

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

“Thy Word is Truth”

Thirty-seventh Volume
comprising the years 1951 & 1952

*“Thy Word is . . . a light
unto my path”*

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“PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES”

F. B. HOLE.

THE Holy Scriptures present to us the truth of God in a way that is designed to bring the power of it to bear upon our state and behaviour. A good deal of history is woven into the Old Testament, but only so much as will illuminate the ways of God and impart deep lessons of a moral character. Again, in the Gospels only that is recorded of our Lord as will give us a four-fold portrait of Him, and of God the Father revealed in Him.

So also, in the Acts of the Apostles we are permitted to see the workings of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles and others, which brought about the practical transition from Judaism to Christianity in its proper character. And in the Epistles we have the full truth ministered to us; but never in a merely theoretical way, as though it was a mental scheme of Divine philosophy. All the truth made known is applied to the state and behaviour of the saints so that the power of it shall affect our lives and bring them into conformity to the will of God.

This is particularly noticeable in the Epistle to the Romans, where chapters 12 to 15 are full of directions and exhortations based upon the truth of the Gospel, unfolded in the earlier chapters. It is there that we get the great verse, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (15: 4).

The allusion here is clearly to the

Old Testament Scriptures, for there it is that we find the things written “aforetime.” They had their bearing of course upon the generations that first received them, but also God had us in view, when they were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They are for our learning, but that learning is not to be academic — the mere acquisition of right information — but very practical. It is to promote **patience**, or endurance, to minister **comfort**, or encouragement, and to imbue us with a **hope** that endures. And if that can be said in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures, it can be asserted with even more emphasis in regard to the New Testament.

How impatient and unending we are by nature! The world is full of men in a hurry to reach their objectives, whether good, bad or indifferent. The same spirit is manifested all too often by true saints of God, who want to reach what is right and scriptural, and yet pursue it in fleshly energy without giving God time to act and bring it about in the power of His Spirit. We must not forget that in 2 Corinthians 12: 12, the first thing mentioned as being a sign of an apostle, even before wonders and mighty deeds, is “all patience.” Now if we learn rightly from the “things written aforetime” we shall see how God reaches His end with infinite patience, and often through what looks like defeat, for He is “the God of patience,” as the next verse of Romans 15 says. It will engender patience in us.

This will introduce us to the

comfort or encouragement of which the Scriptures are so full. The outlook in the world is very black. In the church the outlook cannot be called encouraging. Be it so; yet God is "the God of consolation," or of comfort, and therefore the Scriptures are full of that comfort for the man of faith, for the simple reason that they set before us God Himself. Meditating upon the Scriptures we get our eye fixed upon God, what He has done in Christ and what He yet will do. Then it is that in our thoughts man shrinks into his proper insignificance, and God revealed in Christ shines forth in all His sufficiency before our spiritual eyes.

Then through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we "might have hope." To this point we are conducted in spite of the disillusion-

ment that fills the world. The history of the world is really just a record of blighted hopes, and if we look abroad in the world today, what basis is there on which to rest any hope, since mankind is obviously sinking into a state of mass brutality, unheard of since the world began.

Alone amongst men, the man of faith has a basis for his hope which cannot be shaken. The God whom he knows is the "God of hope" (Rom. 15: 13), to whom he has been introduced by the Spirit through the Scriptures. While we wait for the coming of the Lord, which will be the consummation of all our hopes, let us give the Scriptures, and the truth that they minister to us, a commanding place in all our thoughts.

PERFECTION AND FAILURE

A. J. POLLOCK.

Condensed Notes of an Address Given at Wooler on November 1st, 1949, on 1 Timothy 3: 14-16; 4: 1-5; 2 Timothy 1: 13, 14; 2: 15-22.

IN reading these Scriptures it is well to remember when and why they were written. They are found in the last inspired epistles of the Apostle Paul, written at the very end of his arduous life of service for the Lord, a prisoner in Rome, about to be martyred for Christ's sake. Evil and failure had already crept into that which bore Christ's fair name on the earth. The Apostle writes to Timothy, his loved son in the faith. None were so like-minded as he with the Apostle. Yet he wrote to Timothy, that he might know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the church of

the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. If such a distinguished servant of Christ as Timothy needed instruction, how much more do we in these sadly broken days.

We may learn a fine lesson here. Instead of speaking of failure at this point in his first epistle, the Apostle Paul calls Timothy's attention to that which is PERFECTION. He writes,

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels,

preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

What was without controversy? Surely that "**GOD was manifest in the flesh.**" Here we get our eyes upon perfection. It is not merely that our Lord lived a perfectly sinless life on this earth. He did, all glory to His ever-blessed Name. But He was more than Man. He was "**GOD manifest in the flesh.**" Isaiah prophesied long centuries before the birth of our Lord, that the Child of the virgin, the Child of days, was at the same time **THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVER-LASTING FATHER** (Isa. 9: 6), a mystery we shall never know, either now or hereafter. Our Lord in living a life of flesh in this world manifested God in all His fulness. Scripture tells us, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 9).

We read that our Lord was "**justified in the Spirit.**" Every step our Lord took, every act of healing He performed, every word that He spoke, was accompanied by the full and happy endorsement of the Holy Spirit. Alas! it is not so with the very best of us. With our Lord was absolute perfection. What a rest to the soul to look upon Him, to know that He glorified God to the full, that all God's counsels and purposes will see their fruition in Him.

Our Lord was "**seen of angels.**" There are two amazing facts in Christianity: (1) When our Lord walked on this earth **GOD WAS HERE.** (2) When our Lord ascended into heaven **MAN WAS THERE.** What must the angels have thought on that day of days

when our Lord was born of a virgin, and cradled in a manger at Bethlehem? Well might they rend the heavens with a glad shout, "Glory to God in the highest." They saw Him when He was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. When Satan, baffled and beaten, departed from our Lord, angels came and ministered unto Him. Angels were witnesses of His glorious and triumphant resurrection. But what must have been the adoring homage of the angels when our Lord entered the glory, a true Man, with the marks of His passion in His hands and feet and side?

"**Preached unto the Gentiles.**" Here we come to a deeply illuminating passage of Scripture. How could it be said that our Lord was preached unto **the Gentiles**? He Himself said, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24). But once His atoning death had settled the whole question of sin, and He was risen from the dead, and on the eve of His return to the glory, the commission, He gave to His disciples, was, "Go ye into **ALL THE WORLD,** and preach the Gospel to **EVERY CREATURE.**" (Mark 16: 15). Does this not clearly show that godliness was to be perpetuated in the lives of the Christians, and that **their** activities would carry the Gospel world-wide. In short, that the life of our Lord was to be perpetuated in the members of His body here on earth. This thought is further emphasised in the next statement.

"**Believed on in the world.**" Now all is different. As we have seen it is "**all the world**" and "**every creature,**" 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).

This was very manifest in the appointment of the Apostle Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles. His labours and those of others, as with tireless energy they laboured in Gentile lands, was the answer to this commission, carried out to this very day in the labours of missionaries at home and in many distant lands.

"Received up into glory." This was the glorious consummation of our Lord's sojourn on this earth. It is likewise to be the consummation of all the saints at our Lord's second coming, when all the saints, whether their bodies lie in the grave, or they are alive on the earth, go to be for ever with the Lord. And does this not show how intimately the ascension of our Lord is linked up with our being caught up? Having completed the work of redemption, our Lord ascended to glory, not only for Himself, but **representatively** for His own, and that involves the rapture of the saints.

Thus we have depicted for us "the mystery of godliness," so fully and blessedly seen in our Lord; and, when His life was no longer on earth, to be perpetuated in its measure with us, the members of His body here on earth, all grandly to be consummated when our Lord comes "the second time . . . unto salvation." (Heb. 9: 28).

Divine Instructions for a Day of Failure

It is to be carefully noticed how the mention of "the mystery of

godliness" is immediately followed by the strong warning against "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4: 1). There can be no real compromise between good and evil, between light and darkness. Satan's efforts are to mix the two together in the minds of men with very disastrous results. We see this in the world, and worse still in the professing church of God. Let us see to it, that we do not mix with the world. The warning to the young men of the family of God in 1 John 2: 15 is that they should not love the world. Believers have the flesh still in them, constantly seeking gratification in ways far removed from godliness. As we live in the Spirit, it is our part to walk in the Spirit.

Now let us turn to 2 Timothy. We must ever remember that when first the Apostles went evangelising, they had no kind of organisation behind them, no Bibles or Hymnbooks in their hands. They relied alone on the mighty power of God's Holy Spirit. Mighty results followed. Assemblies were formed.

The ministry in those days was very largely oral. It was not till the very end of the Apostle Paul's career, that he wrote the inspired prison epistles — Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and, we believe, Hebrews. The teaching embodied in these epistles must have been orally ministered before the Apostle became Nero's prisoner at Rome. So we find the place that godly tradition rightly had — tradition means handing on. The Apostle Paul spoke of what Timothy had heard from his lips among many witnesses. The many witnesses

would be a safeguard that what was passed on to faithful men was correct, for it was a **collective** memory, as it were, that checked everything. It was not dependent on the memory of one man. "Faithful men" were to hand on what they heard to "others also."

Is there not a warning for us when Paul wrote,

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1: 13)?

We know that the letter killeth, and it is the Spirit that alone giveth life, yet here is an exhortation to hold fast the form of sound words.

The Apostle spoke of the good thing that was committed unto Timothy by the Holy Spirit. Another translation gives it as "the good deposit entrusted" (Darby's New Trans.) In these last Laodicean days, it behoves us not to fritter away the truth that the Lord has given to us in His great grace. Let us be very zealous as to this. The awakening of interest in the truth of God over a century ago drew attention to things that had been lost sight of and forgotten. May we hold tenaciously to the precious deposit of truth, and lose nothing by carelessness or sloth.

It is possible to be so engrossed with church truth, that the Gospel is lost sight of. On the other hand we may be so keen in the Gospel, as to forget the truth that has been ministered to us of the assembly in relation to Christ. It is possible that the desire to see blessing in the Gospel has waned among the assemblies of God's people. We fear it is so. The Apostle Paul is an example

to us. He cried out, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16). And yet he tells us in the magnificent closing words of the Epistle to the Romans that the preaching of the Gospel was to lead up to the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began — that is, the truth as to Christ and the church, which is His body, and we the members thereof on the earth for the perpetuation of the life of Christ in this world.

But how can brethren, especially those young in the faith, answer to all this, unless they study reverently the Scriptures of truth, seeking to learn God's mind for His people, and seeking individually to show it forth in practical life down here?

Evidently things had got to a very serious condition when Paul wrote to Timothy,

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2: 19).

Here we have God's side and ours. We sometimes wonder, if some we know, who profess to be Christians, are really Christian or not. God knows. He knows if there is a vital link between Himself, and one, of whom we may stand in doubt. On our side we have to recognise as being Christians those that depart from iniquity.

Then the Apostle went on to use an illustration of a great house, in which are vessels of gold and silver, of wood and of earth, some to honour, some to dishonour. This describes Christendom all too well. The house of God has within it servants of God, faithful men, but alas! evil

workers as well, who deny the very fundamentals of the Christian faith, professing to be the servants of God, but in reality are vessels to dishonour, tools in the hands of Satan.

And just here we get instructions, the like of which is found in no other part of Scripture. We read of divisions, splits, parties, sects, heresies in the church of God, but hitherto without any outward break. But here we read,

“ If a man therefore purge himself from these [vessels to dishonour], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” (2 Tim. 2: 21).

Here Paul in writing to an individual, and thus addressing himself to all Christians as individuals, gives clear instruction for the believer to purge himself from an association so sunk in evil teaching, that the only godly course is that of separation. This is

God’s Instruction for the Christian in a Day of Ruin

To act on it needs spiritual discernment and moral courage. We have an instance of it in the Reformation, when in protest against the worldliness, superstitions, and evil teaching of the Romish Church, Martin Luther, a monk in the Romish system, severed his connection with it, thus acting according to the Word of God.

What then is the course left open for the one who purges himself from vessels to dishonour? First, he must refuse in his own life, ways dishonouring to the Lord, and “ follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out

of a pure heart ” (2 Tim. 2: 22). Will his path be a lonely path? No, he will find other Christians moved as he has been by the Spirit of God to purge themselves from vessels to dishonour, calling here and there on the Lord out of a pure heart. Such will meet together, not as claiming to be the whole church of God, but as a remnant, seeking to be loyal to the truth of God, and finding themselves meeting with fellow believers for the highest of Christian privileges, even to answer to the Father’s desire, who seeks worshippers, who shall worship Him “ in spirit and in truth ” (John 4: 23).

Now for a last remark. Is it not remarkable that the Apostle Paul wrote the prison epistles — Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians — about the same time as he wrote 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus? Surely he wrote all these epistles for all time. Would not the study of these epistles, telling us of God’s thoughts as to the constitution and practices of the Church of God, as God intended them to be, enlighten the minds of the saints? This study would broaden their minds, and bring them into a fuller appreciation of what the church is to Christ, what the body is to the Head in heaven. Spite of all failure there is “ one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4: 4-6). Would the contemplation of this not give a sobriety, a godly care for the holiness of God’s house, an answering in spirit to the truth of the assembly as before God? We think it would in a marked way.

DEAD TO SIN BUT ALIVE TO GOD

(EXTRACTED)

THE obligation that rests upon us as Christians is clearly this, for we read, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 11). The question however arises, What power will enable us to carry this out?

The answer is, We can only do it as being brought into the life of Christ, and in the power of faith and affection for the Lord Jesus. The better rendering for the end of that verse is, alive unto God "in Christ Jesus" (New Trans.). Being in Christ Jesus, we partake of His life and nature.

But this thought of reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God presents much difficulty to many minds. It may help to turn to a Scriptural illustration, which is given to us in the history of Mephibosheth, as recorded in 2 Samuel 16: 1-4; 19: 24-30. Chapters 15 to 19 of that book are occupied with the period when David, towards the close of his reign, was rejected and for a time driven out of His kingdom; and the attitude of Mephibosheth in relation to this is highly instructive.

In chapter 16, Ziba the servant comes to David and slanders his master. He declares that Mephibosheth has said, "To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." Now this was evidently a lie. But mark! it was quite the natural thing for him to say, if he thought of himself as

living in connection with his father's house. Anyone of Saul's house might well be expected to take advantage of the absence of David to do **their own will** and seek to advance **their own interests.**

But if we turn to chapter 19, we find the truth. In verse 27, Mephibosheth says that Ziba has slandered him to the king, and what he does say about himself and his father's house is the exact opposite, "All of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table."

So the truth was that instead of thinking of himself as alive in connection with Saul he reckoned himself as **a dead man in that connection.** Actually he was **living,** but that he owed entirely to the grace of David, and he now **lived in connection with David,** who had associated him with himself and given him a place at his table.

Now during the absence of the king what was the practical result upon him of this reckoning of himself as dead to Saul and alive to David? A very important question! We must take good heed to the answer because of its bearing upon ourselves. Verse 24 tells us the result in the life and behaviour of Mephibosheth. During the absence of the king he was **a mourner.**

There were very probably great doings in Jerusalem during the short usurpation of Absalom and the absence of the true king. They

were stirring times. The usurper held his functions and bestowed his favours in order to consolidate his position, but Mephibosheth was apart from it all, since he reckoned himself to be a dead man. If he had looked upon himself as still in connection with his father's house, he would have been in the thick of all that was going on. He would have said, "Now is the time for me to get back a bit of my own." But looking upon himself as dead, all that was going on in Jerusalem was to him but the will of man taking advantage of the absence of David to have its own way; that is, it was simply **sin**.

So we see the practical result of reckoning himself dead; it annulled for him the power of sin that was ruling in Jerusalem. Had it not been so, he would have been one of the first to come under sin's power. He escaped its power by reckoning himself dead. And his case is a striking illustration of our own. Just in proportion as we reckon ourselves

to be dead as connected with the old man will the power of sin be annulled for us.

Now let us enquire one thing further. What enabled Mephibosheth thus to reckon himself dead? It was the power of **life with David and affection for him**. In his sight David was "as an angel of God." He had taken him up, though a lame man under death, as connected with the house of Saul. He had shown him kindness, taken him into favour and given him a place at his own table. Everything he had he owed to David and all this grace had won his heart. It was because he was so alive to David in the power of love that he was enabled to reckon himself dead to the lawlessness that reigned in Jerusalem during the absence of the king.

Meditate on these things, and its application to us will be plainly seen. May we have grace to live as those who are alive to God and dead to sin.

BIBLE STUDY — GENESIS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 42: 25 — 45: 28).

THOUGH Joseph entertained such tender feeling towards his brethren that he wept over them, he did not allow it to deflect him from the stern dealing that was necessary, if they were to be brought to a proper spirit of repentance as to the great wrong they perpetrated against him, and against their father also, many years before. Simeon was held as hostage, but the rest were sent off with full loads of corn and provision for the way, but each

man with his money placed in his sack.

Only one of them discovered this while at the inn, and the effect of the discovery on their minds is recorded in verse 28. They suspected that some plot or pretext lay behind it and it filled them with fear. Their consciences were still at work and they saw in it an act of retribution on the part of God. We too can recognize that truly the hand of God

was in it.

Arrived home, they related their experiences to Jacob, and their fears were increased by the discovery that each man had his money returned in his sack. Poor Jacob's reaction to it all, recorded in verse 36, is very characteristic of him. When he said, "Me have ye bereaved . . . Joseph is not . . ." he spoke more truly than he knew. His bereavement, as regards Joseph, did indeed lie at their door, so this must have been a further stab to their consciences.

His complaint was, "All these things are against me." And so indeed it appeared. He had yet to learn that all these things were a part of God's plan for his ultimate good, so that at the end of his life he might be able to refer to "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil" (48: 16). The fact was that "all these things" were going to "work together for good," and therefore provide us with an effective illustration of the truth of Romans 8: 28.

For the moment Jacob flatly refused to part with Benjamin, but chapter 43 shows us how his stubborn refusal had to give way before the hard logic of facts. There would be no obtaining of the needed food except Benjamin were permitted to go with his brothers down to Egypt. In the words of Judah, recorded in verses 8 and 9, we find disclosed an attitude towards him quite the opposite to his attitude towards Joseph years before. A repentant spirit was beginning to disclose its fruits.

In Hebrews 7: 22, we read of Jesus being made "a Surety of a

better testament." In verse 9 of our chapter we have an excellent illustration of what suretyship involves. If there be any breakdown the blame of it must lie for ever on the surety, and all must be required at his hand. Were there any breakdown in the new covenant, the blame of it would rest upon Christ for ever. But, No! Its stability and the security of all its blessings are ensured for eternity.

