped are the mighty bands as tow!
 What power could keep the King below?
 Broken the chain of grief and pain!
 Jesus is raised again, again!
 Shout till the echoes joyful ring!
 Praise Him the ever-crowned King!
 Praise Him by Whom all things have breath!
 Praise Him Who gave Himself to death!
 Praise Him to all high heaven's fane
 Who lived, and died, **AND LIVES AGAIN!**

CORRESPONDENCE.

Irritability in Christians.

Dear Tertius.

We have corresponded on many subjects and I hope with profit to us both. I should appreciate your thoughts on irritability in Christians; how can it be overcome? A brother whose words have often helped me, told me that sometimes a lost collar stud before breakfast would irritate him so that he would be out of temper all day. He did go on to say, and I was thankful to hear it, that such incidents humbled him so much, they brought his pride into the dust, and he thought that collar studs were one of the means by which he was sorely chastened. He confessed too that such irritability was very inconsistent with his knowledge of God. I remember once being greatly impressed by what seemed to me a very intelligent and spiritual thanksgiving by a brother I did not know, in a Lord's Day morning meeting. I was a visitor to the place and remarked to my host as to the helpful part this brother had taken. He said "Yes, and you should hear him at home if his dinner isn't right." I assure you that answer grieved me; it was not the love that covers a multitude of sins, and my host dropped quite as low in my estimation as the irritable brother did. Now I want to know what you can suggest as being helpful to any who may be plagued with this sort of temper.

Yours affectionately,

Quartus.

ANSWER.

My dear Quartus.

That such impatience and petulance should shew itself in a true child of God is sad indeed, and is

far more serious than one might think. It defeats the very object of God in calling us to be His own. In what I am persuaded is the true rendering of James 4. 5, we read "What, do you consider this is an idle word? —*He yearns jealously for the spirit He set within us.*" That is God desires the friendship of man, but a friend who is peevish and irascible is not a pleasant one. Such a one robs God of the pleasure He desires to find in him, by the work of His Spirit. Let irritable brethren consider that. Their irritability not only spoils their testimony to Christ, but spoils their communion with God.

If impatience and temper were fully confessed before God, not as shortcomings and peccadilloes, but as serious sin, there would come a sense of forgiveness, and of that cleansing from all unrighteousness of which the Scripture speaks (1 John 1); and it is that that seems to be the deep need. This involves the unsparing judgment of self; for after all it is SELF and selfishness that is at the bottom of the trouble. With the confession let the latter part of James 4. 5, as well as the former part be remembered. "He giveth more grace." The forgiving, healing, strengthening grace of God may always be reckoned on, where contrition is sincere.

Besides this, let others have a larger place in our thoughts. "Content to be THIRD" would be a good motto to hang up somewhere where the eye could constantly rest upon it. *God first; others second, myself third.* How one sees it set forth in Christ in a way that endears Him to our hearts and rebukes us.

A young girl who is saved from drowning by a young man, thanks her deliverer, of course, but she does not necessarily fall in love with him. Here lies the crux of the matter. We gratefully thank our Saviour for all He has done for us, but we sometimes fail to return His deep, true, wonderful love that made Him save us. Self is a greater object than Christ. The remedy is to study Him, as set forth in the Scriptures, till His attractiveness weans the soul from love of self.

If the brother with the illusive stud, began with the Lord before tackling the stud, he would probably have less trouble with it, certainly he would have less trouble with him-

self. And it may be that the brother who made the beautiful thanksgiving allowed his intelligence to carry him above his true spiritual growth and state, hence his fall; this is a thing to guard against. But if he was really with the Lord in the sanctuary he failed to take Him with him into his home. In Mark 1 the Lord went straight from the synagogue into Simon's house. I am sure Simon did not complain of his dinner with the Lord there. How good it is to realise that not only is the Lord the true centre in His assemblies, but He will take the supreme place in our homes if we will but yield it to Him.

Your affectionate brother,
Tertius.

For Wives, Mothers, and Servants.

It falls to the lot of not a few Christian people to rise earlier than the rest of the household, to light the fire and to cook the breakfast for others. It is easy to succumb to the temptation to think of such service as drudgery only, and to begin the day with a resentful mind, willing to be served but reluctant to serve, forgetting the words of the Lord, "the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10. 45). The day that begins under the shadow of resentment promises to deepen in darkness throughout its length. The day that begins with remembrance of how the Lord, solely under the constraint of His love, Himself lighted a fire and cooked a breakfast, will be lightened with the joy of the Lord until the evening falls. This contact with Him, this avenue opened up to fellowship with Him, is the peculiar privilege of the many who, serving in the comparative obscurity of the home, meet the daily and prosaic needs of others as He did by the Galilean sea.

From "The Lord, the Servant," a booklet by C.F.H.

Can you think of anything more touching than the Father's love—the love wherewith He loves His Son? Well that love is to be *in* us! Consider that for a moment. Not on us only, faith might rejoice in that, but *in* us: that is realisation, and for that the Lord prayed to His Father. Take out your New Testament and read it again. John 17. 26.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Holy Ghost and Fire.

“What is the significance of ‘fire’ in the words of John the Baptist when he said of the Lord, ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire’? I had always understood fire to represent judgment, but one baptized with the Holy Ghost could hardly be baptized also with judgment. I have read recently of this fire being emblematic of resistless energy and force given by the Spirit, particularly in speech—is there any such use of it in Scripture to support this?”—SUTTON.

IF these words of John the Baptist are read in their context it will be seen that the fire is the judgment of the Lord on unrepentant Israel, and not the energy of the Holy Spirit through His servants. They were not spoken to disciples, but to a people amongst whom were those that John called a “generation of vipers.” When the Lord spoke to His disciples in Acts 1 of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He made no reference to the “fire.”

In verse 10 of Matthew 3 John speaks of every tree that bears no fruit being cut down and cast out into the *fire*, and in verse 12, of the chaff being burned up with unquenchable *fire*; clearly judgment in both statements; why should “fire” in the intervening verse be something else?

The point is not merely one of interest, it is of the greatest importance, for in it lies the right of the Lord to dispose of men according to His own divine justice. John, the faithful forerunner, declared his own limitation; he could baptize the people with water; he could bring them down into that which signified death, and he could do no more; but his Lord, who was coming after him, could lift them into the sphere of life, He would baptize them with the Holy Ghost—the power and intelligence of the life into which He would bring them, or—dread alternative—baptize them with fire, i.e.

pour out His judgment upon them. He would gather His wheat into His garner and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Israel was His floor, and He would discriminate between His wheat and the chaff. Who but the Lord could do this? “The Lord knoweth them that are His.” He had come to Israel in grace, but He had come to a recalcitrant nation, a remnant only of which would receive Him; and since He is a just God as well as a Saviour, His judgment must of necessity fall upon the rebellious. “For the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4 1). That striking prophecy is given in close proximity to the ministry of John the Baptist. Notice, that throughout Matthew’s Gospel this discriminating judgment is prominent. Here the wheat and the chaff, later the wheat and tares, the good and bad fish, the wise and foolish virgins, etc.

It seems to us that Pentecost was not in any way a fulfillment of John’s prophetic words as given in Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospels; they await the second coming of the Lord, as several Old Testament prophecies would prove. His testimony to the Lord as given in John’s Gospel is of a different character to that of the others, and this probably was fulfilled at the coming of the Spirit at

Pentecost, but there is no mention of the "fire" on that testimony. Scripture is everywhere perfect, there are no mere repetitions in it, and it is by comparing passage with passage that we often arrive at a right interpretation of it.

Pentecost was the fulfilment of the Lord's words given in John 14. 15 and 16, and Acts 1, and it is remarkable that when Peter explained to the people what had happened then he made no reference to John's words, but quoted Joel, chapter 2; and when he was called upon to defend his going to Gentiles before the brethren at Jerusalem, he quoted to them the Lord's words, and not John's, and on neither occasion did he make any reference to fire.

What then of the parted tongues *like as of fire* that appeared unto the disciples and sat upon each of them? This was certainly not *a baptism of fire*, but it was a sure indication that the Holy Spirit is holy; "Our God is a consuming fire." When the Spirit descended upon the Lord at His baptism, He appeared as a dove, emblem of complacency and rest, there

was nothing in Him that was obnoxious to the Spirit, but everything that was suitable and delightful; but with the disciples it was different, the flesh was in them and the possible working of sin, and the Spirit must be against the flesh and sin. God who judges the flesh and sin in men, cannot spare them in His saints and servants, hence the need on their part of self-judgment in which the Spirit will surely give His aid. The judgment of the Holy Spirit fell upon Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 because they did not judge the evil thoughts that sprang up in their hearts.

Zeal in the work of the Lord is most desirable and indeed essential if the work is to be approved of the Lord; but this zeal will be found in the ungrieved Spirit dwelling within us. When the Apostles so spake that many believed it was because they were filled with the Holy Spirit. We do not read as far as we remember of any of them speaking with fire, but we do read of the fire trying every man's work, of what sort it is (1 Corinthians 3).

Paul in Paradise.

"Will you please explain chapter 12. 1--5. I have found that many believe that this was only a vision that Paul had; a sort of high spiritual emotion. I had always thought that he was actually caught up to the third heaven, and that the thorn in the flesh was given him to keep him from being puffed up because of this experience."—ENQUIRER.

WE are surprised that anyone who accepts the word should question that this was an actual experience of Paul's. We do not read of any other having a similar experience, but Paul did not boast because he alone had had the experience, but because it was his as, "a man in Christ." He had been caught up into the place that belongs to every man

in Christ, and into which every man in Christ will eventually be caught up. His bodily senses had no part in this experience, he was entirely unaware of his body, this he tells us twice? There he heard things unspeakable, things that a man in mortal flesh could not utter, and which men in their mortal condition could not take in, but they are the things

that belong to all who are "in Christ" and we shall enter into them when in our glorified bodies we are there.

While he could not impart to others what he had seen and heard he must have been greatly strengthened by them in all his sufferings for Christ's sake, for he had actually seen the goal, yet even Paul, an apostle, might have been puffed up because of this experience, and have despised others who had not had it, clearly proving that the flesh cannot be changed even by heavenly visions and revelations, so the thorn.

It has been pointed out how great is the contrast between the Lord Jesus and the greatest of His servants. The Lord was glorified on the mount, but He was just as perfect in the plain, there was no evil proud flesh in Him that needed a bridle or thorn to keep it in check. But good it is to see that His grace could so work in Paul, that He could glory in that which made him despicable in the eyes of men, that Christ might be everything. Paul's experience is recorded for our learning and great is the lesson that it teaches.

Notes for Preachers.

THE preacher who neglects to pray much must be very careless about his ministry. He cannot have comprehended his calling. He cannot have commuted the value of souls or estimated the meaning of eternity. He will surely be a mere talker, loving the praise of men more than the favour of God, and he will be most approved where grace is least valued. He is a mere loiterer and not a labourer. He limps in his life like the lame man in the Proverbs, whose legs were not equal, for his praying is shorter than his preaching.

If you cannot prevail with men for God, you can at least endeavour to prevail with God for men. Like Jeremiah, you can make it your resolve "If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore and run down with tears." To such appeals the Lord's heart can never be indifferent; in due time the weeping intercessor will become the rejoicing winner of souls. "How is it

that your seeds come up so soon?" asked one gardener of another. "Because I steep it" was the reply. Steep your sermons in tears when none but God is nigh. It is the one who sows in tears that reaps with joy.

"Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in strifes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness at the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well-known; as dying and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

THE GOSPEL AND ITS PREACHERS. J. T. Mawson.

OUR English word gospel has come to us from the Anglo-Saxon Godspel—God’s story. It is good news, but it is more than good news, it is God’s news, and it is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 1. 3. God is the source of it, Christ is the subject of it, and to all mankind it is sent. The true gospeller is sent of God, for “how shall they preach except they be sent?” Romans 10. 15. He is like the Baptist of whom we read, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” *God was the source of his mission.* He spoke of the Lord Jesus and pointed souls to Him; *Christ was the subject of his preaching and the Object of his mission.* Those that “heard him speak followed Jesus;” *that was the result of his mission,* and he said, “This my joy therefore is fulfilled, He must increase, I must decrease;” *that was the reward and crown of his mission.* A happy man and a pattern servant was John the Baptist!

Those who are to stand up to preach the gospel must know it, which means they must know Him who is its subject, the Lord Jesus Christ; if they are to preach truly and well they must preach with conviction, “as it is written, I believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” 2 Cor. 4. 13; and they must be sincere men, and not all who preach are this, alas; even in Paul’s day he had to write, “We are not as many *which corrupt the word of God;* but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.” 2 Cor. 2. 16. Who are they who corrupt the gospel? Those who preach another gospel—which is not another, which is neither God’s news nor good news,

for Christ is not its theme—who are the ministers of Satan and pervert the gospel in order to turn souls from Christ. 2 Cor. 11. God’s curse and not His blessing rests upon them and their efforts. Galatians 1. 6—9.

The disciples of the Lord knew Him as their risen Lord, for He shewed Himself to them alive from the dead by many infallible proofs. In their eagerness and ignorance they hoped that He would abide with them, and set up the throne of David in Jerusalem and make them great men in a glorious kingdom; but they had to learn that no place on earth was good enough for Him at that time, He had to go to the right hand of the Majesty on high, to His Father’s throne; the most glorious place in the universe of God was the only place worthy to receive Him. They saw Him go up; their eyes followed Him as He ascended into heaven, and until the cloud of glory received Him out of their sight. They were witnesses not of His resurrection only, but of His ascension to glory, and they were filled with great joy thereat. They grasped the fact that their Lord and Master was infinitely greater and more glorious than had been their best thoughts of Him.

The last words that came from His mouth as He left the earth were, “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth.” What amazement must have filled the Jewish hearts of those disciples as they considered this commission; they were to witness on the earth of His glory in the heavens, and the sphere of their witness was to reach out to the uttermost part of the earth. They were eager to tell of His glory to Israel, for hitherto their hopes and

affections had been confined to that narrow sphere, but now their hearts were to be enlarged at the coming of the Holy Ghost to embrace the world. They were to speak of the most blessed Person, exalted to the most glorious place, to the greatest possible number of men; for not a needy sinner beneath the sun had to be denied the favour of hearing the word, and upon all had to be pressed the rightful claims of Christ; He is Lord of all.

What a rebuke are these last words of our Lord to our narrow selfish and unmissionary hearts! What a challenge they are to us and our indifference to all but a very confined circle, and the way we have of limiting the gospel and its preachers! Let everyone who is interested in the gospel consider them afresh in the light of the Lord's ascension into heaven to be the centre of blessing for all, the great Mediator between God and man. Being the Lord's last words they ought to profoundly impress us. In them we learn the extent of His claims: His power for blessing: the immensity of the grace that is in Him, as well as its suitability to the needs of men even to the uttermost part of the earth. Here also we learn the breadth of the love of God, who gave His only-begotten Son for the world, and will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. "Unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

These disciples were obedient men. Their Lord had told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high, for a divine mission could only be carried out in divine power. He also told them to love one another, and they did as they were told, for they gathered together of one mind and with one accord to

wait and pray for the fulfilment of His word. The power that was to carry their witness for their wonderful Saviour to the uttermost part of the earth was the Holy Ghost; for His coming they had to wait; without Him they were not to move a step or speak a word. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." They were to receive POWER; but this power was inseparable from the Person of the Holy Ghost, it was in Him, and not in them apart from Him; it was His coming that was to make them effectual *witnesses for Christ*. A great many would like to have that power that would give them a place among their fellows and distinguish them; in this the devil will help them, but not the Holy Ghost; He has come solely and only in the name of Christ and for His glory.

These men did not wait in vain, they speedily proved that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hear-ken than the fat of rams," for the Holy Ghost came upon them and filled them every one. They were not only commissioned by their glorified Lord, but empowered by the Holy Ghost who had come from Him, to give them utterance.

Being God, the power of the Holy Ghost is unchanging power, it is the same to-day as then; the growing corruption of Christendom may make it impossible for Him to give the same manifestation of His presence as He did at Pentecost, nevertheless there is no other power for God on earth. All the vast organizations and the machinery that men have created, who depend upon the arm of flesh and upon the wisdom of the schools and upon money gathered from any quarter, tainted or otherwise, for the carrying on of so-called religious

work, are a hindrance to God's work and no help. They make much show and noise as they build their wood, hay and stubble, and outstrip the world in self-advertisement and self-laudation; but the Holy Ghost is not in it, and when the trial by fire comes the work will not stand.

Happy is the servant of Christ who has no confidence in these carnal weapons; who in faithfulness to his Master will stand apart from that which does not glorify Him; who pursues his true mission of witness for Christ, and places himself at the disposal of his Lord to be filled with the Holy Ghost to this end.

It is necessary in these days in which even true servants of Christ make the blessing and uplifting of men the primary matter, to insist that **WITNESS TO CHRIST IS THE PREACHER'S MISSION**. Blessing to men will follow this as effect follows cause, but "Ye shall be witnesses to Me" is the commission, and it is for that that the Holy Ghost gives power. A man may talk of the blessing of men with great eloquence and leave them still self-centred and consequently unblessed; but if he bears witness to Christ, all who are affected by his message will change their centre; they will turn from self to Christ and "magnify God." This is the work of the Holy Ghost.

What a glorious witness it was that these disciples had to bear. They had seen their Lord nailed upon a cross as a common felon, thieves on either side; hatred and mockery around; and darkness and silence above, from whence they expected that succour would come to Him. It was a sight of most awful dreadfulness to them; it had filled them with unspeakable sorrow; it had broken

their hearts, shaken their faith, and scattered them like sheep attacked by wolves. But His resurrection had gathered them, removed their sorrow and stabilized their faith; and now the Holy Ghost had come to indwell them and to teach them the meaning and necessity of that cross, and to tell them that it had been exchanged for the throne; that their Lord had been crowned with heavenly glory and honour; that God had "highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The Holy Spirit had come upon them directly from the enthronement and coronation of their Lord, from the scene of exultation in heaven at His triumph, and from the Father's delight in Him; and filling them as He did, they bore witness as though their very eyes beheld it all, for the Spirit's witness to them as to it, made it real to faith's vision.

Thus they spake when the time came, and this was their theme, and this is still the true theme of the preacher. Sad that those who have so glorious a subject should be caught by the spirit of the world and find other themes more congenial, and spend their energies upon many schemes for the betterment of the world, instead of uplifting Christ as the great magnet who draws men out of it to Himself. But the Holy Ghost will not depart from His mission, no matter how the servants of the Lord may fail, and none shall seek His help in vain whose purpose is to bear witness to Christ.

To those who believed the witness of the Apostles the Holy Ghost was given. This was part of Peter's message in his first recorded sermon. "Repent," he said unto them, "and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST." Two things at least were involved in this. Firstly, when the Holy Ghost came upon any one it meant that the Lord was thereby taking possession of that which was His by right of purchase. The Lord's rights were involved in it. We must give a greater place to this in our preaching. So often we dwell upon what men will get; but what will the Lord get? He will get all who believe the gospel concerning Himself, and He takes possession of them as His own when the Spirit seals them. The Spirit comes to make good the Lord's claims in those who believe.

Secondly, the gift of the Holy Ghost gives to those who receive it the power and capacity to enter into a sphere of blessing entirely outside

the range of the natural man; for the natural man receiveth not the things of God, they are spiritually discerned. Our preaching is poor in this respect, we dwell largely upon what men will be delivered from—their sins will be forgiven, and they will be saved from the judgment those sins deserved; all very true, but all negative. But the gospel brings what is most gloriously positive: it opens the door to the things of God, gives these things to the saints as their inheritance, gives the Holy Ghost so that those who believe might have a present knowledge and enjoyment of these things, and a well of water within them fully satisfying the deepest yearnings of the soul; a power transforming every part of the life; a capacity for entering into communion with God. The gift of the Holy Ghost meant the translation from the world, disappointing bankrupt and condemned, into the kingdom of God, the head and centre of which is the victorious Lord and Saviour, and the power of which is the Holy Ghost thus received, and the joy of which is God Himself.

God for us.

WHAT a comfort it is to know that God thinks of us, and arranges all for us, even when we fail to think of Him. There is not a day, not a moment, but God is thinking of us, and He is above all the plottings of Satan. Did His people in the wilderness want food? He sent them manna from heaven. Did they want guidance? He gave the pillar to go before them. Did Jordan lie between them and Canaan? There was the ark to stand in the midst of the waters until they all had passed over dry shod. What a thought this ought to give us of the love of God, when we see His activity in goodness

to us all the way through! What a comfort to know that He is *for* us, out of the spring and principle of His own love!

We can never really know God till we know His love. God so loved the world that He sent His Son. The world did not ask God to send Him, men did not ask Christ to come, but God loved them, and *He* sent Him. What a comfort then it is to know that God is *for* us, and what are the enemies in His presence—the flesh, the world, and Satan! Faith overcomes all by looking at what God is.

J.N.D.

“WHAT HAST THOU IN THE HOUSE?”

A. M. Chambers.

“*What hast thou in the house?*” (2 Kings 4. 2).

“*Search me and see if there be any wicked way in me.*” (Psa. 139. 23, 24).

“What hast thou in the house?”

Lord, do *Thou* search and see!
 And if, alas, there be
 Some evil dwelling there,
 (Though outward things be fair)
 Show me the hidden sin
 That lurks my house within,
 Search *Thou* and see!

If there be in my house,

Concealed on darkened shelf
 Some hoarded secret pelf—
 Self-pleasing, jealousy,
 Or pride, or enmity—
 Lord, bring it to the light
 That I may loathe the sight,
 Search *Thou* and see!

I cannot search my house—

My heart too fondly clings
 Unto its hateful things.
 I would pass evil by.
 It needs Thy holy eye,
 It needs Thy light divine
 Into each room to shine.
 —Master, the house is Thine—
 Search *Thou* and see!

Our confidence is in the precious blood of Christ. We cannot estimate its value but God does, and He must accept the sinner that makes the blood his only plea. God’s righteousness is seen in it, for it is the evidence of a holy life offered up under the judgment of God for sin—the Just for the unjust, and God’s love is witnessed by it, for it tells the length that God would go to save us. He gave His Son.

If God had judged us for our sins, as He might justly have done, we should have owned His righteousness but never have known His love; if He had passed over our sins, we might have considered it love, but it would not have been holy love, which the love of God must be, but when we come to the cross we see perfect righteousness and perfect love.

ISAIAH 53.

A. J. Pollock.

ISAIAH 53 is one of the most striking and notable chapters in the Bible. It points unmistakably to a *suffering* Messiah. It is an arresting prophecy.

The Jews refuse a suffering Messiah and with carnal expectation look for One, who shall restore the land of Israel to a position of glory and supremacy. They look for a Messiah with military genius and brilliant statesmanship. They do not look for the *meek* inheriting the earth. They do not realise that the sufferings of Christ of necessity must precede the glory of the Kingdom. The crown of thorns must come before the crown of glory.

So clearly does Isaiah point to a suffering Messiah that the Jewish religious leaders are hard put to to explain this chapter. So much is this so, in reading the Sacred Roll through in order in their synagogues, they purposely avoid reading Isaiah 53. It is the despair of their expositors. They cannot explain it away. They will not believe it. They deliberately refuse it. How true it is that "blindness in part is happened to Israel" (Roman 11. 25).

"He shall grow up before HIM as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when WE shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (verse 2).

Note the difference between "Him" and "we." "Him"—Jehovah Himself; "we"—the Jewish nation. How did Isaiah seven centuries before the event foresee the treatment the Jews would mete out to their Messiah, when He presented Himself as the Son of Man, who must be lifted up

in atoning sacrifice on the cross? Here we unmistakably get inspiration. Only God can foresee down the centuries. *God* used Isaiah as His inspired pen.

.....
"HIM"

What graphic and beautiful imagery is used here.

"He shall grow up before HIM as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

Imagine the desert. The song of no bird fills the air. No cry of beast is heard. An oppressive silence lies heavy over the solitude. No blade of grass is seen. No bush breaks the skyline. Suddenly you are entranced. A beautiful plant, rooted in the sand, luxurious and exotic, to your surprise meets your eye.

Such is the Bible imagery. God looked down on the desert of this world. Desolation and sin marked everything. But lo! there was One in this dreary drab scene that rejoiced the heart of God — one, who was well pleasing in every particular. What an object for God to look down upon.

.....
"WE"

"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when WE shall see Him, there is no beauty that WE should desire Him."

What must man be to be at such variance with God! Beautiful in the eyes of Jehovah; no beauty in the eyes of men. Jehovah's delight; men's execration. Surely this might be true of the rabble, you say, but not of the educated and religious! Nay, it was the very leaders of the nation, their high priests and rulers,

that rent the air with their vehement cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him."

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (verse 4).

Matthew 8. 16, 17, tells us how the Lord bore griefs and carried sorrows when He exorcised demons from bodies plagued by their possession, when He healed the sick. He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38). Yet in spite of all this gracious beneficence, the Jews in their carnality entirely misread the meaning of the cross, and believed that our Lord was smitten of God because of what *HE* was. But thank God the truth came out.

"But 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" (verse 5).

Here we have the cross, and *only* the cross. Here we have its true and inner meaning. Our Lord did not die for *His* sins, He had none, He was sinless. Why then did He die? For *our* sins. This is the great meaning of His death. The cross is

"The centre of two eternities,
Which look with rapt adoring eyes."

The cross is the centre of God's moral universe. It is the declaration of His mighty love, the upholding of His holiness and truth. How clearly this was indicated seven centuries before the crucifixion took place.

"Who shall declare His generation?" (verse 8).

"He shall see His seed" (verse 10).

The pathetic lament of verse 8 is answered by the triumphant assertion of verse 10. Our Lord was cut off in the midst of days. It seemed as though He had lived in vain. Did this mean nothing to Him? "Who shall declare His generation?" We then get verse 9 telling us of His burial, *and on the other side of death, in resurrection*, we get the wonderful truth, "He shall see His seed." The grain of wheat falls into the ground only to bear much fruit. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (verse 11). What an answer to the cross! What a reward to the suffering Messiah!

Look! The seer says, "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb'" (Revelation 7. 9, 10). What an answer! "A multitude that no man could number!" Every race laid under tribute to swell the triumph of the Lamb and to proclaim the mighty results of His work on the cross! What a plan is our God's! What a conception of the Divine Mind!

"O God! the thought was Thine!
(Thine only it could be)
Fruit of the wisdom, love divine,
Peculiar unto Thee."

"And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (verse 9).

This verse is somewhat obscurely rendered, a free but faithful translation of it would run,

They would have made His grave with the wicked, but He lay with the rich in His death.

Seven centuries roll by, and the events so vividly portrayed in this wonderful chapter took place. The suffering Messiah expired on the cross between two thieves. In the ordinary course of things the three bodies would be roughly cut down from the ghastly gibbets, and unceremoniously flung into a common grave.

“They would have made His grave with the wicked.” But did God allow this? When man’s hour came men were allowed to do what they liked. They spat in His face. They plucked the hair off His cheek. They put the crown of thorns upon His head. Blood gushed from a score of wounds.

But once He had died how different. No hand but those who revered and loved Him were permitted to touch His dead body. “Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor” (Mark 15. 43)—“a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph” (Matthew 27. 57)—was “a disciple of Jesus but secretly for fear of the Jews” (John 19. 38). Now Joseph steps out into the open, helped by Nicodemus, the same who came to Jesus by night. They bring

a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight, Joseph buys fine linen. Together these two disciples of our Lord reverently take the dead body of our Lord down from the cross, and lay it in Joseph’s own new tomb. “He lay with the rich in His death.” How did Isaiah know this seven centuries before it took place?

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“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong” (verse 12)

“SING . . . enlarge the place of thy tent . . . spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes . . . for thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called” (Isaiah 54. 1—5).

Here we come to the climax! Here is the shout of victory, the song of exultation. Israel will yet come into rejoicing and blessing. Blessing will stretch out to the whole world. But we Christians come into the blessings and joys of accomplished redemption now, and can rejoice in Isaiah 53.

Well may we

“SING.”

Faith looks to the power of God, but judges all by the word; for God must always act according to His word; and the servant of God who is in communion with God, will act on this thought. Even if signs are propitious he should decide nothing until the will of God be clear according to the word.