Jacob's scheming propensities come again to light in verses 11 and 12, but at the same time there was a measure of trust in the mercy of God. With his permission the brethren at last depart for Egypt, taking Benjamin with them, and arrive in the presence of Joseph. Seeing that they had complied, and brought Benjamin with them, he was prepared to bring them into his house to dine at noon. This kindly attitude only stirred up more alarm in their minds, since they remembered the episode of the money in their sacks and they still had no idea of the identity of the man who was now lord of all Egypt.

Their ignorance made all Joseph's actions seem the more remarkable and their uneasiness and suspicions increased. On his part we are permitted to see again how true were his affections, particularly for Benjamin. He was again moved to tears, as verse 30 records. But he was marked by wisdom as well as love. At the dinner the rift between Hebrew and Egyptian was manifest, but the brethren sat before Joseph, and he placed them in the exact order of their ages, with Benjamin's portion five times as much as any of the others. All this must have seemed to indicate almost super-

human discernment on the part of the great man, and increased the uneasy feeling that they had.

Their consciences had already been aroused, as we saw when reading chapter 42: 21, but the work of repentance needed to be yet deepened. Hence Joseph's further dealings with them as recorded in chapter 44. The incident is so well known that we need only to point out a few of its salient details. Things were so ordered that the apparent guilt should fall upon Benjamin, for whom Judah had stood as surety to Jacob. This naturally brought Judah forward as the spokesman. He had taken the lead in selling Joseph to the Midianites going to Egypt, speaking with much hardness of heart. Now he has to speak as to Benjamin, and what a change is manifest! Instead of hardness great tenderness of feeling, particularly for his old father, Jacob. **Then** it mattered not how Jacob would feel: **now** it mattered everything to him. Here we see the working of a repentance not to be repented of.

Judah presented the whole case as regards his father and Benjamin with very great pathos, such pathos as could only spring from intense and genuine feeling, the reality of which was evidenced by his closing request to be allowed to stand as substitute for Benjamin. He was prepared to face life-slavery for himself rather than see his brother taken and his father's grey hairs brought down with sorrow to the grave. We saw Judah in a very unfavourable light in both chapters 37 and 38; now we see what a complete change is produced when real repentance takes place.

In all this we see typified that national repentance of Israel, predicted in Zechariah 12: 10-14. In that chapter Jehovah speaks, and He says, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him." They will discover that the One whom they pierced is Jehovah Himself. In the same way the repentance of the brethren here reaches its climax when they discover that the great lord of Egypt is none other than Joseph whom they had pierced with so many sorrows. This discovery they make, as recorded in the opening verses of chapter 45.

Again we see how very fittingly the history presents us with a type. The discovery was not made as the result of any discernment or sagacity on the part of the brethren, but wholly by the revelation of himself on the part of Joseph. When at His second advent Christ is revealed in His glory, then Israel will recognize Him and cry, "My God, we know Thee" (Hosea 8: 2). Moreover Joseph's revelation was made as the fruit of his love for them: love so real that he could not restrain himself longer and that moved him to tears.

In Joseph we see displayed both affection and magnanimity. With the brethren the workings of their consciences reached their climax, producing fear and reducing them to silence. They found themselves wholly at the mercy of the brother whom they had so bitterly wronged, and as yet they could not believe in his magnanimous dealings with

them. What must it have been to them to hear his words, "Come near to me, I pray you"?

It was as they turned to Him that the veil was taken from their eyes and they knew him. So it will be with Israel in the coming day. At the present time "when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3: 15, 16). Then they will discover that Jesus, the Nazarene, whom they sold for thirty pieces of silver and crucified, is the Lord of glory, and at the same time the personification of magnanimity and love.

We might have expected that, having bidden his brethren to come near and said to them, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt," it would have been they who wept, firstly at the recognition of the great wrong they had perpetrated against him, and secondly at the grace that abounded over their evil. But, no, the tears were his and not theirs. They had had to bow down before him, but he deserved it for he towered above them in the things that are really great in the sight of God. A faint foreshadowing of the greatness of Christ.

A further thing characterized Joseph, as we see in verses 5-8. His eye rested upon God and not upon circumstances, however trying they had been. The evil actions of the brethren had faded into insignificance in his mind. He recognized that God had been behind all that they had done, and had worked it in as part of His plan for salvation and deliverance. We are reminded of that prayer of the primitive

church, when they acknowledged that Herod, Pilate, Gentiles and Jews, gathered together against the Lord Jesus, had only accomplished "whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4: 28). Joseph had been instrumental in bringing to pass "a great deliverance," yet it was very small when compared with the deliverance wrought by the death and resurrection of Christ.

And further, God had sent Joseph down into Egypt in order to preserve a posterity in the earth for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He knew what Joseph can hardly have known; that many centuries after out of that posterity, as concerning the flesh, would come the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Turn where we may in Scripture, Christ is ever before the mind of God, and at this epoch Joseph was the instrument used of God to preserve that line of descent that finally would lead to Him.

Whatever Joseph may, or may not, have realized as to this, there was a touch of the prophetic about his words, and in the whole matter God was so distinctly before him that he was lifted far above any resentment as to the wrong done to him. To his brethren he said, "So now it was **not you** that sent me hither, **but God.**" Happy should we all be, if in regard to the perverse things of life, wrought by perverse persons, we could always say in truth, "Not you, but God." If in adversity we see man, we are irritated; if we see God, we are humbled, subdued and blessed.

Joseph acknowledged that it was God who had made him "lord of all his [Pharaoh's] house," and,

“lord of all Egypt.” Already we have had “lord” a number of times, but used as a title of respect, much as we might now address someone as “sir.” This is the first time we read of anyone being **made** “lord.” So that here we have a type of Jesus being made “Lord,” as Peter announced in Acts 2: 36. As lord of all Egypt Joseph had all power vested in him, and that power he wielded to promote what was good. So the Lordship of Jesus involves firstly, His **absolute dominion**, and secondly, His **benevolent rule**.

A very tender and touching note runs through the message that Joseph sent by his brethren to his father. After the long years of separation he was to be near unto his beloved son, and nourished by him. Tenderness and urgency marked the message that he sent, and realizing that in old age his father might be slow to move, he instructed as an incentive, “Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt.”

We have had the word “glory” once before in Genesis 31: 1, used to indicate wealth. This is the first time it is used to indicate honour and splendour, so again we can discern its typical value. It is when

Christ is revealed in His glory that Israel will be gathered to Him, and bow down before Him. Then shall be fulfilled the word, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power” (Psa. 110: 3). They were by no means willing in the day of His humiliation and poverty.

Having delivered these instructions, there was again a touching scene of affection and tears. Benjamin being his full brother, it was not surprising that there was this display after so long a separation; but that he should kiss and weep upon the brethren, who once had so cruelly wronged him, was a remarkable thing. The kiss and the tears were the sign not only of affection but also of a full forgiveness. It is significant that the record is, “**after that** his brethren talked with him.” The free conversation, which flows from communion, could only be established on the ground of forgiveness.

Thus indeed it is with us today. Until we are assured of Divine forgiveness, and thus we are in the enjoyment of peace with God, we cannot be at home in His presence nor enter into communion with Him. Until then we find it impossible to freely address Him in either thanksgiving or in prayer.



I FEEL the importance of definitely apprehending the **relationship** in which the Lord has set us. . . . Hence would flow that rigid **obedience** (and obedience is the only thing in which a Christian should be rigid) which would keep us from **latitudinarianism**, and that nearness to Christ which would keep us from **sectarianism** (the most natural weed of the human heart) for sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves: and it would give us a feeling and interest in the **whole** Church of God: for Christ can love **nothing less**.

EVENTIDE — EOTHEN

A. J. POLLOCK.

FOR the Christian these two words stand for opposites—Eventide: the gradual fading out of the natural life; Eothen (a Greek word signifying “early dawn”): the dawn of a better and brighter day than any known on earth. Eventide carries with it the many memories of life; for the Christian not one single day failing of God’s “goodness and mercy.” Eothen bids us anticipate that we “shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” (Psalm 23: 6). We do well to be more occupied, not with the bodily failings of the natural life, but with the anticipation of the new coming life in all its fullness and blessedness.

As a matter of fact for the Christian the dawn of a better day has already begun. He has an “inward man,” the beginning of the new creation, that is “renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4: 16). The “outward man,” the “natural man,” perishes day by day, the incoming not fully corresponding with the outgoing, and consequently decay setting in, slowly at first, but with a quickened speed as life draws to a close.

How blessed for our latter days is the comfort that we are in the hand of the Good Shepherd, who gives us eternal life, and the promise that no one can pluck us out of His hand. Not only so, we are also in the Father’s hand, and no one can pluck us out of His hand. I remember a Christian lady, whose great desire was that when she should come to die, she might pass away, clasping the hand of a Christian friend. How utterly poor that would be compared

to our privilege of being in the hand of the Son and of the Father. If we could clasp all the hands of all the saints of all time when dying, that would be infinitely short of what is our comfort for every day of our earthly pilgrimage to the very last moment of life.

The “inward man” is surely connected with eternal life, the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That life would not be eternal, if the output, to use the figure, were not fully answered by the renewal. It is a strange spectacle, a frail body, decay setting in manifestly, but along with it an “inward man,” knowing no decay, the possession of eternal life, the aged pilgrim knowing more and more by long experience the blessedness of that life. How wonderfully well off we are.

But is there no happiness connected with the word, Eventide? Most manifestly very much! We read, “And even to your old age I AM HE; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isa. 46: 4). To be carried by One, who introduces Himself as “I AM HE,” leaves nothing to be desired. Alas! some of us are as foolish as the woman, who was bearing a big burden, and a kind neighbour gave her a lift in his cart. She insisted upon placing the big burden on her lap, so as not to give the horse the task of carrying it. The cart was carrying both her and her burden, and she did not realise it. We read, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for

you." (1 Peter 5: 7). Let us cast our care upon Him, **and leave it with Him**, and not carry it away again.

In one of the psalms we are reminded that the earth and all its works will one day perish. We read, "They shall perish," but immediately we read the truly comforting words, "But Thou art the Same" (Psalm 102: 27). Things change with us. He changes not — I AM HE, what stability! It is said that the whole universe is in constant motion, sun, moon and stars, but there is absolutely eternal rest and quiet at the centre of everything, even God Himself, and only there.

But in this world of sin we echo this hymn-writer's words: —

**"Change and decay in all around
I see;**

**O Thou, who changest not,
abide with me."**

This our Lord promises to do. He never will fail us.

The New Testament tells us that in the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour who died for us on the cross, who has risen triumphant from the dead, and has ascended to glory, we have a great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens. In the days of His holy Manhood on earth He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Thus we have a sympathising, succouring High Priest, who furnishes us with a throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy and find help in time of need. Every day of our pilgrimage we are in need, and He ever stands ready to render us timely help.

I have a book in my little library with the title, **Eothen**, which gives a

wonderful account of a journey on camel-back across the Arabian desert. The traveller started at Gaza, having for his objective Cairo. He was so struck in the desert with the sudden end of night when the sun began to bring in the early dawn, lighting everything up with a wonderful charm, that he called his book, **Eothen**. But when we Christians speak of our spiritual Eothen, words fail to describe the glory of that, which is to be ours.

There are two accounts of the glory of that place. We read of a new heaven and a new earth. The Apostle John in a vision saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. And what is the description of this place, God's dwelling place with men? It is largely **negatively** described. We are told in Revelation 21 of the things that are **not** there — no tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain. The untoward things that accompany a world, into which sin has entered, will have no place there. What a glorious contrast to a creation that "groaneth and travaileth in pain." (Rom. 8: 22).

But there is another description in Scripture of a **positive** nature. For fourteen years the Apostle Paul kept the secret of his having been translated to the third heaven. The first heaven, the atmospheric heaven, is that which belongs to this earth in which men can breathe and live; the second heaven, the vast expanse beyond the atmospheric heaven, the stellar heaven, where it is impossible for men to live; the third heaven, the dwelling place of God. A messenger of Satan to buffet Paul, to humiliate him, was given in the goodness of God to keep his flesh from being

puffed up.

The Corinthian saints, however, were questioning his apostleship, and, to our eternal blessing, Paul was led of the Lord to reveal his experience. It is the one and only peep into heaven we know in the Scriptures. Paul tells us that he heard things not lawful to repeat on earth, revelations that our present bodies of humiliation cannot stand, revelations surpassingly wonderful, but one day the blessedness of all

this will be ours when the Dawn comes. It may come to us one by one, as death takes one and another away, or it may come for us all in the moment that the Lord shall shout the summoning shout, and call us to the Father's house forever.

Whether we look backward on past mercies and deliverances, or forward to the glorious future that awaits each believer, we may well praise and worship God, the Giver of all good.

A GREAT HONOUR AND A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY

A. JACOB.

EDITOR'S NOTE. — As this magazine is concerned with the **application** of Scripture to Christian life and service, and not only with its **exposition**, we call attention to this article. Lack of blessing is often deplored, but one reason for it is laid bare here. See Haggai 1: 9.

APART from holy worship there is no greater honour conferred upon the saints than to be called to serve as "God's fellow-workmen" (1 Cor. 3: 9, New Trans.). The parting command of our Lord Jesus Christ was "Go into all the world and preach the glad tidings to all the creation" (Mark 16: 15), and its effect upon the early disciples was such that "They going forth, preached everywhere" (Mark 16: 20).

Now it has pleased God in His wonderful grace to raise up and send forth from assemblies with which many of the readers of this magazine are connected a number of His servants to carry the glad tidings

to the regions beyond. This is a singular token of the Lord's goodness towards us, but at the same time it constitutes a most solemn responsibility as to their support for us who remain at home.

It is, therefore, a matter of deep concern that there should be so great a lack in this respect that in the case of one group of labourers it was necessary recently to **make a cut in the very meagre remittances** sent out to the field. It is true that this is a day of rising cost of living, but this problem also confronts the workers in most other lands as well as here. How would the saints here feel if, in these days, there was an actual **reduction in their own incomes?**

It is not, however, spasmodic efforts which are required to meet this situation. If our brethren are to be sustained they need regular support, just as much as we do ourselves, for the maintenance of our loved ones and homes. It is for this very reason that the Lord has so ordained in His word that those of us who abide at home should set aside from our earnings with **regularity**. Remember that it is written, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. 16: 2). This is not Old Testament law, but New Testament teaching. The only point that is left unsettled is the proportion to be put by. Is it one-twentieth, one-tenth or one-fifth? Each one must decide this before the Lord: this only we would say, "Will saints under grace do **less** than servants under law?" It is a heart-searching question.

Just fifty years ago, the writer of this article, on studying his private account book, which he still has, was faced with the same issue, on realising that his gifts to the Lord's service only came to about one-thirtieth of his income! He resolved by the grace of God, he would henceforth put by not less than one-tenth. That resolve is one for which he unfeignedly thanks God, for the joy it has brought him and the encouragement to the Lord's servants.

A short while ago, the writer received a deeply moving letter from a widow, a sister in the Lord. Mark her words, and if they do not touch the readers' hearts and create a deeper spirit of devotion, it will be sad indeed. Here is an extract from

her letter:

"At twelve years of age I yielded to the Lord. I was twenty before I knew of gatherings on Scriptural lines. I then went to a Bible Class where a godly lady taught us to give to the Lord at least one-tenth of any money we received. I started to do this, though I had but little to divide by ten. I married when I was twenty-four, and as my husband had not formed the habit of regular giving to the Lord I tried to persuade him. At first he was not willing, saying it was legal, but afterwards he agreed, though we had only 27/6 per week, so that the privations you mention and more were our lot during a number of years. My husband was faithful in that to the end; the tenth was put aside regularly and we had some money for our missionary friends."

So that the readers of this magazine may have some knowledge of the actual facts of the case we have collected from sources well known to us as much information on the subject as possible. In result we find that the annual cost per worker — including the costs of children, if any, of furloughs, and of upkeep of the stations, etc.—works out at almost exactly £300 each. Our readers may feel that this is a very large sum, but is that really so? The only item which might not be clear is the sum included for station expenses. In this figure must be included all the cost of building houses for the workers, schools, dispensaries and constant repairs thereto, replacement of trucks, also school and medical requisites, not to speak of happenings the like of which we never experience in this

country. The following extract from a letter from a missionary working in Africa gives one example:—

“ It all happened in the space of fifteen minutes. We were in the meeting on the Wednesday afternoon; quite suddenly I realised a storm was blowing up. I thought we would just have time to close with prayer, and get down to our houses before the storm came, but alas, I was wrong. Before I had even finished praying the rain was falling and terrible gusts of wind blew the rain into the hall. We ran into a small room at the back, but the wind was so fierce quite a few of the people who were with us took fright and ran out in case the building came down. We were probably in that little room less than ten minutes, but when we did venture out what a sight met our eyes. Five of our class rooms were in ruins, some of the roofs had been carried ten or fifteen yards from the building. However, no life had been lost, so we had much to give thanks for in the midst of our adversity. Our African friends were wonderfully sympathetic, and the next day schoolboys and workmen worked with real heart clearing up, and the masons rebuilding, but it turned out to be a full six weeks job to rebuild and re-roof these schools.”

Consider now what the position is at home. Let us say that the **average income** of each of the Lord's people at home is only £6 per week. If we deduct income tax at the maximum amount paid by a single person the **net** income would be £5 9s. per week, or say, £283 p.a. Now if the proportion “ put by ” each week

was only that required by law, i.e., one-tenth and only **one-half** of this was given for the Lord's work in other lands, it would come to £14 a year or about 5s. 6d. per week. How many of the Lord's people earning £6 per week give 5s. 6d. per week to the Lord's work abroad? Very heart-searching! In that case, it would need only 22 wage-earners to provide the £300 required for one such worker.

In the **one** assembly in which the writer of this article is there are some 40 wage-earners, and is not the average income **far more** than £6 per week? Why then is there any lack?

Let us, beloved brethren, face this solemn issue in the presence of the Lord. Some may say, “ But we could not possibly put by a tenth.” It is true that we cannot do so if we spend our money in other directions, but are we **only** willing to give to the Lord that which costs us nothing? It will most certainly require **self-denial** to put by for the Lord's work even a tenth, but would any of us dare to kneel before the Lord and say to HIM, “ Lord, I need nearly all my money for myself and my family and I really cannot spare Thee more than one-fortieth.” If you would not dare to do it now, what will you say when you see HIM, face to face?

If everyone of the Lord's people would consider this solemn issue, and respond to the Lord's gracious call to consecrate ourselves afresh to His service, we believe that every need of our brethren would be supplied, we ourselves would be spiritually enlarged and blessed, and the Lord's name be magnified.

ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAYER

R. THOMSON.

IN the Lord's teaching and practice, He always emphasized the great importance of prayer to God. Although He was God manifested in the flesh, He had taken up in Manhood a service of dependence and obedience toward God the Father, and was on account of this often found in prayer. Seven times in the Gospel of Luke, which depicts Him in the character of the Son of Man, we see Him engaged thus. On the occasion of choosing the twelve apostles to be with Him, He spent the whole night in prayer to God. This is very striking and also very instructive to our hearts; for if the Son in His perfect pathway needed to pray, how much more must we, who are compassed about with infirmities of various kinds.

It was while giving instruction to His disciples, in Matthew 7: 7, that He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you." These words give us every encouragement to draw near to God and in simple faith make known our requests to Him. The answer is assured, if we on our part will be marked by importunity.

Again, in the upper room with His disciples, He said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14: 13). This no doubt looked forward to a period beyond the sufferings of the cross; when Christ as the Son would have gone back to the Father. In this new position of resurrection and ascension, His desire that His own should continue to pray and ask in His Name, is still the same.

Often when we are praying, we do not seem to have any special request to make; and consequently such general requests only receive a general answer. In the case of the blind man, Luke 18: 35-43, we behold one marked by importunity in calling upon the Lord. He had a great need: and when Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto Him, saying, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" he said simply and definitely, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." This was the great, pressing need of the blind man; and in response, the Lord Jesus said, "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." To receive his sight was also to behold the One who had given him this great gift and to follow Him, bringing glory to God.

Again, in an Old Testament incident, we read of a King who was spoken unto by God, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings 3: 5). In reply, the young King Solomon pleaded his inability, as of a little child, to know how to go out or come in; and asked for an understanding heart to judge God's people with the ability to discern between good and bad. This pleased the Lord, so that He gave him a wise and understanding heart, beyond all that had been before him or that should come after him. What a wonderful answer!

But there was much more, for God said, "I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." Solomon expressed his need to God in

humble and child-like faith and was richly endowed. Such is the wonderful liberality of God, set forth for our instruction.

Another delightful incident is seen in 2 Kings 2, in connection with Elijah and Elisha. The former, knowing that the Lord was about to take him, said, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." This brought forth the remarkable request, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." He was so enamoured with his master that he wanted to be like him both in character and service. He had asked a hard thing, but if there was watchfulness and

diligence it should be granted.

Elisha saw his master taken up to heaven by the whirlwind and his request was granted. He rent his own clothes and took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him — a figure of putting off the old man and putting on the new. In this new spirit and power Elisha went forth in the service of God.

Now we are brought into the enjoyment of communion with the Father and the Son, so may we be the more encouraged to seek His face in prayer. He delights to answer the prayer of faith, and we have no reason to expect answers less distinct than of old.

THE THOUGHT AFFECTS THE WALK

J. HOUSTON

IF we would walk rightly, we shall have to begin by thinking rightly. The mind guides the feet. Thoughts of God, as revealed in Christ, are always right; for in them we have the truth in all its blessedness. We can, indeed, delight in all that is revealed, and meditate upon it always. The result will be a walk with God, in sweet communion with Him. Thoughts of self are always wrong; for they lead us to occupation with self, wherein lies all the trouble. Whether it is self doing good, or evil, we should never have it in thought. If we think of it, in relation to doing good, we shall be proud; if we become occupied with it, in relation to evil (failure and sin), we shall be despondent. In other words, we are either lifted up, about doing

good; or cast down, through doing evil.

The Corinthians behaved themselves badly. They were proud. The apostle told them so. They thought they **knew** . . . We do not mention what they knew; for thought is free, and it takes long flights, especially when self is its centre. Self does not exactly **say**, "I know everything;" but it **thinks** it does. Self is not, in any sense, teachable; and it is the greatest hindrance to learning, under the divine teaching of the Spirit, who leads us into all truth.

The Corinthians **thought they knew** . . . They were puffed up by it. Such a thought inflates. The apostle goes to the very root of the matter: "If any man think that he

knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8: 2). The whole evil lies, not in possessing knowledge, but in thinking that we possess it. It matters nothing what that knowledge may be, of divine, or human, things. One Greek philosopher said, in so many words, that he knew that he knew nothing. This may seem to be humble; but there is the possibility of being proud of **ignorance**, just as one may be proud of **knowledge**. The point is, Is it self that does not know, or does know? A Diogenes might be proud of his poverty and misery, and look contemptuously on those who had riches and happiness. Self can go down, as well as up; but it finishes always **in being up**, that is, **it is proud**. This is its essential character.

Then the thought that we can do this, or that, or refrain from doing this, or that, is of self, and is wrong. We need hardly say, that this thought will lead the feet in a slippery path, where a fall is inevitable. Peter thought he could stand the test of the Cross, and die for Christ, rather than forsake Him, or deny Him. Before he went far with that thought, he denied the Lord before **a girl — not a heavily armed Roman soldier**. How weak he was! Job thought he was righteous (in point of fact, he really was righteous), and it needed a long, drawn-out trial of the most extraordinary kind to bring him to the end of that thought (that is, repentance — a change of thought), and come down in dust and ashes, abhorring himself before God. The reader may ask here, Is it wrong to think? Yes, **if self is the centre**. The whole trouble lies **there**.

In speaking to the inflated Corinthians, Paul said: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 12). This was opportune counsel to them; and no less so to us. The evil here was in thinking that they stood, and not in actually standing. Self thinks it stands, just as it thinks it knows. When temptation comes, it thinks it can meet it. We need say nothing of the result. Again, it may be asked, Is it wrong to think we can do, or not do? Yes, if self is the actor in doing, or not doing. Suppose self says, "I will do," we may be very sure it will not do. Suppose, it says, "I will not do," we can be sure it will do. This is the lesson of the seventh chapter of Romans. The children of Israel thought they could do, when they said: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Exod. 19: 8). Did they do it? No. Their whole history is proof. It was then they virtually put themselves under law.

It has been said often enough that we should have low thoughts of self, and high thoughts of God. This is, strictly speaking, inaccurate, to say the least. We should have **no** thoughts of self, and **only** thoughts of God. So long as self has a place, it can spoil everything. It is like the wild gourds in the pottage (2 Kings 4: 39). The conclusion is, we are not right in anything; in thought, or action, when self is in it. The whole genius of Christianity is to take us away from self, and occupy us with God, as revealed in Christ. Christ is the object supreme of thought; and it is left for us to say, in whatever measure we may have learned it, **NOT I, BUT CHRIST**.

BIBLE STUDY — GENESIS

F. B. HOLE.

Chapters 45: 16 — 47: 31.

THERE had been a considerable measure of secrecy in all these dealings between Joseph and his brethren, but now all secrecy was abandoned. Pharaoh and all his court were now fully apprised of what had taken place and it pleased them. Since "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians," as we are told in the last verse of the next chapter, we might have been surprised at this did we not know, as we before remarked, that at this epoch the ruling powers in Egypt were not true Egyptians but an alien race, closely allied with the nomadic and shepherd folk to which Jacob and his sons belonged. It is quite probable that the Pharaoh of those days looked upon it as a stroke of good business to receive Jacob and his descendants. It would bring under his protection those who would be his natural allies.

Pharaoh therefore instigated the sending of beasts and wagons sufficient in number to effect the transport, and also the sending of the message and invitation, recorded in verses 17 and 18. Here again we find words which strongly remind us of New Testament language. We quote them: "Come unto me; and I will give you . . ." Of what does that remind you? We shall all surely answer that it reminds us of Matthew 11: 28, "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest." Joseph's word was to be, "I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land." But that "good" would involve to them rest from their fears of famine and the weary-

ing search for food during the years of famine; coming to Joseph they would find rest indeed.

There was now bestowed upon them bounty beyond all their thoughts, in the presence of which only one thing became them, and that was the obedience of faith. We read, "And the children of Israel did so." They did exactly as they were commanded. Everything necessary was conferred upon them, as verses 21-23 record. Thus they were dispatched to their father with the injunction, "See that ye fall not out by the way." There was very rightly a little sting for their consciences in this. They fell out badly over Joseph many years before. As forgiven men they were now to manifest an entirely different spirit.

Back to Jacob they went with tidings of Joseph, astounding and to him almost unbelievable. But there were the wagons sent from Joseph with their full supplies. They were to him a foretaste and earnest of the good things to be found in Joseph's presence, and that wrought conviction and revived Jacob's heart. His nerve returned and he was ready for the journey. The words of Joseph had been supplemented by the firstfruits he sent.

Today, we have not only received the words of One far greater than Joseph, but we have received the firstfruits of His Spirit. Our spirits should indeed be revived and aglow, as we travel to the place where Jesus our Lord is.

The way in which Jacob's new

name of Israel is introduced in the record is worthy of note. Jacob's heart had fainted because of unbelief, and then his spirit revived. But when his faith had revived, it is **Israel** who said, "It is enough." Again, when at the beginning of chapter 46, we find the faith of his heart translated into positive action, it is **Israel** who gathers his possessions together and journeys, stopping at Beer-sheba to sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac. In these things he was acting in a way more worthy of one who was "Prince of God," than of one who was "Supplanter."

Beer-sheba too had been specially identified with his father Isaac, and from that spot the wanderings of Jacob had begun — see chapter 28: 10. Jacob had now come full circuit, if we may so say, and was back at the point of departure. Hence we find God Himself intervening and dealing directly with him. Yet though there had been this response of faith on his part, God knew that the old Jacob nature was still strong in him, and addressed him as such. The repetition of his name added emphasis to the revelation God gave.

In chapter 26: 2, we read of God appearing to Isaac and saying, "Go not down into Egypt." As a result of this command we do not find Egypt in the picture until we find Joseph carried there. Now however the Divine direction is exactly opposite and Jacob was not to be afraid to go. God's word to him was brief, but it contained four distinct promises.

First, that the sojourn in Egypt should be so ordered that there Jacob's family and descendants

should increase and be welded into a great nation. Their experience should be that of Psalm 4: 1, "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me" (New Trans.). In the tribulations of Egypt, acting like a furnace of iron, they were welded into a nation, that God took for His own. The hour had now come for this trying experience to be theirs, though at the outset all seemed favourable.

But, in the second place, this result would only be achieved because God Himself would go down with them. Had He not done so, they would speedily have been swamped by the abounding evils of that land. As it was, they got infected by them, as their subsequent history showed; but the presence of God with them secured the testimony to Himself in their midst.

So in the third place, there was the promise that God in His own time would bring them up out of Egypt, so that once more they might be in the land that was theirs according to His word. God never swerves from His declared purpose, though to reach it He may pursue ways that seem to be contradictory to it. So verse 4 is an illustration of the difference between God's **purpose** and His **ways**; a difference that we need to bear in mind as to God's dealings with ourselves today. Called with an heavenly calling, we must firmly seize God's purpose for us as members of Christ, and on the other hand not be surprised at, nor stumble over, the ways He may take with us in achieving His purpose.

Lastly, there was a promise personal to Jacob, which inferred that he would not be parted from Joseph until his end. The happy

reunion would last until the finish, and when he died Joseph would be at his side.

Thus instructed and encouraged of God, Jacob pursued his way from Beer-sheba into Goshen, the easterly part of the land of Egypt, sending Judah before him to direct their route. We are given a list of sons and grandsons and told their number as 70. If we refer to Exodus 12: 37, we shall see the great increase that took place while they were in Egypt, and how God fulfilled His word as to making them a great nation.

In verse 29 we again see Joseph in a very favourable light and as a man of a very tender heart. The splendour of his present position had not spoiled him. He had reached it through sorrow, which has a mellowing and softening effect upon those who go through it with God. Moreover he undertook to be their mediator in regard to Pharaoh and instructed them how to approach him. They were to emphasize that their occupation had been with sheep and cattle. The Pharaohs of that dynasty being of the so-called, "Shepherd Kings," this would ingratiate them with the ruling monarch, and also make the Egyptians content to have them as far away as possible in the land of Goshen, since they detested shepherds.

It is easy to see how this suited the purpose of God, which was to make a nation of them, free from admixture of alien blood. Though under Egyptian jurisdiction, there was to be a line of demarcation from the outset between them and the natives of Egypt. So in the early

verses of chapter 47 we read how simply and naturally all this came to pass. Pharaoh was most benign in his attitude. He welcomed them, allotting to them the best of the land in Goshen, and offering to them posts of importance as rulers of his cattle. Bearing in mind that Egypt, in common with the rest of the world, was in the midst of a great famine, such favourable treatment was indeed extraordinary, and only to be accounted for by the moving of God's hand behind the scenes.

Then comes the touching scene of old Jacob being presented by Joseph in the presence of Pharaoh. At the age of 130 he must have seemed a very old man in Egyptian eyes, but twice over, in verse 9, do we find him using the word, "pilgrimage." It is true of course that his life had been of a nomadic type, but nevertheless it indicates that these God-fearing patriarchs, as Hebrews 11 shows, ever had the eyes of their hearts upon the future, and knew that the present life was in view of a destination yet to be realized. If it was thus with them, how much more so should it be thus with us, who are partakers of a heavenly calling?

And moreover, twice in this paragraph, is it stated that Jacob blessed Pharaoh. The one thing cited in Hebrews 11, as showing his faith is his blessing of the sons of Joseph. That we get presently, but we remember the statement of Hebrews 7: 7, "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." The patriarch, though at that moment but a displaced person and a refugee in the presence of the great king, was consciously superior to him in his knowledge of the true

God. He knew enough of Him to be conscious that to have His pledged presence and guidance was something greater than all the glory that Egypt had to offer. He possessed the better, while Pharaoh for all his outward majesty, possessed the less. In the light of the faith and glory of Christ the position of the Christian is much accentuated. Are we always alive to the favour wherein we stand, and therefore lifted above the favours and allurements of the world?

Joseph's father and brethren being placed in the best of the land and nourished there, we now turn to consider the state of things prevailing among the Egyptians. This occupies verses 13-26. As the dreams had foretold, the famine became progressively worse. The people were fed, but not as those in Goshen. They had to buy their food from Joseph, who acted for Pharaoh. They brought their money, and when that failed their cattle, and when those failed they had to sell their land. The only exception made was in the case of the priests, men who wielded great power because through their idol gods they were in touch with the supernatural.

Thus bit by bit everything in Egypt fell into the hands of Pharaoh, and a law made by Joseph was that his proprietorship should be acknowledged by a rent paid in kind — the fifth part of all the produce. This was oppressive legislation indeed, but the sort of thing that was quite ordinary in those days. We can see how in the course of many years it may have helped to provoke that uprising of the ancient Egyptian dynasty, which

is recorded in Scripture as, "There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." (Exod. 1: 8).

Though this action of Joseph strikes us as oppressive, particularly perhaps his removing of the people from one end of the land to another, we cannot but think it has a typical value, setting forth how completely he was "lord of all Egypt," and thus a figure of Christ. Now the Lordship of Christ is absolute, for if He is not Lord of all and of every detail, He is not Lord at all. Moreover as Lord He subdues everything to God and disposes of everything according to the Divine mind. A time will come, "when all things shall be subdued unto Him" (1 Cor. 15: 28), and when as a result, God shall be all in all. But that which the Lord Jesus will bring to pass, though it will involve the execution of judgment, will be for the ultimate blessing of the universe of God.

In the closing verses of our chapter we return to Jacob in the land of Goshen. Seventeen more years rolled over him, so he remained until the dreadful years of famine were only an unpleasant memory. Then the time came that he had to die. Jacob indeed he was, but he spoke as Israel when he extracted from Joseph a vow that he would not bury him in Egypt, but lay his body with those of his fathers in the land which was theirs by promise. Joseph readily acceded for, as we shall see, he too had the same faith. They had received the promises and believed them, and they knew that the promised Seed would be connected with that land.

“GOD-BREATHED”

A. J. POLLOCK.

THERE are two striking occasions when we are told that “God breathed,” and in both cases it is connected with **life**. The first occurs in Genesis 2: 7, where we read that, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed [Hebrew, **neshamah**, breath] into his nostrils the breath of **life**; and man became a **living** soul.” Here we have given to us the beginning of human life on this earth. This is very far removed from the theory of evolution, but tells us of God as Creator, the Fountain Head of all life, and how He bestowed human life on man.

The other occasion is where we read that “All Scripture is given by inspiration [Greek, **theopneustos**, God-breathed] of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). That this is connected with life, **divine life**, is stated in Hebrews 4: 12, “The word of God is quick [literally **living**, Greek **zaō**, to have life] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Here is stated the full inspiration of Holy Scripture, God-breathed from beginning to end.

The human body is often used as an illustration of the Scriptures. Indeed we find Scripture itself using the human body as illustrative of divine and spiritual truths, concerning our Lord as the Head of the Church His body, and believers

looked upon as members of His body (see, 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; Col. 2).

There are many members in the human body. There are many books making together the Holy Scriptures. The members of the human body have different functions, yet act harmoniously in the life of the body. The Books of the Bible are very varied, some largely taken up with history, some with prophecy, some with doctrine, some with exhortation, and above all, the four Gospels presenting to us the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord. Yet all in perfect harmony, no contradiction between one part and another, though the writers might be separated by centuries, and be unknown to each other. All this goes to prove that the Bible is God-breathed, for in no other way could it bear the characteristics that it does, were it even partly of man's production. There is a very solemn warning at the very close of the Bible (Rev. 22: 18, 19) as to adding to, or taking from the word of God. It is all of God and God alone from Genesis to Revelation.

The word of God is living, for it produces life, and life can only come from life. We read, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which **liveth** and abideth for ever.” (2 Peter 1: 23). “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.” (James 1: 18). Under the hand of God by the agency of God's Holy Spirit millions of men and women all down the ages of the world's history have been begotten by the Scriptures of truth. The word

of God is **living**.

The very fact that this very ancient book in the world's literature still goes out by the millions every year, producing changed lives, altered adjustments to God, is proof of its being **living**. It is like the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22: 2).

It is not that every part of the Bible is of equal value to us, any more than that each part of the human body is of equal value. There are parts of the human body we could do without and yet live fairly comfortable and useful lives, but the loss of the smallest member would mean a mutilated body. Every part of the body is necessary to make a complete body. So all the books of the Bible are necessary for the whole Book as God-breathed. We might think we could do without one of the small Minor Prophets, and could not do without the Epistle

to the Romans or the Epistle to the Colossians, yet if the smallest part of the Book were missing we should have a mutilated Bible.