Look at a man who is not decided; he consults this one and that one, when it is a question how he is to act; and having some desire to do his own will, he will rather seek counsel of those who have not as much faith as himself. Paul took no counsel of flesh and blood.

GRACE.

W.B.D.—y.

“By grace are ye saved, through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.” (Eph. 2).

'Tis grace, sheer grace, that brings us unto God. . . .
 Not any path that our own feet have trod,
 Not any deeds that our own hands have wrought,
 Not any truth that our own souls have sought,
 Nor sight of eyes, nor hearing of the ear,
 Nor lust of gain, nor lash of human fear,
 Nor close-knit proof of academic brain,
 Nor pleasant bliss, nor agony of pain,
 Nor poet's dream, nor ravishment of art,
 Nor kindness of nature in the heart,
 Nor cold observance of the legal mind,
 Nor harsh austerity the flesh to bind.
 But grace, sheer grace, through shedding of the Blood,
 Has brought us, singing in our hearts, to God.

Circumstances and God.

We may be called on to pass through pain and sorrow and trial as part of God's discipline; but everything that comes from God comes from a source and spring in which we have confidence. We look through the circumstances to Him; and we know that nothing can separate us from His love.

Where God is but little known, and where there is not therefore confidence in His love, there will be repining at circumstances, murmurings and rebellion.

People who are ever looking at second causes are led into practical infidelity; and so it is in measure with the saint of God; if he be resting in circumstances, he loses the sense of having to do with God.

Knowing that everything comes from God—no matter where we are or what the circumstances—we should interpret all by His love.

Is it not true that we often stop practically at the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and consider only our feelings and judgment about them? Now this is a proof that our souls are not living in the fulness of communion with God. That that we should be occupied with is not the circumstances but what God intends by them.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTRY.

J.N.D.

THE exercise of gift, although subject to the directions of the Word, is in no wise dependent on the will of the body (the church), but on that of the Head. *He* has given, *He* has placed in the body such or such a joint; and they are responsible to the Head for the fulfilment of their functions. The wisdom of the Head is disputed, if the employment of the gift be gainsayed. This responsibility is to be exercised in love and for edification — not otherwise: but responsibility to Christ cannot be set aside; nor may we touch Christ's claims upon the service of His servant.

The circumstances of the church may occasion difficulties in this matter; but humility and faithfulness to the Lord will always know what to do. Love and obedience always find the path. The Spirit will ever be with him who obeys Christ in love. This responsibility of the individual to Christ is of the utmost importance — as important, in its place, as regards service flowing from gift, as it is when the question is one of moral conduct. Whatever affects this, affects the rights of Christ and the responsibility from which none can be exempt. We sometimes see both destroyed by the spirit of corrupted Christianity, and men exempted from their individual responsibility in matters of moral duty, just as in their responsibility to Christ in the exercise of their gift: God however never foregoes His claims upon them.

To hinder this service does not hinder heretics or false teachers. The flesh in most true Christians must be everywhere kept down; and it needs to be so in the use or abuse of gifts

real or supposed, as in other things. The flesh is never a gift of God. I cannot think, that to strengthen the sense of individual responsibility is to open a door to the flesh.

These gifts placed in the Church as a whole, in the body of Christ, become joints and bands; and it is in the Church, in the body, that they are placed. A gift is a gift in the body and for the whole body, as a member of the human body acts for the whole. My eye sees for my whole body; my foot steps for the whole body. To give them a charge over that which is not the body, is to dislocate them. They may, indeed, be exercised in a given locality, but as the expression of the grace and of the claims of Christ; and this grace and these claims of Christ, extend to all the body. Let us remember that they are never to be used by the will of man: where that will comes in, sin enters. This may happen, as may any other sin; but, as in the case of any other sin, it becomes the subject of discipline. We see this in the abuse of the gift of tongues at Corinth. On the other hand, the narrow spirit of man is often corrected by the inalienable and universal rights of the Spirit of God, supreme and *one* in all the body. No human arrangement can supersede His claims; but *He*, as we have seen, has the right to direct the exercise of each individual gift. *He* it is who exercises the government of God in the church.

It is good to remember, let us add, that the gifts are not necessarily exercised in an assembly. Placed in the body, it is in the body they are exercised, though it may be often, doubtless, in an assembly; but they are also exercised on other occasions.

Romans 12, enjoins particularly the modesty which leads the servant of God to confine himself to the assiduous and faithful employment of the gift committed to him. Let each one, says the apostle, think soberly of himself: (how truly gracious and good, how encouraging to the heart, and, at the same time, how wholesome is the word of God!) let him "think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith . . . Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." Hence we may also remark, that we find not only special gifts as joints in the body; but, generally, the humble and faithful use of the talent confided to the servant—a talent with which he trades, according to his responsibility towards the Master, from whom he had received it.

In 1 Peter 4. 10, there is the same responsibility operating in love towards others. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." I know that many fear such a principle; but that does not change the truth. If any one does not speak to me as announcing the truth of God, I do not know why he speaks to me at all. Moreover, this is what the apostle says; not *according to* the word of God, as some translate, but "*as the oracles,*" as announcing the word of God. This is what every man does who preaches the gospel: he has no doubt of the certainty of what he says. If one has not this assurance, he ought not to

teach. The pretension to infallibility is one thing: quite another is the certainty that we possess God's mind, and that on such and such an occasion, we give it out from Him and according to His will.

This responsibility would often prevent a man from speaking, when he is not taught of God: and if, as among the Bereans, even what an apostle says is judged by the word, there is no danger. It is not a question of new revelations, nor that the things spoken should be received without examination; but that the speaker should have the assurance that he is giving utterance to the mind of God, and not merely his own thoughts. If anyone undertakes to teach me and I ask, Are you sure that this comes from God, that it is the truth of God, and that God would have you teach it to me? and he answers me that he is not sure of it, what confidence can I have in him? Even supposing he replies he is sure, I have still to examine it by the word. The more we place him who teaches under such a responsibility, the more solemnity and sobriety will there be in his teaching; and where there is love and real gift, he will not shrink from this responsibility. If he does, let him reflect upon the parable of the servant who buried his talent: if he has not sufficient love to trade, because of the responsibility, he is exactly in the position of this wicked servant; he is not acting according to grace. We are thus reminded of this great principle: direct responsibility to Christ, by whom the talent has been entrusted to us—a responsibility from which no earthly relationship can disengage us. The claims of Christ and His judgment are ever there.

Responsibility, power, liberty, according to the Spirit, and the res-

traint of the flesh, these are the great principles of the Christian walk in this matter—a walk of which love will ever be the spring, the moving principle, and the aim. A service which is rendered to Christ, as wholly above man, without which responsibility to Christ would be made void, it acts in the unity of the whole body: otherwise the unity of the one Spirit is denied. Such is the order that the Spirit alone can produce, because He alone can put man out of sight, and subject his will by communicating a liberty, which is not the liberty of self, but the Spirit of God:—a liberty which ever recognises with joy, and as its blessedness, the authority of the Lord and entire submission to His will:—a liberty, which exists only to serve Him, and considers independence as the miserable pride of sin.

He who speaks of the rights of man, whether of an individual or of mankind, only speaks of sin. He who does not acknowledge the rights of the Holy Spirit, resists the sovereignty of God, who, by means of these gifts, exalts on this earth that same Jesus who once visited it in humiliation. The Church—the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost

upon earth:—this is the grand truth of ministry, and of the glory of Christ, and of His service upon this earth. The presence of God gives joy, liberty, responsibility, and solemnity. Man, in the presence of God, is set aside as to his vanity and pride, and strengthened in his service and fidelity.

Such is the source, power and order of ministry, as set before us in the word of God.

Essential to Christianity, because Christianity, in accordance with the active energy of the love of God, seeks that which was lost, testifying to the work and to the victory of Jesus, by which the lost may be saved, this ministry of Jesus, who alone is worthy to be thus glorified, receives all its power, and has its only source, in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is the ministry of the Holy Ghost, in the choice and employment of His servants. In all this God is sovereign. The exercise of the gifts bestowed by Him is regulated by the Holy Spirit, who acts sovereignly in the Church. The proofs and examples of this are found in the Word. As a source of ministry, or as authority for its exercise, man interferes only to sin.

Individual Responsibility.

The great guardian principle of all conduct in the church of God is personal responsibility to *the Lord*.

No guidance of another can ever come in between an individual's conscience and God.

In popery this individual responsibility is taken away.

Individual responsibility always secures the maintenance of God's authority.

J.N.D.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

Ephesians 4.

WE are to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; but what is it? This unity finds its centre in Christ; to talk of unity and work for it leaving Christ out would be a work of the flesh. We must begin with Christ. And it is Christ risen and glorified in Whom this unity centres, and that shuts out man after the flesh, and separates from the world. This unity is one in which the flesh and the world have no part.

The Spirit has come from Christ in glory and by His coming has formed one body — “there is one body”—and Christ is the Head of it. This unity includes every member of His body, it is Christ and His body.

The Spirit has come to glorify Christ, so that *He* will be the first in the thoughts of everyone of His members who is endeavouring to keep this unity. But He has also come to carry on Christ’s interest on the earth, the first and chiefest of which is His body, and every member in sympathetic contact with the Head will care for His interests; to concentrate upon a sect or party is to lose the greatness of the Spirit’s unity and to fail in the keeping of it.

Can we ignore that statement, He “died . . . to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad” in relation to this

unity? I think not; nor what is involved in it. Love led Him to give Himself, then love becomes the power of gathering; but sin and evil made it necessary that He should give Himself, then separation from sin and evil are imperative to it. “Ye turned to God:”—His love attracted them to Himself—“from idols,” separating them from evil. Unity that connived at evil could not be unity according to God, nor would a unity that was not in love be of Him either.

Only as formed in divine love could anyone shew lowliness and meekness with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, and in no other spirit could any one keep the unity of the Spirit.

The bond of peace is important and would carry us back to chapter two. “He is our peace who hath made both one.” He has made peace and “He came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that are nigh.” Whatever aforetime might have caused dissension and strife between Jew and Gentile has been answered in His cross, and both (believers) have been reconciled unto God in one body by the cross. If the peace is disturbed now it is because something that was judged at the cross has been resuscitated.

It is God Himself that is for us, and if so what matters it who is against us? Not only can nothing escape Him, but He occupies Himself with everything that concerns us. He neglects nothing and controls all things.

God is going to take us to heaven to be happy there with Christ forever; but He would make us happy here first. It is a difficult thing but He can do it. But that happiness is not found in our circumstances, but, we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.

A. Cutting.

THE first lesson we had to learn was that the Lord Jesus Christ is *necessary* to us. This we were slow to learn. Independence is that which is ingrained in every one of us and for years we thought we were all that. We could manage without God or Christ we thought until a need was begotten in us by the Holy Spirit. Then the same grace that awoke us to that need, drew us by the strong compelling of divine love to Him who alone could meet it.

The woman with the issue of blood and the man with the demon possessed son. — *She* tried many physicians before she came to Christ.—*He* said “I brought him to Thy disciples and *they could not.*” Reprovingly He said, “O faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? Bring him to Me.” — but He was the *last* resource sought.

It is one thing to learn He is necessary but another thing that He is *sufficient* and indeed still further that He is *all-sufficient*, for *time* as well as eternity.

This lesson is learnt in our having to do with Christ in our personal need.

Besides an individual history we have in association with others, a corporate need—if you will there is a *church need*. Education is necessary for us before we learn that He is necessary, indeed, sufficient—yea, all-sufficient for the church’s need.

The church is left in a hostile world in the face of a vigilant inveterate foe, and needs protection. It is also left in a desert world where there are no supplies. The needs of the church are incident on it being

His church. Divine supplies are required and the world cannot supply them. Hence before the Lord left the world He began to educate His disciples to this end that He would be all-sufficient for them in every sort of need.

There is nothing that *tests us* like need, but where we are tested *He is proved*.

Sufficiency. In John vi. we find the Lord teaching His disciples what to do and where to look in their need which would be acutely felt by them when He was gone. His first lesson was in connection with *His sufficiency* and the next of *His supremacy*. The time when this testing and instruction took place is better seen in Matthew xiv., though John vi. supplies us with some significant and affecting little touches.

Note His test question to Philip and the infinite resources that were with Him. “*From whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?—* This He said to *prove him for He knew what He Himself would do!!*” He seems to be saying in this test question “*Now which way will you look?*”

Philip is at once oppressed by *the greatness of the need*—Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them for each to take a little.

Andrew on the other hand when he speaks shows that what oppresses him is the *littleness of the supply*.

Philip looked on the multitude in their need but Andrew could not see beyond the bread basket and the boy —“Five barley loaves and two small fishes.” *What are they among so many?*

This was typical of the church's need when Christ would leave the world. Now He teaches them *what* He Himself would do. What will He do? Will He perform a wonderful miracle and turn the stones of the desert into bread to meet their need? What an occasion it would have been to shew this wonderful power for them. "He said bring them to Me." He immediately shewed them which way to look. He took the loaves and fishes and looked up to heaven! He connected their poverty of supply with heaven's bounty. Observe He used what they had! It seems as if He would lessen the wonder of His own miracle of turning stones into bread rather than not use what they had.

He teaches us that what He wants to use is the *bit we have*. It may not be much that I have but I will put it at His disposal and into His hands.

Don't think for a moment that this ministry is limited to people who preach.

An old costermonger used to drive a donkey and cart up and down these streets. I have bought many an orange from him just to hear him say "Do you know, my boy, I was just thinking before you came up of that there verse" — and then I would get some share of his barley loaf that I verily think had been put into the Master's hands, perhaps ere he started away in the morning. A dear old doctor that I knew used to say each morning "Lord bring us into touch with some anxious soul to-day and give us something to minister to them."

Do we do anything like that? Have we heart enough for Him to bring Him into the day's work?

"Does the word of Christ dwell in us richly" as in that old costermonger?

Supremacy. Now we come to the next lesson He has to teach them in preparation for their being left in a ruthless world and with a tireless enemy.

Here is a *dark night*, a *stormy sea* and an *absent Lord!* but it was He who sent the disciples away. They had previously suggested to His compassionate heart that He should *send the multitude* away, *hungering and faint with no supplies.*

Now in turn He sends the disciples away across the sea, and when they get into the midst of the sea a storm rises. Now they are in difficulties and are as resourceless as were the multitudes before.

It is a picture of the godly Jewish remnant left tossing on the sea of nations and Christ away on the hill top in intercession. When He went away He left a remnant of godly Jews. These left the camp of a Christless Judaism and went out to Christ, just as Peter left the boat and walked upon the water to go to Jesus. When He returns in His glory He will find a godly remnant of this same nation looking for Him, though before His coming to them they will have to know and taste the power of Satan—the prince of the power of the air, who will lash the nations into fury against them and endeavour to blot them out of existence. Christ comes to them walking across the stormy sea. Supreme over all the power of Satan, and no sooner He gains the ship than they are at the land and the storm over and the desired haven reached.

In another way we may say all the Lord's people are crossing the

stormy sea of life and are buffeting with adverse circumstances. The wind is high and the cross currents are strong, and for those who will live godly there is the assured persecution, but there is one cheering word here. "He saw them toiling in rowing for the winds were contrary . . ." What a comfort that has been to many a storm-tossed saint. A watchful sympathetic eye is watching them from His place of intercession, or as the hymn puts it, "Jesus knows all about our struggles!" The coming of the Lord will bring it all to an end and we shall find ourselves in the desired haven on the loveliest homeland shore, there to praise for ever His all-sufficiency for His people.

There is still another way of looking at this picture — or rather one feature of it is worthy of our attention, and that is Peter's action in leaving the boat. He goes ahead of the rest and reaches Christ and proves His all-sufficiency for such faith and also His complete supremacy over all that is adverse.

To the rest in the boat He was an apparition that brought fear, but to Peter there was something in Him *to draw*. "If it be *Thou* bid me come!"

There is no possibility of walking such a path if Christ is lost sight of. There can be no support from any other. All depends on whether it is the Lord that is calling. Faith only can walk that path.

The Boat is not a help to faith, but rather it helps to do without faith. It is one of *seen* things and we walk *by faith* and not by sight.

Peter here goes beyond the position of the remnant of Israel, and he represents that faith that will

leave the boat and all its known and seen means of support to walk with Jesus—a bold undertaking, but *faith* works or is active by *love*.

This is the true position of the church. Faith in Him and affection for Him leads us to leave every human support to have His company and to walk with Him.

Are we clinging to the boat, some human device to supercede or supplement what needs no supplementing, the *all-sufficiency* of Christ for *faith*? That is the sin of Christendom. Boat-building is the effort of the day, and we can understand it when Christ and His Spirit are lost sight of. There came a moment in Peter's walk when perhaps if the boat had been a bit nearer he would have been glad to clamber back again but he was evidently nearer Christ than that and his cry only served to prove afresh the sufficiency of Christ for his need and His hand of power made him test the Supremacy of Christ over the powers that lashed the sea into a storm.

Losing sight of Jesus: and seeing the waves and the storm he lost power—"Never lose sight of Jesus!"

If it is to Christ I am gathered—then Christ will never fail! If it is to something short of Christ, no matter how good, I shall break down. Good pasture, wonderful teaching, gifted men — all may fail, but Christ won't fail. The machinery of Christendom was all introduced bit by bit as men lost sight of the all-sufficiency of Christ and His Spirit for His church. If love to Christ and faith in Christ does not hold us we shall turn to other things that will supercede Him and shut Him out.

SANCTIFICATION: 1 Peter 1.

J.N.D.

THE apostle says in verse 8, "whom [Christ] having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now, there is no such thing as this without the new birth, which has an object which pre-occupies it. It is an entirely new life, which has interests, affections, quite a new world; and without which there is no Christian, because there is not Christ.

Observe particularly this word "*sanctification*": the first idea is separation to God.

Here is what God has done: He has *separated* us to Himself, as a man who hews stones out of a quarry. The stone is hewed out of a quarry and *set apart*, destined to be cut and fashioned, in order to be placed in the appointed building. And God detaches a soul from the quarry of this world to *separate it* for Himself.

I say not but that there is much to do, for a rough stone cut out of the quarry requires often considerable labour before it is placed in the building for which it is destined.

Even so God *separates*, prepares, and fashions this soul to introduce it into His spiritual building. There are many useless matters to take off, but God acts every day in His grace. Howsoever, this soul is *sanctified*, set apart for God, from the moment it is taken out of the quarry of this world.

He takes us out of the quarry of this world to place us under the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The stone is entirely His and adapted to His purpose. Although He has yet

to work upon it, the question is not of what He does each day, but generally of the *appropriation* to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who acts in the soul and *appropriates* it to Himself.

It may previously have been very honourable or very wicked in its conduct (that is of no moment here); only it will be more grateful, if it feels more evil; but as to its former condition, this matters little: it belongs now to God.

The aim of the life of a soul *sanctified*, or *set apart*, is to do the will of God.

As soon as a soul is *sanctified*, it is *sanctified* unto obedience.

As to the second thing, we are *sanctified* to enjoy the sprinkling of the blood. The blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; it is by the efficacy of His blood that we are *separated* from this world.

I would point out to you the meaning of the word "*sanctification*"; it is rarely used in the Scriptures in the sense in which we generally use it, that is to say, in the progressive sense. It is only three times spoken of in this sense.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness (*sanctification*) without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12. 14). "The very God of peace *sanctify* you wholly" (1 Thess. 5. 23). I quote these two passages to shew that I do not set aside this sense of the word; but it more particularly designates an act of *separation*—a *setting apart* for God.

If we have not laid hold of this meaning, there will be an entire mistake as to what *sanctification* is.

In the two above-quoted passages, the word has an every-day application. In the sense in which it is used by the apostle, in the beginning of this epistle, it is perfectly in the sense of taking a stone out of the quarry of this world to fashion it to God.

Sanctification is attributed to the Father in more than one place in the Bible; see Heb. 10. 10. Now it is by His will that we are *sanctified*.

The soul *separated* from the world is *sanctified* by that very fact. There is the old trunk which pushes forth its shoots; but God acts in pruning; and His acting, which takes place by the Holy Spirit, works the daily practical *sanctification*.

The heart is each day more and more set apart. Thus, when life is communicated and thereby the man is *sanctified*, there is a daily work of *sanctification* which applies to the affections, to the habits, to the walk.

The Spirit of Christ in me cannot be different from what was in Him; and it is evident that he who is *separated* from this world for God cannot find pleasure in the life of sin of this world, and prefer it to that of heaven.

There is nothing in common between the life of heaven and that of the world. It is not a question of prohibition as to using this or that, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, joys; and it is, on that account, people imagine Christians are sad, as if they were absorbed by only one thought. It is that our joys are altogether different from those of the world: the world knows not our joys.

No unrenewed person can comprehend what renders the Christian happy.

Is it for naught the gold is put into the furnace, or because it is not gold? No; it is to purify it. God, by trials, takes out of our hearts that which is impure, in order that, when the glory arrives, we may enjoy it.

The magnet always turns towards the pole; the needle always trembles a little when the storm and tempest roar, but its direction changes not—the needle of the Christian heart points always towards Christ.

The Word of God becomes the instrument of blessing and of practical *sanctification*.

This is practical *sanctification*: habits, affections and a walk formed after the life and calling one has received from God.

He places us in trial: He makes us pass through the furnace, because He will wholly purify us.

Let us examine the difference between our justification and our *sanctification*.

Justification is something, not in ourselves, but a position in which God has placed us before Himself.

God cannot give precepts of *sanctification* to such as have no justification.

The progress of practical *sanctification* must not be confounded with justification, because practical *sanctification* is wrought in a saved soul that has eternal life.

Have you peace with God, the pardon of your sins? If not, the question is of the justification of a sinner.

He (God) does not speak to sinners of *sanctification*.

“MY GUEST-CHAMBER.”

Inglis Fleming.

“There was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2. 7).

“Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?” (Luke 22. 11).

It is a matter of interest that the words as translated “room” and “guest-chamber” in the above quoted passages are the translation of the same word in the original Greek.

The Saviour, the Son of God, came into His own world and among His own earthly people Israel, but was rejected at the very outset. “No room” was found for Him in the crowded caravanserai. A stable floor and a manger cradle were all that could be or would be offered for His reception at His birth. This cold callous treatment was indicative of what He might look for throughout His earthly sojourn.

A borrowed manger at His birth. A borrowed boat for a pulpit. A borrowed cushion for a pillow. A borrowed penny for an illustration. A borrowed grave at His death. Such conditions marked His pathway among men, while every footfall was for the glory of His Father. But all this was befitting. It was morally impossible for the Lord of glory to truckle to human greatness. “The foundations of the earth” were “out of course.” And thus He was found, the

“Ever homeless stranger”

in the world His hands had made.

But divine grace opened the hearts of some, and out of His fulness blessing flowed in abundance to them.

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God even to them that believed on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1. 11—13). These favoured ones welcomed Him to their hearts and to their homes. They were to Him as Elims amid the Marahs of the world at large.

We may instance how “A certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.” And that little home at Bethany became a pleasant place of resort to

“The Scorned, the Despised, the Rejected”

“He knew all men.” And so it was that as the end drew near, when, to fulfil a prophecy, He needed the foal of the ass He could send His disciples to find one at “a place where two ways met.” “The Lord hath need of him!” was enough for its owner, and it was sent promptly for the Master’s use.

Again in His omniscience, He could direct His servants to the man bearing the “pitcher of water.” The exact time and point of meeting were known to Him. And He was well acquainted with the place available for Him where He might eat the passover with His disciples. “Where is My guest-chamber?” (for so we should read it) was to be the question of His messengers to the good man of the house. How plainly it is shewn that, to Him,

“All hearts are open and all desires known.”

And this amid the contumely and

shame which were being heaped upon Him as He trod the solitary way of supreme sorrow to Calvary.

“My guest chamber!”

Shall we ask ourselves if our hearts are such for Him in the world where He is the unwelcomed, the unwanted One? For such He is still even among many who profess to be His followers.

Well it is if we can say,

“Make my heart Thy palace,
And Thy royal throne.”

Let us consider that Jerusalem guest chamber for a little. Important lessons may be learned therefrom.

It was “a large room.”

It was an “upper room.”

It was furnished.

It was “prepared.”

“A large room.”

Our hearts should be large for our Lord and for His own. “All saints” must be embraced in our thoughts of our fellow believers. “All the world” is to be remembered as to the gospel message.

An “upper” room. Above the noise of man’s world of business and of pleasure. Our Christian calling is happy but it is holy, and it is heavenly. We who believe are “not of the world even as” our rejected Lord and Master is “not of the world.”

Furnished. It was equipped with all necessary couches and table. A place of rest and communion.

“*Prepared.*” All was clean and in order and “made ready,” for HIS reception and for that of His own, *immediately* when required. It was “Ready for service.” (Are we not reminded here of those who could say to another rejected one “Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint” (2 Sam. 15. 16)? Or again, of “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2. 21)?

“My guest-chamber.” It was His. The good man of the house was but a steward in charge of that upper room.

And we are *His*. His precious blood which has *cleansed us claims* us for His service. “Ye are not your own . . . for ye are bought with a price.” (And this is true of *all* believers). The words are clear and clamant and commanding.

Do we recognise this rightly? Do we acknowledge that the ownership is His of our life, our time, our possessions?

Can we honestly sing,

“Oh! Jesus Lord! and Master!
I give myself to Thee,
For Thou in Thine atonement
Did’st give Thyself for me.
I own no other Master,
My heart shall be Thy throne;
My life I give henceforth to live,
Oh! Lord for Thee alone?”

“Them that honour Me I will honour,” stands as His message to us to-day while we await His return.

“Sanctify them by Thy truth” (John 17. 17). “For their sakes I sanctify Myself” (John 17. 19). What does the Lord Jesus here for us? He sets Himself *apart*. He *sanctifies* Himself. It is not that He may be more holy, but He makes Himself the model man.

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ARK.

C. H. Burchell.

A Bible Study.

THE Ark of God was the most sacred vessel of the Sanctuary and occupied the most distinguished place in the Tabernacle. It was mentioned first in the inspired list (Exodus 25. 10) to show its peculiarly sacred character, and, as indicated in verse 22, it was the place where Moses received Divine communications and where Jehovah dwelt among His people (Psalm 80. 1). It journeyed with the children of Israel all through the wilderness along with the Tabernacle, which eventually was erected in the land at Shiloh (Joshua 18. 1), then Nob (1 Samuel 22. 11—19), and Gibeon (1 Chron. 21. 29). It was the duty of the priests to cover the Ark with the beautiful vail before it was carried by the Kohathites in the various movements of the camp (Numbers 4. 5 and 15), but in 1 Samuel 4. 3, the “elders of Israel” laid impious hands upon this holy vessel and removed it for their own purposes. From that time forward the Ark *never again* occupied its place in the Tabernacle. “Icha-bod”—“The glory is departed from Israel” (1 Samuel 4. 21) was alas true, and Psalm 78. 60 and 61 records God’s solemn judgment in connection with such unholy work. Captured by the Philistines the Ark remained in their possession seven months (1 Samuel 6. 1) and was then returned, finding a resting-place at Kirjath-Jearim — “city of woods” near Jerusalem—in the first place for 20 years (1 Samuel 7. 2), but there was then no movement for its restoration, and it remained there for a further period of about 80 years—see 11 Samuel 6. 2 — the margin of the Bible shows that “Baale” was “Kirjath-Jearim.” This period — 100

years — included the judgeship of Samuel and the reign of Saul, which passed without recovering it, but no use was made of it and 1 Chron. 13. 3 states distinctly that it was not “enquired of” in the days of Saul.

But when David began to reign over *all* Israel—see 1 Chron. 12. 38. —the utterances of Psalm 132 indicate the yearning of his heart to recover possession of the Ark. Verse 6 of this Psalm seems to imply that it had been lost—we “heard” of it—we “found it in the fields of the wood” —which latter is the meaning of “Kirjath-Jearim” — already mentioned as the place where the Ark rested (1 Samuel 7. 2).