How good it is to take it just as God has given it to us. To remember that it is "God-breathed" should make us feel how God Himself is speaking to us in every part of it. No wonder that the prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts." (Jer. 15: 16). No wonder that Job could say, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." (Job 23: 12).

What is that word to us? Do we meditate on it night and day? Are our souls fed by it as in a dry and thirsty world?

ETERNAL LIFE OR IDOLS

F. B. HOLE.

Condensed Notes of an Address on 1 John 5: 18-21, given at Wooler, November 3rd, 1949.

IN reading this short passage my main point is contained in verses 20 and 21; but just a few words, to start with, on verses 18 and 19, where we have a very important distinction. The Spirit of God draws a very clear line of demarcation between the saints as born of God and the world out of which they have been taken. We must ever bear in mind that we belong to a chosen race, to a generation that God has brought into being by His

own act. The character of this new race is declared, since, "whosoever is born of God sinneth not."

Now here we have one of those abstract statements that occur so often in this remarkable epistle. That is, the Spirit of God invites us to consider the matter in its own essential nature and character, abstracting it in our thoughts from all other things, and from the complications they may introduce. To

consider a thing abstractly is very helpful, if we really wish to understand it.

Let me use an illustration. A chemist might hand you a bottle and uncorking it might bid you take a sniff. You do so and recoil, saying it has a disagreeable smell. He now hands you another bottle containing a fluid that looks like water, and when opened you can hardly detect any odour. Yet he tells you that the most potent ingredient in the first bottle was that very liquid. In the first bottle its real nature was obscured by other substances. Only when presented in abstract form was its true nature revealed.

Now we are living in a world of many mixtures. The object of the great adversary is to make the mixture as complicated as possible. The object of the Spirit of God is to differentiate, and make the abstract character of the child of God on the one hand, and of the world on the other, as plain as possible.

As born of God we have a nature that is sinless. Such an one, abstractly considered, "cannot sin," as we are told in verse 9 of chapter 3. Other verses in this epistle contemplate us in our present practical condition, and then consequently speak of our sinning. But when the Lord comes and we stand with Him in glory what is now true of us only in this abstract sense will be true of us practically, absolutely and forever. Thanks be to God!

So also in verse 19, the world is considered in an abstract way. It lies "in wickedness" or "in the wicked one." You may wish to tell me that there are some very nice and

amiable people in the world. Granted, if you consider the world with its strange complications, from a practical point of view. In Romans 7 and 8, the "flesh" is viewed abstractly and so we read that there is no good in it, and that those who are in the flesh "cannot please God."

May God help us all, and particularly those who are young, to seize the abstract point of view. Those born of God cannot sin. A man in the flesh cannot do anything but sin. The world lies in the grip of the wicked one.

That may seem a strong thing to say of the world, but it is true. The devil is shaping the course of things. Men may imagine they are doing it, but they are not. When I was a small boy I was taken to see a marionette show. There were the little dolls quaintly dressed all moving or dancing on the stage. But from where I sat cracks in the boarding beneath the stage allowed me to have a glimpse of the men who were pulling the strings, so the dancing of the dolls was not so wonderful to my childish mind. Men on the world stage may look imposing — Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, and the rest — but when we see the devil pulling the strings that control their movements, they fascinate us no more.

The trouble with us so often is that we ignore the line of demarcation that God has drawn. Let us see that we maintain it, for we mix things at our peril.

The first statement of verse 20 is this: "We know that the Son of God is come." We do **not** know that

some great and inscrutable Person is come, and that He became the Son of God by the manner in which He came. That is **not** the truth, and what our verse states **is** the truth. "Son of God" is a Name of most illustrious import. His coming into Manhood was an act of humiliation, a stoop of unimaginable greatness — far greater than would have been involved had it been needful for Michael the Archangel to assume the lowest form of animal life, and become a worm.

"Son of God" is not a Name taken, expressive of His humiliation but the Name of His original glory, and we have some knowledge of what His coming has brought us. God has been made known, and the Father's Name fully declared. Glimpses of the true God had been granted in previous ages, but now, "Him that is true" stands fully revealed.

But wonderful as the revelation is, it would mean nothing to us had we not eyes to see it. So we get the second great statement of our verse that "He hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true." We may well bless God for a gift like that.

How was that gift bestowed? Well, not only have we been begotten of God, but from the ascended Christ we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. As we read in verse 20 of chapter 2, it could be said even to babes in Christ, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." In the last scenes, as recorded in Luke's Gospel, we read how the Lord opened the understanding of His disciples that they might understand

the Scriptures. That I should connect with John's record of how He breathed into them, saying, "Receive ye Holy Ghost;" bestowing upon them His risen life in the energy of the Spirit. Hence there is given to us the understanding to take in the things of God.

So in our verse we have, firstly, the **revelation** in the coming of the the Son of God. Then, secondly, there is **illumination** by the gift of this understanding. You may remember that the Lord Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye." Someone might feel inclined to say, "But I thought that the light is the sun." So it is, if we view things objectively. But viewing things subjectively, and as a matter of our experience, the eye is the light. The sun might be shining at noon, but if I had no eye there would be nothing but darkness in me.

Twice in our verse God is spoken of as "Him that is true." Here, as ever, truth stands in contrast to all that is false and unreal. In God Himself we have the ultimate Reality. Hence the sharp contrast that is drawn between Him and the world, which is so full of unreality. In its **moral character** the world is a vain show, but even in a **physical** and **material** way unreality is increasingly stamped upon everything. Very few things are just what they seem to be. The very food we eat is largely faked in one way or another. This epistle tells us, "The world passeth away." We need shed no tears over that statement.

But verse 20 carries us a step further. Not only have we the revelation and the illumination but, "we are in Him that is true, even

in His Son Jesus Christ." We are at a loss for one word to express this. We might say, **origination**, but that would better express the fact that we are "of God," as verse 19 told us. This goes beyond that, for we might have been "of" Him without being "in" Him. We are "in Him that is true," inasmuch as we are brought into His life and nature, by being "in His Son Jesus Christ;" so perhaps **derivation** is the more suitable word. Him that is true, then, is clearly God the Father, and we are in the Father by being in the Son. So here we have that which the Lord spoke of anticipatively in John 14. He looked forward to the day close at hand when the Spirit should be given to indwell the disciples, and He said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." We derive everything from Him.

This is indeed a most marvellous thing — something beyond all our thoughts. The depth of our plight as fallen sinners was such that it would have been wonderful if God had redeemed us and fitted us to know and be with Him, just as a dog knows and loves his master. A dog may display considerable intelligence and great devotion, but all within the limits set by this fact — it cannot share the life and nature of its master. We are not mere spectators or observers, we have that which no angel has, being brought into the very life and nature of God, by being "in His Son."

Are we then to entertain the thought that the Son is merely an intermediary, and possibly something inferior to God the Father?

This false idea has always been simmering in some minds, and appearing more or less boldly from time to time. The closing words of our verse dissipate this thought. Pointing an emphatic finger at "His Son Jesus Christ," the solemn pronouncement is, "This is the true God, and eternal life."

In the first verses of his Gospel, John introduces the same Person as "The Word," and asserts His essential Deity. Here He is "The Son," and His Deity is affirmed with equal emphasis. The adjective "true" is added here, since the world, which is energized by the deceiver, lies darkly in the background. But He not only is the true God, so that all that may be known of God is revealed in Him, but He is also the eternal life, the Fountain-Head of that life which now is ours, so that we may know and enjoy the revelation.

Into that life have we been brought, and we have it **now**. This does not in any way clash with that which we find frequently in Paul's writings — "The end everlasting life" (Rom. 6: 22) — that life as a future thing. You might walk into a greenhouse in this country and see a cactus growing in a pot. It looks like a spiny cucumber standing up on its end. If you ever visit the West Indies you will see the same sort of cactus in its tropical fulness, twenty feet high, and not stunted by a chilly clime. The essential life of both is the same. We have the life now, though its fulness belongs to the age that is to come.

That which hinders the development of that life now may be summed up in the one word, **idols**.

Hence the last verse of the epistle. The word, "little" should not be there. The whole family of God is addressed and not babes merely. The closing exhortation is "Keep yourselves from idols." What is an idol? We may define it by saying, an idol is anything which usurps in the heart and mind that supreme place that belongs to God alone. That which takes such commanding possession of our thoughts becomes an idol.

In these words the Holy Spirit has uncovered for us the root of much failure and weakness amongst the children of God. The idolized thing becomes like a film over the eye, dimming its vision of the brighter things above. Here I feel very sympathetic with my younger brothers and sisters, for I am now sufficiently old to look back to youthful days when there were not nearly the

number of clever things invented, calculated to fascinate and fill the mind to the exclusion of far better things. In my young days there were no motor-cars, no airplanes, no radio, no television, no cinemas, enticing you to spend time on them rather than on the service of the Lord and things of eternal value.

So our closing word must be one of warning. You may hear great and wonderful things in meetings, and even yield them a ready assent in your mind, but if you are decoyed away to spend most of your time in the pursuit of other things that bear the idol character, your Christianity will be but a poor anaemic thing.

So let me repeat once more John's closing admonition, "Children, keep yourselves from idols." And may we all have grace to respond with "Amen," and really mean it.

THE ALTAR OF ED

J. W. H. NICHOLS.

(JOSHUA 22: 34).

THE two and one-half tribes of Israel — Ruben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh (Numbers 32) remind us somewhat of Lot, the earthly minded companion of Abraham, who chose the well watered plain of Jordan, which appeared to him as "the garden of the Lord" and who failed to appreciate — as did Abraham — the call of God. Yet in other ways they were dissimilar, for it could not be said that, like Lot, their lives were formed by mixed principles, which led to unholy associations with such direful consequences, but they were evid-

ently a people fully owning and wishing identification with those who obeyed the call of God, yet they were not prepared to walk in the power of it.

"The eyes of man are never satisfied" (Proverbs 27: 20), and Lot-like the tribes lifted up their eyes, "saw the land," and "behold the place was a place for cattle." (Num. 32: 1). But it was on the wilderness side of Jordan, and alas they evidently thought less of God's call to Canaan and the pilgrimage of their brethren, than present advan-

tages. Abraham, their progenitor, knew nothing of that side of Jordan. Moses had not mentioned it, and when they left Egypt nothing short of the promised land was before them. But as they journeyed their earthly possessions increased, and they had **much cattle**. Evidently they reasoned, that since the plains suited their pursuit, nothing would be gained by crossing Jordan, and they, therefore, ask for an inheritance on the plain of Jordan and so came short of the call of God. There was no thought of giving up their portion as Israelites, no rebellion, but their cattle led them to seek **what suited them**, and so they remained on the wilderness side.

What a voice this has for us! How many true Christians there are who come short of appropriating their heavenly possessions! Like the two and half tribes, they have no thought of being untrue to their Christian position, but are content to know their salvation is secure, and settle down in congenial circumstances.

To Moses their proposal came with misgiving, it was so far short of the purpose of God made known while they were still in Egypt. "I will bring you unto the land concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob and I will give it to you for an heritage: I am the Lord." (Exod. 6: 8). He chides them and speaks of the way their brethren had been discouraged by the spies sent out from Kadesh Barnea, and the resulting forty years wandering in the wilderness. They repudiate all thought of alienation from their brethren, and signify their willingness to go with them to war until the land is

possessed. In this they were unlike Lot whose conduct separated him from Abraham. They did not want to forfeit fellowship with their brethren, but they were not in the moral power of the call of God, something less than **the land** sufficed.

In Joshua 22 we find the sequel. All that was commendable in them Joshua recounts, but it is evidently with some misgiving; he blessed them, and sent them away, saying, "But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, charged you, to love the Lord your God and walk in **all His ways** and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with **all your heart** and with **all your soul**." So they returned to the wilderness side of Jordan, and on settling down in their chosen possessions, we read they "built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to" (Joshua 22: 10). But it was not **the** altar. They were far from the tabernacle with its ark of the covenant and accompanying mercy seat, of which God had said, "There will I meet with thee and will commune with thee." (Exod. 25: 22).

No altar, however "great to see to," could possibly make up for the loss of this. Upon their altar, they are free to own, no burnt offerings or meat offerings or peace offerings could be offered (verse 23) — it was simply to "see to," and lest their children should cease to fear the Lord, and as a witness of their place and portion in Israel.

All this shows, they had some fear that their desire to remain in the

plain of Jordan might not bring un-mixed blessing. We can never step out of the path of obedience without consequent spiritual loss. Israel, when they heard of the altar built on the other side of Jordan, gathered together at Shiloh to go up against their brethren, but on hearing the purpose of it, and the avowed loyalty of the two and a half tribes, they were satisfied and returned.

What a lesson is here, for those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand. How many there are whose place and portion among the people of God cannot be questioned, who, however, are not prepared to take possession of their heavenly position, and so settle down in congenial surroundings, **the wrong side of Jordan**, i.e., know little of what

it is to be dead and risen with Christ and are not found seeking those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God (Col. 3: 1, 2). Content to maintain their Christian profession in a religious world, where there is often "a great altar to see to," they come short of their heavenly calling, and often become world-borderers. All this inevitably brings corresponding loss — loss of present Christian joy, fulness of joy of which the blessed Lord speaks in John 15: 11, and future reward, when every bit of faithfulness and testimony will be remembered.

The Lord grant that writer and reader may not fall short, or desire less than our God-given heavenly position and calling.

BIBLE STUDY — GENESIS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 47: 29—49: 12).

THE patriarchs, being men of faith, viewed Canaan as being the land of Messiah's glory, and though now descending into the grave, they expected to see that glory in a coming day. The closing verses of Hebrews 11 sum up the situation. Though they believed they did not receive that which was promised.

They were waiting, though they did not know it, for further purposes of God to come to light, and the church was yet to be gathered out of all nations. Hence we read that they — the Old Testament saints — without us — the saints composing the church — "should not be made perfect." In a glorified condition we shall all reach perfection together

at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The one event in Jacob's life which is singled out in Hebrews 11, as exemplifying the faith that was in him, is his blessing of the sons of Joseph. The importance of this act of his is evident here, for the whole of chapter 48 is given up to the account of it. Being upon his death-bed, Joseph and his two sons arrived to see him, and it is striking how at once Jacob reverted to the moment when first he was brought into contact with God, as recorded in chapter 28. The blessing then granted he remembered and the promises then made he rehearsed in a way that shows that he received them in

faith. They were blessings of an earthly sort, but in the sons of Joseph he saw the beginning of their fulfilment.

There appears to be an element of prophecy in verse 5, for in the history of the nation Joseph's two sons were treated just as though they had been sons of Jacob, as Reuben and Simeon were his; each being treated as the head of a tribe, and all Joseph's posterity were ranged under the heads of these two tribes.

Then further, having recalled the original blessing received from God at Bethel, he passed on to recall the greatest sorrow of his life when Rachel, the mother of Joseph, died in the vicinity of Bethlehem. His faith could not embrace the distinction that was yet to come to the place, for centuries had to pass before prophecy indicated that spot as the birthplace of the great Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity. It was to be the place where not only was there to be a mourning for Rachel, but also where there should be a great mourning, "Rachel weeping for her children," according to Matthew 2: 18.

When Rachel died Jacob was still in full strength; now his natural strength was gone, his eyes were dim, so that he could not even discern the sons of Joseph. In his days of vigour he had too frequently walked by the sight of his own eyes; now at the close he begins to walk and act by faith and not by sight, and at the same time he realizes the exceeding kindness of God toward him. He had spent weary years thinking that never again would he

see the face of his beloved son, and now not only had he seen him but his seed also. Upon the two sons he would now bestow his blessing.

With filial piety Joseph bowed down before his father and then presented them with due respect to their ages, so that Jacob's right hand might rest upon the head of the elder, according to the custom of those days. At that moment it was the faith of Jacob that was prominent — faith which led to his possessing the spirit of prophecy. Consequently he reversed what Joseph had done, and crossing his hands he laid his right hand upon Ephraim and not Manasseh.

Herein we may see a parable that has meaning for us. The name Manasseh means **Forgetting**, which is negative in its bearing, whereas Ephraim means **Fruitful**, which definitely bears a positive character. The first man and his race are negative as regards God, the complete negation of all His thoughts. In Christ, the Second Man, is the Yea and Amen to all God's thoughts, and all fruitfulness is found in Him. He is indeed the Man of God's right hand, and it is a great day in the spiritual history of each of us when we heartily endorse the fact that the first man is dispossessed by the Second, and therefore we turn away from self-seeking to find our all in Christ.

Once more then we find a type pointing forward to the word, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10: 9). When challenged by Joseph, Jacob held his ground, and though Manasseh was definitely blessed, yet Ephraim was given priority. The

probation of mankind was running its course at this time and the test was not completed. Hence the time had not come for the conclusive judgment of the first man to be set forth in type, but only the fact that the Second should dispossess the first.

Again in verse 21 we hear the accents of faith. Israel knew that he was about to die, but his eye was lifted from himself to God. He had done much scheming in his time, but now he recognized that the only thing that really mattered was the presence and purpose of God. No matter what he himself had been nor what his sons would prove themselves to be, God would be true to them and to His purpose to give them the land that He had promised. At last, God and His word was the stay of Israel's soul, and we shall be happy if, long before we come to the end of life's journey, we discover that there, and there **only**, is stability and security to be found. Thereby we shall be spared much of the fruitless and heart-breaking scheming which we have seen characterizing him.

The last verse of the chapter seems to allude to an episode not previously recorded. We read of, "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph" (John 4: 5), and Joshua 24: 32 seems also to refer to this gift. If so, we must identify it with the transaction recorded in chapter 33: 19 of our book, and that was close to the bad and warlike action of his sons Simeon and Levi, yet no mention is made there as to sword and bow in the hands of Jacob. However, there was the acquisition of a portion in the land as the result of conflict

as well as purchase, and it was given to Joseph, who became thereby lord of that little portion of the land as well as lord of all Egypt. It was a kind of foretaste and pledge that ultimately the whole land would be possessed.

In chapter 49, we find Jacob still presented to us as a man of faith. He called his sons together that he might pronounce a blessing upon them, and he was conscious that in so doing he was speaking as a prophet and foretelling that which should befall them in the last days. We are on safe ground therefore in interpreting his utterances as referring to "the last days," and not merely to the more immediate future experiences of the tribes.

Reuben was the firstborn and in him more especially the might, the strength, the dignity and the power of Jacob should be seen. The very beginning of Jacob's strength and excellency were to be expressed in him. And what was expressed? Nothing but instability and self-gratification, which was defiling and an outrage on all natural decency. What a disappointment for Jacob to see this evil manifested as the beginning of his strength!

Here surely we have predicted that which marked Israel the nation all through their sad history, and particularly when they were tested under the law. Whether in the wilderness or in the land; whether under Moses or Joshua or the Judges or the Kings; their story is one long record of unstable fluctuations between the worship of Jehovah and of idols. They were defiled by their adulterous connection with false gods. And in contemplating this we

must remember that they were the sample nation, selected that the test of man might be carried out in them. In their condemnation all the nations stand condemned; ourselves included as men in the flesh.

Simeon and Levi come next. Their father never forgot their cruel and violent action, as recorded in chapter 34, and he dissociated himself from it. They claimed to be avenging the honour of their sister, but with what they did Jacob's honour would not be united, and he denounced it as the fruit of their anger. The allusion here is again to that which was past, and in which their natural character was seen. But to what did it refer prophetically?

It refers, we believe, to that terrible outbreak of anger and cruelty in the nation, which reached its climax in the rejection and death of Christ. Stephen speaks of Him as "the Just One," in contrast to the sinful men that were slain by Simeon and Levi, and he added, "of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7: 52). Strikingly enough Simeon and Levi achieved their murderous intent by a preliminary act of betrayal.

The last clause of verse 6 is obscure, inasmuch as the reading is not certain. But taking it as it stands, "they digged down a wall," we may apply to the fact that in murdering their Messiah and Deliverer, they destroyed their own separated position, and digged down by so doing the wall of protection that had been theirs. They are still in a very full sense the scattered nation, and that in spite of a partial return to their own land.

Consequently there rests upon

them nationally the curse of which Jacob spoke in verse 7. Indeed, as we know, they took the curse upon themselves in the presence of Pilate, the representative of the ruling Gentile power. Verse 7 is still being fulfilled before our eyes to this day, though early in their history a fulfilment of it began. Simeon was soon much weakened and relegated to an unimportant place among the tribes, whilst Levi was separated from them. But that was because after several centuries Levi was zealous not for his own honour but for God's honour, and used his sword to vindicate God's holiness.

We see, then, in verses 5-7, a prophetic reference to the death of their Messiah at the hands of the nation, resulting in the curse and scattering being their portion, as to this day. This is a national matter and does not conflict with the action of God's grace in still calling out from among them a remnant according to His election.

In the blessing of Judah an entirely different note is struck. In verses 8-12, we turn to a prophecy which refers to Christ, who though rejected and slain, as we have just seen, emerges triumphant both in grace and in judgment. There is a play upon Judah's name, for it means "Praise," and Christ is to be the Object of universal praise, as we see in Revelation 5; praise which shall fill both heaven and earth and go far beyond anything foreseen by Jacob. Two classes are seen in verse 8 — his brethren and his enemies. His brethren are to sound out his praise, and his enemies are to feel the power of his hand in subjugation; and how these things, spoken of Judah, point on to Christ, it is

easy to see. Here his father's children are to bow down before Judah, as representing Christ, just as previously they were to bow down before Joseph, since he represented Christ.

In verse 9 Judah is compared to a lion, as a king among beasts. Here we see an allusion to Christ acting in judgment. Genesis is the seed-plot of the Bible. We pass to Revelation, where everything reaches fruition and finality, and in chapter 5 we find "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" about to take the book of judgment and break its seals. And the universe is filled with His praises. The connection is too plain for us to miss. In this way old Jacob must have rejoiced to see the day of Christ, though doubtless not so fully as Abraham did.

Verse 10 contains a striking prophecy, indicating that Judah would be the tribe out of whom should come the kingly line, culminating in "Shiloh," a term which is taken to refer to Christ as the Prince of peace. And of course we know that our Lord, as concerning the flesh, sprang out of Judah, as we are reminded in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Out of that kingly line He sprang, as is shown by the two genealogies recorded by Matthew

and Luke. But at the end of that verse another striking fact is alluded to, for the word, "people," is more correctly, "peoples;" that is, it refers to the nations generally and not merely to the nation of Israel. And the coming of Shiloh has resulted in His becoming, by reason of His rejection and death, the Centre of gathering for a multitude out of all nations; and in the coming age He will be visibly the Centre not only of Israel but of the nations also.

The prophetic allusions of verses 11 and 12 are not so clear, especially as the language is highly poetic and figurative. We cannot miss the words, "His foal," and "His ass's colt," which at once carry our thoughts to Zechariah's prophecy and its fulfilment as our Lord presented Himself to Jerusalem, as is shown in Matthew 21: 5. It looks therefore as if the words relate to His first advent rather than to His second, and thus refer to His sufferings and to the grace which is proffered as the result of them.

In Isaiah 55: 1 the Gentiles are in view for the call goes forth to "every one" that thirsts. "Wine and milk" are free for all. Our verses would indicate the reason. They are free because procured as the result of what He has done.



"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3: 5). For this we want power. Now the joy of the Lord is our strength. Our power is found in that which lifts us out of the whole region to which evil attaches. Christ, risen from the dead, is now to give character to every detail of our behaviour.

ANCHORED WITHIN THE VEIL

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE title of this article is made up of two figurative or symbolic words — **anchored** and **veil**. It has been truly said, that if every symbolism was removed from the Scriptures a very small volume would be left. Symbolism possesses two outstanding qualities, viz., **vividness** and **brevity**. The latter quality may astonish the reader, but on reflection it will be seen that to express symbolic language in ordinary terms would necessitate the employment of a much larger number of words. It is so in this case, as we shall see.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the use of symbolism in the Scriptures is found in Revelation 21: 9-27 and 22: 1-5. There we get a description that is clearly not that of a literal city, but vivid, glowing symbolic language describing the Church of God as seen in her relation to the millennial earth in the day to come. The dictionary gives the meaning of symbolic language as "that which represents something else." This is a good example of it.

"ANCHORED!" What train of thought does this single word convey? Surely that of a vessel, that has reached the port of arrival. Preparatory to beginning the journey the anchor was lifted, and without using it the voyage with its buffetings was made. Then the desired haven entered, its anchor was dropped. In Hebrews 6: 13-20 is found the passage where this symbolic language is written.

"VEIL!" Of what does this remind us? It naturally recalls the symbolic teaching of the Tabernacle in the desert, round which the chil-

dren of Israel were gathered. By this symbolism God sought to teach His chosen people precious lessons, and ourselves too, as the Epistle to the Hebrews is a witness.

This symbolism centred round the Tabernacle itself, a tent divided into two unequal parts, the inner and smaller part being called "The holiest of all," in which was the Ark and the Mercy Seat stained with the blood of the sin-offering, wherein between the two golden cherubim, the Shekinah glory filled the Holy Place. Unlike the Antitype, as seen in our Lord, His Person and His atoning work on the cross, this spoke of distance as well as of access. The High Priest had access, but only once a year on the great day of atonement; the priests and the children of Israel had no access, but were kept at a distance, for the symbolisms of the Old Testament never put away sin. They were only "a shadow of good things to come."

But see what the New Testament tells us. When our Lord completed the mighty work of redemption at the cross of Calvary, we read that He cried with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED," and gave up the ghost. As these triumphant words fell from His blessed lips, the VEIL of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom — rent by the hand of God Himself, declaring His full satisfaction with the atoning work accomplished on the cross, His full acceptance of it as meeting all the claims of His holiness in respect of sin, and setting the believer free to enter into the holiest of all in virtue of the precious blood shed; that is, consciously to be in the pres-

ence of God, and eventually to enter heaven itself, the bliss of the Lord's presence, and the joy of the Father's house.

But note the difference. In an earthly voyage the anchor is dropped at the **end** of the voyage. In the heavenly voyage of the soul the anchor is dropped in heaven at the very **beginning** of the voyage, at the very moment when a repentant sinner accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour. The journey's **end** is assured at the very **beginning** of the soul's journey in faith.

This anchor is likened to a **hope**. An earthly hope is the very reverse of certainty. It may materialize or it may not. Till realization or disappointment comes, one never knows. But this hope being GOD-GIVEN, the fulfilment is as sure as if it had already taken place. God's own character is pledged to the fulfilment of His own word. Scripture tells us, that "we **ARE** saved by [or, in] hope [not in the future, but **NOW**] . . . but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8: 24, 25), as being sure of it.

The believer's anchor is "both **sure** and **steadfast**, and which entereth into that within the veil." We are here reminded of the **two** flukes of an anchor, designed to take firm grip of the ocean bed. We have **two** immutable things, given to the believer by God to make him absolutely sure — His **counsel** and His **oath**. The writer remembers well a scene which occurred in Jamaica over fifty years ago. At six o'clock in the morning about one hundred and fifty coloured people were gathered in a tent for a Bible talk before

the great heat of the day came on. An aged coloured woman was seen laboriously thumbing a large print Bible. She then asked a question, "There is a word in Hebrews 6: 18," she said, "I cannot pronounce it, but I can spell it — i-m-m-u-t-a-b-l-e. Tell me, what does it mean?" I replied, "It means something that cannot by any possibility change or alter." This answer gave her great comfort.

There is no needless repetition in the Scriptures. If anything is repeated it is to emphasize and draw special attention to the point in question.

Why are men put on oath in the law courts of the land? It is because they are capable of lying. The psalmist said in his haste that "all men are liars" (Psalm 116: 11), and men have not altered. In happy contrast to this we are told that it is "impossible for God to lie." God cannot do these things that would be the negation of His being, nature and holiness. God cannot swear by one higher than **Himself**, so He swears by **Himself**. He said to Abraham, "**SURELY** . . . I will bless thee." Why add the word **surely**? On the Divine side there was no need for it whatever. No word can add to God's trustworthiness. His word is His bond. It is immutable, unchangeable, divine. God confirmed **His** word by an oath, most graciously given **for our sakes**, seeing we are naturally "slow of heart to believe." (Luke 24: 25).

We add another witness to this. Our Lord sometimes prefaced His sayings by, "**VERILY, VERILY.**" Why this double affirmation of our Lord? Because of His gracious

desire to encourage us to trust Him fully.

And what do we know of what is "inside the veil"? Best and foremost of all, the Lord Jesus is there. He has entered **representatively**, "having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. 9: 12). He has entered as the **FORERunner**. This is a composite word, that means there are **AFTER**-runners. Through infinite grace every believer on the Lord Jesus can be so named. He has won this place for His own. He has gone in as the great Forerunner,

making way for the after-runners to follow.

In contrast, not only the High Priest, but **ALL** believers have the privilege of entering the holiest of all, the very presence of God. (Heb. 10: 19).

What a joy and comfort to every saint, whether a living or a dying saint, to realize that his or her anchor is safely dropped inside the veil. And we are journeying to a land where the inhabitant shall never say, "I am sick." (Isa. 33: 24).

CHRIST AT THE DOOR

J. HOUSTON.

THE Church was intended to be Christ's witness on earth, during the dark night of His absence, and that in view of His coming again. In this place of testimony, it has failed, and is now in ruin. It began, in its declension, in Ephesus, when it left its "first love;" and it ends in Laodicea, in an appalling state of lukewarmness — "neither cold nor hot." Christ not only disowns it, but spues it out of His mouth.

As might be expected, He is **outside**: "Behold I stand at the **door**, and knock" (Rev. 3: 20). He knocks, seeking entrance; not to the Church as such, but to those whom He loves, who are **inside**. Of them, He thus speaks: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent."

It might be thought, the place where His own should be is **outside**,

where He is; but this is not so, since they cannot leave the Church, of which they form an essential part. In view of this, He does not call them to come out to Him; but appeals to them to open the door, that He may come in to them. The Church may fail in its testimony, but it is still the Church. Evil men may have come into it, bringing with them their "damnable heresies" (see Jude; 2 Peter 2); but, just as Israel, in Babylon, was still Israel, so the Church in its moral captivity is still the Church. The good and bad may be thrown together in this world, and have to **remain** thus, till the discriminating judgment of God separates them, as we see in the parable of the tares (Matt. 13: 24-30). Certain it is, when the Lord comes for His own, to receive them in the air, not one will be left behind. This is the com-

fort of all who love the Lord, and long for His coming.

Now, it is one thing to be in the Church, with reference to its ruin, in testimony; it is quite another thing to be associated with that which caused its ruin. We can state the same thing thus: it is one thing, to be thrown **together**, with wicked men, in an outward testimony; it is quite another thing to be associated with their wickedness. This brings in the principle of separation from evil, and that, **in the very place**, where the evil is practised. In other words, the faithful can be separate from the vessels to dishonour, and still be in the great house (see 2 Tim. 2: 19-21). Daniel was in Babylon; but he would not defile himself with Babylon's food; nor would he worship its idols. He was "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use," and that, **in the very place**, where there was defilement and idolatry. So it is with the faithful today.

But why does the Lord rebuke and chasten those, whom He loves, in Laodicea? Because He loves them. He cannot, on that account, allow them to drift into a state of lukewarmness, and be deprived of their love. Love seeks its object, and will not be satisfied without it. If His own were apathetic, and even indifferent, to His love, being affected by the prevailing spirit of their environment, He could not remain in that attitude towards them. His love would move Him to rebuke and chasten them, that they might be led to self-judgment and recovery.

We now come to His appeal: "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and

will sup with him, and he with Me." The attitude He assumes here is that of a wayfarer, not unlike what we have in Solomon's Song, chapter 5: 2. The image there is striking. The bride is asleep; the bridegroom is outside in the street. He knocks, saying, "Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled." In order to appeal to her affections, He describes His humiliation, disappointment and grief, on account of her apathy and somnolence. He says: "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." And if this was calculated to move the heart of the remnant of Israel towards their Messiah, what shall we say of Christ, knocking at the door of His Church, seeking for **individuals** to open to Him, while **the mass** are held in the most appalling indifference? This is what we see in Laodicea.

Many Christians are feeling the effects of Laodicean lukewarmness towards Christ. Self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, glorying in boasted possessions, spiritual or otherwise, while Christ is outside. Whatever Laodicea has, or thinks it has, one thing is definitely lacking — Christ. For that precise reason, it is "wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." With Christ, we have all; without Him, we have nothing. The very blessings we possess, without Him, or think we possess, are turned into a curse. We never were intended to have anything, apart from Him. We have no blessings, apart from Him, the Blessor. He is the Source of all good, the Object supreme of the heart. To be without Him, is to be without life, light, riches, joy, peace and love, and all that fills and satisfies the heart.

A Daniel in Babylon; a Paul in prison in Rome; a John in Patmos: may furnish us with illustrious examples of what Christ can be to the heart when circumstances are at their worst. So today, when Christ comes into the heart, circumstances are nothing, save to give Him occasion to endear Himself to us, and

show how completely He can raise us above them. We could scarcely conceive anything better, or sweeter, or more precious, than to have Christ to sup with us, and to be able to sup with Him, in this cold night of His rejection, till we are with Him in glory.

THE ASCENSION IN JOHN'S GOSPEL G. S. HEPBURN.

IN my early days, and also quite recently, I have heard it stressed that John does not record the ascension of our Lord, but so far I have never been able to understand the point of this remark, for while he does not **record** the event, the ascension has a very important place in the economy of his gospel.

Of the evangelists, Matthew alone makes no mention of the ascension, his gospel being that of the Kingdom, and he concludes with these words of the Lord, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

In John's gospel the Lord has a great deal to say, not only of His having come from the Father, but also of His going back to the Father, and in chapter 20, having manifested Himself in resurrection to Mary Magdalene in answer to her affection, when she evidently would have embraced Him, He says, "Touch me not, for I am not yet **ascended**

to My Father." In Matthew Jesus allowed the women to embrace His feet, but in John he is about to reveal to Mary Magdalene entirely new relationships, and to her was committed one of the most wonderful messages ever entrusted to a human being, viz., "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I **ascend** to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." This new relationship with the Lord is clearly with Him, not only as the risen, but also as the **ascended One**.

See also, chapter 6, "What if ye shall see the Son of Man **ascend** up where he was before?"

The truth is, there is very little in John's gospel that could be known and enjoyed until the Holy Spirit had been given (see 13: 7; 14: 26; 16: 7), and the Holy Spirit could only descend in answer to the Lord's **ascension** to the Father (see 7: 39).



GOD sometimes shuts the door and shuts us in,
That HE may speak, perchance through grief or pain.
And softly, heart to heart above the din,
May tell some precious thought to us again.

SPIRITUAL ENLARGEMENT

D. Ross.

Condensed Notes of an Address on Psalm 4: 1.

THE "New Translation" renders the second clause of this verse as, "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me." What do we think that pressure does to us? Contracts us, limits us, impoverishes us? Not if we have our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are set here for His glory. We will then find that all the trials, the bereavements, the sorrows, the disasters, the disappointments that come upon us, will lead us into a large place. We shall not be impoverished, but we shall be made rich, and we shall be filled with all the fulness of God.

I want you just for a moment to look at this man of God, the Apostle Paul, as he stands revealed in 2 Corinthians, in order that we might see fulfilled his desire, that in his mortal body Christ might be magnified, whether it be by life or by death. He penned that letter probably from the city of Ephesus or shortly after he had left it, and think of the pressure that there was upon that man's spirit! Read the 11th chapter and you see what it was — the care of all the Churches, enough to bow anyone down as you think of their condition.

To the east of him was Galatia, and there they were in danger of leaving the true Christian position and being entangled with the yoke of bondage, a foreign, spurious thing, a Judaistic imitation of Christianity which would bring their souls into bondage. And then from the Ægean Sea there came to him news of the possible danger, not of legalism but of laxity, where these

Corinthians, these Greeks, were translating Christian liberty into license — licentiousness and looseness. Is all his work to be in vain? that work he had built in Galatia; that work for which he had spent years in Corinth? And he was pressed in spirit.

And then in Ephesus, a place which was a stronghold of demonism, the Apostle Paul was face to face with the powers of darkness and of hell. He says he fought with wild beasts at Ephesus; men that were so bestial; men that were so under the power of the devil that they looked like veritable wild beasts. And so the Apostle Paul says, I want you to know brethren that we were "pressed out of measure, above strength." And it is that word "out of measure," or "beyond measure," that I want to draw attention to. I happened to look up the Englishman's Greek Concordance for that word beginning with "Hyper," which means "Over," and I found that the great majority of the words that begin with that term came from the writings of the Apostle Paul; and the writings of this period — when this Epistle was written — has this word over and over again. A man in the battle of life; a man pressed above measure, and yet in the pressure we find that the Lord has enlarged him. He had the sentence of death in himself and the blessing runs over. How was he enlarged? He learned not to trust in himself. What a deliverance that is! God allows the pressure to come upon us; He allows the sorrow to bow us down; He

allows us to be bitterly disappointed; all that we may learn deliverance from self.