And having “found” the Ark, David with divine intuition does not return it to the forsaken Tabernacle at Shiloh, but eventually brings it to God’s new centre (11 Samuel 6. 17, 11 Chron. 1. 4). Jehovah’s dwelling place was now ZION (Psalm 76. 2, Psalm 132. 13), and the Ark being no longer covered as in Numbers 4. 5, a new order of service is instituted by David, who becomes the King-priest in 1 Chron. 15. 27 and 16. 2. In verse 4 of 1 Chron. 16. the Levites are appointed to a praise ministry before the Ark—there had never been anything of this kind in connection with the Tabernacle ritual—*that* was for *sacrifice*—*this* for *thanksgiving*.

And from the tent that David had pitched for it, the Ark of God is brought to the Temple in 11 Chron. 5. 5., and the staves are taken out (verse 9), its travelling days were done, and the glory (which had departed in the days of Eli) now re-

turns and "filled the House of God" (verse 14).

Surely here we have a voice for our own time. Christ is the antitype of the Ark, and He has been fully revealed in the gospel. It is the day of the "tent" and not the "temple," but faith sees the "glory of God" in the face of Jesus Christ (11 Cor. 4. 6) and the "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13. 15) is the happy privilege of our priestly position.

But the routine of sacrifices continued up to Solomon's day at the Tabernacle (11 Chron. 1) although there was no Ark or mercy-seat, and the "Holiest" was in darkness! The High Priest might officiate in connection with the great day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) but he could not sprinkle the blood upon and before

the mercy-seat, for it was not there, and so propitiation—God's part of that solemn day's ceremonial—was absent from the time of Eli to that of Solomon.

And has not this a message for us? All around professing Christendom pursues its so-called religious worship, but to those who know the Christ of God this has no attraction, for they recognise that the great essential—the Ark—is absent, and that God's new centre now is not earth, but heaven, where the "glory of God" rests upon Christ, the true antitype of the Ark, and having access to the "Holiest" in that heavenly sanctuary, the "blood of Jesus" is revealed (Heb. 10. 19) on the ground of which we are invited to draw near (verse 22).

The Father's Love. John 17.

THERE is nothing in heaven above greater than the Father's love to His Son. We feel this as we hear the words, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" and "the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me." More to Him than crowns and kingdoms and all the glory is His Father's love. We are surely right in saying that it was this love that sustained Him when as the Man of Sorrows He trod His crossward way uncheered by earthly smiles. But here is a most marvelous thing. He shares that love with us! It is incomprehensible, we could not have believed it if He had not said it, but He has said, "*That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.*" Not *on* them only, but *in* them, known and enjoyed by

them, their delight as it is His own (John 17). He has declared the Father's name with this end in view. Our part is to listen, to absorb the declaration, to make it our own by the Spirit that dwells in us. Not only to listen with wonder but to appropriate by faith; to keep His word, to cherish it, and have it abiding in us. "My Father and your Father" thus He has spoken, and as we are prepared to hear His word, the Father becomes real to our affections. Our vessels are, of course, very small. He takes in His Father's love in full measure, and responds in equal fulness; we are limited, our measure is small, but the love is the same. His words assure us of this, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

THE WANING INTEREST IN THE GOSPEL.

IS it a sign of coming revival in gospel interest that some are becoming truly concerned as to the lack of it? We earnestly hope that it is. One of our correspondents says what we all know, "that the numbers—especially men—who attend any place of worship or go to halls where the gospel is preached, are becoming fewer and fewer." And he asks "Can it be pleasing to Him, who, in His grace would have all men to be saved, that we continue during the months suitable for open air work, speaking to the few who have believed the glad tidings and who occupy the seats at the regular indoor Sunday evening service, *and neglect the thousands in the streets?*"—A.H.L.

We are very sure that it is not pleasing to Him that we should neglect these needy crowds, but we would suggest that Sunday evening is not the only evening in the week, and we see no reason why open air gospel preaching should be confined to that evening. He suggests that "during the summer and early autumn those places into which people don't come should be closed and the preaching be given outside in one or more spots." We think the suggestion should be seriously considered, we have known it work well, when instead of one meeting indoors three short meetings in crowded streets, not with traffic but with inhabitants, gave the preachers hundreds of needy hearers for their message, instead of the vacant seats they would have had if they had stayed indoors; and it seems to us that this would be in obedience to the Lord's own word, "Go ye" and "go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city." Are we ever told to sit in-

doors and wait for the people to come in to hear? The huntsman must go after the game, the fisherman must go in search of the fish, and the gospel preacher must go where sinners are if he would reach them. "GO" is the word.

Our correspondent quotes C. H. Spurgeon's words, "Really it must be considered a necessary condition of a gospel meeting that there should be persons to listen," and J. N. Darby's, "If we do not seek souls, God will set His testimony elsewhere," and another wise man and successful evangelist used to say "If you don't go out, you'll die out." All are true; on the other hand we have seen that God is most definitely with those who have courage enough and zeal enough to *go forth* with the gospel in dependence upon Him. We had a letter in our hands the other day in which the writer said, "Without exaggeration a thousand people gathered round to hear the word" and he was able to report the conversion of men.

Of course, not everybody who preaches the word indoors is fitted for open air work, we could relate many amusing incidents to prove this, but the subject is too serious for stories of grotesque failures. Yet those who have no gift for this special work may stand by the preacher, and be the greatest possible help to him by their earnest prayer and fellowship.

There must be many young men whose mouths have not yet been publicly opened to witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus who are well fitted for this service to God and men. The qualifications are a

heart moved and warmed by the grace of the gospel, and constrained by the love of Christ, and a deep sense of the value and need and peril of souls; a humble mind, that cries, "Who is sufficient for these things," and that goes forth in dependence upon God in whom all sufficiency is. The passers-by will easily discern the self-sufficient, self-important man and despise him, they will be just as ready to recognise the man who with earnestness of soul pleads with them

in the Name of the Lord and does not obtrude himself; they may ridicule, but reality will impress them. May God give to us great reality when we stand up to speak of His holy and blessed Son.

Our correspondent well and truly and finally remarks, "that we might by our testimony in the open air in the summer time secure some interested hearers for our indoor meetings in the winter time."

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

Fellowship and Membership.

"Christians that I enjoy fellowship with take the ground that membership in the church is conditional upon obedience to Acts 2. 42.

"Also that the church is God's centre (in this particular instance the local assembly the expression of it). That any change in Christian fellowship could be viewed as departure from God's centre.

"Is this scriptural? I would be glad of help."—G.M.

THE only membership of which we read in the Word is that of the body of Christ; being members of His body we are members one of another, and there is nothing conditional about that. Those that received the word in Acts 2. 41, 42, did not do the things that are there commended in order to become members of Christ's body but because they were that already by faith and the sealing of the Spirit of God. To make membership of the body of Christ or one's place in the church conditional is serious error; but we should expect to see those who are members of the body of Christ continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers, and if a man was indifferent to these things we should have some doubts as to whether he was a member of the body of Christ at all.

The church is not God's centre, Christ is God's centre. Popery claims that the church is God's centre, and every evil thing thrives within it. But Christ is the holy and the true, and God gathers to Christ, and the effect of being gathered to Christ is to take character from Him. There are many who claim to be gathered to God's centre, it is not your business to dispute the claim or to go here and there to test it, but to test yourself. If where you are the Lord's word is kept and obeyed, and His name honoured and adored, if His rights are maintained and there is subjection to His authority and holy will you may be thankful. "Faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints" is the two-fold mark of "saints and faithful brethren in Christ" (Col. 1). If these marks are absent from any company those who form it are not faithful brethren.

THE LORD'S YOKE.

F. B. Hole.

Matthew 11. 16—19, 25—30.

I CAN divide what I have to say under four headings. First of all, a few words about the exceeding grace and beauty of *the One who speaks* these matchless words; then the *invitation* that He issues; the *instructions* He gives, and lastly the *assurance* that He offers.

The Speaker we all know. "At that time Jesus answered and said . . ." He was named Jesus before He came on the scene because, as the angel said, "He shall save His people from their sins." His miraculous birth took place that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled, "They shall call His name Emmanuel," which being interpreted is, God with us." It is indeed a marvellous thing that God should come amongst us thus; that there should appear a Man—a proper, a genuine, a perfect Man—and yet that Man should be Emmanuel.

When we come to this eleventh chapter we find Him accepting the fact of His rejection. There are no plaudits from the people; the multitude is not moved in His favour; there is a singular lack of appreciation both of Himself and of everything He brought. The same spirit had been manifested in regard to His forerunner, John the Baptist. He was the one who "mourned" unto them, for he had about him that severity of aspect that had marked Elijah. He was austere and separate and in his ministry continually put his finger upon the weakest spots in the lives of his hearers. They paid no real attention to him and did not "lament." Then came the blessed Lord Jesus Christ with tidings of grace. He mixed with men, He went

to their feasts, He wrought miraculously in grace on their behalf. John did no miracle, you remember, though he said the most searching things, for his ministry was pungent to the last degree. Jesus in word and in deed was overflowing with grace.

The woman had said, "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." She was right, for Jesus was like a vessel full to the brim with water and the least touch will cause it to overflow. She was one of the few exceptions; the great mass saw nothing desirable in Him, and would not "dance" to His "piping." Yet He was "God with us."

Just at that time, when we might have expected Him to assert Himself and force men to pay Him attention, Jesus looked up to the Father as the Lord of heaven and earth and accepted this rejection as from His hands. The Pharisees and scribes were the wise and prudent folk who saw nothing in Him save a new teacher of religion who was both unauthorized and objectionable. The "babes" were the people of a simple and child-like spirit, uninstructed according to human standards, yet with opened eyes, seeing something of what the Father was making known. All this Jesus accepted in the fullest way. Manhood in perfection is seen in Him—lowliness of mind, and absolute subjection to the Father's will.

This is the more wonderful as at the same moment He spoke of all things being delivered into His hands of the Father. Most wonderful words! Here stood the One who had a whole universe of glory at His finger-tips. Ten thousand times ten

thousand worlds were His, and ten thousand thousand more. All things came from His hands in creation at the outset. Now He is on earth that He may accomplish redemption, and all things are delivered to Him of the Father. He it is Who becomes the Revealer of the Father.

The word, "knoweth," which the Lord used twice in verse 27 is a very strong one, meaning to know thoroughly. But though the Father and the Son cannot be thoroughly known by creature minds, the Son is the Revealer of the Father. He came forth for that very purpose, and has accomplished it to perfection.

Two revelations are mentioned, in verses 25 and 27, and I think we can differentiate between them. There is the revelation made by the Father to the babes, and also the revelation of the Father made by the Son on earth. This latter is an objective revelation, inasmuch as the Son is before us as the Object in whom the Father is made known. The former is a subjective revelation, the things of God being made effective in those who are the subjects of the Father's work. The taking of a photograph may illustrate the difference. The sitter is the object and his face is accurately revealed if the lens is a good one. But so long as the lens only reveals the sitter's face on the screen of ground glass there is no subjective revelation: no picture is captured, nothing is retained. Put in a sensitized plate, make the suitable exposure, and under proper chemical treatment the subjective revelation is made.

That is only an imperfect illustration, but it may help us to see that only in and through the Son can the Father be known; and also that only

by the Father's work do the babes receive the revelation into their hearts. The hearts of the scribes and Pharisees were hard and unresponsive; the babes possessed the humble, simple, child-like spirit that made them ready to receive. All this was the Father's will and the Father's work, and in it Jesus delighted, having not one thought apart from the Father's will. He rendered thanks to the Father in it all.

Now this is the One who issues *the invitation*, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We will consider these choice words in the light of the situation that existed at the moment they were uttered, and in so doing we shall not for one instant rob them of their gospel application to-day. Who were these labouring and heavy laden people whom the Lord addressed? He spoke in the midst of a people who for many generations had been under the law of Moses. They knew it well, for as James said in the council, "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." Moreover the scribes and Pharisees bound the law as a heavy burden upon men's shoulders, while they themselves did not touch it with one of their fingers.

The godless and indifferent in Israel paid but lip service to the law; the God-fearing ones made a conscientious attempt to keep it. The "babes" of whom the Lord spoke were doubtless just these simple souls who listened to the holy law of God, applied it to themselves, and consequently became burdened. They laboured to keep the law, and were constantly convicted of failure. It was to just these that the Lord

Jesus opened wide the arms of His invitation, bidding them come to Him that He might give them rest. There was no rest in the law nor in themselves. There was rest in Himself and in the work He was about to accomplish. It is just the same for us to-day.

Then notice *the instruction* He gave in saying, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." Now in that council in Jerusalem Peter spoke of the law as "a yoke . . . which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." This was a very graphic figure. Many years ago I remember seeing the huge South African wagons drawn by twelve or even sixteen oxen yoked in pairs. They were magnificent beasts with mighty horns, but they seemed to groan as they lumbered forward with heads pressed down by the yoke. They looked desperately uncomfortable, but not more so than many a sinner borne down in conscience under the holy law of God.

In these circumstances how welcome is the Lord's gracious invitation that we should come to Him! But we must not dissociate it from His instruction that we take His yoke upon us; that is, that we wholly and unreservedly bow to His supreme authority. A moment must come in the history of each of us when we realize and acknowledge that He is our Lord and when we whole-heartedly accept His control. Has that moment come with each one of us here?

Taking His yoke upon us we may learn of Him. Sometimes we hear Christians both old and young bemoaning themselves as to the slowness with which they learn. Why have I learned so little of Christ? These

words of our Lord may discover the reason to us. He said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me," and we cannot reverse the order of the two parts of the sentence. He did not say—learn of Me, and ultimately you may take My yoke upon you. The taking of His yoke is the preliminary to the learning of Him. Even in earthly matters things work in that way. Except a lad submits to the rule of his master he is not likely to learn anything from him. Our hearts must be bowed in the presence of Jesus as our Lord, for the taking of His yoke is the preliminary to learning of Him. Our Lord has no use for triflers.

Have we all of us known a moment when, alone and in His presence, our souls have bowed before Him saying, "Lord Jesus, Thou hast an absolute right to me? I am a creature of Thy hand, and not only that, I have been redeemed as the fruit of the travail of Thy soul. Let me be loyally Thine, now and for ever." I am not coming to my last point for a moment yet, for I am going to say that even had His yoke been as heavy as the yoke of the law, it would have still been only right that we should wear it on our necks. Only as we do wear it do we learn of Him, the meek One and lowly in heart.

The exact opposite of the meek man is the self-assertive man, and the opposite of the one who is lowly in heart is the one who is high-minded. We were all of us high-minded and self-assertive according to nature, and these features were specially prominent in Saul of Tarsus, for looking back he writes of himself as "a blasphemer and persecutor, and an insolent, overbearing man" (1 Tim. 1. 13. N. Trans.). In the same passage he called himself

“the chief of sinners.” He was a born leader, and he did not scruple to use his powers to assert himself. Jesus was Emmanuel—God with us—yet He did such a thing never, NEVER. God dwelt among us in Manhood, and so we see Manhood in its own proper perfection, for He was meek and lowly in heart.

The prophet had said that when the King came He should be meek and having salvation. It is not the self-assertive man who brings salvation, but the meek One; and in keeping with this we are told in Heb. 5 that the Son, who learned obedience by the things He suffered, having been perfected, became the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. King George V., when a young man, did a full naval course from a midshipman upwards, and thus learned naval obedience. The Son had ever commanded obedience from His creatures; now having become Man, He learns obedience, though ever the perfect One. We obey the One who was obedient unto the death of the cross, and find salvation in Him. It is the yoke of the obedient One, meek and lowly in heart, that we take upon us.

The first man, Adam, travelled on the up line of self-assertion. A crash is the inevitable outcome, for there are accidents on that line! We all have travelled on it too. There is only One who has travelled on the down line from the outset, and in perfection. He is now gone up into the heights far above all others. His yoke it is that we are to take upon us.

Once more I must appeal to you young Christians. Have you ever had a moment in your history when quietly and on bended knee you have

spoken to your Lord and have told Him that you are absolutely His through grace from that moment to the days of eternity? Some of us need a moment like that. If I had not had such a moment in my young days I could not speak to you thus—though I have to confess how very feebly I have followed it up through life. If you have never yet had such a moment, see that you have it to-day. It will make a big difference in your life, and set you free from other yokes.

The yoke of the world still rests upon too many of us. The yoke of worldly customs still lies heavy upon this one; the yoke of fashion upon that one. But the ways of the world are not to have any authority with me. The word of my Lord is the only authority that is to command my heart. If He says it, then I am to gladly obey. I do not regulate my thinkings, religious or otherwise, by what even the scientists say. If all the scientists of earth, multiplied ten thousand times, contradict my Lord, I believe my Lord and not the scientists.

Why is it that we so often hang back and do not heartily take His yoke upon us? Often, I suppose, because we have a feeling that He will tell us to do something that we do not wish to do. He may indeed direct you to many things that run counter to the desires of the flesh and the ways of the world, but never counter to that new nature which is yours as newly created in Christ Jesus. Upon that fact is based *the assurance* that He offers in the last verse of the chapter—“My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” He will never lead you into any way that runs counter to the desires of that new nature which is yours; and

more and more, as you walk in His ways, you will find how happy and delightful they are. You will come to love them, and so find His yoke and His burden easy and light.

Taking His yoke upon us we are yielded up to Him, and then can proceed to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, as Romans 6. 13 puts it. Instead of doing our own wills, which would only be sin, we set out to do His will, and in that there is rest. The One whose yoke is upon us was in the perfect rest of subjection to the Father's will. We may know that rest; then our kickings against circumstances, our fretful irritations will be over, the questionings, the strivings, the anxious labourings will cease. Let us make that whole-hearted committal of ourselves to Him, which will ensure it.

Did you ever read that story of Carey, the missionary of a century ago? After long absence he came back to this country from India, a rather famous man. Someone, who

was really an opponent, wishing to humiliate him, seized a very public occasion to say to him in loud tones something like this, "Let me see Mr. Carey, before you went to India you were a shoe-maker, were you not?" Carey at once replied with a completely unruffled spirit, "Oh! no. I could not say I was a shoe-maker. I was only a cobbler!" Under the yoke of Christ, he had learned something of the lowly mind.

That incident furnishes us with an example of a man who found a sufficiency in Christ and was content with lowly things. What trouble comes into our lives when we aspire to high things, especially when we do it in connection with Christian things. It is when we have the yoke of the meek and lowly One upon us, and we are learning of Him, that we have rest.

If the result of our meeting is that our hearts come more definitely and firmly under His gracious yoke, we shall indeed be greatly blessed.

The Hope of the Christian.

J.N.D.

"We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." His grace is the source of this. His own heart finds its delight in giving us this hope.

We shall share His glory; but the glory we shall share is His. We shall be there with the Lord, ever with Him: no interruption, no decay of joy, but rather increasing delight, as there always is when the object is worthy of the heart, and here it is infinite.

But how bright and blessed is the hope that is before us—to see Him, be like Him, with Him in His own relationship with the Father — to converse with Him—enjoy unmingled, unclouded blessedness in His presence—with Him and as Him—and yet to receive it all from Him and to owe it all to Him. May hope be as living in the saints as the object is worthy of all their hearts. May they abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF FAITH.

J. J. Anning.

Galatians 2. 19—20; Hebrews 12. 1—3; Numbers 13. 1, 2, 6, and 8, also 16—33; Numbers 14. 1—10, 35—38; Joshua 14. 6—14, Joshua 20, 1—6.

I HOPE that I have not wearied you with too much reading, but these Scriptures read give a basis for what I want to say. The Address given yesterday afternoon greatly affected me. One of the Scriptures then referred to was the 13th verse of the 6th of Romans “those that are alive from the dead.”

It was on this account that I read the verses from Galatians where the Apostle states that he lived, in spite of the fact that he had been crucified with Christ. He says “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.” It is my intention to make an appeal to us all to put ourselves in the same place as the Apostle was.

The 12th chapter of the Hebrews was read from to give point to the lesson I wish to draw from the life of Caleb as an example of the perseverance of faith. I do not know anything of his history prior to the time when he was chosen as a representative of the tribe of Judah to go with eleven others to spy out the land of Canaan and report on it. It is evident however that, on arrival in the promised land, he got an objective that was to be his goal until God’s promise was fulfilled and his heart’s desire reached. Very remarkable was the place named Hebron that he rightly coveted for himself. It is associated with very many blessed memories. Look it up for yourselves and you will find it most instructive as you see what Hebron stands for.

It was at Hebron that Abraham made his dwelling place and set up an altar, after separating from Lot. Next you find that there he received the promise from God. Later it proved to be the place of death—“the end of man” as we say. There he buried his wife. You find later that it became the sepulchre of the patriarchs and then, out of death as it were, life and glory came. It became a City of Refuge and afterwards the place where the Kingdom was set up and the glory came to Israel. To us surely it speaks of Calvary and the victory over death and the grave.

I think Caleb had a very keen sense of what was worth having when he desired Hebron for his inheritance. As soon as his feet were placed on the land, his heart was set on an object and he reckoned that the long long journey in front of him was well worth taking for the prize at its end.

I know that there are some young people here to-night that can honestly use the Apostle’s words and say they are alive from the dead, and that the life they now live is lived by the power of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them. You are looking forward to a full possession of the inheritance in Christ Jesus where He is. You have indeed a wonderful inheritance, a glorious goal is in front of you—to be where JESUS is in the glory of GOD. Meanwhile we, like Caleb, have a journey to take; how long it will be we do not know, and I want to encourage you and myself as we look at this beautiful story of Caleb.

Let us take notice of a few things relative to him:—His name seems to be always associated with that of Joshua, the two appear to have been inseparables. Well, Joshua was a type of the Lord Jesus, his changed name from that of Oshea tells us that, since “Joshua” means a Saviour.

I would like to ask if our names are inseparably linked with the name of JESUS, and do the men and women we come in contact with think of JESUS when they think of us? It really should be so. How easy it is to take the blessings and be satisfied with the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, but we are here to represent our absent Lord whilst on the way to glory, and we shall not do that truly unless we keep His company. This association between Caleb and Joshua right through the wilderness and into Canaan itself is no doubt recorded for our help. They walked in company with one another, had the same faith, confidence and courage; the same starting point, path, purpose of heart and goal.

Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are we walking in communion with our Lord and looking steadfastly on Him?

Each one of us knows of the daily difficulties of the journey. Just now we are having a good time, the people we are with are our brethren and we are enjoying fellowship together. Next week most of us will be back in our everyday life and the change from here will be a great one, then our purpose of heart will be tested.

One thing about Caleb is his courage, he did not make light of his difficulties and it must have been a

terrible time for him when his brethren took up stones to stone him and Joshua. He endured persecution and all the difficulties of a 40 years wilderness journey, but he tells us that his strength did not diminish and that he was as good a man physically at the end as at the beginning. Another characteristic to be noted is his dependence upon God. The promised land having been reached, the inhabitants with their giants had to be got rid of. Caleb does not make a vain boast of his strength or a blustering parade of it, but says “if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.” You can see that his confidence was in God. There is still a further point—it is said of him that he wholly followed the Lord his God.

Little remains for me to say beyond attempting to bring these characteristics home to us all. Please note once again the purpose of heart of this man, his lack of confidence in himself, his courage sustained by hope, and his wholly following of God. No wonder he reached his goal and entered into his possession. You also have a goal to reach, with an intervening journey to travel. Are you wholly following the Lord? If the yoke has not been taken and the surrender has been incomplete it is certain that you will know “by-path meadow” and its consequences, plus much shame that the Lord would have you saved from.

There are so many difficulties in the way, snares, temptations and discouragements that we can be easily turned aside from following “in His steps.” Sad to say many of the discouragements come through those who ought to be representing their Lord and helping us, and this

is not a bad opportunity for reminding us all of the injunction to “consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.” This is just what our blessed Master did, and so I go back to the 12th chapter of Hebrews where we are enjoined to look steadfastly on JESUS, the author and finisher of faith. We may often have a rough time of it and frequently be discouraged, we may even be wounded in the house of our friends, but after all it is a mere nothing in comparison with what our Lord experienced and endured. The Scripture says He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and why did He do this and go through all that He did? Was it not that He too, had an object, a goal that nothing could stand in the way of His reaching, not even the cross? “Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the

cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD.”

May we not take courage as we see how He has been through the path before us and has finished the journey?

It is really an honour to suffer for Him, so let us take courage and like Caleb be strong because the Lord never fails. He is with us all the time just as Joshua was with Caleb the whole of the way. Be the journey long or short, rough or smooth, you can count on His support. Likely enough you cannot rely on friends or brethren, but He never fails. Therefore let us take courage and carry on. The goal is to be with Him and enjoy an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

Obedience.

J.N.D.

There is nothing so humble, nothing so steady as *obedience*.

In all cases, and under all circumstances, gifts or no gifts, *obedience* is the path of the Christian—the path of duty and blessing.

Obedience is the only rightful state of the creature, or God would cease to be supreme—would cease to be God.

The only rightful position of the creature is *obedience*; upon this hangs all the order of creation—on this hang sin and righteousness (1 John 3. 4). The definition of sin is lawlessness, doing one's own will. “He that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever” (1 John 2. 17).

This was the critical point of the first Adam's standing and blessing:—“Thou shalt not eat” (Gen. 2. 17). He did eat and was ruined.

Precisely the opposite was found in the blessed and perfect Saviour—“I delight to do thy will, O my God” (Psalm 40. 8). “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me” (John 4. 34).

PROVED AND APPROVED.

R. McCallum.

Scriptures read: Daniel 10. 19; 1. 8—17; 2. 17—23; 3. 14—18; 4. 19—27; 6. 10.

MY text is found in the 19th verse of Daniel, chapter 10, words spoken, I take it, by Gabriel to Daniel when he said "O man greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee."

Before entering into the details of the verses read in your hearing and pursuing the line of thought brought before us by Dr. Anning, I want to remind you of the historical background of this remarkable book.

The year 626 B.C. marked by the death of Ashur-Banipal, the last of the great Assyrian kings, was one of crisis in the history of the world. It was now evident that the sceptre had passed into the hands of a weakling unable to hold together the various parts of the far-flung and loosely-jointed Empire, and ominous signs of disintegration began to manifest themselves throughout the orient from the Mediterranean seaboard to India. Scripture avers that "wheresoever the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together." and the evidences of impending dissolution stirred Egypt, the sinister power of the South, and Babylon, for long a vassal of Assyria, to renewed watchfulness and unrest. In 608 B.C. Pharaoh Necho took full advantage of Assyria's impotence, and marching along the maritime plain of the land of Judah, defeated the local Assyrian forces at Carchemish. The fortunes of war were soon reversed for Egypt, however, when the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar, not only destroyed Nineveh, but advanced, pursuing the fleeing Egyptians as far as the borders of

their own land. Probably tidings of the death of his father Nabo-polasar, caused Nebuchadnezzar to desist from actually invading Egypt and to retire to Babylon. On his return he made a hasty incursion into the kingdom of Judah, and standing before the gates of Jerusalem demanded the submission of Jehoiakim; arranged for the payment of tribute; denuded the temple of its holy vessels; and took with him certain of the children of Israel of the seed royal and of the princes, in whom was no blemish, to be made eunuchs and trained at the Babylonian court in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. Eight years later, it may be remarked, the Babylonian armies set out to reconquer Judæa which had revolted under Jehoiakim. The King's unexpected death, left the queen mother and her son to reap the consequences of his perfidy, and on this occasion a manacled band of at least ten thousand, the most skilled and able of the land was taken captive. Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, was appointed ruler over those left behind and when in 587 B.C. he attempted to throw off the yoke of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar returned for the third time and utterly destroyed the Holy City and temple.

The main facts recorded above are delicately referred to in the opening verses of the book of Daniel but the prophet gives little indication that his life was lived and moulded under stress and sorrow. I want you to keep in mind that Daniel and his companions, as mere lads of 14 years of age or thereabout, were

exiles in the court of the most absolute of oriental despots, in the most degraded and dissolute merchant city of the East, and surrounded on all sides by gross impurity and idolatry. Wrenched from all the sacred influences of hearth and home, their very names, reminiscent of the One true God, altered as an evidence of change of ownership and with a view to expediting the erasure of former memories and associations, they themselves forcibly numbered with a misused class, notorious as intriguers and pests in such courts, and a class avenging themselves on men for the ill-treatment received at the hands of men, we find Daniel and his companions, faithful, true and irreproachable. Indeed this prophet of the Lord, survived in untarnished, uncorrupted greatness the 70 years of the captivity, sustaining all the relationships of life towards God, the world and the state, with uncompromising fidelity and withal with tender respect.

Chapter 1 makes it clear that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were marked by early *piety* and this we may be sure was one evidence of being greatly beloved of God. Were I to ask for an indication in this audience of those similarly favoured, I am confident that the great majority would testify to the goodly heritage of godly influences, hallowing both environment and training.

Were it only to be saved from the injury of a course of sin on mind and body: were it only to be saved early in life to youth and manhood to be lived in His service, how inestimable the blessing! But early piety must inevitably be tested and tried and for each of us there comes the demand

for Purpose of Heart. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." Let us bear in mind that God had laid down definite and minute instructions as to food for His people—instructions wholly unobserved by the Gentiles: moreover the meat set before these youths would in all probability have been offered to idols and the wine poured forth as an oblation to heathen gods and therefore Daniel with admirable decision, determined to refuse them. He was prepared to stand alone. I am not exhorting my younger brethren and sisters in Christ to be singular for the sake of being singular. Indeed here is excellent advice. "Never be singular, unless to be singular is right; but never fear to do the right, for fear of being singular." Daniel's mind was fixed. His attitude was one of uncompromising non-conformity to the world. "He requested the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself," so that his singularity was fearlessly explained, yet he was not imprudent. He did not bid the steward go tell his master that the Hebrew children would have none of his dainties, but he suggested for the steward's own peace of mind, a ten days' test on vegetable diet and water and he discovered that God had prepared the way for him, bringing him into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

The stand taken by these four Hebrew children was for *purity*. We are all old enough to recognise that we are living in an age when purity is set at a discount; when inhibitions and moral restraints are widely held up to ridicule, but I want to encourage you to-night by declaring that God still honours abstinence ob-

served in obedience to His will, by giving powers of mind and body which others through self-indulgence often destroy in themselves. "As for these four children God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" so that they not merely survived the evils of a three years course in King's College, Babylon, but without compromising their loyalty to God, they excelled. Let me counsel those who are young, by God's grace play the man for God in youth. It is so easy to deceive oneself into believing that a courageous stand is more easily taken later in life, but wrong associations and lack of fidelity in witnessing to what is right, create an incubus, which from the human standpoint at least is not easily thrown off. "Well begun is half done," and these four started off well.

But Daniel was not only marked by piety and purity at the outset of life; he was distinguished by that which is the ultimate hallmark of true greatness — *perseverance*. What a volume of tried faithfulness is encompassed in those simple words "Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus"! Here is enshrined a record of acceptable service under at least four kings and under two dynasties amid all the intrigues indigenous to the courts of Oriental despotism, amid the envy and jealousy inevitably exercised towards a captive in high office; amid all the troubles incidental to the King's insanity, and amid duties performed with unswerving loyalty even to the sensual Belshazzar. It is the record of undeviating integrity, even his enemies being compelled to acknowledge in the days of Darius, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it concerning the law of his God."

It is not my intention to enter into the details of chapter 2. The King's dream and the interpretation thereof are well known to all students of prophecy. My purpose is merely to draw attention to these further characteristics of Daniel; he was a man marked by prayer and praise, a man "strong in faith, giving glory to God." Well might each one of us covet this description as a suitable epitaph.

The story of chapter 3 is strangely reminiscent of modern devices and problems. In spite of the revelation of the fore-knowledge and wisdom of Daniel's God, which Nebuchadnezzar had freely acknowledged and recognised by the promotion of Daniel and his companions, this great king, first ruler in the "Times of the Gentiles," made an image of gold some hundred feet in height and nine feet in breadth which he set up on the plain of Dura, and for which he demanded worship throughout the extent of his kingdom. You will notice that in a way it defied the fulfilment of the God-given dream, for it recognised no deterioration throughout the image. It marked the deification of man which has been a feature of every world-power, but it was intended to do more. It was the first attempt at what is transpiring before our eyes to-day, the attempt to unify an empire by the imposition of one common religion, without creed, making no demands upon conscience, requiring no faith, accompanied by a magnificent orchestra, and asking for nothing more than an outward formal acknowledgment of one universal despot. To this act of obeisance and recognition were summoned the princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, sheriffs, and rulers of the provinces,

representative of all parts of his dominion, to whom it was commanded that at the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, all should fall down and worship the image. At that time all present rendered the homage demanded from them, saving three—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It is noticeable that there is no mention of Daniel, and it is characteristic of his self-abnegation that he makes no attempt to justify himself. Had we been recording this incident, how careful we would have been to make clear that we did not renounce our loyalty to God, for we may be absolutely certain that whatever the true explanation of his exemption from the charge may be, Daniel was not amongst the company of worshippers.

Summoned before the King for their refusal to bow down and worship the image, we find these three Hebrews resolute, calm, dignified. The fury of the King and his reinforced threat with his haughty question "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" make it more clear than ever that the controversy is between God and the King and therefore they answered and said, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Then follow these words memorable throughout all time and encouraging beyond utterance to all who tread the path of suffering and persecution. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up." A year ago, Mr. Hole spoke to us in this place on

these words of Holy Scripture—"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it," a principle which it seems to me is beautifully illustrated in our chapter. The mighty men commanded to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace "because the king's commandment was urgent" in their haste failed, it would seem, to take ordinary precautions, and the flame of the fire slew them.

As for the three they were not delivered from the flames, but through their fierce trial they were preserved and enjoyed the inestimable blessing of the company of the Son of God. God delivered them out of the flames, not by quenching the flames but by going into the fire with them, and "upon their bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." Indeed all that the flames had achieved was the bursting of their bonds. There are few, I suppose, even in this audience who have escaped sorrows and trials. These may not have been so acute as the trial of faith we have been considering, yet it may be that your special trial has been of such a nature that you could not reveal it even to your brethren. You have stood alone—yet not alone—and if faithful to Him you can testify that He abideth faithful and that His grace is sufficient. And the day may be near when brethren in Christ will be called upon to show a like dignified faith in God in circumstances precisely similar to those that confronted these Hebrews. May they be true to Him that the trial of their faith "though it be tried with fire may be found unto praise and

honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

In the few verses read in chapter 4 we see that with uncompromising loyalty to God, Daniel shows where he may tender respect and a subject's deference to his King, and it is well for us to observe that within the ambit of the divine decree that gives priority to the claims of God, the two loyalties are not incompatible.

The narrative of chapter 6 is well known and on the details it is not possible to linger. Suffice it to remark that the princes and presidents ensnared Darius, the King, by flattery, causing him to set his seal to a decree intentionally framed to encompass Daniel's death. “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house, and *his windows being open* in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, *as he did aforesaid.*” What impresses me in reading this verse is the perfect consistency of the man. He is merely doing the thing he had always done. We are so often hypocritical! Notice that the windows were open. To have shut them would have been cowardice. Had they been shut to have opened them might have been foolhardy. But his face is towards Jerusalem, his heart is uplifted to God and the consequences are left in His hands. How signally did he prove that his God was able to deliver him! How evident it was again that here was a man greatly beloved!

Yet strange as it may seem our text makes it clear that this remarkable man, intrepid and unmovable, greatly beloved of God, was at this moment marked by that prevalent

human infirmity *fear*. Of what was he afraid? Chapter 10 makes it clear, I think, that this fear was predominantly a reverential sense of awe in the presence of the manifestation of divine majesty and glory. At the end of three weeks of prayer and fasting by the great river Hiddekel, Daniel lifted up his eyes and beheld “a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body was like the beryl and his face as the appearance of lightning and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass and his words like the voice of a multitude.” In the presence of this great vision,—surely the revelation of the glory of the Son of God before His incarnation similar to that vouchsafed to John after His exaltation, there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned to corruption. The ministrations of Gabriel set him upon his hands and knees and then upon his feet, and to the trembling Daniel there was made known the reason for his unanswered prayer. What insight these verses give to the unseen powers of darkness operating in this world. “I am come for thy words. But the prince of the Kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.” The sense of the might of the forces hostile to God and the accomplishment of His purposes in this world doubtless contributed to the distressing and enervating fear that marked Daniel at this juncture. Others with less vision and knowledge than Daniel might have been exulting at this very moment. A remnant had returned under the decree of Cyrus. Indeed, the foundation of the temple had been relaid, but Daniel foresaw that the “iniquity of his people was

not yet filled full," and to him had been given visions of future executions of judgment upon his beloved nation. Trials were yet in store for them, of which the fiery furnace and the lions' den, were but feeble portents, and the prospect filled his soul with fear. But Gabriel strengthened him saying, "O man, greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea be strong." "Peace be unto thee" because thou art greatly beloved. The most reassuring note in a mother's lullaby is that which tells of her love for the child. But again, "peace" because God is God. In spite of the opposition of hell and the machinations of the

devil His purposes must and will find their perfect fruition. He is greater than all the forces that oppose. Indeed Daniel realised this for of the thing revealed he could say "the thing was true," but with Daniel as alas, so often in our own estimation "the time appointed was long." But let us rest our souls tonight in the assurance that God's time is best. The life of God is not measured by the ticks of our clocks. With Him a thousand years are as a day. And so peace 'my brother.' Christ is coming for and with His own, and in this hope, "be strong, yea, be strong."

Obedience.

The gift of knowledge is founded on the spirit of *obedience*; for what does it avail to confer gift on the *disobedient*, unless God should provide for His own dishonour?

The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. But oh! what a store of accompanying evils and ruin, come in upon the act of *disobedience* founded on this devil-used truth.

Of the principles of *obedience* we have an illustrious instance in Samson and his history (Judges 16. 17). There might have seemed little connection between long or uncut hair, and all-overcoming strength: but God was in it; and an *obeyed*, honoured, God is a God of strength to us.

The order of God to Christians is, not *obedience* upon blessing, but blessing on *obedience*: not to wait for blessing in order to *obey*, but to act on the command, and the blessing follows. *And this is faith*. There would be no faith if the blessing came first.

On the whole, the scripture is plain, as the principle is uniform—that *obedience* is the way of blessing; and that we are not to wait for power to *obey* a command, but to *obey* it that we may find power (Matt. 12. 13). The Lord did not restore the hand that he might stretch it out, and shew it, but ordered the man to stretch it out that it might be restored. And this is true in all possible cases.

The operation of the Spirit is to make us *obey*. There is no owning the Spirit but in *obedience*: and all our efforts are so far profitable as they are within *obedience* — God's prescribed order; and that all without is the energy of our own will, and is evil.

“THE NAME.”

W. Bramwell Dick.

“For the Name they have gone forth,” 3 John 7 (N.T.); “Hazarded their lives for the Name” Acts 15. 26; “Everyone that nameth the Name,” 2 Timothy 2. 19; “Thou hast not denied My Name,” Rev. 3. 8.

WHAT I have to say may be stated under five headings: The Call; Courage; Consistency; Company; and Compensation. From the first of the scriptures we learn that there were those in that day who sacrificed home comforts, denied themselves the holy privileges of fellowship with their brethren, and went forth to the Gentiles carrying to them glad tidings of salvation. They went forth in entire dependence on the Lord, and refused to take anything from those to whom they were sent. I want us to apply this directly to ourselves. We who are gathered here are those who, through God’s infinite mercy, know that our sins are forgiven for His Name’s sake. I hope that is true of every person in this hall. If we know that our sins have been forgiven for His Name’s sake, His Name surely commands our affections. The One who bears that Name has won our hearts, He wants to take possession of our lives for Himself. There comes to us a distinct, definite *call*. That, just as those brethren went forth to the Gentiles and proclaimed the glad tidings so you and I have this call, to launch out on the great adventure of faith, seeking to be here “for the Name.” We read in our Authorised Version “For His Name’s sake.” . . . But the New Translation with which we are familiar is perhaps better, “They went forth for the Name.” That matchless Name was everything to them. There is no name to compare with that Name. It belongs to the One who is the Son of God eternal; Who is the Saviour of our souls; Who has the right to be in full control of our lives.

“They went forth.” Now it must be obvious that if they “went forth,” they left something behind them. We will apply that to ourselves. If we are answering to this definite call to go forth, we have severed our links with our former worldly associations, we have been attracted by the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have gone forth *in His Name*, and *for His Name*, in order that we may represent Him here, and be for His glory, not necessarily in public service, but at home, in the office, the workshop, the school, just where we live and work. Now if we set ourselves for that, we may be quite sure that will mean for us persecution. There is that striking word in the second Epistle to Timothy, “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3, 12). It may not be, in this land, the fear of imprisonment or the sword to-day; it may not be the persecution these great men of old had to suffer; but “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall*; not *MAY* suffer, but *SHALL* suffer persecution.” That Name is not loved in this world; nor by those with whom in our unconverted days we associated. That Name is not welcomed among men.

That brings us to our second point, we shall need *Courage*. I suppose there never was a man upon earth who hated the Name of Jesus as Saul of Tarsus did; he hated it so much that he dedicated his life to the blotting of it out, and to the extermination of all those who had the courage to confess it. But there came that never-to-be-forgotten day on the Damascus road, when that

Name fell upon his ears from the lips of the One who bears it, and the mention of the Name of JESUS won his heart. The man who thought to enter Damascus with a great retinue and carry on his mission of murder there, was led in a blind man. And the man who looked forward to leaving Damascus amid the plaudits of the people, and being received in Jerusalem with acclamation, when he came with his prisoners, was let down over the wall in a basket by night. He was prepared for all that because of what the Name of Jesus had become to him. And if there never was a man on earth who hated the Name of Jesus as did Saul of Tarsus, I think we can safely say never was there a man upon earth to whom the Name of Jesus was so inexpressibly precious as Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ. He was prepared 'to do or die' for that Name. He heads that list in the verse we read in Acts 15, of those who "hazarded their lives" for the Lord Jesus Christ. Saul of Tarsus was a proud, overbearing man, and was captured and captivated by the Name of Jesus, and the man who hated and opposed that Name realised that He was the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him, and that He was to have supreme sway over all in a coming day; and he said, "He shall have supreme sway over my life in this day." It was that that changed him and gave him the courage to hazard his life for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said "Neither count I my life dear so that I might finish my course with joy." His one desire was to be here for the Name. Could you imagine any greater privilege, any higher honour, than to be here in a world, where our Lord Jesus is rejected, for the Name? To represent Him; to live for Him, and to be here setting forth the virtues of

Him whose Name is so dear to our hearts. I am sure there is not one of us who does not desire this—it is a good thing to have ambition in life. I do not object to a young man or a girl having ambition to get on in their business or profession, but here is an ambition that must eclipse every other, and *not until this comes first* is the other likely to be realised without damage to your souls, and what is that? To be here "for the Name."

But if that is to be, there must be condition on our part to suit it. This brings us to what I read from second Timothy. We find if we are to be here for the honour of that precious, holy Name, and we are not to bring any blot on it, we must be marked by *consistency*. If there is one thing that a straightforward man of the world hates more than another, it is a man who is inconsistent whether it be in business life, political, or any other department or life, and if inconsistency is so hateful to him, how grievous it must be to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. To be one thing on the Lord's Day and something else during the week is a dreadful thing, but to be during the week what we seek to be on Lord's Day is that which will be acceptable to the Lord. We read in 2 Timothy 2. 19, "Let everyone that nameth the *Name of the Lord* depart, or withdraw, from iniquity." We have been accustomed to give this command a sort of ecclesiastical bearing. I don't think there is anything ecclesiastical about it. It was written to young Timothy, who desired to be a "vessel" sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and it is the Lord's desire that every young man and woman should be a vessel "sanctified and meet for the Master's use." If this is to be so it is clear that we

must withdraw from everything that is not pleasing to the Master. Iniquity is not necessarily something gross, or that is likely to call people's attention to us and cause them to say, "Well, he ought not to do this or to go there." No, iniquity may simply mean those things in which we found ourselves quite at home in our unconverted days. It is whatever is not straight and consistent with the Name of the Lord. The pursuits of your worldly workmates or fellow students are not for you who have named *the Name*. Don't ask, what harm is there in them? If you are going to be a follower of the Lord Jesus, and have the desire to be here "for the Name," then rest assured you cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. It must be one thing or the other. "Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity." The person who names the Name of the Lord is a person who owns the claims of the Lord — who submits himself to the authority of the Lord; who is prepared to follow the Lord, and the *sine qua non* for that is to withdraw from iniquity. That brings us to the second portion of our chapter. If we are to be here vessels "sanctified and meet for the Master's use," we will be very careful as to our *companions*. We read just now from the 22nd verse — "Flee also youthful lusts." Here is the word to us "Flee and follow." "Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." I want to say to you my dear young friends, "Whatever you do, be careful as to your company." The men of God of whom we read in Scripture were men who were very careful in the choice of their companions. I am going to come a little nearer home. I want to say whatever

you do, be uncommonly careful in your choice of a life-companion. There is a young man who goes to a girl and seeks her hand. She says, "You know, I cannot have anything to do with you, you are not a Christian." He says, "But I am a Christian." By which he simply means, I am not a heathen. And she takes him on his own word, she becomes unequally yoked with an unbeliever, brings dishonour upon the name of the blessed Lord, and a life of sorrow upon herself. This is one of Satan's most successful moves. When Balak sent for Balaam to come and curse the children of Israel, and Balaam found he could do nothing but bless them, he said to Balak, "I will tell you what to do if you want to succeed. There is no use bringing your army against this people, God will fight for them. You will have no chance. But I will tell you how you will succeed. Give your daughters to their sons, and get their daughters for your sons. Intermarry—be one with them, and they will be one with you. Balak took that advice and, alas, Israel fell into the snare to their disaster. Don't let Satan get the better of you in that respect. Your Christian life will be blasted, your joy will be lost, you will bring upon yourself a life of misery, and, I don't say you won't get to heaven, because if you are trusting in the precious blood of Christ you will, but you will go there with a life of sorrow and of regret behind you.

That is not the only thing—there is perhaps nothing influences us so much as our companions. A young man was converted and his friend came along to his lodgings as usual—he didn't know what had happened. He said, "Well, where are we going to-night—a picture house

or theatre, or something of that sort?" And the young convert bravely said, "I am not going to any of them, I have trusted Christ, I am saved, and I don't want any of these things now." All his friend's pleadings to spend just one night in the old way proved in vain. A day or two after they met again, and his friend said to him, "I was testing you the other night." "If you had gone in with me to that theatre, I would have despised you for the rest of your life. Now I know you are genuine. And although I cannot see things as you do, I respect you." Make no mistake about it, that unsaved person you are making your companion, who was your companion perhaps before you were converted or who has become your companion since, will try to influence you to go his way, and if you do it he will despise you, if you refuse he will respect you and he may trust your Saviour.

Now as to the *Compensation*, and very wonderful compensation it is. The Lord Jesus could say to these people in Philadelphia, "I know thy works" and we may stop and ask, "What works?" We do not see much evidence or very great activity. No, but there was something the Lord Jesus saw and He tells us what it was. He was able to say to that little company, "Thou hast kept My word and hast not denied My

Name." Reading between the lines we can see that cost them something. It meant they had to suffer for it, but they got this beautiful word from their blessed Lord. Poor, weak, feeble, despised, only a little strength, not marked by very great outward activity, but marked by this which was so dear to His heart. "Thou hast kept My word and hast not denied My Name." To them He said, "To him that overcometh"—and we do want to be overcomers—"will I make a pillar in the temple of My God and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new Name." You have been despised upon earth. I am going to express My appreciation in a coming day. I am going to make you a pillar in the temple of My God, and I am going to inscribe on you the name of the city of My God, and, last but oh! how glorious! — "*My new Name.*" Have we not every cause to be proud of Him? My friends, have we not every cause to rejoice in Him? To make our boast in Him? Be ashamed of Him? Impossible!

Ashamed of Jesus! Could it be
That I should be ashamed of Thee?
For me, Thine was the cross and
shame,

That I might bear Thy worthy Name.
Lord Jesus Christ, I own Thee now,
And low at Thy dear feet I bow.

Every member of the body subserves the body. And as members of the one body of Christ our first obligation is to the body, not a part of it only, but to the body. If you put your natural obligation first and neglect these spiritual ones, you will suffer. We have natural obligations which cannot be ignored, and God will give grace that they may be fulfilled for His glory, but the spiritual come first and if we are true to these, God will surely help us in the natural.

THE EFFECT OF THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

J. T. Mawson.

Psalm 51.

I WANT to shew you the effect upon a man of the knowledge of the living and true God. I lay the emphasis upon the *living and true* God, for in these days it is almost necessary to ask what a man means when he speaks of God. It has been said by a popular writer that the word "God" is the vaguest word in the English language, and as used by some people that is certainly true, for they have a God of their own imagination and not the living and true God at all. Voltaire, the French Atheist, in jeering at the Christian Faith, said that "man had created God in his own image and after his own likeness," and he spoke truer than he knew of some people; in Psalm 50 God charges this very thing against the wicked. He says to them, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." This is the way of the modernist who declares that he accepts the revelation of the God of the Bible so far as it "harmonizes with the thoughts and ideals which he already has."

But it is not difficult to discern between the man who has a false god of his own imagination and the one who has had to do with the living and true God; a man who has evolved his own god will be well satisfied with himself and have no sense of his own deep need as a sinner, he really bows down and adores himself, glorified; but the man who has come face to face with the living and true God developes a deep conviction of his own nothingness and sin; self condemnation is a marked feature of him. He becomes aware of his own sinfulness, for divine and searching light has shone upon him.

Describing this experience Martin Luther said, "When a man like me comes to know the plague of his own heart he is not miserable, he is misery itself; he is not sinful only, he is absolute sin itself." And he realises that a mighty work is necessary if he is to be saved and made right with God; it was this that made Samuel Rutherford say, "When I look at my own sinfulness, my salvation is to me my Saviour's greatest miracle, He has done nothing greater in heaven or on earth than my salvation." Thank God, He is equal to the demand that our sinfulness makes upon Him.

The great examples of the effect of the knowledge of God are given in the Scriptures. There we read of Daniel whose "comeliness was turned into corruption;" of Isaiah who cried "woe is me," of Simon Peter, and of Paul, the Apostle, and perhaps more convincing than all, of Job, who had no rival on earth—"a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil." How tenaciously he clung to his own goodness before he saw God. He even challenged God to produce his life's record; said he, "I would take it upon my shoulder and bind it as a crown to me. I would declare the number of my steps, *and as a prince would I go near to Him. . . . The words of Job are ended.*" Oh, no, Job, they are not, you could not possibly say more on your own behalf, but you will most surely speak again—and he did. Hear him as he lies prostrate in the dust, a broken and a contrite penitent, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Where-

fore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

In all these men we have the conclusion to which they were brought when they had to do with God clearly given, but when David uttered his great repentance he analysed his sin and sinfulness, he saw it in its varied and terrible characters, he shews us the way of true penitence, and the words that he spoke in his soul's agony have become the language, in greater or lesser measure, of all who have been brought to know God since his day.

Let us first consider the way in which he describes his sins. He uses three words — transgressions, iniquity and sin. And these words are not mere synonyms, that can be used interchangeably without any loss of force, each has its own terrible meaning. *Transgression* is revolt, rebellion. God says "Thou shalt not," I say, "I will." God says, "Thou shalt." I say, "I won't." In pity He lays His hand upon my shoulder and says, "Don't"; I pull away my shoulder and flout His pity. That is transgression. And this strange conduct had been multiplied in David's history as in ours, for he says, not, my transgression, but "my transgressions."

Iniquity means that which is crooked, perverted, twisted. God had a way for David and for us, as straight as His righteous sceptre, but David and everyone of us preferred a crooked way, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way." Independence of God, and the way of death rather than confidence in God and the way of life, is the deliberate choice of all the children of Adam, and the prophet, who cried, "Thou

art the man" in David's startled ear, turns also the accusing finger at everyone of us. Sin, as David used the word, means missing the mark. God had set up His mark for men to aim at, for not a man ever entered this world who was not responsible to glorify God and live to His praise; if God is God, it must be so, for being God, He cannot claim less than that the aim of every intelligent creature, be he angel or man, should be in harmony with His will. David confessed his failure in this; he had missed God's mark; in his blind self-will and self-gratification he had refused to see God's mark and had set up his own in the hope that it would yield him a greater happiness; he missed his own aim and got misery instead of happiness, "his moisture was turned into the drought of summer." And here we all have stood with him. David and we failed to gain even what we aimed at, so that he and we were not only sinners but wretchedly disappointed sinners. Sin is a boomerang that misses the target but most surely returns and smites the soul of the thrower.

What could David do, when the full horror of his position broke upon him, when light from God exposed his sin? He cannot undo the past but he yearns to have it blotted out; he had no means of ridding himself of the deep stain in his soul, but he pleads to be thoroughly washed from his iniquity and to be cleansed from his sin. Nothing could quieten his aroused conscience and put his troubled soul at rest but this three-fold action on his behalf; but who could do this? His first desire was to have the heavy indictment obliterated. There it stood against him, a charge sheet crowded with his transgressions, which with united voice condemned him; he felt that

his iniquity had defiled the very texture of his soul and character, and as a fuller would beat and scrub a filthy garment in washing it so he felt that he needed to be washed; and he longed to hear the word pronounced over him that the priest pronounced over the cleansed and healed leper, when he declared that he was cleansed from his plague.

To whom could he turn for this? Not to Nathan the prophet, nor to Zadok the priest, nor could he, though possessing kingly power, relieve himself of his burden of sin; his only hope was in God, and herein is the gospel; the light that had exposed his sin had revealed to him the very thoughts and heart of God so that he looked up in his misery and cried to God. It is good to hear him plead, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies." God's loving kindness was His pity for men in their distress; the multitude of His tender mercies, spoke of His inward feelings, of the bowels of His compassions. David made his appeal to the very heart of God; He pleaded what God is in His very nature, and according to that he besought that God would deal with him and his sins. We may well listen to David's cries and learn that God is greater in His grace than the greatest sins, and is the sinner's one and only hope in his distress. We have another Old Testament witness to this. Nebuchadnezzar, the great king, because of his pride, had been degraded to the level of the beasts of the field, and eaten grass as an ox for seven years, until his hair had grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like the claws of birds; what could he do when he discovered how low he had sunk? He would shrink from men and

would be an object of loathing to the meanest of his subjects, what could he do? Hear his confession "I Nebuchadnezzar *lifted up my eyes to heaven,*" and he did not look up in vain, God did not despise him, for he was able to add, "I blessed the most High." And think of the prodigal; everything and every man had failed him; his sin and folly had reduced him to the swinefield and food, to whom could he look in his dire need? "I will arise," he said, "and go to my father."

"Who is a pardoning God like Thee!
And who has grace so rich so free!"

But have we New Testament answers to David's threefold desire? Yes, thank God! for our souls' everlasting relief and for His glory, we have. The heavy indictment is met by Romans 3. 24. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"—"Being justified by His blood," ch. 5. 9 — thus are the transgressions blotted out. The desperate need of a thorough washing from all iniquity is met in 1 Corinthians 6. 11. "But such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," and the declaration that the sinner who believes is cleansed and cleared, and free from all imputation of sin is made in Romans 8. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

I am not supposing that David knew the fulness of this three-fold blessedness, and we must go to Psalm 32 to learn that he even knew the joy of forgiveness, he had not

reached that point in our psalm, and we have still to follow him into a deeper agony and a fuller confession. As the light of God searches him every other being passes from his thoughts and he understands that it is against God that he had sinned, against His holy law, His inexorable justice, His mercy, His longsuffering and love. And further in his sins he had become the justification of solemn words that God had spoken concerning men. It is remarkable that the details of the full length description of sinful men (Jew and Gentile) given to us in Romans 3. 9—18, are taken chiefly from David's own psalms. He had been the mouth-piece of God for the utterance of these things, and it may be that as they flowed from his lips he congratulated himself that he was not as others, but now he finds that he has become an exemplification of every evil; the germs were there hidden in his very nature and only waiting the opportunity to break out. And this brings him to the point of his deepest agony; and the most poignant cry in the Old Testament bursts from his soul. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." He is not making an excuse for his sins, or casting the blame of them upon his mother; he is saying, "My very nature is corrupt, the springs of my being are polluted." It is not now what he had done, but what he is, his eyes are fully open now, he has come to the root of the tragedy. This heart-broken cry is paralleled in the New Testament, and by the man who "touching the righteousness of the law was blameless," when he said, "I know that in me that is in my flesh, good does not dwell," and "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death." There is no difference between the worst and the

best, between David and Saul of Tarsus, or you and me.