He uses this word in Romans 7, when he found out that in him was something that was exceeding sinful, "above measure," surpassingly sinful; so sinful that he felt himself to be chained to a corpse when he said, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But in the pressure God enlarged him, set him free, and the chapter that takes you to the depth of misery ends with a keynote of victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And so it was at Ephesus, he was delivered from himself that he should not trust in himself but in the God that raises the dead. And as you read through the Epistle you find alternating the pressure and the enlargement; the fainting and the wonderful strength; the impoverishment and the enriching with the fulness of God.

And then he goes on to think of the glory; first on Sinai when there was such a revelation of the glory of God that the face of Moses shone, and the children of Israel could not bear to look upon it. And what does he say? There has been revealed a glory that excelleth, that surpasseth, that is "above measure," that has utterly eclipsed the glory of Sinai; and you and I are brought to the glory of the Lord with unveiled face and are changed. We realize the glory in the face of Jesus and there is this wonderful enlarging from the mean, contracted little creatures that we are; we come out in something of the grandeur and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are changed into His blessed image. And we are not conscious of it. Moses wist not

that his face shone, and if you and I think our faces are shining and we are occupied with our faces, then that will cause the cloud to come upon us. But when our hearts are gazing upon the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is this transformation.

The next chapter tells you about the possibility of fainting. He has got a terrible burden, for the God of this world is against him, blinding the eyes of the unbelieving. But, "in pressure Thou hast enlarged me," for he says, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." You and I have got something of that light in our hearts. But now you come to the pressure side again. Where have we got it? In frail earthen vessels that can break. Why? That the excellency, the surpassing of the power might be of God and not of us. Surpassing pressure; surpassing glory; glory in the face of Jesus, and surpassing power. And why is it that we are so little conscious of the surpassing power of God? Because we are so little conscious of the weakness of the earthen vessels. The Apostle protested as to the thorn in the flesh which seemed to weaken him and incapacitate him for the ministry, and the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect" — not in your strength, but "in weakness."

Then he begins a series of paradoxes as you might call them — troubled on every side, not distressed; perplexed but not in despair — that might be translated, at our wits' end but not out of our wits —

persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; pressure on the one hand and the enlargement on the other; human weakness on the one hand but the manifestation of the power of God on the other hand.

And then at the end of the chapter there is a beautiful expression, "For which cause we faint not." Paul, is not the pressure too great for you? You said you were weighed down beyond measure. But now he has another weight in view, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment" — momentarily and light although a little before it was beyond measure and above strength — "worketh for us a far more exceeding" — now the word there is this word twice over; it is "exceeding, exceeding, weight of glory," or "surpassing, surpassing, weight of glory." He is looking forward to that day when he will be weighed down above measure with all the eternal glory of God. We do need eye-salve so that our eyes may be anointed to see that which is eternal — "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever," and all the eternal system of things that are linked up with Him. Then we shall see that surpassing, surpassing weight of glory that lies ahead of those who, in this the vale of tears, in the day of our testing and our trial, are in pressure. Won't we let the Lord have His way with us, and in the pressure enlarge us!

And that same man in the 11th chapter tells you of all the pressure through which he went. Read it, if you want to know what he calls "light" afflictions. When we think of our petty trials and we are weighed down, it would be a very

good thing for us to get a sense of proportion by reading what this man of God went through. If he called these afflictions "light," then anything that we have been bowed down under is a mere trifle.

Now this man that knew pressure beyond measure was the only man that was privileged to have revelation beyond measure, because the "abundance" of revelation is the same word I have been speaking of — exceeding and above measure. He got an abundance of revelation, but along with that he got a thorn in the flesh. Why? If he got revelation above measure he needed something to balance it, lest he became exalted above measure. What does he call this thorn in the flesh? A messenger of Satan to buffet him, dealing blow upon blow. You see a man in the water, swimming for life, and there comes a big wave and knocks him over, and then another big wave comes along, giving him another buffet. Some of us hardly get our heads above water when we get buffet upon buffet. Abundance of revelation, abundance of buffeting, and with it all abundance of strength — "My grace sufficient;" strength made perfect in weakness.

And then the last thing — we get an exceeding weight of glory. And what we need to balance it all is the knowledge of the love of Christ, exceeding, surpassing knowledge, of which Ephesians 3 speaks, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. So if the Lord allows you to pass through sorrow and blow upon blow to fall upon you, it is in order that you might be enlarged. The hand that sends it is the hand of infinite love, and the love of Christ is the love that surpasseth know-

Judge, and yet you and I can come to know it and be filled with all the fulness of God.

Shall we rebel against God's way with us? Shall we spurn the hand that brings discipline with it? Shall we not put ourselves into His hands, and if He allows us to be weighed

down, remember with that weight, with that pressure, that trial, comes the enlargement, the enrichment, the enlightenment and the filling with the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. So I leave my text with you: "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me."

BIBLE STUDY — GENESIS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTER 49: 13-33)

THUS far, in the blessing of the tribes, we have seen predicted the sorrowful history of Israel up to Christ, and Christ Himself presented as the Object of praise and the Wielder of power, though a hint be given of His suffering at His first advent.

With Zebulun, in verse 13, we pass to a prediction which sets forth that which has characterized the people after they rejected their Messiah. That tribe did occupy the north-western part of the land toward Zidon, which brought them into contact with the wide outlook of the shipping world, and for many centuries now the Jew has been pushed out all over the world and has given himself up to commerce, of which ships are an appropriate symbol.

With this Issachar also is connected. The figures here are very graphic. The Jew has indeed proved himself to be possessed of remarkable strength, but he has been continually pressed down beneath his two burdens, which he has endured for the sake of rest for his wandering feet and for a pleasant life. He has been burdened with the labour of

acquiring wealth on the one hand, and of being "a servant unto tribute," on the other. Again and again has he crouched under the burden of having to yield up in some kind of tribute much of what he had burdened himself with.

These two tribes, then, set forth that which has characterized the people during this long period that has succeeded the rejection of their Messiah. Now in Dan, verses 16-18, we have a prediction of the anti-christ, who is to come. When the true Judge of Israel appeared, His unbelieving people smote Him with a rod upon the cheek as Micah foretold: now another judge will appear, represented by Dan. The true Judge came with an authority which was Divine: the false will judge "as one of the tribes of Israel;" that is, his authority springs from man, for he will come "in his own name," as the Lord said in John 5: 43.

Moreover there will be about him an authority and power that is of the serpent — Satanic, as New Testament scriptures show. Ungodly Jews of those days may imagine they are riding forward to

victory, but in result they will be like a rider falling backward to disaster. The Jews have suffered many bitter things since they slew Christ, but the bitterest things lie before them under the brief domination of antichrist.

The contemplation of these things moved the prophetic soul of the patriarch, and led him to express his personal faith and hope. "I have waited for Thy salvation O Lord." This is the first occurrence of the word, "salvation," in our English Bible. Jacob had to **wait** for it. Many centuries after old Simeon could say, "**Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,**" and we can each now say, that in heart and life **we have experienced it.** But, in the sense in which Jacob thought of it, the cry still goes forth, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!" (Psa. 14: 7).

In verses 19-21, the three tribes, Gad, Asher and Naphtali, are grouped together, and Jacob's words seem to set forth the experiences of the godly in Israel as the antichrist is overthrown and replaced by the true Messiah. At first everything will conspire to overcome them under the persecuting power of the "beasts," of whom we read in Revelation 13. They will be persecuted and reviled for righteousness sake, but at the end theirs will be the kingdom, as the Lord stated in Matthew 5: 10-12. Like Gad they will overcome at the last.

Having overcome by the grace and power of Christ in His second advent, they will enjoy the fatness and royal dainties of the kingdom, as indicated in Asher. Further, as indicated in the word to Naphtali, they will have liberty secured to them.

The figure is a graphic one, for the "hind" is the female deer, naturally apprehensive and not furnished with horns for its own defence. Brought into this place of secure liberty, their mouths are opened with "goodly words." No longer will praise be silent for God in Sion (see, Psa. 65: 1, margin), for their mouths at last will be filled with thanksgiving.

This brings us to Joseph, where again we have a striking type of Christ. If in Judah we see Him presented as the royal Lion, who came down to lowliness and sacrifice, in Joseph we see Him as the One once hated and rejected, who nevertheless rises up in the strength of the mighty God to be the Inheritor of all blessing both heavenly and earthly, as well as the Source of all fruitfulness, which shall extend beyond the confines of Israel to all creation.

In Joseph's own history, that we have considered, we have seen a preliminary forecast of Jacob's blessing. His brethren hated him and shot at him, but the mighty God of Jacob stood behind him and made his hands strong, so that he became a blessing to the civilized world of his day. The language of verse 24 is remarkable in view of the way in which Joseph's **hands** are mentioned in the history — see, 39: 3, 4, 6, 22; 41: 42. Here the secret spring of Joseph's skill is revealed. Upon the hands of Joseph rested the hands of the mighty God.

At this point the thoughts of old Jacob travelled on from the type to the great Antitype. From that same mighty God would in due time come the One who is both Shepherd and Stone. We have already had Him

mentioned as the **Seed** of the woman, which presents Him in relation to the whole human race, though as Man of another order than that of the first man, Adam. Here Jacob's words are more circumscribed, for Israel is before him. That nation will never be right until it finds itself gathered round the true **Shepherd** and under His care, and established upon the foundation **Stone** that can never be moved.

Genesis has well been called the seed-plot of the Bible. Here are three designations of Christ, which appear with increasing fulness of light right through the Book, and the figures, as we know, are expanded into the New Testament and given an application in connection with the Church, to which we belong. Considerations of space forbid our tracing out here these further references, but we trust that many of our readers will be stirred up to do so.

True to the dispensation in which he was found, the blessings that Jacob pronounced were mainly earthly, but still of the widest sort — “unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills,” for the Inheritor of them all is the One who had been separated from His brethren. It was the cutting off from His people of the Messiah that brought the wider purposes into view.

Lastly we come to Benjamin, and here we close on the solemn note of judgment. The earthly blessing of Israel will not be ushered in apart from judgment. This is a fact we are often tempted to overlook, and never more so than in the day in which we live. It is probably the case that in the latter part of the nineteenth century the preachers of the Gospel rather overstressed the

solemn facts of judgment and hell fire, but the swing of the pendulum has now gone much too far in the other direction.

Benjamin, let us recall, signifies, “Son of the right hand.” He typifies Christ exalted to the right hand of God and exercising judgment on His behalf, as is brought before us so strikingly in Psalm 110. Verse 5 of that Psalm reads, “The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.” This exactly coincides with verse 27 of our chapter, but stating the same truth in plainer and less figurative language.

So let us allow the solemn truth to sink into our hearts that judgment is a stern necessity with God, and there will be no bright millennial age without it. The idea still persists that the age will be brought about by the gradual diffusion of the Gospel, and we cannot help feeling that the main attractiveness of that idea lies in the fact that those who entertain it can largely, if not altogether, eliminate the fact of judgment from their minds. To eliminate the idea of judgment from the minds of the people was the work of false prophets in Old Testament times. Hence such scathing words as these:— “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light.” (Amos 5: 18).

The blessing of the twelve tribes was now complete, as verse 28 states. The first verse of the chapter showed that Jacob's words had a prophetic bearing and we have read them in that light. The language used is full of figures and not nearly so plain as the later predic-

tions which we get in the prophets. This is not surprising, as it has ever been God's way to make His revelation a progressive one. There is a progress of doctrine in the Old Testament as well as in the New.

The closing command of Jacob to his sons now comes before us, and still we hear the accents of faith. It is worthy of note that his thoughts turned to the original spot that had been bought by Abraham near Mamre. As Rachel had been so special an object of his affection we might have expected that he would have desired to be buried by her side. But no! there was this spot that had been purchased in the land, to faith a kind of pledge that one day God would fulfil His promise and all the land would be theirs. There had been laid Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah, and there would he be buried.

So from the time that we found Jacob in the land of Goshen, — chapter 47: 27 — to the finish, we see Jacob acting and speaking as a man of faith. He had reached Joseph, not as the result of his own scheming, clever or otherwise, but as the fruit of God's wonderful in-

tervention. The storms of his life were over and he had sailed into an haven of rest. The eye of his faith had been cleared of mist and dimness, and God in the certainty of His promise and His power was fully in view. In this faith Jacob could calmly gather up his feet into the bed, yield up his spirit and be gathered to his people.

This glimpse we are granted of Jacob, "when he was a dying," is very cheering. It illustrates how God can bring a saint, whose course for many years was a chequered one, to a calm and beautiful finish. Many of us in this day of Gospel light have to say,

"Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home rejoicing brought
me"

We thank God that thus He deals with us too.

A bright finish to one's earthly course is good. Yet it is even better to have the brightness of faith characterizing all one's course, though this may mean a less striking exit when the end is reached.



THE remnant is not seeking to recover the position on earth which the Church has lost, but to be ready in **heart** and **ways** for Christ, so that the cry "Come" is the one desire of the bride . . . The ministry now is more to get the saints ready for Christ than to regain the position of testimony in the world. Of course as there is devotedness to Christ, there will be a shining forth of light in this dark place; but I think the object of the Spirit now is so to draw our hearts to Christ that everything unsuited to Him would be renounced; and the better we know Him the more suited to Him we shall be.

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

ARTHUR F. POLLOCK.

ONE book in the Bible begins with the word GOD. It is the Epistle to the Hebrews, the first sentence of which declares that He "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

What a stupendous assertion! This is at once arresting and a challenge of the greatest moment to each of us, for we can only know God as He is pleased to reveal Himself to us. Our Lord put His seal on God's communications of the past through Moses and others, when He declared in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16: 31).

In the light of this, indifference to that which God spake in and through Christ Jesus must be serious in the extreme and bring eternal loss to the soul. Indeed, there is the word of warning in Hebrews 12: 25, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven."

These words also remind us how God not only spake in the Son, but that He actually spake with audible voice from heaven during the days that Christ was on earth, the import of which is of the utmost interest.

In the Gospels we read of how, when the John the Baptist was baptizing, Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. John forbad Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee,

and comest Thou to me?" Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." John then baptized Him, and as Jesus came up out of the water, the Spirit of God descended upon Him and a voice from heaven was heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." John bears record that God's word to him had been, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 33, 34).

But why should God the Father break the silence of the heavens with this declaration? Christ had been living a secluded life in the village of Nazareth in the home of His mother and Joseph, where He worked at the trade of a carpenter. When, then, in coming forth as Messiah, He took His place in baptism with those who responded to the Baptist's call to repentance (for as always He would find His place alongside repenting sinners) onlookers might have thought that He had sins to confess. We can thus well understand the Father interposing with words, declaring who He was, and that in every way His life had been well pleasing, so introducing our blessed Lord to the people as the sinless Son of God. Scripture, too, is so plain, "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3: 5); "Who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21); "Who did no sin" (1 Peter 2: 22); and "Tempted . . . yet without sin." (Heb. 4: 15). And so Jesus went forth declared to be the Son of God, without sin and perfectly

pleasing to the Father. What a Saviour is ours! Let us then take in the full import of this declaration of the Father, and let it fill our minds and hearts with a deepening appreciation of the greatness and perfection of our Lord and Saviour.

The next occasion, that we read of the voice from heaven being heard, was when Jesus took His three favoured disciples, Peter, James and John, into a high mountain apart. There He was transfigured before them and Moses and Elias appeared talking with Jesus. Peter in his confusion exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Immediately a bright cloud overshadowed them: and a voice out of the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." What a mistake Peter made in thus putting his Lord on a level with Moses and Elias, wonderful servants as they were! Can we not understand how the Father must immediately interpose to assert the surpassing greatness of His beloved Son, co-equal with Himself, and in whom He found His perfect delight, that we might find our delight in Him, too.

The added words, "hear Him," are full of significance, to which we do well to give great heed, for we lose much if we fail to receive all our knowledge of divine things as from the Lord Himself, whoever may have been the channel by which it came to us. Let us beware of that which is second-hand; that is, linked in our minds pre-eminently with the name of a servant of God, however honoured he may be, and however much we may value him as gifted of

God. Unless truth is held absolutely directly from God and in relation to Christ Himself, there will be something lacking in its power to affect the life and testimony. Then heed the word, "Hear HIM," and ever see to it that the Son of God is outstandingly supreme to us. The Father will never tolerate a rival to His Son, neither must we.

Further, we read of a third occasion, when the Father's voice was heard from heaven. It was at the end of the life of Jesus, when some Greeks approached the Apostle Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip accompanied by Andrew went and told Jesus: His reply was, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," indicating the necessity of His death if sinners were to be saved, causing Jesus to exclaim, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify Thy name." As our Lord uttered these words of holy shrinking from the prospect of taking upon Himself our sins in perfect submission to the Father's will, "there came a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." How reassuring to our hearts to listen to the Father's voice thus testifying to the perfection of the life and work of our Saviour as ever having fulfilled the Father's will to His eternal glory.

How privileged we are to hear the voice from heaven, proclaiming to all the sinless perfection of the holy humanity of Jesus, the Son of God, as He entered upon His public ministry: then, during the course of

that holy life, announcing His pre-eminence to three of His own on the mount of transfiguration; finally, declaring the perfection of His entire work and life, as He was about to become the Sinbearer, in laying down His holy life for our salvation and eternal blessing.

May our faith be strengthened, our appreciation of our adorable Lord stimulated, our love for Him called forth increasingly, and our care for His work and interests augmented to His eternal glory and the blessing of saint and sinner for His name's sake.

“ THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ”

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE word for **angel** in both Hebrew and Greek, simply means **messenger**. The context of Scripture will decide whether a heavenly messenger, or an earthly messenger, is referred to. The heavenly messenger is referred to in Scripture as an **angel**; the earthly messenger is referred to as **messenger** no less than ninety-nine times in the Old Testament.

The expression that heads this article, “ **The Angel of the Lord,** ” always refers to a **heavenly messenger**, save when it is clear that it refers to the Lord Himself. This may make plain what is a difficulty with many. We read of God, that He “only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” (1 Tim. 6: 16). Then again we read, “ **The LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.** ” (Exod. 33: 11). Does this not seem a contradiction? Yet we know Scripture never contradicts itself. What then is the explanation?