I am not undertaking to give you in detailed teaching the way of deliverance for which David yearned and Saul of Tarsus prayed. I am showing you the experience through which a man goes who has been brought face to face with God; He abhors himself, but he finds in God his one hope, he confesses the truth as to himself but cleaves to God; he has none other to whom he can turn in his distress. And if a man told me that he had never known such an experience, in some measure at least, I should gravely question whether he had ever had to do with God at all.

As light breaks upon David's soul, he discovers that God is not indifferent to him, He does not abandon him to misery and despair; He has desires and designs in regard to him. When he has come to the end of himself and made a full confession as to what he is, he can say, "*Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," 1 Sam. 16. 7. And David's desire has been brought into full accord with God's, he wants truth and wisdom to be in him, the chief characteristics of a nature that he did not possess by natural birth. But in regard to this he also casts himself upon God and prays: Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. A humbling process this purging with hyssop, but as he goes through it his confidence in God grows. God can accomplish this miracle of cleansing, in which a new nature supercedes the old, and from the truth and wisdom in his hidden parts resulting from

this renewal, joy and gladness would surely spring forth. Creative power, possessed only by God, could bring it about, hence he pleads, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." The New Testament speaks of "the pure heart," and we know well that this can only be by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost and obedience to the truth.

No intelligent Christian would pray "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" for we know that in this gospel day all that believe the gospel of our salvation are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God *unto the day of redemption*, Eph. 4. 30; but if by our backsliding we have grieved the Spirit, we have certainly lost the joy of our salvation, and need indeed to pray for its restoration. And if ever we knew a brighter hour in our soul's history or a day of greater devotion to Christ than now, we are backsliders. The right spirit means a steadfast spirit, *purpose of heart*, and "Thy free spirit" is the spirit of liberty "God hath not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Now notice the light and liberty and holy happy service that David anticipates as a result of God's gracious work towards and in him. "I will teach transgressors Thy ways." "My tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness." "My mouth shall shew forth Thy praise." Out of the fulness of his heart his mouth shall speak, and his theme shall be, not himself, but the God of his salvation; he will sing, and shew forth, and teach. He will not fear God's righteousness, but will make it the subject of his song; he who at the be-

ginning hoped only for His mercy, shall exult in His righteousness! We who know the gospel of God can do this in a way not given to David, for now God hath set forth Christ Jesus, a propitiation through faith in His blood; to declare His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3. 24, 26. Shall we be less ready to speak than David was? Shall our lips be silent? Are we growing tired of the gospel, and losing our interest in John 3. 16? Are sinners converted to God when we open our lips to speak? They will not be if the Spirit is grieved and quenched within us, or if we have lost the joy of our salvation, or if we are not exulting in God's righteousness.

David learnt great things as God brought him out of the slough through which he had passed; he learnt that not outward show and ornate sacrifices such as he had offered before the ark in Zion, pleased Him, but a broken and a contrite heart, a lesson of immense value; he learnt also to forget his own interests and think of God's; he was no longer a mere suppliant at God's feet pleading for mercy, but an intercessor in communion with God about God's interests on earth, and he could look forward in a joyful and satisfying expectation to the time when a ransomed people would offer sacrifices of righteousness unto God such as He could accept and delight in. Happy indeed is the man who has been brought to know the living and true God, who has learnt the lesson of his own sinfulness, and who can make his boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

To lean upon tradition is to prove that *we have not* His commandments.

THE SECRET OF POWER.

When God is about to use a man, He makes that man feel himself most consciously nothing. If He delivered Israel by the hand of Gideon, He must have the glory, not Gideon. It must be by His strength and not Gideon's. It is when we are brought down into our own nothingness that God can work. When we are weakest in ourselves then are we strong in the Lord. Can we not invariably trace our failures to self-confidence? When a believer thinks he is going to do a feat, his failure becomes ridiculous. God must abase that which is proud and lifted up.

A true heart makes a strong hand, but a true heart is one that cleaves to the Lord and has no confidence in the flesh. Having confidence in the Captain of our salvation, we do not faint at the thought of difficulties, or flee from our foes; like true-hearted Caleb, we reckon that "we are well able to overcome them." God's great design in His dealing with us is to teach us to trust wholly in Himself.

It is sin that weakens our hands in our service for God. Self-will is sin; independence of God is sin. When self is judged, and we are subject to God, we prove that "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

When the people of God are saying, we are rich and increased in goods, they are blind to their true condition, and know not how far they have departed from their original standing. When they begin to feel that they are poor and miserable and blind and naked, then is there hope of revival.

The sin of the church has brought it into desolation and destitution; but no matter how impoverished we may be, if we are sensible of it, there is all the fulness of Christ for us. He can deliver, He can raise up, and He will not turn away His ear from a cry of need.

God must judge sin and evil in His people, His chastening hand must often be upon them; whom He loves He rebukes and chastens, but He is ever grieved with their afflictions, and waits to deliver them. It is when we humble ourselves under His mighty hand, that He raises us up in due season.

Faith makes nothing of circumstances, because it makes God all. The difficulties are not lessened but God fills the eye.

Faith acts on its own responsibility. One way in which we constantly fail is in asking counsel of those who have not faith; we thus sink down to their level.

“THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST.”

D. ROSS.

Philippians 1. 19—23 ; 2. 5, 17, 20, 21 and 30 ; 3. 20 and 21 ; 4. 19, 22.

FROM the shores of Anglesey to the great river Euphrates, from the forests of Germany to the sandy deserts of the Sahara, the habitable world at the time when these words were written was in the absolute power of a dissolute half-crazed despot who once expressed his savage desire that all the Roman heads were on one neck, so that he might cut them off with one stroke. This wicked emperor Nero, intoxicated with power, resolved to crush the Christian church. He did not know, or had forgotten, that another man, King Herod, had already set out to vex the Christian church, but had died a miserable death being eaten of worms, while the Word of God grew and multiplied. Christians to-day as ever, need to be saved, and this salvation, our text shows us, comes from the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ. Trials come upon us from without such as we find in chapter 1 but alas! heart-breaking difficulties come upon us also from within the Christian church and the only means of salvation for us in the face of both is the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul was imbued with this spirit as few others have ever been. He was a man of consuming ambition whose earnest expectation was that Christ should be magnified in his body. This word “expectation” means the stretching out of the neck. How often is such eagerness to be seen on the golf course, on the race course, on the tennis court, but alas how seldom in the Christian course. It is said that the Moravian Missionaries had as emblem the picture of an ox with a plough on one

side and an altar on the other, and underneath the words “ready for either.” The plough spoke of service in life, and the altar of service in death. Such was Paul’s desire. Christ is greater than the heavens but some people have a very small conception of Christ which is sometimes all the smaller because they have known some Christians. May God help us to make Christ great in the eyes of our fellows even though it should involve death or all the hardships that life may mean for a faithful Christian.

“For me to live is Christ,” was Paul’s claim. This does not mean that every Christian can truly say that Christ is his life, but that the sum total of all life’s actual experiences for Paul was Christ. Now note that in this epistle he does not speak as an apostle which might make his claim unique, but as a bondsman of Jesus Christ, a title which any one of us can claim and thus this blessed experience is open for us all. What is life for you, young man? Is it gold? Then death for you will be loss. Is it sport and the pleasure which has largely taken the place of God with the present day generation? Then death for you will be loss, and indeed that loss may come long before death. How much better covet the right to say with Paul, “for me to live is Christ,” even though he lay in a dungeon where we might naturally expect him to say that life for him was utter misery. Death for him was gain because it meant to depart and to be with Christ in whose presence he could know without let or hindrance the love which passeth

knowledge and be filled into all the fulness of God. A man who can truly speak thus is saved, for his enemies can never touch him.

One of the early martyrs on being commanded to deny the name of Christ refused. The judge said, "I will take your property from you." "That you cannot do, for my inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, fadeth not away and is reserved in heaven for me." Then "I will take from you your freedom." "That you cannot do, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free and that freedom you cannot touch." "But I can take your life from you." "No, that is also impossible for you, for my life is hid with Christ in God." What can the devil, the world, the Neros, the Herods or all the persecutors of ancient and modern times do with such people who know salvation through the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ?

Here is a strange dilemma where a man of like passions with ourselves does not know which to choose, whether life or death. Shakespeare's character Hamlet was faced with a similar dilemma in these famous words which many of you learned at school. "To be or not to be, that is the question." Life to him with all the whips and scorns of the time was such an intolerable burden that he would gladly have ended it with a bare bodkin. But death might well be something worse than life.

"The undiscovered country from whose
bourn
No traveller returns—puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of."

How absolutely different the dilemma of the prince who has to choose between two intolerable evils, life and death, and that of Nero's pri-

soner who sees in life the opportunity for glorifying Christ and serving His saints, and in death the consummation of blessedness in the presence of the Lord who loved him and gave Himself for him. Thank God! This same spirit is still in the world to-day. Men and women shut up in concentration camps, or perishing in the unutterable miseries of banishment in Siberia, are experiencing through it salvation, and are thereby enabled to praise and magnify the Lord who bought them.

Do we realise fully what a stupendous event took place on the day of Pentecost? The Spirit of God, the third person of the Triune God-head came into this world to indwell men and women, to be power and salvation to them, enabling them to manifest the spirit of Jesus Christ, so that death and life, shame and reproach, imprisonment and persecutions can be the true means to a fuller and more precious experience of Christ. We rejoice that we live in a country where active persecution is a thing of the past, although it may yet be, who knows, a thing of the very near future. But there are mighty forces in our land also arraigned against God and His Christ, and young people in our colleges and universities, and even in our schools have to face powers of darkness that would rob them of their faith. But here again, we can have salvation by the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2, however, hints at a deadlier foe than the open, avowed enemies of our faith. This is to be found in the dis-unity and dissensions which mar our Christian testimony. If some of us have spent sleepless nights battling for our faith, it may be that still oftener we have

been robbed of our sleep by the distressing quarrels among Christians. Let us bow our heads in shame at the spectacle we present to the mighty forces of darkness arrayed against the Church of God.

In 1679, a body of ill-equipped and untrained Covenanters were facing a regular army led by experienced generals, and what a spectacle! A handful of brave, loyal but desperate men hold the Bothwell Bridge against Monmouth and Claverhouse's hosts crying "For God's sake send us help, send us ammunition." And behind them, groups of disputants preach against each other, and ex-communicate one another until the enemy sweeps aside the feeble resistance, and scatters them as chaff upon the threshing-floor. We need the spirit of Jesus Christ to-day to save us from fraternal strife.

The Philippian saints, and one would judge the Philippian sisters especially, needed the beautiful apostolic injunction, and our need is certainly not less than theirs. "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." But whose is this mind to be? Not your mind nor my mind, but the mind which was in Christ Jesus. What is the difficulty with the brethren? Is it zeal for divine principles and divine truth? Surely an excellent thing, but let us be very sure first of all that it is really the truth for which we are contending, and then secondly that we are doing so in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

A young teacher just starting out in his profession, discovered one day

to his horror that a boy was circulating unclean literature in his class. Could he ignore that? Of course he could not. The case was reported to the Headmaster who, after scorching the boy with scathing words, ordered him to be gone. Next day, however, the boy appeared again, and the young teacher, aping his Headmaster, drove him out with bitter language. The parents resented this, and the Headmaster rebuked his assistant. "But," answered the youth, "you said the same yourself." "Yes," was the reply, "but remember, I am the Headmaster, and you are not."

Are we keen in judging our brethren? Are we expert in cutting off those that offend us? Let us be sure when we undertake anything like this (and sometimes we have no option), that we are doing it under orders from our Master, and in His spirit. Look at Him as He weeps over the rebellious city whose doom He utters, and listen to the anguished cry of love. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, but ye would not." Do we heed only the Apostolic injunction, "Therefore put away that wicked person," and forget altogether the request, "to forgive and comfort and confirm your love toward" the penitent?

The mind of Christ caused Him, who was God's equal to make Himself of no reputation, to take upon Him the form of a servant, and to humble Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Think what the word Cross meant to the Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, whose sacred writings declared, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Think also what it meant to Paul the Roman citizen.

Perhaps he had read the proud utterance of Cicero, Rome's greatest orator. "It is an outrage to bind a Roman citizen; to scourge him is an atrocious crime, to put him to death is almost a parricide; but to crucify him, what shall I call it?" And yet Christ, the Son of the Highest, became obedient to the cursed and shameful death of the Cross. That is the mind of Christ.

Has it ever been seen since? It has. It was seen in the Apostle Paul, who says, "If I be *offered* upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He was ready to die, not indeed as the principal sacrifice, but just as an additional drink offering to the sacrifice of the saints. Surely this was esteeming others better than himself. The Greek runner who brought the good news of the great victory of Marathon (490 B.C.), on reaching Athens, fell dead on the threshold with the shout upon his lips, "Chairete Kai Chairomen," "Rejoice and let us rejoice." The herald of Calvary's triumph knows even a greater joy, as he contemplates the possibility of his life being poured forth in the discharge of his office.

But this spirit is shown also in his son Timothy, who genuinely cared for the state of the saints. How few, and especially among the young men, strong, intelligent and gifted—are interested in the care of the little handfuls of saints. "All seek their own not the things of Jesus Christ." What a number of things are in the world to engage us, but if in us is the spirit of Jesus Christ who at 12 years of age could say, "Wist ye not that I

must be in the things of my Father?" we shall gladly follow Timothy's example who as a son with the father served (did bond-service) with Paul in the gospel.

And yet one more example of this spirit is found in this chapter. The youth of to-day love taking risks, living dangerously, and experiencing the thrill in motor car, boat, and aeroplane of exceeding all speed limits, of scaling the steepest mountains, and of facing perils on land and sea. How one wishes that such daring were coupled with the worthiest of causes, the service of the Lord of life and glory. Epaphroditus took risks. His name, curiously enough, comes from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of Luck, a goddess also greatly worshipped to-day. People who no longer believe in the God of the Bible believe in the grotesque little mascots on their cars and aeroplanes. Epaphroditus took risks, hazarded his life for the work of Christ. Here is a life of high adventure, to risk your life, to hazard your reputation, your prospects for His sake who made Himself of no reputation and even became the song of the drunkard.

And now we look not only for His spirit, but for the Saviour Himself to complete His glorious salvation when body, soul, and spirit shall be saved not only from the penalty and power but from the very presence of sin; for the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

"God delights to employ the self-emptied little ones for the doing of His greatest works."

SELF-CENTRED OR CHRIST-CENTRED.

A. J. Pollock.

Read: Hosea 10. 1 ; Judges 9. 8—15 ; John 15. 8 and 16 ; 2 Corinthians 8. 1—9.

WE trust this meeting is going to be a *business* meeting. We trust some of our young brothers and sisters may do definite business this evening with the Lord in their souls. When we first are converted we often rest content with the blessings we have received. Then there comes a moment in our history, when we hear the Lord saying in a far higher and spiritual sense than that in which Solomon used the word, "My son, give me thine heart" (Proverbs 23. 26); or "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4. 23). That is why I read the last Scripture, where we are told that the Macedonian believers "*FIRST gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.*" There can be no successful Christian life till this point is reached. Has it been reached in your history, dear young believer? If not, may it be reached even now by God's grace.

I remember meeting a young Christian. He was thinking of answering to the Lord's desire in the remembrance of Himself in the Lord's supper. He kept back for a long time. In talking it over he said to me, "I have not yet made up my mind." I replied, "My dear young friend, it is not a question of making up your mind, it is a matter of making up your *heart.*" When we give ourselves to the Lord, He has got everything we have, and this is His right. "Ye are brought with a price therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6. 20).

You, young Christians, are in a very important stage in your life. The most of it lies before you. What are you going to do with it? Is it to be self or Christ—self-centred or Christ-centred? If the former, however successful you may be in the eyes of the world, you may be able to bequeath a fortune, houses, lands, stocks and shares; if that is all your life it will have been a ghastly blunder; but if you live for Christ, for God, for eternity, you will be wise indeed.

There is a well-known story of D. L. Moody, the great American evangelist. In the early stage of his career he was asked after a gospel meeting if he had got any converts. He replied, "I got two and a half." The remark was said, "I suppose, Mr. Moody, two grown-ups and one child have confessed the Lord." "No," replied Mr. Moody, "I mean two children and one grown-up. The grown-up has only half his life left before him. I only call him a half. These two children have their whole lives before them, and I call them two."

There is a good deal of common sense in the way Mr. Moody looked at things. And so, we look at you young folks with real solicitude, and wonder how you will shape your lives. You cannot shape them aright but in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

The passage we read from Hosea 10. 1 is a striking warning against a self-centred life. "Israel is an empty

vine, he bringeth forth fruit *unto himself*." What would you think of a vine that grew grapes, and then devoured its own fruit? What would you think of a vineyard with ten thousand vines in it, and when the owner comes for the fruit which is his due, he finds these ten thousand vines have been busy devouring their own grapes? The only thing to do with such a vineyard is to destroy it. Its only usefulness is fruit-bearing. Its wood is worthless. It cannot furnish even a pin to hang a vessel thereon (Ezekiel 15. 3).

Here we have graphically portrayed in parable a self-centred life. A self-centred life, a life that turns everything to self-aggrandisement, self-comfort, in short that is all for self, is from the Christian standpoint a life of shame and disaster. Many alas! think if they give a little of their spare time and money to the Lord that they are good Christians. That is not sufficient. "They first gave *themselves to the Lord*," says our text. I read a very interesting story about a very rich oil corporation. They wanted an agent in China, who should be a complete master of the very difficult Chinese language, a man of strong personality. They were told of the very man they wanted, a gifted missionary in China, who was receiving a stipend just enough to meet bare necessities, to keep body and soul together. An official was deputed to go to China and secure his services, if possible. He was authorised to offer him a salary of £2,000 a year. If he refused, he was to offer him £3,000 a year. If that were refused, £4,000 a year was to be offered. And if he refused such a princely salary, he was to be asked to state his own terms—to secure his services at any price.

To his astonishment the missionary refused the dazzling offer. He was asked his reason for so doing: "Look at the princely salary. You can name your own figure. Why don't you accept the offer?"

The missionary gave a wonderful reply. He said, "You are offering me a *small job* with a *big* salary. I am engaged on a *big* job with a *small* salary. My eye is *on the JOB* and not on the salary. I am not going to sell oil when I have the wonderful privilege of winning souls for Christ."

Moses acted something like this. In the providence of God he was adopted as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. By an ordinance of Pharaoh the male children of the Israelites were to be cast into the river Nile, and be destroyed. God foreseeing everything, actually raised up the daughter of the very man, who made the decree, to be the preserver of the infant Moses. It was a brilliant position for him. He had his feet, as it were, on the very threshold of the throne of Egypt, the world's mightiest kingdom at that time.

What did Moses do when he came to years? Common sense would have said, Look here, Moses, providence has put you in a remarkable place. Your position is brilliant. Use it for yourself to your own advantage. Make a name for yourself. It was all in his power. The ball was at his feet.

What did Moses do? Truly wise was he. Profoundly foolish if he had chosen the path of mere earthly fame again. We read that he esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of

Egypt" (Hebrews 11. 26). He threw in his lot with his despised down-trodden countrymen. He left behind him a grand record we may all well emulate.

Jotham's parable is the first parable in the Bible. The olive, the fig, the vine trees are all offered kingship over the trees. Each one said, "*Should I leave?*" To give up fruitfulness in order to take a brilliant position was not really addition, it was subtraction of a very serious nature—it was giving up their *true* purpose in life, the only reason for their existence. "*Should I leave?*" Let these echo again and again in your memory. I know Christian men, who could make a great name for themselves in this world, who might leave fortunes, if they choose, or secure titles and fame, but who are content to walk humbly with God's people, and who in the words of Scripture, "Esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Are they wise? Are you?

We come now to John 15. There it is a question of fruitbearing. There is one necessity for us if we are to bear fruit for God in our lives—we *must abide in Christ*. "Without Me," said our Lord, "ye can do nothing" (verse 5). We read, "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear *much* fruit" (verse 8). It does not say "*fruit*," but "*MUCH fruit*."

Is my life fruitful? Is yours? If not, we are missing what life really is. Are we content with fruit, or do we seek the Father's glory in seeking to furnish "*MUCH fruit?*"

The young men in the family of God as presented in 1 John 2. 14—17 had got a fair distance on the right

road. They were strong. They had overcome the wicked one. The word of God abode in them. It was not that they had gained a lot of head knowledge of the Scriptures, desirable as that is as far as it goes, said the apostle, "The word of God abideth in you" (1 John 2. 14). They had come under the power of the word of God. It affected their conduct. It gripped their lives.

And yet, and yet, they were in danger. There comes the solemn warning, "Love not the world, neither the things in the world." I remember how these words came in startling power to my soul. They were like a veritable thunder clap. I have known strong young men in the family of God tempted by the world's applause, its fame and gain, and succumb and oh! what a failure there ensued. How sad are the words, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4. 10). And we hear nothing more about him. That is the tragedy of it. In the same scripture how the word of Paul stands in vivid contrast, "I have fought a good fight . . . I have kept the faith" (verse 7).

How shall we end? Nay, young believer, how shall you *begin*? Your life is before you. What will you make of it?

We earnestly desire a right start for you. We are anxious that you should go on to an intelligent appreciation of the whole truth of God, the truth of the church, the truth of Christ as Head of the body, and we as members of Him and of each other, the truth of His second coming, but unless we begin aright, we cannot rightly go on to these grand truths.

Let me close with a magnificent verse:—"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5. 14, 15). We pick out two phrases from our text:—

"Not . . . unto ourselves"

but

"Unto HIM."

Which shall it be, "Unto ourselves," or "Unto HIM?" Let these words burn themselves into the hearts of the young men and women here to-night. If you live unto yourselves, you will assuredly be disappointed. You will lose a golden op-

portunity. You will simply put your teeth into the dust-filled apples of Sodom at the Dead Sea. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." The price is not good enough. It does not last. A worldly Christian is a pitiable object.

But live unto Him, who died for us and rose again, how great and *eternal* is the gain and how great is the present joy.

If as a result of this week's meetings we should ever happen to know that some of you young people have been stirred up by the Spirit of God to hand yourselves over to the Lord, spirit, soul and body, and to live for Him and His interests and under His guidance, these meetings will have been worth while. May it be so for Christ's name's sake. Amen.

Warning Words.

J.N.D.

There is nothing more dangerous than to use the word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately.

There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with saints on the things of God beyond what I hold in communion is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said, that is said, were we watchful as to this, and the word not so used in an unclean way. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with God; there is uncommon danger in it.

When living really in the power of communion, we have that energy of supplication that looks for answer.

Humbleness and dependence should be marked on all a saint's actions.

FAITHFUL, ZEALOUS, WORTHY, APPROVED.

E. P. Brown.

1 Cor. 4. 2 ; Gal. 4. 18 (New Trans.) ; Eph. 4. 1 to 3 ; 2 Tim. 2. 15.

THERE are four words in these four scriptures I have read upon which I want to concentrate. In the first scripture the word is "faithful," in the second it is "zealous," in the third it is "worthy," and in the fourth it is "approved." What a collection of graces, and all of them within our reach. Thank God our Christian faith is not a failure, even though we may fail; it is a vital force still if practised in this world, and everyone of us may be faithful, zealous, worthy, and approved. Some look upon our Faith as dead, like the dead languages, interesting to certain professors, the theologians, for instance, but irksome and useless to those in other walks of life. Thank God I think we have a demonstration in the meetings here this week with so many young people present that our Faith is a vital, potent force in the world. It means much to us any how. God in His grace has given us that which the world cannot rob us of. We have the Spirit of God, the only power by which we can live as Christians. Yet it is a serious matter when we look round and see what little effect Christians have upon this world. In the local newspapers of the city where I live a reporter was giving his impressions of the various sections of Christians, and he said "the last of the religious bodies of which I have personal remembrance is "the brethren." Their main tenets are based on a literal acceptance of the Bible, a book they know from A to Z (would to God they did) in a fashion most wonderful Why, I wonder, are they so ineffectual in moving the world? It is a source of continual surprise to me

that they should be unable to leave a greater mark on their day and generation." Well, we don't want to be famous in the world, but it is sad indeed if we are unable to affect people for God. The Apostles turned the world upside down. Have we been so occupied with questions, with difficulties, with splitting hairs, that we have forgotten that we are left in the world to please God, to be FAITHFUL to the One who in grace has taken us up, and to bear witness to Him before men?

This brings me to my first word "faithful." There is first, faithfulness to Christ. We need to be unswerving in our loyalty to our blessed Master and Lord. He has purchased us by His precious blood and has every claim upon us. The previous chapter to the one I read first closes with the words "Ye are Christ's," and to be faithful means loyalty to the One to whom we belong. The other day a very valued servant of the firm with which I am connected passed away. We wanted to send a wreath as a mark of our esteem, and one of the heads of his department came to me and asked what should be put on the card to attach to the wreath. I said to him "What do you think?" "Well," he said, "the one thing that can be said about him is that he was faithful." It is a grand testimony for any man or woman to have, that they have been faithful.

We have illustrations of fidelity given in the Scriptures. We might take the little girl that served in Naaman's house. There she was, torn from home and country,

brought as a slave into this man's house, and when the opportunity occurred she spoke of what was uppermost in her heart, that there was a God in Israel, and His prophet was there. She was faithful in her allegiance to her God, though an exile and a slave. Moses also gained a reputation for faithfulness. In the third chapter of Hebrews when the Spirit of God speaks of the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son over God's house, He introduces Moses, and says Moses was faithful in all His house, as a servant. He knew the law of God and did it; he had before him definitely and assuredly what God wished him to do and he carried it out faithfully. He was faithful to the God whom he served, and dear young Christian friends, you and I have a Master Who is worthy of our service, worthy of our confidence, worthy of our affections, how great is our opportunity of being faithful to Him. Have we got the single eye and the undivided heart? Do we say we have Christ on Sunday and business on Monday? There is the danger with all of us, of forgetting that we belong to Him seven days in the week. When Monday morning comes how readily we turn to the material side of things and forget that we are Christ's. I speak as a business man, and know well the tendency. However it is possible to be faithful to Christ in business and school life, and we shall be if our hearts are engrossed with Christ.

Joseph is a fine example of faithfulness. In the most trying and difficult circumstances in which a man could be placed he withstood the temptation when it assailed him. He belonged to God and he was willing to suffer prison rather than fail in his faithfulness to God. There then came

the opportunity when placed in a high and exalted position to display his greatness, but the Spirit of God dwells rather on the faithful way in which he fulfilled the responsibilities entrusted to him than upon his greatness and exaltation.

There is also faithfulness in our relations with our brethren. This is an important side of our Christian life; we have our associations with those who know and love the Lord. We desire to follow with them in the things of the Lord, as those who own His lordship. We ought to be anxious to be directed aright in everything we do and say that affects our brethren. But what of the back-biting and evil speaking and slandering? Is that faithfulness? May we be preserved from that for His Name's sake. We have been considering in our Bible Readings the subject of love to the brethren and I have no doubt all here do truly love the brethren. Our love to our brethren is a proof that we have thus passed from death to life, but we need to remember that love must be in exercise in a practical way towards them if we are to be truly faithful.

There is also faithfulness in our life in the world. How often we have to confess with shame that while we recognize that we owe allegiance to the Lord Jesus by attending meetings and appearing amongst our brethren, when in touch with the world we are slow to display that we belong to Christ. I will never forget during the great strike being called from my office because of a disturbance in the factory. When the men saw me coming they did not jeer and jibe as I thought they would, but they started to sing a hymn. I asked someone why they did that and the answer

was "They knew you were religious!" I do not tell you this because I claim to be faithful, but they knew to Whom I belonged.

The second scripture I read to you is very interesting when read from the New Translation. "It is right to be zealous about a right thing." Zeal is a grand thing and much to be desired. It is the exact opposite of Laodicean lukewarmness. There is generally speaking much lethargy abroad to-day. The prayer meetings are an indication of that. All sorts of things are pleaded by those who have not heart enough to be where prayer is wont to be made. Our zeal must shew itself in relation to Christ first, there can be no question as to the rightness of that, coldness towards Him must grieve His heart. Zeal that I might attain to something or shine somewhere is a poor thing and will not have the support of the Holy Spirit. It is good to be zealous in regard to all things of life. I ought to be zealous to perform my duties well and do all the things that devolve upon me in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, but it is in the things that are of God that I am called upon to be zealous particularly. To be zealous for Christ will lead me to seek to win souls for Him. I shall be interested in the gospel, and I shall be kept right as regards my service. Further I shall be kept right in my relations with my brethren. May God help us to seek the good of our brethren. Think what the Church is to Christ, chosen by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son, sanctified by God the Holy Spirit. Do we seek zealously the interests of the saints of God? Paul was willing to lay down his life for them, but he had to say that all men sought their own. May God give us the grace to consider our brethren everywhere, and

make us very specially zealous to see that the babes in Christ are helped in their pilgrim path. I speak now to some of my older brethren in this matter and would desire for them and myself to have that holy zeal that marked those of long ago who thought not of their own ease and welfare, but laboured fervently for the Lord. We need more zeal for the welfare of unsaved men and women. What zeal marked the beloved Apostle Paul when in the city of Athens. His spirit was painfully excited within him and he could not keep his mouth closed.

The fourth of Ephesians is a wonderful scripture. I do not intend to touch upon it theologically, but I want to speak about the word WORTHY. What a lovely word it is when we consider it. "That we might walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called." It is to walk in all lowliness and meekness. Paul could say it was by the grace of God that he was what he was, altogether unworthy in himself. He had been called by His blessed grace along with all the saints in the sense set out in the next few verses so beautifully. They give us the calling—the unity of the Spirit. We have been bound up with the one Lord and with all the saints by the Spirit, and we are to walk worthy of that glorious thought. In the second chapter of this Epistle the Apostle by the Spirit shews us what was in the heart of God, that there should be brought into one body both Jew and Gentile and that for His eternal pleasure. You and I are called to take our part in this great thought of God. It was the great desire of the Apostle that the Ephesian Christians should know something of the dignity of this, but when we reach the Book of the Revelation we learn how sadly they had

declined. They had left their first love, and there is no worthiness in that, it was their shame.

May we be able to hold up our heads more in view of the high honour that has been bestowed upon us and walk before and with Him in this world where He is still rejected and despised. There is a day coming when He will display His glorious triumph in gathering around Him those for whom He shed His precious blood. Think of it, dear friends, the blessed Son of God came down here that He might lay down His life for you and me, and bind us together in one. May we not lose that thought.

The last scripture I read enjoins Timothy, and surely you and me too, to shew diligence to be approved unto God. Timothy was perhaps apt to be very backward; he certainly did not push himself forward. Some are too forward, but if God is before us, and to be approved of Him is our desire we shall be kept right as to that. The exhortation is to shew diligence to present yourself approved unto God. It is a great thing to be pleasing to God. There was only One on this earth Who was fully and altogether pleasing to God, His well-beloved Son. We have, I know, the beautiful picture of Enoch, who gained the testimony that he

pleased God, and God took him, and we can rejoice that a family man such as he was gained such a testimony, but our standard and pattern is Christ. He was the One of Whom God shewed His approval in opening the heavens upon Him and saying "This is My beloved Son in Whom I have found all My delight." I do trust that in some small measure at any rate we all shall have the joy of hearing Him say to us some word of approval. We are to shew diligence as workmen, as those who have been taken up for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and surely each one of us has that place here. We are all called to be workmen for Him, to shew diligence to be approved by Him in relation to the truth of God. We think of "truth" sometimes as something deep and profound and beyond us. We must not do that. Let us cultivate an appetite for the truth, and the Spirit of God who dwells in us will lead us into all truth, the truth of God will abide, and will build up our souls, if we know it and live it, it will make us approved unto God. Let us strive diligently to have the spirit of Paul who could say at the close of his life "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." He knew he had been approved, and may God grant that we may know it too.

In waiting on the Lord there is a strength that nothing can resist. His hand can move everything, and His wisdom guide everything. It is folly and weakness to put forth our own efforts without Him. He makes everything contribute to the blessing of those that love Him and He orders everything according to the counsel of His will. Happy is the man that waits on the Lord!

A THREE-FOLD INVITATION.

R. Turnbull.

John 1. 35—39 ; Matthew 14. 28—29 ; Matthew 11. 25—30.

IN these three short scriptures we have a three-fold invitation from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. **COME AND SEE! COME! COME UNTO ME!** These invitations reveal to us the heart of the blessed Lord who desires to have us enjoy His company—and that He might reveal to us that peace and joy which He Himself so much enjoyed in His communion with His Father.

The Lord Jesus is the *SON OF GOD*. Invariably when He reveals Himself to anyone as Son of God, that one is brought down at His feet as a worshipper. This is very beautifully emphasised in the blind man in John 9, who had his eyes opened. When cross-questioned by his neighbours and the Pharisees, though he did not know very much about the One who had opened his eyes, he bore witness to the fact that “if this man were not of God He could do nothing.” That was too much for his critics, they excommunicated him, and cast him out of the synagogue, but the Lord soon found him and put to him a very remarkable question, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” “Who is He Lord that I might believe?” The Lord’s answer revealed Himself to the blind man’s heart “Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee!” and what a result? “Lord I believe,” and he worshipped Him. The revelation of Himself as the Son of God produced adoring worship!

John stood with two of his disciples—and contemplating Jesus as He walked—being wholly occupied with the excellence and glory of this

One, said,—“Behold the Lamb of God” Such was the power accompanying those words that the two disciples at once left their master and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said unto them “*What seek ye*”? I believe these are the first recorded words of the Lord Jesus after entering upon His public ministry and they let us into the secret of His heart’s desire, but they also came as a test to the two disciples. He does not ask “*Whom seek ye*,” but “*What seek ye*?” They did not reply “we have heard of Thy mighty works, and would like to see more of them,” but “Master where dwellest Thou?” Their answer reveals the fact that John’s testimony had created a desire in their hearts to be in the Lord’s company, and His reply “Come and see” gives them full assurance. If in our hearts there is a longing for His company His heart *is* desiring our company, and if we are near Him we shall hear the invitation “Come and see!” They responded to that invitation for they came and saw where He dwelt and abode with Him that day.

It is not recorded what communications He made to them. But we may be sure that He communicated to them “*things concerning Himself*,” and the result was that Andrew went and found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus saying, “We have found the Messiah (the Christ).” It was then that Simon heard his new name, the full meaning of which he would understand later. Then Philip went forth and found Nathaniel who was rather sceptical, but that did not thwart the enthusiasm of Philip who

when asked "Can here any good thing come out of Nazareth?" replied "Come and see!" To Nathaniel the Lord revealed Himself in such a way that he answered "Thou art the SON OF GOD, Thou art the KING OF ISRAEL." I feel sure that again this manifestation of the Son of God brought the disciples to the Lord's feet with worshipping hearts.

In Matthew 14 we find the disciples being sent by Jesus to the other side. Entering the boat they launch forth and as the evening gathered about them the ship was in the midst of the sea tossed with the waves, and the wind was contrary. In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them walking on the sea, and when His disciples saw Him they cried out in their fear saying "It is a spirit," but immediately Jesus answered saying "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." That voice was enough for Peter who replied "Lord if it be Thou, bid me come *unto Thee* on the water." How the answer thrilled him "COME." Nothing more was needed for loving, impetuous Peter. He saw in that person *HIS LORD*, he heard *HIS WORD*, and he doubted not *HIS POWER* — so without further ado he stepped over the side of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus. But you say, he began to sink! Yes he did, but do note carefully *he walked on the water* and with the Lord near him, the same power that enabled him to walk a few yards was there to enable him to walk a few miles if need be.

It was when Peter looked at the waves he began to sink, but the cry "Lord save me" was uttered and immediately there was stretched forth the Hand of Omnipotence to hold him up, and by the side of the Lord

he walked until they reached the boat, and as soon as they reached it there was a great calm. It was then the disciples realised who He was for they worshipped Him saying "*Thou art the Son of God.*" Again we have worshippers as He reveals Himself in this way.

Have we not in this incident a picture of our position? There is "this side" and there is "the other side." This side where our Lord was crucified on a malefactors' cross, but we are crossing to the other side into the joy of His eternal presence. When the Lord sent His disciples to the other side He went up into the mountain apart to pray—to pray undoubtedly for them. He was active on their behalf while they were facing the tempest, and though you and I have the difficulties of this life to meet while crossing to the other side—household cares—business anxieties—and the opposition of the great enemy of Christ and our souls, there is One who lives for us on high, ever living in the presence of God for us, His thoughts ever towards us, and when we may be thinking everything is looking black and the position a hopeless one Jesus Himself will draw near and if we really want His company, and say like Peter—"Lord, if it be Thou, bid me COME UNTO THEE." His answer to us will be "COME." We too have *Himself, His Word, His Power.*

Referring to our scripture in Matthew 11, John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ, was in prison; then the Lord a few verses further on speaks in a remarkable way of the very cities wherein He had moved among the people doing His mighty miracles, but instead of being received, He has to say "Woe unto thee Bethsaida, for if the mighty works

which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago."

"Woe unto thee Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven." In this very town had been the home of Jesus. He would be seen by its inhabitants every day, His actions being observed by all. Truly they were a privileged people—exalted to heaven, but He has to say to them "Thou shalt be brought down to hell" and He adds "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sidon in the day of judgment than for thee."

It was just then—when one would have thought that Jesus would have been received with acclamation—that his rejection is emphasised. How do you think you or I would have acted in such circumstances, or if our testimony were so refused? I think we might well have said, This is hopeless, we must give it up. It is no good going on any longer! but not so He, for we read "At that time"—just when everything was so black. It was at that time He turned to the Father and said "I thank Thee O Father." Another scripture puts it "He rejoiced in spirit"—He exulted—the thought really is I believe "leapt with joy"—and why? It was in the knowledge that everything was in the Father's hand, and that thought brought joy and rest to His heart, so that He can say "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth because 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."

Have you any opposition as a Christian, do you feel it difficult sometimes to go on? Are there those in the workshop or office that perse-

cute you? Can you, under such circumstances lift up your heart and say "I thank Thee O Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight"? This of course is only possible in-so-far as we have a knowledge of the Father, and such knowledge alone will enable us to rest in the thought that everything is in His hands. Is it not grand to learn that *we* may know the Father, so that with a note of thanksgiving we leave everything with Him?

The words of Jesus are very precious as He declares the fact that we may know the Father and then He invites us to Himself that He may reveal the Father to us and so enjoy His rest. Ponder these words—"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." This we can understand can we not, for how could it be otherwise? but think of the words following "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and *he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.*"

How can we know the Father except the Son reveals Him—and so the invitation is so precious "COME UNTO ME." A gospel text you say. Yes, often indeed used as such, and as gospel preachers let us continue to use these words of Jesus—what an invitation, "COME UNTO ME AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST," but these words in their full meaning convey to you and me, dear fellow Christians, a cordial invitation when wearied and distressed "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,

for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

There is of course such a thing as an "unequal yoke." You have heard that expression before have you not? If there is any here—I speak lovingly and tenderly — who are attaching themselves or allowing themselves to become attached to those who are not Christ's—so making an unequal yoke, may God this very night draw you aside into His presence, so that you may afresh and in new power hear these words from His lips "Come unto Me. Take My yoke upon you, learn of Me, I am meek and lowly in heart. My yoke is easy, My burden is light." Are you struggling under the load of the burden yourself? Jesus says "My yoke is easy, My burden is light"—

As we are drawn into the presence of the Father—sinners saved by grace though we be — can we not hear afresh those words that were uttered by the Lord Himself as He spoke to the woman by Sychar's well "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." Well might we ask what manner of persons ought we to be, having received these blessings through our Lord Jesus Christ, blessings eternal? We are brought into His presence as the Son of God as worshippers; and brought into the presence of the Father to worship in spirit and in truth, and I am certain that as our hearts are occupied more with Him who is everything to the Father, we will be more before Him as worshippers — He indeed is worthy.

Leave the place of self-will, venture fully, wholly upon God; you cannot perish, cannot trust Him too fully. When our wills no longer resist Him we find His blessed will, His love, bearing us upward carrying us as a child is borne in its mother's arms. Here we find the very might of His will which we so feared bears and lifts us into perfect rest.

Ridout.

Do not be afraid of full grace ; be well assured it does not mar holiness, whatever else deadens the conscience grace does not. Would a child's sense of its mother's love weaken its desire to please her? The strength we need is only found in grace. We stand in grace, and can be strong in nothing else. Legality is a sure sign of a self-centred man, grace turns our thoughts to Him in whom it is and from whom it comes; it makes nothing of self and everything of God in Christ.

Power is in the Lord and He works in grace. Prayer and supplication to Him will surely be answered. A sense of our own nothingness and of His fulness will lead to dependence upon Him, and enable us to maintain simplicity in our lives and ministry.

"Rejoice in the Lord *always*" and "Be careful for NOTHING." What sweeping words, leaving us without excuse for not being happy! "Nothing" excludes all care, and "always" leaves no time out. Only our confidence and rejoicing must be *in the Lord*. Why should we doubt His faithfulness? On His love we may always reckon.

FOUR HOUSES

J. D. Westwood.

Scriptures read:—Luke 9. 57—58 ; Luke 10. 38—42 ; John 11. 1—3, 19—20 ; John 12. 1—3 ; Acts 12. 11—12 ; Acts 16. 14—15, 40 ; 2 John 1—6, 9—10 ; Revelation 2. 18—19.

I WANT us to see what Scripture says about four houses. There is a Shakespearean passage familiar to any boy or girl who has gone through school. It runs somewhat as follows:—“Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that. You take my house when you do take the prop that doth sustain my house.” In other words, the prop that sustained the house of the Moneylender in question was Gold; and when his money was gone, his house went down like a pack of cards. We have the testimony of his daughter elsewhere in the book—a daughter is usually most loyal to a father—but she says a strong thing, “Our house is hell”—so much for the house the prop of which is gold.

Now, I want to ask you this evening, what kind of a house do we live in? A question for us all—I remember some years ago a young brother ministering in a certain place: he said that not long before he had been speaking in the open air, and as a result of his remarks someone said, “Are you talking to me?” and the brother replied, “Do you imagine I am talking into the air? Yes, of course I am talking to you.” Well, I am talking to you; but I am talking to myself as well, and to those who have not yet got houses; to any who, if the Lord leaves us here, will presently be having houses. This week already we have heard godly counsel, counsel which is disregarded at the greatest possible peril, with regard to a life-partner. If the Lord leaves us here—(we are looking for His return; but the Apostle who was on the very tiptoe of expectation with

regard to the Lord’s coming, was the one who arranged that good counsel should be passed on to faithful men, and it was well that he did so)—presently some of our young people will be having houses. It is to them then that I am speaking chiefly, and to myself; and you who already have houses can overhear what I am going to say.

In all four cases under consideration the house is spoken of as associated with the woman, for example “the house of Mary” (Acts 12. 12). Now, as we look at this first scripture (Luke 10. 38—42) we see a wonderful thing. In the previous chapter the Lord has to say “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” Who heard that? The young man who said he was willing to follow Him whithersoever He went. Certainly! But heaven also heard it; and what do you find in the next chapter? Heaven attended to it: And the Lord has one home to which at last He can turn when He is weary in the evening; it is a woman who received Him into her house. Presently she discovered what was apparently a good ground of grievance. We find fault with the sisters sometimes for their lack of logic, and indeed it is a good thing for us brothers that the sisters are not too logical, that they are swayed by their affections rather than by their reason;—but Martha was perfectly logical. Here was Mary apparently not doing her share of the work. And at times servants of the Lord feel that others are slacking, mere spec-

tators, taking it easy with regard to the service of the Lord. Martha was busy enough in the service of the Lord—hers was undoubtedly service for the Lord in that house—but when she wanted to have her sister corrected, she spoke to the right Person. What a great deal of trouble would be saved if instead of criticising each other directly or indirectly, we spoke to the Lord about our problems! Martha then spoke to the Lord; and she learned this from the Lord—that there existed a good part which Mary had chosen. It is beautiful to see that when death had come in and united these two sisters in a common loss, and when the Lord intervened and brought life out of death (for that is His peculiar glory) the household of Martha came to perfection. What kind of perfection? Martha willing to serve (that was her particular function) with Lazarus reclining at table, and Mary wholly absorbed with the Lord. Now what happened in the house at Bethany? The house was filled with the odour of the ointment that Mary poured on the feet of the Lord. No doubt there were present those who were not too attractive in many ways; but the thing that was attractive, the thing that permeated the house, was the odour of the ointment. If there is the grace of God in our hearts, surely that can dispel all the inequalities and solve all the problems; and our house will be filled “with the odour of the ointment.”

Now when we come to the second house, it is the house of Mary, and she is designated the “*mother of Mark*.” Apparently she was married to a Gentile, probably a Roman, but he is not mentioned, however his son is mentioned, and we learn from later history that this son failed as a servant, although the day did arrive

when he was given the high honour of writing the second Gospel. But the thing to which I want to draw your attention in the house of Mary is, in the first place, that she was a mother; and when I say a mother, I mean a mother not naturally but in the spiritual sense; she had the heart of a mother. May the Lord increase the number of spiritual mothers amongst the sisters! And then, in the second place, there were many people gathered together. One of the tests as to what we are doing with our house is: how many people can we get into them, or how many people keep as far away from us as they can? And they were gathered for the very best purpose — not to play cards. You say “why do you emphasise that in an assembly like this?” My answer is—the day may come when some young brother or some young sister led away by social ambition may be found so engaged. What were they doing in Mary’s house? It was a house of prayer; and when the Temple in Jerusalem was a den of thieves, Mary’s house was a house of prayer.

Now when you come to the third house, the house of Lydia, one has to note certain things with regard to Lydia. In the first place she was a seller of purple. When the Holy Spirit says a “seller of purple,” something definite is intended. Purple was the imperial colour. She was a seller of purple. In other words she wanted as many people as possible to be clothed with the imperial colours, the colours of that magnificent empire of Rome. What a change when the Apostle came along, and she had the wonderful experience of having her heart opened. You can open your house as much as you like; if your heart is not open, if all the time your heart is closed, it is a mere

show and sham. But Lydia's heart was opened, and then she wanted her household baptised, "she and her household." She became identified and all that she had with the rejected Christ, slain under the world power of Rome. It ceased to be magnificent in her eyes, she had come into the Kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.

We should be ambitious to see our household so ordered that in our ways and in our acts men may see we have come under the Lordship of Christ. And then she wanted the Apostle into her house; not with anything like condescension, nothing like that. And, on the other hand, the Apostle did not enter her house until she had constrained him. You remember the Lord at Emmaus did not enter the house till He was constrained. And according to the verse at the end of the chapter, it was to the house of Lydia naturally that the Apostle returned — to comfort and to exhort.

When we come to our last Scripture, we find a wonderful love-letter. It is written by John the Elder, and it is written to the "elect lady." May our dear young sisters be ambitious to be "elect ladies"! The highest honour for any woman is that God should think of her as "the elect lady." To this elect lady there is

written a love-letter. What a wonderful love-letter! I have not time now to go into the terms of it. A brother in one of our Bible Readings asked for the meaning of love; you have it here. There is nothing like Scripture for definitions—"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and *Love*? "That we walk after His commandments."

But you will notice that when a woman's heart is full of love, the Apostle will not allow it to degenerate into mere sentiment. A dear brother said to me last January: "The time may come, when we may not be allowed to gather together in assembly; but we can at least safeguard our homes." There is a phrase that "the Englishman's home is his castle," and that is mere arrogance. But we can safeguard our houses in refusing to allow therein anything that is not according to Scripture. I know the kind of house everyone of us desires—a house with a fine prospect, a house with a magnificent garden, and I have nothing to say against these things; they should be used for the munificent God. But let us see that we do not allow into our house anything that would detract from the truth of God. "Receive him not into your house, neither give him greeting."

Obedience was the principle on which the Lord acted in temptation. "It is written" (Matt. 4. 4) was His reply.

Obedience can be swerved from in no instance without breaking through the first and only principle of accepted relationship to God; it is the only exercise, save praise, of life to God.

Self-will is never right. *Obedience* to man is often wrong—*disobedience* to God.

OVERCOMING.

F. B. Hole.

1 John 2. 14 ; 4. 4 ; 5. 4, 5.

IT has been noticeable how evening after evening the addresses have been of a practical order. My first thought as to this closing address was to have dealt with another practical theme, but, after listening to the wholesome and important exhortations that we have had, I have concluded that our closing moments ought to be given to the consideration of great, and blessed realities, which form the basis upon which a life of spiritual victory can be built.

Now, depend upon it, the Christian life, normally speaking, is a life of victory, for God has set us up with everything which conduces to that end. In the three passages we have read overcoming is spoken of, and to overcome is of course to get the victory. I think I can point out in them four things—a kind of fourfold base—on which the life of victory rests, and all four are things provided and supplied of God to us. We have to be much more concerned as to how we utilize what God provides, so the practical note will not be absent from what I have to say. John's Epistle, though containing many warnings, is an epistle of victory; though the great victory book of the Bible is the book of Revelation, for there the climax is reached and the victory of God is manifested.

I am not going to speak on the theme that comes before us in Romans 7 and 8. We often speak of "victory over sin," but as a matter of fact the word, victory, does not occur in that passage: the word that does occur is, deliverance — "who shall deliver me?" This is what we need if it is a question of the working

of sin in the flesh—deliverance from this state of internal slavery and confusion, into which sin has plunged us; and this we get in Christ and by His Spirit. When that deliverance has reached us, then we are prepared to face the foes of an external sort, and find that the victory is ours.

In the few words that we read from chapter 2, we heard of those who had got the victory over *the wicked one*; we all know who he is, our great adversary, the devil. In chapter 4, it is getting the victory over the *false prophets*. Men were speaking by another spirit than the Spirit of God, and the children of the Divine family had overcome them. In chapter 5, the matter is very plain: it is overcoming *the world*. I propose to begin at the end, and to work backwards.

The first thing I point out is that, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." Some of you may have been thinking that victory belongs only to the older and more advanced Christians, but this word applies to all of us. It is a wonderful fact that, if you are a Christian, you have been begotten of God, and hence you have a nature which is in keeping with God who is love, and which is entirely out of keeping with the world—which is in fact entirely superior to the world—so as to get the victory over it. The world has vast attractions for the old nature; it has none whatever for the new.

Some of you may take up this statement and reason from it backwards, in a way I used to do myself. The statement alarms you, because

you say to yourself — I do not overcome the world, therefore the inference is that I am not born of God. Now as to that I must remind you that in our Bible Readings on this Epistle we repeatedly dwelt upon the abstract nature of the statements which the Apostle John makes. This is one of them. The Apostle is like an analytical chemist, but of a spiritual order. He is resolving things into their primitive elements and he is showing us what are the essential properties of those elements. He is not asking us to think of all the combinations and mixtures in which the elements are found in the ordinary way. The essential property of the new nature found in those who are begotten of God is this—it gets the victory over the world.

You know the story of Noah's Ark: how he liberated two birds as the waters began to abate. One was a raven, and one was a dove. One had an unclean nature with a very depraved taste, loving nothing better than carrion. The other, a bird of a very different order, found nothing attractive in the raven's food. The raven soon found something to satisfy its taste and did not come back. The dove found nothing till dry land began to appear. The flesh in us is like the raven, and feeds on carrion, but that which is begotten of God is like the dove, feeding only on that which is pure — the dove, we may remember, is in Scripture an emblem of the Spirit of God. Now just as the dove got the victory over the carrion, so does whatsoever is born of God get the victory over the world. It must do so: it is in its very nature to do so. We are viewing things abstractly, as I have said.

If however we view things practically we have at once to admit a dif-

ferent state of affairs. As born of God we have new tastes and desires, we see a whole world of things we never saw before, yet we know only too well the terrible downward drag of the flesh within us and how it loves the world and its evil. As born of God we are to have the victory, and the secret of it in practice is this—feed the dove, and starve the raven!

This is just what the Apostle Paul says in Galatians 6, only using another figure, when he speaks of our sowing to the flesh or our sowing to the Spirit. I think I see a man going forth to sow with a seed basket on either side. In one basket there is wheat, and in the other tares. He may sow one or the other, and the crop depends upon which. We may be frequently dipping our hand into the basket of tares and scattering that on the soil of our lives: if so, we must not be surprised at the ugly crop we have to reap. The exhortation of the Holy Spirit is that we sow that which is of Himself so that we reap everlasting life: in other words, that we do not feed the raven but the dove. But look at this, young Christian, and take courage from it — as begotten of God we have a nature of such a sort that it overcomes the world.

But we have a second thing in this fifth chapter. The victory that overcomes the world is "our faith." As the next verse shows, the allusion here is to the Christian faith that "Jesus is the Son of God." Jesus is indeed the Christ, but our faith travels beyond that to the glorious fact that He is the Son of God. John wrote his Gospel that our souls might be established in that faith, and if He shines before our faith as the Son of God, we know Him as the One

who came from that world — the Father's world — into this world. Who is he that gets the victory over this world but he that has by faith discovered the Centre of a very much brighter and better world than this? It is not a question of having the Sonship of Jesus as an article of our creed, of accepting this truth theologically, but of having it as a vital power in our souls.

A story is told of a man much used of God in days gone by. When young and at college he swept up a lot of prizes, and was complimented by the Heads. They said, "If you will do this and this, and take that course, we will make a great man of you." But he had recently been soundly converted and the answer he gave was something like this, "Gentlemen, I thank you, but I have one question to ask—if you make a great man of me, for which world?" They had no other world in view than this, so that rather surprised them no doubt. He did not pursue the course they had mapped out for him, since he had that other world in view. He spent his life in serving the Lord and he was much used in the expounding of the Scriptures. The fact of the matter was that he really believed that Jesus is the Son of God, the Master and Centre of a brighter world than this, and, in the light of that, this world lost its attractive pull; he got the victory over it.

It would indeed be good if we went from these meetings with something like that about us. God give us grace to cultivate it.

Then working backwards I come to the verse in chapter 4. The false prophets are in question here, men who are agents of the devil and energized by the spirit of antichrist. The

children of God overcome them because indwelt by the Spirit of God. The last words of chapter 3 are "the Spirit which He hath given us," and we know that He is given us to abide with us for ever. That Spirit is referred to when we read, "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." He who is in the world is that spirit who is designated in Scripture the god and prince of this world. The Lord Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." He has something in us for we have the flesh within; but being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we have One in us who is greater.

The spirit of darkness works in the world, and speaks through the false prophets who are gone out into the world, and who are by no means extinct to-day. They abound, alas, in the pulpits of Christendom — a Christendom which has become indistinguishable from the world. When the "New Theology" was brought out some thirty or more years ago, Robert Blatchford, a notorious infidel of those days, wrote to this effect, "Why, the Rev. So-and-so (naming its leading exponent) is as much an infidel as I am, and I am as much a Christian as he is. The difference between us is that he wears a white tie and I do not." The false prophets of old were inspired by the spirit of darkness, and that spirit is still at work; but He who is in us is greater than he. In that fact lies the victory for us.

Once more I step back, this time to chapter 2. Here we have the Apostle addressing those whom he calls "young men," and telling them that they are strong and have overcome the wicked one; the ground of it being, "the Word of God abideth

in you.” We must emphasize that word, “abideth,” for it has great significance. The Word could not possibly abide in me except I know it. I must read it; I must gain acquaintance with it; not only mentally—excellent as it is to have it stored in one’s memory by constant reading—but so that the truth conveyed in the Word really dawns upon the inward eye of my soul. Then it is that the Word gets into my affections, I love it, I treasure it, it commands my conscience, it begins to extend its governing power over my life. That is where strength lies. That is the way of victory over the wicked one.