The obvious answer is this. No man can see God in His **essential** Godhead glory — Father, Son and

Holy Spirit, One God indivisible, Three in One, and One in Three, the ever blessed Triune God. But in the early years of the world's history, when there was no Scripture in existence, we find the **LORD (Jehovah)** graciously assuming the appearance of an angel, or of a man, and in this way communicating His mind to men for their blessing and guidance. The word, **theophany**, conveys the thought of Jehovah appearing to the patriarchs in this way. Divine communications in those far-off days necessarily took an oral **form**. Instances of this are pretty frequently found in Scripture — God speaking to Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3: 9); His speaking to Cain (Gen. 4: 9, 15); His speaking to Noah (Gen. 6: 13); His speaking to Abram (Gen. 12: 1, 7); His speaking to Jacob (Gen. 46: 2); His speaking to Moses out of the burning bush and on Mount Sinai, and in the giving of the law (Exod. 3: 4; 20: 1-17); His speaking to the child Samuel (1 Sam. 3: 4, 6, 8, 11). These few instances out of many substantiate the fact of God speaking **orally**, so largely seen in Old Testament times.

We give an example where the Angel of the Lord was the Lord

Himself. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, out of the midst of a burning bush, and when Moses asked in whose name he was sent, the Lord replied, "I AM THAT I AM . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exod. 3: 14). Most clearly here the Angel of the Lord described Himself as Jehovah. "I AM THAT I AM," is a name that can only apply to Deity. The etymology of the sacred name, **Jehovah**, is deeply interesting. The name is compounded of parts of three words. We put the letters chosen in each word in **capital** letters, forming the name **Jehovah**.

YEHyeh — meaning **He will be** (the **beginning** of the word).

hOVe — meaning **He is** (the **middle** of the word).

hahyAH — meaning **He was** (the **end** of the word).

This word YEHOVAH stands for the One who ever will be, who ever is, who ever was — from eternity to eternity — "the true God and eternal life." (1 John 5: 20).

Another instance we refer to is when "three men" approached Abraham's tent door. In the narrative in Genesis 18 it is plainly seen that one of the "three men" was the LORD Himself, in human form. But what of the other two? In Genesis 19 they are referred to as **men** in verses 5, 10, 12, 16, whilst in verses 1 and 15 they are described as angels, showing they were angels in human form.

As to the New Testament it is very obvious why so little is said of the Angel of the Lord. In the New

Testament the Angel of the Lord is never the Lord Himself. No longer does our Lord assume angelic form in His communications with men, but we read, that He, who was in the form of God, equal with God, took upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man. Our Lord became a true man, sin apart, born of a virgin, growing up to manhood, and coming into public testimony, and becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2: 5-8). Not a passing visit as in Old Testament times, for we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM." (John 1: 18). In the synoptical gospels what little we read concerning the Angel of the Lord centres round the birth and death of our Lord. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph (**to whom Mary was espoused**) in a dream, informing him of the manner of our Lord's birth into this world. We also read that Gabriel, the Angel of the Lord, was chosen to convey to Mary (**the mother of our Lord according to the flesh**), information of a similar nature — all to guard the fundamental and wonderful truth of our Lord's virgin birth. (Luke 1: 26-35).

It was an angel of the Lord, who attested our Lord's resurrection. He came in the glory of angelic form, his countenance as lightning, his raiment white as snow, his appearance so terrifying as to cause the guard round the tomb to become as dead men. (Matt. 28: 1-8). The angel of the Lord rolled the stone from the tomb, surely not to let the

Saviour out, but to let the sorrowing women, who came early to the tomb, to look in, to see that the tomb was empty, and no longer held the dead body of their beloved Lord. This testimony has gone forth from that day to this with wondrous results. The Angel of the Lord reminded the women how the Lord prophesied that He would be crucified, and be buried, and in three days rise again. Here was the glorious fulfilment of this prophecy. Our Lord was indeed triumphant over sin and death, over the grave and hades.

Here it would be well to correct popular conceptions as to angels. We have often seen pictures of angels, depicted as young women with wings. These pictures have no Scriptural support. Angels as described in Scripture are either seen in angelic glory, as for instance the angel at the resurrection of our Lord, whose countenance was like lightning, causing the guard round the tomb to be as dead men, or else they are described as men, their appearance producing no surprise. In these latter cases they are always described as men, and never as women. There is no sex among the angels. "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." (Matt. 22: 3).

Nor are angels ever said to have wings. Doubtless the idea has been taken from what the Scriptures tell us of the Cherubim and Seraphim. In the case of the Cherubim their representation is prominent in connection with the ark. Figures of two Cherubim with outstretched wings, made of pure gold, standing on the blood-stained Mercy Seat, were designed of God to teach wonderful

lessons to the children of Israel. These types all found their fulfilment in the Person of our Lord, God and man, one blessed Person, His atoning work, and the blessing that comes through Him to all, who put their faith in Him. In this connection the Epistle to the Hebrews is invaluable in teaching the meaning of these wonderful types and how they are all fulfilled in our blessed Lord.

The Seraphim are only once mentioned in Scripture, and that not as in actual existence, but as seen by the prophet Isaiah in a vision. He saw them as having six wings, with twain they covered their faces in the presence of the glory of the Lord; with twain they covered their feet in reverent humility; with twain they did fly at the bidding of Jehovah. "They cried one unto another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts! the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6: 1-7). Surely this ascription is holy to the Father; holy to the Son; holy to the Holy Spirit — the One, ever-blessed indivisible Triune God. We never read, however, of angels having wings.

Lastly we are reminded that God "maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire." (Psa. 104: 4). "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1: 14). We may never know how much and how often we are indebted to their ministry, all unconscious, as we are, of their help.

Alas! there are evil spirits. The writer Jude tells us of angels, "which kept not their first estate," and who are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the

judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). We also know that the underworld is highly organised under the kingship of Satan, who is called the angel of the bottomless pit, and whose highly repulsive and frightful subjects are described in terrifying symbolic language in Revelation 9: 1-12.

We also read of the subtlety of Satan when "transformed into an angel of light," and his ministers "transformed as the ministers of righteousness" — surely a **pseudo-righteousness**, a deceitful propaganda of the most evil kind. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." (2 Cor. 11: 13-15). We find such workers speak much of light, in reality the evil vapouring of the unregenerate mind of man, with not a trace of real righteousness in their talk.

Eighteen times in the synoptical gospels these fallen angels or spirits are described as unclean. Spiritist propagandists should be closely watched in this respect. Our Lord

and His apostles commanded again and again these unclean spirits to come out of human bodies of which they had taken violent possession. "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house." (Matt. 12: 29). This our Lord has done in virtue of His atoning death on the cross. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that **THROUGH DEATH He might destroy [annul, New Trans.] him that had the power of death**, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2: 14, 15). Blessed be God, the believer is assured that "greater is He that is in you [the blessed Holy Spirit] than he [the devil] that is in the world." (1 John 4: 4).

This very brief article may lead some readers to follow the subject more fully for themselves, as unfolded in Scripture.



GOD CHOOSES BUSY MEN

GOD never goes to the lazy or the idle when He needs men for His service. When God wants a worker He calls a worker:

Moses was with his flocks at Horeb.

Gideon was threshing wheat by the wine press.

David was caring for his father's sheep.

Elisha was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen.

Nehemiah was bearing the king's cup.

Amos was following the flock.

Peter and Andrew were casting a net into the sea.

James and John were mending their nets.

Matthew was collecting customs.

THE LESSON OF FRUSTRATION

T. D. BELL.

THE intimacy of secret personal communications is sometimes expressed in Old Testament Scriptures under the figure, "told in his ear," as in 1 Samuel 9: 15, or "revealed to," in 2 Samuel 7: 27. In each of these passages the phrase literally used is "the uncovered ear." This word in the ear, conveys the sense of the Lord speaking in an intimate and individual way; and it is when the soul learns to receive the written word in this way, that really deep and lasting impressions are left.

A study of the second of these two Scriptures will show the effect on the soul of these personal communications. David addresses the Lord, "For Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house," literally, "hast uncovered the ear of Thy servant." Earlier in the chapter David meets frustration. He wants to build the Lord's house but is forbidden. The Lord points him to Solomon who shall build the house. It is this communication that David refers to. The Lord tells him that David's house He surely would build, but that Solomon was to build the Lord's house.

The effect is to set David's mind completely at rest. The Lord's goodness is revealed to His servant as to David's house. His purposes for His own glory are also revealed as to the Lord's house, that another was to build. It is in this rest of mind that the heart is set free to worship. This is always the double effect of the word individually and

intimately received. Received, that is to say, by the uncovered ear. It finds the recipient going in verse 18 and sitting before the Lord. Taking his true place in a confidence that knows no questioning, and this leads to worship.

The experience of similar frustration is ours in the much smaller things we are called upon so often to meet. We want to do something, some deeply cherished plan for the Lord's service. Circumstances come in upsetting all our plans, perhaps even a bed of long continued illness. This is so often the Lord's way of speaking in our ears. Trying to the flesh, but in it the Lord is bringing to light these same two things, viz., His tender mercy for us, and His plans for His own glory. He could do this unknown to us — and often does — but what joy to realize that He has stopped our own plans, to carry us with Him in happy confidence in His own fuller purposes. So the soul learns to sit before the Lord and then like David in verse 26, to worship.

Brief as this thought is of the Lord's ways with us, it would surely be incomplete if we failed to remember the One of whom the word speaks in a very different way. In Psalm 40: 6 that One supplants the sacrifice and offering of the old order. For, as it has been often noticed, that verse takes up the entire form of the offerings of that dispensation, and the One who speaks lays it all aside. "Mine ears hast Thou opened."

With us so often is the need for

circumstances to come in and make us ready to listen. Every circumstance found Him with opened ears. Surely it is the deepening sense of His solitary perfection which forms,

so to speak, the equipment which the saint carries into the inside place. When there we find the sense of His perfections is the very texture of our worship.

BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS AND EXODUS F. B. HOLE.

(Genesis 50: 1 — Exodus 2: 10)

ALL the sons of Jacob appear to have been present at his death-bed, according to the first verse of chapter 49, yet no mention is made of them in the closing scenes. Joseph alone remains before us as we open chapter 50, and again we see him as a man of deep affection, moved to tears. These patriarchs died in faith, as we are told in Hebrews II, yet their faith did not lessen the love proper to natural relationships, nor does it do so for us today. The breaking of the link is a very real sorrow.

Being in Egypt, the burial customs of that land were observed up to a certain point, but Jacob's body was not to lie embalmed in an Egyptian tomb. By Jacob's desire, as well as Joseph's, it was to lie in the land of promise. The promise of God was a reality to their faith, since "Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for" (Heb. II: 1, New Trans.). The things hoped for are real, and faith substantiates them, or, makes them real, to us.

Jacob's funeral bore witness to the extraordinary position of power and influence to which Joseph had attained. Pharaoh's permission was readily given. All Jacob's sons were associated with Joseph in it, and

also many important personages of Egypt. It was recognized in Canaan as a great mourning of the Egyptians. Nevertheless his body was laid in the grave that witnessed to the fact that these men of faith were still strangers and pilgrims.

Back in Egypt, one last test confronted Joseph. His brethren sent him a message which revealed that they had never quite trusted his magnanimous attitude towards them. They felt it was too good to be really true, and suspected that it was a kindness assumed for the sake of his old father, Jacob. If that had been so, now was the time for the true Joseph to reveal himself in paying off the old score. Their message revealed that they did not altogether trust him.

Their message was very diplomatic. They invoked the memory of their dead father to shelter themselves. They acknowledged their trespass of many years before, which was good, and they professed themselves to be the servants of the God of Jacob. But still they revealed all too clearly that they regarded all his former goodness as not expressive of his real self.

This was a sorrowful stab to the heart of Joseph, and for the seventh

and last time we read that **he wept**. This last test reveals him to us in a peculiarly excellent light. Any ordinary man might have been annoyed and antagonized by such a spirit of distrust, but Joseph's reaction was very different. He was moved to tears, expressive of wounded love, but his attitude toward them remained just as it had been, for it was the expression of his genuine nature.

In this again he is a striking type of the Lord Jesus. How many times have we, who have received of His eternal bounty, displayed either in word or deed, or in both, that we do not trust Him unreservedly; but His attitude toward us never alters, His love never wanes, His care never abates. Many years ago a servant of the Lord quoted the lines of the hymn,

“ They, that trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true,”

and then surprised everybody by adding, “ But I know something more wonderful than that.” All had, however, to acknowledge that he spoke truly when he added, “ It is more wonderful still that they, who do **not** trust Him wholly, **still find Him wholly true!**” This is illustrated here. Joseph's brethren did by no means trust him wholly, yet they found him wholly true to that which was his real nature and character.

Having wept, Joseph replied and his words show afresh how consistently God was before him. He was not in the place of God, and therefore not free to act without reference to Him. God had acted in the whole matter, and meant it unto good. That being God's intention,

he would not for a moment swerve from it. His acts toward them would also be consistently for their good. His exaltation in Egypt was such that they were indeed his servants, as they confessed, but he would use his power for their nourishment and protection. He comforted them by kindly speech.

Verse 20 is a fine summing up of the whole story. They had committed a grievous wrong but God had overruled it for salvation. This at once directs our thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ. The evil thought, which was wrought out against Joseph by his brethren, was as nothing compared with that perpetrated by the Jews when they rejected and crucified their Messiah. God permitted it, because He meant it unto good in the accomplishment of an eternal redemption; for the laying of the foundation, whereon rests securely the superstructure of blessing, in a new creation according to His eternal purpose. Thus has God made the wrath of man to praise Him.

Joseph, as we have said, saw God in the whole matter, and it preserved him from pettiness and an unbecoming spirit. With this beautiful episode the story concerning him comes to its end. He lived to be 110 years old, and may have done many other notable things before his death, but as a type of Christ his history is completed as far as Scripture is concerned, save that we are permitted to know that he too died in faith, and in expectancy that a day would come when God would redeem His promise as to the land, and the Exodus would take place. It is this closing episode that is seized upon in Hebrews 11, to establish that he was

a man of faith.

One cannot close the book of Genesis without being struck by the last four words. It opens with a couple created in innocence and placed in a **garden of delights**. It closes with a **coffin in Egypt**, and in that coffin a dead man, in spite of the fact that he was an eminent saint. Sin had come in, and death by sin.

The book of Exodus opens with a recapitulation of the sons of Jacob, and with the fact that not only Joseph died but all his brethren and all that generation. But in spite of this their descendants multiplied exceedingly. God was with them and they grew to be a powerful people in the land of Goshen.

As the years lengthened out, a great change came over the whole situation, occasioned by the rising up of a new king, who "knew not Joseph." This expression may not mean that he was unaware of his existence but rather that, regarding him as an interloper and an oppressor, he ignored him altogether.

During the last century or so, our knowledge of Egyptian history has been greatly increased by the discovery of many monuments and other records of the past, coupled with the discovery of the secrets of their hieroglyphic writing, permitting it to be deciphered. It now seems certain that not very long after the death of Joseph the rule of the "Hyksos," or "Shepherd kings," came to an end. There was an uprising of the real, native Egyptians, which thrust them out and put a representative of their ancient

dynasties on the throne. Joseph, being allied in race with the Shepherd kings, was of course anathema to the new rulers, and the people of Israel were regarded in a similar light and therefore as a potential danger for Egypt.

Verses 8-10, then, evidently refer to this state of things that developed as a century or two rolled by, and it led to a complete change in their fortunes. Egypt had been to them a place of refuge, a **kindly sanctuary** in the time of famine and affliction. It now became to them **the house of bondage**. It became the "smoking furnace" that Abraham had seen when the "horror of great darkness" fell upon him, as recorded in Genesis 15: 12. They were enslaved, building treasure cities for Pharaoh under the taskmasters.

This did not, however, hinder what God had purposed. Verse 12 records that, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." So here was an illustration and verification of the word uttered by the Psalmist, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress" (Psa. 4: 1). Pharaoh's efforts at suppression were completely neutralized by the abundant increase that God gave.

They did however succeed in making their lives "bitter with hard bondage" in all manner of rigorous service. Egypt is clearly a type of the world, and one of the first steps into spiritual blessing is when the world, that once fascinated us as the scene of our pleasures, is turned for us into a place of bitter bondage. Sin brings bitterness in its train and we cannot escape it. We shall see this presented again in this typical

history recorded in Exodus, for in chapter 12: 8, we read of the "bitter herbs," with which the Passover lamb had to be eaten; and again in chapter 15: 23, we read of the "bitter" waters of Marah, that met them directly they entered the wilderness. Happy for us, it is, when "the pleasures of sin" lose their attraction and instead the **bitterness of sin** fills our souls.

The latter part of the first chapter reveals the desperate measures taken by Pharaoh in the effort to stem what God was doing. His first effort to destroy the male children failed since the fear of God was on the midwives. His second effort, that of casting all the male babies into the river, which was entrusted to the people generally, looked much more like achieving a complete success.

But we open chapter 2, and we at once discover two things. First, that there were still among the children of Israel men and women of faith. This is made plain in Hebrews 11: 23, where the faith, not of Moses, but of his parents is cited. Moses was born and, according to our chapter, his mother hid him for three months, seeing he was a "goodly child." The verse in Hebrews reveals that his father as well as his mother saw that he was "a proper child," and having the eye of faith fixed on God, they were not afraid of the king's commandment. A greater than Pharaoh commanded their allegiance.

The second thing we notice is that again God makes the wrath of man to praise Him. The wicked design of the king prepared the way for the future deliverer of Israel to be brought into his own house and

court, and gain an experience of Egyptian customs and ways that stood him in good stead, when, as the fruit of God's discipline he was ready to act in the name of Jehovah. The story of Moses in the ark of rushes is so well known that one need hardly call attention to the skill of the Divine hand, which ordered that Moses should be nursed by his own mother, that she should be paid wages for doing so, and that finally he should be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Little did the Pharaoh of that day think that his design of **death** was preserving in **life** the man whom God would use in the days of his successor to overthrow the might of Egypt. But so it was.

Pharaoh's daughter called him Moses, meaning, "Drawn out," because she drew him out of the river. It was however an appropriate name since God had drawn him out, or rather called him out, to be a servant of His in a very special way.

In Exodus we are only told as to Moses so much as suits the purpose of this book, recording Israel's typical redemption from Egypt. Passing from verse 10 of chapter 2, to verse 11, we read what came to pass "in those days," and we might suppose that the incident recorded took place soon after he came under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter. From the address of Stephen, recorded in Acts 7, we learn that many years, probably more than 20, elapsed between those two verses. He attained to greatness, but it is passed over in silence as far as Exodus is concerned.