I need hardly remind you that the Lord Jesus Himself gained the victory over Satan by the Word of God. He was indeed God over all blessed for ever, yet having become a Man, He fully took man’s place of subjection, and did not crush him by the might of His Deity. As the humble and dependent Man He had instantly the appropriate reply from the Word of God, and thus He gained the victory. That was the only weapon He wielded, and it is the only effective weapon available for us. If it abides in us we become skilful in using it.

Now a brief summary of what has been before us is this: As John presents things in this epistle, the adversaries are three: “the wicked one,” the “false prophets,” and “the world.” The victory for us however rests upon a four-fold basis. First there is *the work of God*, by which we are begotten of Him. Second, *the Son of God*, as the Object of our faith. Third, *the Spirit of God*, indwelling the children of the Divine family. Fourth, *the Word of God*, which is to abide in us. And these things are all presented to us, as we

have noticed, in an abstract way, so that we may grasp their real nature and character, without our minds being distracted by the mixtures and complications that we meet with in practice.

But having said that, let us be very careful to take up these things in a practical way. Let us not go away saying we have had a very good time considering a wonderful vision, a delightful kind of Utopia, in which victory is theoretically ours. No! These things are made known to us in the abstract, in order that we may turn them into concrete reality.

We are born of God, but then as this very Epistle enforces, the flesh is still in us; so the secret of practical victory in this connection is going to be—to go back to my figure—the feeding of the dove and the starving of the raven. Feeding on the Scripture will feed the dove. Prayer will feed the dove. Service for the Lord will feed the dove. Light and trashy literature won’t feed the dove but the raven, and so with many other things; only I cannot settle all the points for you. Here is a problem, says someone, I wish you would tell me what to do and relieve me of the bother in my mind. But this “bother,” this exercise of mind is good for you, and it will be easily settled if you judge of a thing by asking, Will it feed the dove or the raven? These simple practical things are the hinges on which the matter turns. Victory will be yours as you go in for that which feeds the dove, and say, no, to that which feeds the raven.

And then “our faith” that Jesus is the Son of God. The Jew expected the Messiah—for that was his faith—who would appear on earth and

restore all things here. His faith in the nature of things did not carry his heart outside the world. But that is exactly what "our faith" does. We are called to know the Son of God in glory. Oh! to have Him clearly, brightly shining before the eyes of our hearts. Then the world will at once be in our eyes but a very little thing, and victory over it will be ours.

Then, the Spirit of God. My word to you in that connection is the Scriptural one, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," because if you do you will be absolutely powerless. Left to your own resources you are but a little pigmy in the presence of

false prophets, controlled by the spirit of antichrist. Only the Spirit who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Lastly the Word of God; and this not merely in our hand or even in our minds, but enshrined and abiding in our hearts, when it governs and controls our lives.

Now, God grant that it may be so for every one of us. We want a life of victory—do we not? Well, these Scriptures have indicated to us the way. If by Divine grace we walk that way, we shall pass from defeat to the sweetness of victory.

It was for me
That Jesus died—
No fountain here
Of joy or pride
That my brief span
Of mortal breath
Could only bring
A Friend to death.

But this remains
The heart to free—
That it was Jesus
Died for me,
And all my joy
And all my pride*
Belong to Him,
The Friend that died.

W. B. D—y.

*Pride is used in the sense of glory.

If there be one thing of importance now, it is Christian *devotedness*. I do not separate this from Christian doctrine, but found it on it.

The spring and source of all true *devotedness* is divine love filling and operating in our hearts: as Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5. 14).

Thus, in all true *devotedness*, Christ is the first and governing object; next, "His own which are in the world;" and then our fellow-men. First their souls, then their bodies, and every want they are in.

The activity of love does not destroy the sense of obligation in the saint, but alters the whole character of his work.

THE PREACHER OF THE WORD

J. T. Mawson.

A PREACHER is a messenger; he is sent forth with a report, and it is the Lord who sends him. This he must not forget, for "how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Romans 10. The man who keeps this in mind will be kept from self-importance and swagger. A great honour is put upon him certainly, but it is not he that is important but the message he carries. Being sent, his first thought must be the One who sends him. To "please Him who hath chosen him" (2 Timothy 2. 4; to shew himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," verse 15, and a "vessel meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" verse 21: this should be his one all-controlling ambition. His first thought must be his Master, and his last thought too, for he must return from his mission to Him to give account as to the way he has carried it out and the success of it. "He commanded those servants to be called unto Him, that He might know how much every man had gained by trading" Luke 19. 15. But he must also keep his Master in mind during his mission, for it will be a complete failure if he loses contact with Him, and, moreover the Lord never withdraws His eye from His servants, and here is a marvellous thing, "*A faithful . . . messenger refresheth the soul of his Master,*" Proverbs 25. 13. We may be sure that Solomon knew what he was talking about when he said that, and he said it by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The thought of the faithful messenger brings the Lord Himself to the mind, He is called "the faithful Witness," and how perfectly refreshed was the heart of His Father as He looked upon Him.

Twice, we know, He publicly declared His delight in Him, but there was not a moment by night or day that the Lord had not the secret assurance that He always pleased the One who sent Him. "As My Father hath sent Me into the world even so send I you," He said, so that He is the pattern as well as the Master of the preacher.

The true preacher comes from the Lord with a message to men. He comes to men, and he will always be ready to serve them, but they are not his master. "He is bought with a price and must not be the servant of men," 1 Corinthians 7. 23, in the sense of taking orders from them and being under their control. He is an ambassador of peace from God to the world and must know the divine conditions and terms of peace if he is to present them, and interpret them to men according to the mind of his Sovereign Lord. He is a bringer of good news to men from the Lord in heaven, and again we turn to Solomon who describes this very thing "*As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country,*" Proverbs 25. 25. And if he is "*a faithful ambassador he is health,*" Proverbs 13. 17. He is in himself a witness to the delivering, healing power of the message he carries, for health and holiness are words derived from the same root, and a faithful messenger is a man who is in spiritual health, there is a wholeness about him: his Master, his Master's message, and his Master's interests absorb him; but there is a solemn contrast to this given in Solomon's terse words, "*A wicked messenger falleth into mischief.*" "Wicked" is "wrong." This wicked messenger has wrong views of his Master, like

the man who said to Him, "I knew that thou wert an austere man," he has wrong views as to his message, and will substitute his own honeyed words for his Master's faithful message, and he not only falls into mischief himself, but causes others to fall into mischief also, for "*a man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet,*" Proverbs 29. 5. But "*a faithful witness delivereth souls*" Proverbs 14. 25. His words, which are his Lord's words, are words of salvation, setting souls free from the snare of the great and subtle adversary, for his words are truth, and the truth makes free all those who believe it.

But again "*He that watereth others, he shall be watered also himself,*" Proverbs 11. 25. "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God care for the oxen?" Surely He does, but He would have us learn the deeper lesson, that in labouring for other's good there is a peculiar joy, and the one who carries the message of grace from God to men is refreshed and blest and enlarged in doing it. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," Proverbs 11. 24. Whichever way the faithful messenger looks he will find joy and blessing for his own soul. What a joy for instance it is to be the messenger of such a Master. "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things I have made touching the King." And what a wonderful message is the one to be carried; the three greatest words in human lan-

guage are "God is love," and that is the message. And how great is the joy when the message is effective, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." And the faithful messenger has his own share in that joy.

It is a good thing to dwell upon the joy and the blessing, for these are great, "*The faithful man shall abound with blessings,*" Proverbs 28. 20, but warnings are also needed, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." Paul preached with power, and the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance, but he never could have done it, if he could not have added, "Ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sakes." So we read in his letter to the Thessalonians. He followed the Lord in his living; he was like his Master. The man who carries the Master's message and yet falsifies it by his life is a false witness, and "*a false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish,*" Proverbs 19. 9. "No man," said a wise old puritan, "preaches his sermon well to others if he doth not first preach it to himself." And certainly no man affects others by the truth he speaks except as he has been affected by it himself. "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Our sufficiency is of God," and if any man thinks himself able for this service of preaching the word apart from dependence upon God, he is surely heading for a fall as great and terrible as that of Simon Peter's.

God heard the prayers of Cornelius, but He also took notice of his alms. Acts 10.

“NOT ONE WORD”

W. Bramwell Dick.

“There hath not failed one word of all His good promise” (1 Kings 8. 56).

THAT was a splendid testimony that was given by King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. He traced the history of the Children of Israel from the days of Moses. Had he reviewed it from their side it would have been to record a melancholy story of failure, rebellion, departure. He recalled, however, not their treatment of God, but God's dealings with them, and he could truly say, “There hath not failed one word of all His good promise. NOT ONE WORD.” We launched forth upon the year 1937 encouraged by the “exceeding great and precious promises” of our ever-gracious God (2 Peter 1. 4), and now having reached the close of the year with its many and varied experiences, joy, sorrow; bitter, sweet; dark, bright; we can testify, can we not? “There hath not failed one word of all His *good* promise,” NOT ONE WORD. Some of us have passed many milestones on the road, others have touched comparatively few, and it may be for all of us the last one is just in sight for the Lord is coming. But each of us can say and to His praise we delight to say it, “There hath not failed one word of all His good promise.” NOT ONE WORD. He promised tribulation, and perhaps we have had that. He also promised peace, and it may be that the tribulation enabled us the better to appreciate the peace (John 16. 33). He promised us sorrow, many may have experienced that. He accompanied it by the assurance of joy, and how precious was the joy following the sorrow (John 16. 20). He promised the trial of our faith; He also set before us “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Peter

1. 7). He promised us the testing of our confidence, and, with that, the prospects of His near return (Hebrews 10. 35—37), and “There hath not failed (nor can there fail), one word of all His good promise.” NOT ONE WORD.

We look back over our life, be it short or long, we look back over the year of which this is the closing month. If we think of ourselves, alas! we have to deplore unfaithfulness, faithlessness, and much that has grieved His heart of tender love. We turn from ourselves to Himself, we think of His patience, His long-suffering, His love, His care, and we gladly bear witness, “There hath not failed one word of all His good promise.” NOT ONE WORD. What a God is ours! What He has been, what He is, He ever shall be.

“His faithfulness, for ever sure,
For endless ages will endure;
His perfect work will ever prove
The depths of His eternal love.”

The coming of the Lord seems so very near. It may be that we are to have but little more opportunity to experience His faithfulness, and to taste, in wilderness circumstances, His great love and patient grace. In any case may we know Him better, enjoy His love more, and extol His faithfulness, and praise His Name.

When He comes for us, when in the light of His presence we travel back over all the way that He hath led us, then how gladly shall we say “There hath not failed one word of all His good promise.” NOT ONE WORD. Meanwhile, and in this confidence,

“We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.”

A SEEMING CONTRADICTION

F. B. Hole.

“Let both grow together until the harvest” (Matthew 13. 30).

“Come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Corinthian 6. 17).

THAT there are no real contradictions in the Word of God we are well assured, though there are passages that present a contradictory appearance to the superficial reader. On closer inspection however the contradiction disappears and some rich spiritual instruction comes to light. A case in point is furnished by the two scriptures noted above.

In Matthew 13, all attempt on the part of the servants of the parable to separate between the wheat and the tares, by rooting up the latter, is *forbidden*—the wheat representing “the children of the kingdom,” and the tares, “the children of the wicked one.” In 2 Corinthians 6, a separation between the believer and the unbeliever is strictly *enjoined*. There certainly seems to be a contradiction here.

It cannot be urged that different epochs are contemplated in the two passages, and that the solution of the problem lies in that. The parable of the tares in the field is one that shows how the kingdom of the heavens in its present form has taken on its very mixed character, which is to be ended by the coming of the Lord; and consequently shows that the mixture must persist throughout the present period. Paul’s instructions as to separation are valid for just the same period. Both passages apply to the present epoch in which we live.

We do notice however that it is *the kingdom of heaven* which is likened to this inextricable mixture

of wheat and tares in the field; whilst the instruction to come out and be separate from the unbelievers is addressed to “*the church of God* which is at Corinth.” There is a difference here. Let us consider it.

The kingdom of heaven is of course not heaven but rather that sphere on earth where the rule of heaven is acknowledged. All those who profess and call themselves Christians profess to be under the authority of the Lord who has taken His seat in the heavens. In this parable “the field” is explained by the Lord as being “the world,” and it is by the sowing of the good seed in the world that the children of the kingdom have been brought forth. By the enemy’s sowing of tares in this same field have the children of the wicked one been produced. All are in *the same world* and thoroughly mixed together, especially in those parts which we may speak of as Christendom.

Now this parable makes it very clear that it is not the business of the Lord’s servants to-day to attempt to disentangle the children of the wicked one and clear them out of *the world*. They will be disentangled from the children of the kingdom and cleared right out when the Son of Man comes and inaugurates the era of the kingdom displayed in power, and the work will be done by angels and not by men. To clear the evil out of Christendom is no business of ours.

Many Christians cling to the idea that to the church has been com-

mitted the mission of converting the world; that the Christian gospel, supplemented by Christian education and influence, is going to reduce the tares and ultimately eliminate them, and that so the millennium will be introduced. There is no support for this idea in the parable, but the very reverse. The suggestion made by the servants of the householder was that they should root the tares out of the field, and this was forbidden by the householder. He saw that they lacked the necessary discrimination and skill, and that their efforts would result as much in rooting up wheat as in rooting up tares.

There was a prophetic warning in this. We have only to read a little history to learn what efforts have been put forth by the great Papal system to root the tares out of the field—in other words, to eliminate “heretics” from Christendom, by destroying them out of the earth. In no country was the Papacy more successful in this work than in Spain. They piled the faggots round the “heretics” and burned them by the score, calling the solemn occasion, “auto-de-fe” which means “an act of faith.” The irony of it! Much of Spain’s present day misery can be traced back to their fatal success.

They did their work all too well. No one was spared who confessed faith in Christ as the only Mediator, apart from His virgin mother, and saints and angels. There were not many “heretics” in Spain, so the Inquisition ended with the triumphant feeling that they had rooted all the “tares” out of the land. In reality they had rooted up every visible blade of “wheat.” If any system other than the Papal system attempted the same thing to-day, they

would only end by producing the same terrible result.

So a brief summary of the parable of the tares of the field would be this: while the kingdom of heaven persists in its present form, the human servants are forbidden to attempt to rectify matters by rooting out of the world the children of the wicked one.

But in 2 Corinthians 6 the church is in view and not the kingdom. Those who are members of Christ, and of His body, are not told to root the ungodly out of the earth; if they were, there would indeed be a great contradiction between the two passages. They are told to be separate as regards all “fellowship” with the ungodly. Just because we are not called upon to put things right in the great “field” of the “world,” we are called upon to let a strong line of demarcation exist, and be very visible, between ourselves and the world. The truth here is not *contradictory* of Matthew 13, but *complementary* to it.

Examine the passage for a moment and see how this is so. We are not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” The word “unequally” might more accurately be translated “diversely.” It is an allusion to Deuteronomy 22. 10, where it is forbidden to plough with such animals together as an ox and an ass. They are diverse in nature, and hence thoroughly different in habits and gait. It would be an utter misfit and entail misery for both animals. Now there is a fundamental *diversity of nature* between the believer and the unbeliever, which forbids anything like a yoke between them. Of course we move amongst unbelievers and have much contact

with them in our daily callings, and oftentimes even in the home. We are called upon to behave with the utmost grace and to let our light shine before them. But we are not to be *yoked* with them.

The question may be asked—What exactly constitutes a yoke? The following verses, containing a series of questions, help to answer this. “What *fellowship* . . . what *communion* . . . what *concord* . . . what *part* . . . what *agreement*?” These five words show what kind of thing is forbidden. Moreover they are followed by the positive instruction to “*come out* . . . be *separate* . . . *touch not* the unclean.”—three other words which reinforce the five questions. We are not to involve ourselves in any fellowships or partnerships which would yoke us to unbelievers and commit us to the unclean things with which their world is filled. Without any question marriage is a yoke of that kind, and business partnership is another; and other things too come under the scope of this word. Again and again we have to ask ourselves when commitments are proposed to us—Will this thing involve me in an unequal yoke?

Many a godly Christian has had to suffer as to his worldly prospects because he obeyed this scripture. He

could have made a lot more money if he had consented to partner some ungodly man and share in his enterprises. This is just what the closing words of the chapter contemplate. We may be losers as to the things of the world, but we shall not ultimately lose, for the Lord God Almighty will take us up and father us in a very real way. We may always rely on Him.

In connection with this such scriptures as 1 Corinthians 5. 13, and 2 Timothy 2. 19—21, have their place. Both show that flagrant evil—whether moral or doctrinal—is not to be given lodgment in the bosom of the church of God. Not only is there to be a clear-cut line of separation between the saints and the world, but evil of the types mentioned in these two passages is to have no place in their midst. And this is the more urgent and important because we are found in the midst of such a mixed state of affairs in the world. *Just because we cannot root the tares out of the world field, it is so important to maintain the line of separation, which is warranted and enjoined by the Scripture.*

Rightly understood then, the two passages, cited at the outset, support and reinforce each other.

Whatever enfeebles attachment to Christ destroys power. It is not gross sin that does it, which of course will be met and judged; but it is the little things of everyday life, which are apt to be chosen before Christ. When the world creeps in, the salt has lost its savour, and we shew that a rejected Christ has little power in our eyes. The Lord keep us in the path with Christ, where all is bright and blessed. If the film of this world has been drawn over our spiritual vision, hiding Christ from us, He alone can remove it.

THE LIVING WATER

J.N.D.

John 7. 37—39.

THE Lord has prepared, and wonderfully given, that which is to be the very comfort and stay of our souls while in this wilderness: "He that believeth, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Christ can cause you to overflow with the spiritual apprehension of His refreshing grace. He will make you so one with Himself, that the fountain, the inexhaustible fountain, which He contains, shall be so indwelling in you, as to be ever flowing, ever streaming, even in the wilderness: not coming in only, but flowing out in joyful acknowledgments of spiritual refreshment.

It was this that Christ promised He would give after His departure: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

This was the promise He gave on the last day of the feast—the promise of the Holy Ghost, which *should* be given to him that believeth.

The blessed Comforter was given for our refreshment in the wilderness.

What fills the soul of a Christian with bitterness is the practical experience that he is not yet come up out of the wilderness — that he is not yet in the glory. But, to refresh and comfort him, the Lord gives him within himself, and while here, these "living waters." "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Could your hearts contain the thousandth part of that love which the Spirit could impart, your gratitude would overflow exceedingly, in the apprehension that, even in the desert you have constantly within you a witness of the overflowing fulness of Christ's love, the fulness of His fellowship, and the fulness of His joy.

Brethren, I would ask you, Are you grieving the Spirit? Are the things that you are occupied with such as would find a place amidst these living waters? Are your associations and desires capable of being assimilated with these pure streams, and together flow unruffled and untainted? Or are its operations restrained by your assimilation to what opposes it?

Have you deprived yourselves of the comfortable perception of His overflowing fulness within you, by gratifying "the old man"—engaging in those things which the Spirit abhors—tempting Him to leave you low and barren? for where there is a cleaving to, and seeking of, the things of sense, it necessarily keeps us lifeless and languid, even sometimes as though there were no Spirit in us at all.

Are you conscious that there is in you this fulness — this overflowing fulness — from the glorified Christ? Why are you *not* conscious of it? Only because you are *practically* disowning Him.

Oh! brethren, we are losing much of the joy and consolation of this divine Spirit, by our own inconsistencies, and love of what grieves Him.

THE CONFLICT

W. T. Fullerton.

Ephesians 6. 10—18.

IN considering the power and wiles of the devil, how comforting are these words "*Be strong in the Lord.*" "Strength is found alone in Jesus." Yet that is not exactly what the word says, but, "Be strong in the LORD." He is the same person, God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ. It was a happy day for you and for me when we confessed Him as our Lord. We acknowledged His authority, His supremacy. He has been raised up above all the power of the foe. He is Lord, He is Victor, and our strength and our resources are in Him.

We could not expect to find the needed strength apart from the Lord. What could we do apart from dependence upon Him, subjection to His known will, and communion with Him? If there is not that, what is there? Nothing but the will of the flesh that can avail nothing against this great foe. Nay, it will put us quickly into his hands.

"*And the power of His might.*" What a word is that to lay hold of! When He was here on earth His path was one of infinite grace. Yet we see also the power of His might. He bound the "strong man" and spoiled his goods; His enemies quailed before Him; He cast out many devils, and now that He is raised up from the dead and set far above all principality, and power, and might, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, is His power one whit less? We must consider Him if we are to face the foe with boldness. We shall not fear him if we know our Lord and His power.

"*Put on the whole armour of God.*" The whole armour. Not one piece missing. How foolish would the soldier be who went into battle only partly panoplied; the enemy would get the man just where the piece was missing. It was during the war, a brother in the Lord and I stood together looking over the top of the trench. It was a beautiful morning, there seemed no danger, no sign of the enemy. When crack, and my brother got a bullet in the helmet,—his helmet saved him. Beloved brethren, we may be careless, but the foe is not unwatchful. It is when we are off our guard that he gets his opportunity. We must have the whole armour, and it is the armour of God. No human wisdom will do here. We cannot beat the wiles of the enemy by human argument or anything of man. We must have what is of God.

"*That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*" It is his wiles we have to fear. It is not his strength—the Lord has met that—"the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." The Lord overthrew his power by dying, the cross was the victory, and we are entitled to treat him as a defeated foe. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." But his wiles! his methodical stratagems! He is a master there!

"*We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*" These are the powers that are behind the hatred that is against the

followers of Christ in other lands, and they are just as much against us, and in this war there is no armistice, no quarter. Do we not get here a hint of the method of the attack? It will be through the world, that subtle thing that lies in the wicked one—where does it begin and where does it end? “All that is in the world is not of the Father” (1 John 2. 16). The man with the single eye will say, “If it’s not of the Father it is the world.” The enemy will use it if we give him the slightest opportunity; he will allure the heart, spoil the joy, dull the apprehension of and appetite for heavenly things and drive us in our faith and experience from the heavenly places in which the grace of God has set us. We are to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand, and equipped with the whole armour of God, He can enable us to do this.

“*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.*” What do these several pieces of armour indicate? Is it not the state of the soul? It is practical. When we came as sinners to God we had no character to maintain. By grace we were saved. But now that we are saved character has a large place. I do not know what you feel about it, but I confess that I have not had the jealous care over my soul that I should have had, the girdle has often been slack. Who has not known the benefit of a girdle; it braces up the whole man, it can also be used for gathering together flowing garments.

The Christian girdle is the truth, the word of God. We need it in our inward parts, controlling our affections and our motives. It is as we are inwardly controlled by the word that we shall be outwardly consistent with it. We could not have right out-

ward conduct unless right inwardly. Christian, pull the girdle tighter, brace yourself up with the truth, gird up the loins of your mind; don’t let your affections and thoughts flow carelessly to the things of the world. You will be defeated and out of the battle before the fight begins if you do. There must be no such thing as unbuckling the girdle until we reach our Home. There we shall ungird and rest from all conflict, for there will be nothing there but what is of God.

“*And having on the breastplate of righteousness*” “Christ is made “unto us righteousness,” and we are made the righteousness of God in Him” 1 Corinthians 1. 30, 2 Corinthians 5. 21. The knowledge of this gives us confidence before the foe “Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Yet there is more here, the breastplate is *practical* righteousness. It is consistency with what God has made us in Christ. Where there is this consistency the Christian can look the enemy in the face, his heart does not condemn him; he has a conscience void of offence before God and man. The blood of Christ gives a purged conscience before God, and consistent, righteous walk gives a good conscience before the enemy.

“*Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*” If our feet are thus shod we are ready for long marches in the wilderness, “In the world ye shall have tribulation but in Me peace.” These shoes will enable us to walk in peace towards all, and in openness and confidence. There is a moral order here, “the effect of righteousness is peace.” “They shall walk and not faint.”

“*Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to*

quench the fiery darts of the wicked." "I believe God," said Paul, in the darkest hour, and when the ship on which he sailed was about to be broken by the great storm. He had the shield of faith. A saint once said to me, "I have lost my faith." What had happened? Bereavement and poverty had come in, and the shield of faith was let down and the devil got in a horrible dart — "Is there a God who cares?" Have you ever been there? I know what it is. In those dreadful days of the war, surrounded by hate and desolation, and death daily staring one in the face, and I lifted my heart to God and the heavens seemed brass. I let down the shield of faith and the dart got in, "Is there a God after all?" But how infinitely gracious is our God! The shield of faith was up again. "Thou art good and doest good," and that served through thick and thin and has served many times since. That quenched the fiery dart and filled my heart with peace. The saints of God who are suffering in those European countries are needing the shield of faith in these days, but we need it here as much as they. "*And take the helmet of salvation.*" We can lift the head with boldness, for, if God be for us, who against us? We are on the winning side, we anticipate the victory and can rejoice. He who has saved us, and is saving us, will save us to the uttermost and

to the end. We can sing in the face of the foe.

"*And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*" What a weapon is this! And the Spirit can use it against the enemy through us. It was the weapon with which the Lord silenced him in the wilderness, and we have no other. It meets every difficulty, it is suited to every circumstance; and *Praying always*. The word of God and prayer go together. The soldier of God is a dependent man. He is an obedient man, subject to the word; he is a dependent man, a man of prayer.

But remember you are not fighting a lone fight, there are others in this army of God, your need is their need, and theirs is yours, hence prayer for them as they pray for you is necessary. And finally do not forget God's work in the world. Men and women every where are in the thralldom of the devil. Then pray, pray for the gospel, and for the preachers of it, pray earnestly that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified. "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication FOR ALL SAINTS; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of THE GOSPEL.*"

There is not a single thing in which we have served Christ that shall be forgotten; all shall come out that is real, and what is real is Christ in us, and Christ only.

What is the mark of the action of the Holy Ghost on the soul? The Lord Jesus gets a place which He had not before, and if you are full of the Holy Ghost, you will have no object but Christ, no thought but Christ, no end but Christ, no will but Christ.

GOD'S WAYS ARE BEHIND THE SCENES.

Inglis Fleming.

“THE Lord reigneth” (Psalm 93). Here is the heart’s resting place. Amid the storm and stress He rules, and “None can stay His hand or say What doest Thou?”

Psalm 93 brings this glorious truth before us. In it “the whole history of God and man in government” is brought before us. From eternity in the past to the millennial reign in the future He rules and over-rules.

“The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord is clothed with strength wherewith He hath girded Himself” (verse 1).

Apparelled in majesty, He sits on high and in His essential glory no man hath seen or can see Him. But “He hath girded Himself with strength” and manifested “His eternal power and Godhead” in the works of His hands. Thus we see in creation, “parts of His ways, but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?” (Job 26. 14).

“The world also is established that it cannot be moved” (verse 1).

As everything *exists* through Him so everything *subsists* in Him. He upholds all things which He has created. Of old “He spake, and it was done: He commanded and it stood fast” (Psalm 33. 9). By the same word He maintains order in the universe, sustaining all by the word of His power (Heb. 1. 3).

He has swung the earth on its orbit round the sun and none can move it from its place. With exactitude and promptitude it makes its

journeyings. Man’s best timepieces vary and have to be corrected from period to period by the apparent movement of the sun. So evident is this variation that on the great ocean liners three chronometers are carried instead of one only. And then the average of the times shown on their dials is taken because they all differ slightly and it is of all importance to know as nearly as possible the exact hour so that observations may be made to determine the ship’s position day by day. And then finally *all* the instruments have to be adjusted when the voyage ends.

Meanwhile the earth moves on in its appointed course, unaffected by all that passes upon it, being under the control “of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1. 11).

“Thy throne is established of old: Thou art from everlasting” (verse 2).

In our finite weakness we turn with joy to Him in His infinite strength. “The eternal God is” our “refuge.” In this thought Moses, the man of God, delighted. “Lord,” he cries, “Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God” (Psalm 90. 1, 2). Age after age passes, dispensation after dispensation comes to its close, generation after generation perishes, *but God abides*. “Great is our Lord, and of great power, His understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147. 5). Alas, to His power there is opposition. Against the rul-

ing of His throne there is rebellion. Sin has come in. Thus we read,

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice; The floods lift up their waves" (verse 3).

Duped by him who deceiveth the whole world, man has resisted the authority of his Maker. All down the centuries, from the fall of our first parents, the floods of man's pride and self-sufficiency and alienation have raised themselves against God and His interests and His people.

An instance of this was seen in Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God was about to redeem His people from their bondage. "Let My people go!" He demanded of the king. But Pharaoh hardened his heart and stiffened his neck. Of him it might be said, "He stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon Him even on His neck, upon the thick bosses of His buckler." His proud antagonism was all in vain. Israel came out and, not in poverty, but, "with great substance," as God had said four hundred years before (see Gen. 15. 15), and Pharaoh and his hosts were overthrown. This redemption of Israel led Jethro to cry, "Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh who hath delivered the people from under the hands of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them" (Exodus 18. 10—11). "They dealt proudly . ." He was above them. "The floods lifted themselves," but in vain.

But the most notable instance is in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. There, urged on by Satan, men are seen at their worst. It is their "hour and the power of darkness." "The floods have lifted up their voice" aloud. Tempestuous waves and raging billows rear their heads against the Son of God. Apparently they are overwhelming Him for the waves and the billows pass over His holy head, and "Deep called to deep" as the waterspouts of judgment were out-poured. But having suffered all and yielded up His life, the Saviour rose triumphant, and sits at the right hand of God. Again, "the Lord hath triumphed gloriously." Entering upon this truth the company of believers lift up their voice to God with one accord, and say, "Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child (servant) Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, *"For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done"* (Acts 4. 24—28).

With "*wicked hands*" they had taken Christ and had crucified and slain Him. But behind all and above all was "*the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.*" He who sits in the heavens laughs—the Lord has them in derision (Psalm 2. 4).

Truly "there are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand"

(Prov. 19. 21). And again "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, He maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33. 10—11).

The raging waves of the sea foam out their own shame, but they reach not the throne of the everlasting God. He is above all their haughtiness and pride and makes the wrath of man to praise Him, restraining the remainder which does not serve His purpose.

Christ is the victor. By death He has annulled him who had the power of death and has delivered them who "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2. 14, 15). "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour." He is the captain of our salvation. He is the leader of many sons on their way to the glory of God. He stands in the assembly leading the praise of God.

Truly "the Lord reigneth" *now* as *He will reign*—and then manifestly in His coming kingdom.

It is the same to-day as at Calvary. The floods *lifted up their voice* then, they lift up their waves now. Opposition to God and His saints is ever in evidence. His Son, the eternal Word, was rejected then, His written Word is rejected now. His warnings of coming wrath are disregarded. His welcoming messages in the gospel are slighted. God is not in all the thoughts of men. But God IS, and He is carrying out His own purposes unhurriedly. He is over all in the government of the nations and in His own times will manifest Himself.

Solomon in his wisdom could say "If thou seest the oppression of the poor and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the highest regardeth and there be higher than they." Violent perverting of judgment and justice were seen at Calvary. They are to be seen to-day in the treatment of the saints of God and among men generally. But "*the higher than the highest*" regards, and He can turn the curse into a blessing. He can make the base metal of temporal affliction into the finest gold of spiritual prosperity.

"Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong
If it be His sweet will."

Futile indeed are the puny efforts of devils, demons and men against the will of God.

As another has said,

"The persecuting emperor little thought what he was giving us when he banished the apostle; no more than Augustus in his political plans as to the census of the empire knew he was sending a poor carpenter to Bethlehem, with his espoused wife, that Christ might be born there; or the Jews and Pilate's soldiers, that they were sending the thief to heaven, when they broke his legs in heartless respect for their own superstitions or ordinances.

"God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements: they will accomplish God's. The rest of them all perish and disappear. We have only peacefully to do His will" (J. N. Darby).

THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLE

Notes of Bible Readings in London. Norwood. October 9th.

THESE Epistles are generally thought to be the earliest of Paul's Epistles. They are the simplest of them all, and shew us in a free and happy way the effect of the gospel when received in unquestioning and simple faith. Paul does not press his Apostleship. There was no need for that, as the great truths of the gospel were in no way questioned, nor have we here the unfolding of truths that called for the authority that lay in his Apostleship.

Yet nothing could be greater or more blessed than the way this young church is addressed. "In God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." How eternally secure they were in such a position and relationship! This is the beginning of the Christian life, for the babes know the Father, but the oldest saint cannot get beyond it, nor shall we ever get beyond it. As all men in *natural life*, live and move and have their being in God, being entirely dependent upon Him, so in this new *spiritual life* we live and move and have our being in God, now known to us as Father. We could not be in this relationship with God, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father is the living and true God, and they were in Him, in the light and liberty and life and love of the revelation of Himself, in contrast to the darkness and superstition and bondage of their former paganism; and they were in the Lord Jesus Christ with faith and hope in Him, in contrast to the hopelessness of the unbelieving Jews who had rejected Him. This position and relationship was very real to these young saints; it ought not to be less real to us.

The Apostle found cause for both thanksgiving and prayer as he remembered them before God. The life that they lived in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ was fresh and vigorous, and he rejoiced because of it. Faith, love and hope—the essential characteristics of the Christian life, were in striking evidence, so that they worked and laboured and endured in the power of them.

Verse 1 defines their standing, and verse 3 their practical state. It is what the gospel had done for them, they had entered by it into a new life and that life had entered into them, and it was expressed in this threefold way. They were not saved by works, but *faith* produced works, as James tells us, and their labour was not that of a legal demand but the product of *love*, and they did not endure their sufferings with a dull resignation as that which was inevitable, but with a confident *hope* of the coming glory of the Lord. The work and labour and endurance may continue in a formal and lifeless way, this is sadly in evidence in the greatly favoured Ephesian church as seen in Revelation 2. They continued their Christian activities, and were most correct externally and ecclesiastically, but the spring of life was not there, the faith, love and hope were absent. Their work and labour and endurance were in the sight of God and our Father. They lived before Him, others saw the results of this in their outward lives. His eye rested on the inner springs, the work of His own grace within them.

In every verse in the chapter but one, one or more of the Persons in

the Godhead are mentioned, shewing that they had received the full revelation of God, as Father and Son and Holy Ghost.

Paul knew their election of God, not by revelation but by observation. These features of the divine life in them were the undeniable evidences of it.

The gospel had come to them in power and the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. This in the first place would be the way it came to them in the Apostle, and then the effect of it in them. Paul preached the word with power, but the power was not of man, it was of the Holy Ghost. If it had been in the power, the wisdom or the eloquence of man it would only have appealed to their human sensibilities and left them unchanged in heart and nature, but the word was in the power of God, it was preached in the Holy Ghost, and it divinely affected them, their consciences and souls were reached; then the Apostle preached the word with *much* assurance. He knew in his own experience the power and blessedness of the gospel that he preached. He believed, therefore he spoke.

The lives of the preachers were consistent with their message; lip and life were in agreement, an important matter, and one that should exercise every preacher of the gospel; there could be no power apart from this, for the Holy Ghost would be a grieved Spirit.

The preaching is given in Acts 17, and the impression left upon the opposers was that it was turning the world upside down, and the gist of it was that there was "another King—one Jesus." This gospel is the true life changer. The result of it at Thes-

salonica was a complete upheaval in the lives of those who believed, which led to a whole-hearted submission to the Lord Jesus. Every attempt at changing lives apart from the preaching of Christ and His rights is futile, the change will be only external and will leave the subject of it further away from God than before.

They became followers of the Apostles and of the Lord and this brought them into much affliction and joy of the Holy Ghost. How often these things go together. The affliction tests the reality of the faith, it separates the heart from the world, and makes it cleave to the Lord. Times of persecution have been times of spiritual progress and joy. David's sweetest psalms were sung in his times of adversity.

And these young saints became *models* to all the believers throughout all those parts. And this had two sides, what they were together in affliction and joy as having received the word, and what they were as sounding it out to others. If we are lacking on either side we are one-sided Christians and anything but models, but it is probable that these two sides go together, if there is decline on one side there is decline on both.

They turned to God from idols, that was their *faith*; to serve the living and true God that was their *love*; and to wait for His Son from heaven, that was their *hope*.

And what a change of view this must have been for the Jews among them who were saved, the despised and crucified Jesus of Nazareth was God's Son, and God had raised Him from the dead, and He was their deliverer from the wrath to come.

THE NEW BIRTH

A. J. Pollock.

THAT this is essential and vital is very evident from the plain words of our Lord: "Except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the Kingdom of God" and again: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot *enter* the Kingdom of God" (John 3. 3, 5).

This was said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, evidently a man of position and uprightness, and yet for him the ground was cut from under his feet in one stroke. No reformation, no patching up of the old, no mixing of the old and the new would do. The flesh will not do for God, and whether it be refined or coarse, cultured or rude, religious or irreligious, matters not. Nothing will do for God save a new start.

An illustration will help here. A belated traveller in Italy was obliged to seek shelter for the night in the cottage of a goatherd. The floor of his room was filthy, and he was on the point of requesting the goatherd's wife to clean the floor, when he discovered it was a *mud* floor. He reflected that hot water, soap, flannel and scrubbing brush applied to a *mud* floor would only make matters worse and produce a *muddier* floor. That which is mud is mud, and our Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (verse 6).

How could the traveller get a clean floor? By getting a *new* floor, made of clean materials and capable of being kept clean.

So in the spiritual realm. There must be a new floor as it were — a new nature—a new man.

It is interesting that another translation of our Lord's words, "Ye must be born *again*" (verse 7) is, "Ye must be born *from above*." This is clearly right for the word, *anothen*, translated *again*, is the same word used in the following Scriptures. "He that cometh from above (*anothen*) is above all" (John 3. 31). "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee *from above*" (*anothen*) (John 19. 11). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is *from above*" (*anothen*) (James 1. 17). "Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain *from the top (anothen) to the bottom*" (Matthew 27. 51).

The question then arises, Is the sinner born again in order to believe? Or, Does the sinner believe in order to be born again? The latter belief is that which is widely held among evangelical Christians. But it is evidently not a true belief. See what such a belief leads to. It means in plain English that the flesh is capable, as the flesh, of faith and belief in the Lord. It is the direct contradiction of Scripture, which says, "They that are in the flesh *cannot please God*" (Romans 8. 8). Surely to believe on the Lord Jesus is pleasing to God. Scripture declares that "the carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8. 7). Not that it is *at* enmity. In such a case reconciliation might be effected. But it says the carnal mind *is* enmity, and adds "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Surely this is final.

The writer, the Apostle John, confirms fully what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8. He says, "As

many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: *which were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1. 12, 13). Here it distinctly predicates that those, who believe, were already born again — born not of blood, that is we are not born Christians because our parents are such; nor of the will of the flesh, the sincerest desires of relatives and friends cannot bring it about; nor of man, no priest dropping a few drops of water on to the brow of an unconscious infant can bring it about; but it is OF GOD, and OF GOD *alone*, "born from above."

That it is God's sovereign act is again clearly stated by our Lord. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *SO is every one that is born of the Spirit*" (John 3. 8). If this verse is true, and it is, how can anyone believe in order to be born again, especially in face of John 1, 12, 13, just quoted where it is distinctly stated that those who believed were those who were already born of God? How blessed this is! What a sure foundation new birth has. For what can be surer than the sovereignty of God? What God does He does for ever in this particular. "The gifts [*including the gift of life as in the new birth*] and calling of God are without repentance" [*that is there is emphatically no change of mind on His part*] (Romans 11. 29).

Whilst we urge what we believe to be the true teaching of Scripture, that new birth precedes belief in Christ, or else it is the flesh that believes, an utter impossibility, it may be urged by some that we teach a man can be born again, and not be saved.

That is so, and we can give a plain Bible example of this. Take the case of Cornelius. We read in the Scriptures that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10. 1). Here is a man most evidently born again. A man devout, fearing God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and prayerful is surely not marked by a carnal mind which *is* enmity against God.

And yet this born-again man was told by the angel in a vision "send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house *SHALL be saved*" (Acts 11. 13, 14). Then evidently Cornelius was *not saved*, though devout and fearing God and prayerful, till he received the gospel at the lips of Peter.

The fact is the new birth is the *moral* preparation in the heart, which leads to repentance and belief. The man is *passive* in new birth. He is *active* in repentance and belief. At new birth a new clean cut *unsought by him* enters into his life. He does not understand it at the moment, any more than a new-born child realises that it has entered upon a new environment in coming into the world. "Born of water [*the word of God*] and the Spirit" (John 3. 5). Who can tell *how* that is accomplished? We only know that it is so, and that by some means God uses His word by the Spirit to bring it about.

The new birth, we may say, is God's secret. Repentance and faith we can take cognizance of. We are never told to have faith in order to be born again. Point to any Scrip-

ture that says so, and we will gladly bow to it. But such does not exist. We can however, point you to Scripture that exhorts men to repent. "God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17. 30). We can point to Scripture that exhorts men to believe. Our Lord said, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel" (Mark 1. 15).

We cannot account any man a Christian until he has received the gospel and trusted Christ as Saviour, but we may thankfully see traits in a man such as were seen so blessedly in Nicodemus and Cornelius that

would give us confidence that God had begun a good work in him, and that the initial stage of that was the sovereign act of God in producing the new birth, and if a good work has begun we can be "confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1. 6), that is God will finish the work He begins. Thus falls to the ground the argument that a born-again man might die before he could receive the gospel and would therefore perish in his sins. We can thankfully and gratefully leave God to do His own work in souls, and we may well leave speculation alone.

Love covering a multitude of sins.

J.N.D.

1 Peter 4. 7—9.

THE first thing that is enforced on the saints is *fervent charity*; not merely long-suffering, which would prevent any outbreak of the anger of the flesh, but an energy of love, which by stamping its character on all the ways of Christians toward each other, would practically set aside the acts of the flesh, and make manifest the divine presence and action. Now this love covers a multitude of sins. The Apostle is not speaking here with a view to ultimate pardon, but of the present notice which God takes—His present relations of government with His people for we have present relationships with God.

If the assembly is at variance, if there is little love, if the intercourse among Christians is with straitened hearts and difficult, the existing evil, the mutual wrongs, subsist before

God: but if there is love, which neither commits nor resents any wrongs, but pardons such things, and only finds in them occasion for its own exercise, it is then the love which the eye of God rests upon, and not the evil. Even if there are misdeeds — sins — love occupies itself about them, the offender is brought back, is restored, by the charity of the assembly; the sins are removed from the eye of God, they are covered.

It is a quotation from the book of Proverbs 10. 12: "Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all sins." We have a right to forgive them—to wash the feet of our brother. (Compare James 5. 15, and 1 John 5. 16). We not only forgive, but love maintains the assembly before God according to His own nature so that He can bless it.

FAITH, FAITHFULNESS, FRICTION

HERE are three things essential to separation from the world. Faith, Faithfulness, and Friction. Faith in God will have to be exercised, faithfulness will have to be in exercise in us, we shall require strengthening in our souls, we shall be cast upon God, and He will use the friction to polish us. I once saw a carter polishing the chains of his horse's harness. He had them in a bag which he shook backwards and forwards. I asked him what he was doing and he replied, "I am polishing these chains by friction." So it is with us. This friction must go on continually, there is no escape from it. Some saints appear to be under the impression that separation from the world can be carried on without suffering, but this is quite impossible. "If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus he shall suffer persecution." There is not a man living who can carry on separation apart from suffering. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me peace." If you are not prepared for suffering do not begin separation. Too many

have started already without this preparation, and I would say do not you increase the number. If you are not prepared for suffering—for distinct trial, then do not start, but ask God to prepare you for it. If you rush into it without faith you get the friction, it will not polish you but break you. If you have faith and faithfulness, then friction will polish you; but without these necessary qualifications the friction will not brighten you, and the devil will take advantage of your condition so that instead of your being a testimony for Christ you will be a source of weakness in the testimony. We must remember that to be prepared for separation will need God's help. There is not a servant on the earth who can prepare you, nor can a saint do so either. How blessed to know that if one is set for separation of heart to Christ there are all the resources of the grace of God at his disposal. The Father cares, the Son intercedes, and the Holy Ghost empowers.

God is our refuge, and passing events do not disturb Him.

He knows everything beforehand, nothing can shake His throne or change the love He has for us.

We are the objects of His love and of His tender care.

He bows down His ear to us when we speak to Him. Then instead of being disquieted, and allowing circumstances to press upon us we should make our requests known to Him.

If we trust Him wholly, and who will doubt Him who know His love, we can give thanks while we pray, for we are sure of an answer of grace to our prayer.

This is trust; and the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. It is not your heart that keeps the peace, but the peace that keeps your heart.

A PRELIMINARY CONDITION OF REVIVAL

T. Oliver.

THAT there is great need for revival of interest in the things of the Lord on the part of many of those who bear His name, may be accepted as a statement which does not call for much demonstration. But a revival of lasting value cannot be stirred up on the basis of sentiment or natural fervour.

There was a great revival in the day of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34). That revival evinced two distinct phases. (1) Josiah became king in Jerusalem at eight years of age. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. He walked in the ways of David, his ancestor, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left. Surely that was an excellent testimonial which compared favourably with the record of most of his predecessors! At twelve years of age he began to purge his kingdom from the high places, groves, images and altars dedicated to Baalim and he burned the bones of the deceased priests who had been associated with these upon their altars. He carried his activities into the neighbouring land of Samaria, most of the inhabitants of which had been carried captive into Assyria about 80 years previously; but apparently the remnant left in the land had continued in their old idolatrous practice.

Now, fourteen years after the initiation of his campaign against idolatry, i.e., in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land thoroughly he sent his officers to repair the House of the Lord. They delivered the money which the Levites had collected to the overseers and they passed the money to

the manual workers. There was no reckoning of the money that was delivered because all dealt faithfully (2 Kings 22, 7). That history could offer better examples of reliability is very unlikely. Yet there was something lacking!

(2) We now reach the second phase of the revival. The money enabled Hilkiah, the High Priest, to make a thorough overhaul of the House. In the process he found the Book of the Law of the Lord, given by the hand of Moses (2 Chronicles 34, 14). Hilkiah sent a messenger with it to the King. When the latter heard the words of the Law read, of which apparently he had previously but slight acquaintance, he was greatly affected. The divine laws had been broken in a flagrant manner and fearful judgments had been incurred.

After rending his clothes the king sent messengers to Huldah, the prophetess, to be informed as to his future course of action. She assured the messengers that on account of Josiah's godliness and grief for the prevalent wickedness, the stroke of judgment would not fall in his time.

Moreover, as a consequence of the words of the Book being found and received by him the king became greatly exercised that his subjects should hear the same words. Thus in the House of the Lord he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant. He persuaded them to renew their solemn Covenant with the Lord. The people stood to the Covenant all the days of his life. Then he caused all the ves-

sels which had been dedicated to the worship of Baal to be burned. He slew all the idolatrous priests, soothsayers and spiritistic media in the cities of Judah and Samaria.

But he was not content with crushing evil, he was now in a position to do good and he caused the Passover to be celebrated with an exactitude and alacrity which had not been in evidence in the palmy days of Solomon. Indeed there was no Passover which had been celebrated like it from the days of Samuel the prophet.

It will be observed that the marvellous increment to the revival was consequent on the word of the Lord being discovered, read, received and enacted. The word is that of Him with whom is no variation nor re-

traction. So that it is safe to affirm that there cannot be any revival of lasting benefit which is not controlled by the Word of God.

In evangelical circles there is frequently much stir, yet the Scriptures do not receive their rightful place as the Word of God, which is living and dynamic. Much ignorance of the letter of Scripture is evinced so that we cannot wonder that the still more subtle entity of the doctrine or teaching of Scripture is not apprehended.

May we be disposed to learn from the example of Josiah to put a premium on the Word of God as the initial requirement in our research after the much desired end of revival of interest in the Lord's work!

Praise!

Oh! our blessed God and Father—
 Now in peace we worship Thee!
 By the Spirit sealed, we gather
 As Thy sons to joy in Thee.
 Happy in Thy full salvation—
 Nought but praise our hearts doth
 swell;
 Brought to Thee—past condemna-
 tion,
 Now we join Thy grace to tell.

Praise! our sins are all forgiven,
 Cleansed are we from every stain;
 Praise, for we to Christ are given,
 Called by His most "worthy
 Name."
 All our enemies are silenced,
 Stand we justified and free;
 Praise! Thy wondrous love hath
 triumphed,
 "More than conquerors" are we.

Praise! for though our sins had
 bound us
 Captives under Satan's sway,
 Proofs of vict'ry now surround us,
 Free, we tread the desert way.
 We, so late enslaved, defiled,
 Are the people of Thy choice;
 Saved, redeem'd, and reconciled,
 In Thy favour we rejoice.

Praise! that from this world we're
 sever'd
 None have we to please but Thee.
 Praise! that we to Christ are
 gather'd,
 And in Him Thy glory see.
 Past the desert Thou wilt bring us,
 Feed us, lead us, be our stay;
 Glad we go, leave all behind us,
 Heaven shall end our pilgrim way.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

The Parable of the Prodigal

"Please explain the relationship in which the prodigal stood to the father before he went into the far country. Does he represent a backslider? and what do the robe and ring and shoes represent?"—READER.

THE two sons of the parable do not represent those who are sons by faith in Christ Jesus, but sons of God in the sense in which Adam was a son, by creation (Luke 3. 38); and as one of the pagan poets, quoted by Paul, had said, "We are His offspring," Acts 17. 28. Hence the prodigal, in his wandering, does not represent a Christian who has back-slidden, but a sinful child of Adam. Man was created in the image and after the likeness of God and set in the earth to represent Him, and hold it for Him. From that high honour he departed and fell when he gave his allegiance to the devil instead of to God, and he became what we see him now to be, not God-centred, but self-centred, a prodigal Adam, and not a progressive, and much-to-be-congratulated ape.

The race is a prodigal race. There was no difference between the elder and the younger sons, for when the elder spake he shewed that he had not one feeling in common with his father, had no sympathy with the compassions of his heart, and might just as well have lived a thousand miles away from him. He was as self-centred as his brother, and morally as far away from his father as he.

The best *robe* signifies fitness for the father's house, which fitness the one who turns to God through Christ receives. Christ becomes his righteousness; the ring would be the pledge of an endless love, and the shoes of sonship. The best robe was something the prodigal never had before: through redemption and in Christ we have a more blessed place before God than ever Adam had or could have had in innocence.

The Transfiguration

"In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, it is stated that 'after six days the Lord went up into the Mount and was transfigured.' I have heard this number of days applied to the time that will elapse between Creation of Man and the Millennium, but this seems to be reading into Scripture what is not there. What do you consider is the significance of these six days? Luke says 'about eight days.'"—FIFE.

WE must avoid fanciful interpretations of Scripture, there is no profit in them, and they are positively harmful, for they are really an irreverent handling of the Word of God. Yet nothing in Scripture is without its significance and since Matthew's and Mark's Gospels emphasise the *six days* and Luke's "about *eight days*," we ought to enquire, Why? There is no contradic-

tion, and each Gospel is consistent with itself. We suggest that Matthew's being the Gospel of the King, shews His kingdom glory *after the six days* as a foreshadowing of that which will come in after the labour and travail of this groaning creation is finished. "Six days shalt thou labour." Six days is the work-day week and God is allowing man to work out his own plans and schemes

and when he has come to complete bankruptcy and developed to the full his rebellion against God, the Lord will appear in His glory and bring in a sabbath of rest—the kingdom of righteousness. Mark follows on these lines.

Luke's Gospel is the Gospel of grace, which is God's *new* way of dealing with men, and this grace is bound up with resurrection. It is a *new* beginning when man's day is over. The numeral "eight" has this significance in Scripture. The eighth day is the first day of the week, the resurrection day. It is instructive to

see that it is Luke that tells us they talked of "His decease." The glory is centred in a Man who *died* and rose again. Luke shews Him as the Man of prayer—entirely dependent upon God. Other kingdoms have been established regardless of God and have perished as surely as they were established. All the glory of this kingdom will radiate from the Man of prayer and the Man who died — the dependent and obedient Man—it will be *new* in every sense of the word, and being established in resurrection life and power will never decay.

Speaking as the Oracles of God

"In 1 Peter 4. 11 those who speak are enjoined to speak as the oracles of God. Will you say what you understand by this? Many think it simply means, speak scripturally."—STAFF.

THE whole passage puts service to God in the household of faith in a very exalted and solemn plane. Whatever gift has been received is for the good of that household, and it must be held and used by him who has it as a good steward of the manifold grace of God. Speaking in public meetings is one of these gifts, and whoever does it should do it as God's mouthpiece, he should speak from God and not from himself. It will of course be according to Scripture, we could not listen to anything not scriptural; but it does not say that here. F. W. Grant says of it: "It is not *according to* the oracles of God, still less 'according to the Scripture,' as most probably we are disposed to take it; but it is as uttering from God that which is

His mind—a thing for which the presence of the Spirit in us is manifestly the most perfect qualification." God knows the needs of His household, and if He finds a vessel meet for His use, He will by His Spirit give the needed word at the time. That it seems to us is the meaning of the passage. If that were kept in mind how "slow we would be to speak and how swift to hear." What exercise of heart before God and waiting upon Him there would be on the part of those who minister. It would not be done on an impulse, or to fill up time. It might mean that more time would be spent in quiet waiting upon God when His household was gathered, which would be far more profitable than ineffectual speaking no matter how correct it might be.

Loquacity or forwardness on religious subjects is a great hindrance to edification.

November Issue, page 242, column two, line 18, read "arrayed" for "arraigned."

“The approaching Advent of Christ”

“You will probably have read the recent book by Alexander Reece, ‘The Approaching Advent of Christ,’ in which he attempts to shew that the teaching of J. N. Darby and others as to the pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church is a contradiction of the teaching of Scripture. You may find an opportunity to review the book in ‘Scripture Truth.’ This would be appreciated.”—LONGTOWN.

THROUGH the courtesy of the publishers of this book — MESSRS. MARSHALL, MORGAN AND SCOTT, LTD.—we have been able to go through it, and we hope to give a series of papers in answer to it. Meanwhile, in replying to your letter, we would say that J. N. Darby, W. Kelly, C. H. Mackintosh and others named in it, were not the foolish, unscrupulous sophists that Alexander Reece would have his readers believe them to be, they were Holy Ghost-taught expositors of the Word of God, and their words of “truth and soberness” were blest to multitudes. They saw and taught what A.R. appears to have entirely overlooked, or is utterly ignorant of—the relationship in which the church stands to Christ, its character and destiny; and the unique place that believers in this present dispensation have, as the brethren of Christ, to God as Father. If he had had but a glimmering of these great things his book would not have been written.

“The mystery,” that is God’s purpose to unite all believers in this present dispensation in one body to Christ, their glorified Head, by the Holy Ghost come down from Him, was hidden in God from all ages past (Eph. 3. 2), and it has no place in Prophecy, and until its completion and rapture to heaven the fulfilment of prophecy is suspended. The illustration of the prophetic train being run into a siding to allow the Church express to pass is a good one.

The two great passages that speak of the coming of the Lord *for* His saints are John 14 and 1 Thessalonians 4. In neither of them is anything said of His appearing to the world, or the establishing of His kingdom; in both the object of His coming is that His saints may be for ever with Him where He is. The Father is to have sons conformed to the image of His Son to fill His home, the Lamb is to have His wife, and these are being gathered out of the world now by the gospel. And these must be taken up out of the world before the “wrath to come” falls upon it. 1 Thess. 1. 10 and Revelation 3. 10.

These great things do not even come to light in the Synoptic Gospel. There are hints as to them in Matthew’s Gospel and plain reference to the church in ch. 16 and 18 in another view of it; but all statements in these Gospels as to the return of the Lord have to do with His kingdom and glory as King and Judge. This is to be our public testimony to the world; the rapture of the church to heaven seems to have more the character of a family secret. He will not come to judge and to take up His Kingdom and glory without His church, His heavenly saints. Col. 3. 4. Rev. 19. 14. They are to come *with* Him and to reign *with* Him. And to see Him universally owned is one part of “that blessed hope.” But we hope if the Lord will to return to the subject.