Stephen said: "Moses was learned

in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." This informs us that he was what the world would call a man of genius. Not a few men can be found who are good talkers — they have oratorical gifts, but are hardly men of action. Others there are, whose ability is seen in what they accom-

plish. Their actions are wise and powerful, but their powers of speech are small. The man who shines in both spheres is a rarity.

In Moses three things were combined—learning, oratory and action. We might have said: Here is a man fully equipped for God's service! But it was not so!



CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

Your contributor's article entitled "A Great Honour and a Solemn Responsibility," appearing in your February issue, is indeed a timely reminder.

The missionaries I have met seem to be perfectly willing to undergo privations, inconveniences and risks of all kinds which, I am sure, many of us at home would shrink from more often than not.

It is to be feared that we are only too apt to substitute in our minds the word "legal" for "systematic," and excuse ourselves accordingly.

The word in 1 Corinthians 16: 2 is clear and emphatic, and although no actual amount is referred to, the word does say, "**as God hath prospered him.**" Therefore it puts a definite responsibility on **all** of us surely; although it is not to be assumed that we are to neglect our household commitments and responsibilities on the plea of giving to the Lord's servants, for "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse

than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5: 8).

We do well to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20: 35). Who is there that does not like receiving? It is delightful to receive something unexpectedly from someone. It causes a thrill of thanksgiving; **but it is more blessed to give than to receive.**

I am always grateful that my father on one privileged occasion showed me his record of gifts to the Lord's work about the time I left school, for from that moment I formed the secret resolve by God's help to set aside a fixed proportion of my then meagre income to the Lord's work in some form or another, which I, too, can thank God has been kept up for 49 years.

Are there some comparatively young among your readers? If so, then I would say start **now**, and they shall find the words true, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth" (Prov. 11: 24). How can that be? someone asks. That I cannot explain, but it has been proved true over and over again.

L.A.A.

“HE THAT CAME BY WATER AND BLOOD”

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR title is quoted from 1 John 5: 6. **Water and Blood**: what do they mean? We know how the Roman soldier pierced with his spear the side of the dead Christ and forthwith there flowed blood and water. This was an actual fact, but the scripture in John's first Epistle clearly shows that both are used as symbols and that a spiritual meaning is to be attached to them.

Water and blood are both cleansing agents. **Blood** symbolizes **judicial** cleansing. **Water** symbolizes **moral** cleansing.

Here are proof texts. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1: 7). This is judicial cleansing by blood. “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5: 25, 26). This is moral cleansing by water.

What is meant by **judicial** cleansing? The sinner is under the judgment of God. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18: 4). This is the verdict of the Judge of all the earth. Yet a righteous God can justify a guilty sinner, for we read, “that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3: 26). How was this accomplished? Through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, satisfying God's righteous claims about the whole question of sin. God is thereby met and satisfied as to His judicial claims, and is thus set free to express righteously His goodness to men in offering them

full and free forgiveness of sins.

What is meant by **moral** cleansing? It signifies the practical effect of the Scriptures, the Word of God, on the conscience of the Christian, leading him to be clean and holy in all his walk and ways.

Judicial cleansing by the blood of Christ is the cleansing of the sinner **once for all**. **Moral** cleansing by the application of the Word of God to the walk and ways of the Christian is a **process**, that goes on as occasion needs, all through his responsible life on earth.

Notice carefully that in the verse we quoted the cleansing by blood is “**from ALL sin.**” Many think that the word, “cleanseth,” here signifies a process; that is, that all the sins of the believing sinner are cleansed away up to the time when he believes. But sins committed after that — and what Christian is free from such, alas! — require a fresh application of the blood for forgiveness. This is to confound hopelessly the truth as to the cleansing by blood with the truth as to cleansing by water, to our great loss.

You may ask, How can God forgive future sins till they are actually committed? One verse of Scripture will answer this question. The believer can say of our Lord, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2: 24). How many of our sins were committed when our Lord died on the cross and bore them? We have to answer, They were **ALL** future. And yet the Scripture speaks of their

being all borne at the cross as if they were past. The fact is that the present tense of the verb, "cleanseth," is used to set forth the power and efficacy of our Lord's precious blood. When it cleanses, it cleanses **from all sin.**

Another scripture confirms this in a wonderful way. We read, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10: 14). Clearly this is not perfection in ourselves, but the believer possessing a perfect standing before God with a purged conscience, in the knowledge that all his sins are forgiven.

A Christian was once charged with believing in sinless perfection. He replied in words something like these: "Yes, I believe in perfection. If I did not, I should not have one moment's peace of mind. But, thank God, perfection is **not in me** but in **Another**. I have a **perfect** Saviour, who did a **perfect** work, and has given me a **perfect** salvation." It is the privilege of the youngest Christian to know that ALL his sins have been so cleansed that they can never rise in judgment against him. Judicially he is clean.

But the believer would indeed be left in a sad condition if it were possible for him to have all his sins forgiven and yet be left with only a sinful nature, every activity of which is sin. And certainly such a nature will never find a place in heaven. So we find that two things come to the believer as a result of the death of our Lord.

Reading 1 John 4: 9 and 10, we see, firstly, **divine life**, involving a **new nature**, every activity of which

is pleasing to God; and, secondly, **propitiation**, the basis of our forgiveness. Note carefully the order of the verses. It is first life and then propitiation.

This is well illustrated in the consecration of the priests, recorded in Exodus 29. First they were washed all over with water, symbolical of the new birth, and then a sin offering had to be slain and its blood applied. The blood gave them their title to their office. The water gave them their personal fitness to stand before God.

A New Testament scripture clearly refers to this. We read, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience [the blood, propitiation] and our bodies washed with pure water [the new birth]" (Heb. 10: 22). Then, in addition to being washed with pure water, when the priests went to serve in the sanctuary they passed the brazen laver full of water in which they washed their hands and feet, removing the defilements of the desert from their persons, every time they entered the holy place.

Our Lord uttered very illuminating words when He said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). In this verse water symbolizes the cleansing effect of the Word of God, bringing in a new nature. The Apostle Peter speaks of this, only he uses the simile of **seed** and not water. We are born again of incorruptible seed "by the Word of God" (1 Pet. 1: 23). The Apostle James supports this also in writing, "Of His own will begat He us with

the word of truth" (Jas. 1: 18).

"Born of water and of the Spirit" is a remarkable statement, yet it is simple when we remember it is the Spirit of God who is the active Agent, and that the word of God, living and powerful, is the "water," or the "seed" He employs. No one understands the wonder of his natural birth. Is it surprising that the surpassing wonder of our new birth baffles our understanding?

Reformation, the turning over of a new leaf, the education of the flesh will not suffice. There must be nothing short of the new birth. An illustration may help as to this. A traveller, stranded late at night among the Italian Alps, obtained a night's lodging in a goatherd's

cottage, and found the floor of his room so filthy that he was about to ask that it might be cleaned. He was saved from making that mistake by noticing that it was a **mud** floor. To apply water and a scrubbing brush to **that** would only make more mud. He realized at once that the only way to get a clean floor would be to get a **new** floor, made of a material that could be kept clean.

The new floor may serve as an illustration of the new birth, the new life. Once there is the new birth, there is the desire to be kept clean practically in God's sight, and the means for this is found in the word of God, applied to our souls in the power of the Holy Spirit. This answers to "the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5: 26).

PHILIPPIANS: A BRIEF SKETCH

J. HOUSTON.

THIS Epistle gives us normal Christian experience, such as is seen in those, in whom the life of Christ is practically exhibited. Paul expresses it thus: "For me to live is Christ." It need hardly be said, it is not the incidental, up-and-down experience of any individual Christian; often attended with failure, the result of self-will and disobedience. It is the experience of the Spirit-filled Christian, whose whole existence is to magnify Christ in his body, whether by life, or by death. And it is not a question, **who** lives this life; but the **fact** that such a life can be lived for the glory of God.

The individuals in whom this proper Christian experience is seen, such as Paul himself, are marked by

their devotedness to the service of Christ. They stand in contrast to those Christians who "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (chap. 2: 21). Still more vividly in contrast to those, "who mind earthly things" (chap. 3: 19). So that, by their singular devotion to the service of Christ, and their marked heavenly-mindedness, they distinguish themselves, and set before their brethren an example which all should follow. "Brethren, be followers together of Me." (chap. 3: 17). So said Paul, who was a striking example.

For the sake of brevity, and, at the same time, to comprehend the whole Epistle, we suggest the following headings: **Serving Christ in**

the Gospel (chap. 1); **Following Him in His humiliation and lowly service to others** (chap. 2); **Winning Him, as prize of the calling on high** (chap. 3); **Triumphing in Him, over all the circumstances of life here below** (chap. 4). All this has Christ as Object.

1. **Serving Christ in the Gospel.**—

Those who are devoted to the service of Christ will always be keen, and out-and-out, for the heralding of the Gospel. Paul is an example. He excelled as an evangelist as shown in 1 Corinthians 15: 10. The Philippians were closely identified with him in his work; not as preachers, but as supporters. They gave him of their substance, willing help in his material needs. So that, if some preach, and others help in material things, all is fellowship in the Gospel.

The enemy, who hates the Gospel, puts obstacles in the way in the form of persecution, even to imprisonment of its heralds. Paul was in prison. He was bound; but he could say, "the Word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2: 9). It was proclaimed "in all the palace, and in all other places." Thus the enemy was defeated, and souls were blessed. In general, this is the way the Gospel prospers in all countries and at all times.

2. **Following Christ, in His humiliation and lowly service to others.**—

This gives us the mind in which service is acceptably rendered. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The great subject of chapter 2 is **service to others**. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Even Christ, in

His great humiliation, had service in view. He became a Servant (lit. bondsman). So too, in keeping with the character of the Epistle, Paul and Timothy are "servants of Jesus Christ" (chap. 1: 1). It is in service to others, lowliness of mind is shown. He who serves is under those whom he serves. This is a general principle. It is service voluntarily assumed, following Christ's example. A king's servants are under him; but they may not be in their subjection voluntarily. In the case of Christ's servants, all are under those whom they serve — the saints — by voluntary choice, after the example of their Master.

And this is true dignity, Christian dignity. The world teaches its children to aim high, even though they should fall low. Christ teaches His servants, by supreme example, to go down; and, in this way, they shall be exalted. He that goes down, in self-abasement, will be exalted, even as Christ was exalted.

3. **Winning Christ, as prize of the calling on high.**—

Christ is set before His servants as a prize to be won. This suggests competition. "They which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain." (1 Cor. 9: 24). It is not a competition to provoke envy, as in the world; but that which gives Christians stimulus and incentive to run in their race. There is a goal to be reached. Christ, in glory, is that goal. And the language of every heavenly-minded servant is: "that I may win Christ." If Christ is their Object in service on earth, He is also their goal in heaven above. In chapter 2, it is lowly-mindedness; in chapter 3, it is heavenly-mindedness. These are the essential and

distinguishing marks of these chapters. It is Christ **going down** and then **going up**. His servants follow Him, first of all **down**, then **up**.

“Being made conformable to His death” links chapter 3 with chapter 2. Christ in glory is not an Object for monkish, contemplative asceticism, as is often supposed. Conformity to His death, before glory is reached, corrects that thought. It is just as if Paul said: “I have Christ before me, as prize; I shall run to win that prize and, if need be, **die as He died, and rise as He rose in glory.**”

4. **Triumphing in Christ, over all the circumstances of life here below.**

—This is the climax of Christian experience. It is well expressed by Paul: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” A servant that “can do all things” is well **above** the vicissitudes of a changing life. Would not one give all one had to be **above** the world, in all its varied fortune? But it can-

not be, for those who are **in** the world, as **belonging to it**. The secret of this power is in being **out** of the world, as **not belonging to it**, even as Christ is not of it.

We see this in Abraham. He took his place, in public testimony for God, in separation from the world; and he was superior to it, in every way. He is superior to kings (Gen. 14). He is **above**, and consequently **far from**, the judgment of Sodom. Only with his eyes did he “see the reward of the wicked” (Gen. 19: 27, 28; Psa. 91: 8).

The servant of Christ, who was in prison, was **above** the man on the throne in Rome, in all the worldly power and splendour he commanded. Strange as this may seem, yet it is fact. Greater was He, that was in Paul, than he that was in Nero in the world. Christ has overcome the world; so also has the servant in whom Christ is, in practical life. Blessed fact! Glorious position of superiority!



CHRIST SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN ARTHUR F. POLLOCK.

IN the Gospels we have the record of the three occasions when the voice of God the Father was heard from heaven. There is also the occasion when, after His ascension, Christ Himself spoke from heaven with audible voice, as recorded in the Acts, and in the Epistles a prediction of how He will speak from heaven again.

In Acts 9, the arch-persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was nearing the city

of Damascus, when suddenly there shone upon him a light above the brightness of the sun, causing him and those with him to fall to the earth. He heard a voice speaking to him saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” to which he made answer, “Who art Thou, Lord?” receiving response, “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest,” bringing from Saul the response, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Saul was converted, his heart won and he became a chosen vessel of God for the building up of the Church, which he had aforetime sought so fiercely to destroy. No wonder that afterwards he realized that Christ and His Church are one and whatever is done to the true believer is done to Christ Himself. What a revelation that was, and how clearly that truth is told forth in the Epistles Paul was later guided to write.

Let us weigh over carefully the significance of Christ's words, spoken from the glory, that our hearts may be increasingly filled with gladness and wonder as we realize how close is our relationship with Christ as His redeemed. It will call forth the praise and worship of our hearts to Him and our love and desire towards every member of His Body, so that we do good to all, who are of the household of faith, for in so doing we minister to Christ. Contrariwise, if we do an injury, we do not only harm our fellow-believer, but even Christ Himself. Christ is in heaven and the only way we can minister to Him is by ministering to the members of His Body here on earth. Let us never lose sight of this, for it is thus that Christ's Body here below can be edified and His Church made to prosper, even as we are exhorted, "That the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12: 25). This puts kindness to our fellow-members on the highest level.

How slow, too, we all are to take in that each member is necessary, just as every member of the human body (even the most insignificant) is essential, and must make its contri-

bution to the health and well-being of the whole, if the body is to function perfectly.

Years ago I read the following, which I thought striking and worth repeating:—

"The Church is the Body of Christ. This means, that the Church, which is an association of a large number of men and women, who differ from each other in race and language and qualities and occupations and temper, has to embody the personality of Jesus Christ. Its members have got to remain different, just as the members of a human body are different: but they have got to be part of a single life, to be obedient to a single will and to combine with each other, so as to carry out the purposes of that will, just as the members of a healthy and well-controlled human body do."

This brings home to us the serious hindrance to the work of the Lord that may be caused by members of the body, who refuse or ignore the directions of Christ, the Head. In the days of His flesh, it is recorded of Him that "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matt. 13: 58). And is not Christ often hindered by members of His body failing to answer His direction in this day of opportunity? It is a salutary exercise on our part to ask, as did the disciples, "Lord, is it I?" It leads to more eagerness to wait on the Lord for His direction and to answer by doing His will in harmony with our fellow-members; all working together to carry out His purposes. In this way our blessed Lord will be unhindered

in displaying Himself through His body on earth. What an unspeakable privilege! How glorifying to His name, and what a mighty testimony to the world!

Let us then ever bear in mind that just as our Lord could say, "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10: 5), in which on earth He carried out the will of God, so in 1 Cor. 12: 27 we read, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." Yes, a body was needed by the Son of God to carry out the will of His Father on earth, and so completely was it done that He could say to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Now that He has gone back to heaven, the Church as His body on earth is necessary to Him, to carry on all that He "began both to do and teach" (Acts 1: 1).

The Scripture says of Christ, that He "went about doing good," and this is still true of Him, but now He needs your hands and mine to minister to the afflicted, our eyes to look upon them with pity, our hearts through which to love them, and our voices to speak words of comfort to them. May Divine grace produce in us a ready response to His call to "present our bodies a living sacrifice," so that "the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4: 11) and His wondrous purposes fulfilled.

May it be our constant ambition always to be in the attitude of Proverbs 8: 34, "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of my doors," ever eager in love for our Lord to run to do His bidding

and put our hands to the work that He would accomplish through members of His body which is composed of all believers.

Finally there is the voice of our Lord and Saviour, which will be heard by all His own, both those who sleep in Jesus and those alive at His coming, "for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17). What a prospect of unalloyed joy to those who love Him!

Here we have for our cheer, the details of the Lord's Second Coming, telling the manner in which He will fulfil His promise to His disciples, recorded in John 14: 3. Indeed, our Scripture ends with the words, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

But they also come as a challenge to our faith in the Word and to our love for the Lord. We hold the doctrine, and that is very important. But does it fill our hearts with joyful anticipation and a longing to see the face of our adorable Lord? — so that we are not only of the number of those who wait for Him, but of those of whom He said, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching" (Luke 12: 37).

So we may discern three classes: (1) Those who **know** of the Second Coming; (2) Those who **know and wait**; and (3) those who not only

know and wait, but who also **watch** for the Lord's return. Our attitude of mind towards the promised coming indicates the measure of our faith and of our love for Him, who gave Himself for us.

If we would test ourselves as to this, consider how often at the opening of the day, we say to ourselves with joy, "Christ may come to-day!" Again, how often at the close of the day, ere we fall asleep, "Christ may come before break of day!" If then, we are waiting and watching, how great will be the sanctifying effect, for Scripture affirms that, "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself,

even as He is pure" (1 John 3: 3). Thus we that seek after holiness will find it, if we maintain our hope of being like Him, when we see Him as He is.

May, then, the words spoken from heaven by our Lord to Saul be so received into our hearts by faith and may our love be so eager to hear His assembling shout, as He descends from heaven to claim His redeemed ones according to His promise, that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and with gladness of heart respond to His will in all things as members of His body here on earth till He come.



BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 2: 11 — 3: 10)

FROM the address of Stephen, in Acts 7, we learn that at the time of the event, recorded in verses 11-15 of our chapter, Moses was "full forty years old." He had reached complete maturity as well as conspicuous greatness in the highest court circles of Egypt and, if we only had the record of Exodus, we might be inclined to regard his slaughter of the Egyptian as an act prompted simply by a sudden burst of indignation. We have to read Hebrews 11: 24-26, and then we discover that it was an outward expression of an inward resolve, which had been reached in the power of faith.

In Exodus we are given a brief recital of the **facts** on the surface history of the episode. In Acts 7 we are told of what was **in his mind**,

leading him to act as he did. As to the history, he knew that he sprang from Israel and shared Israel's hopes, though he was a great man amongst the Egyptians. The assaulted Hebrew was brother to him. He "looked this way and that way," and as there were no witnesses, he identified himself with the Hebrew and slew the Egyptian. But what was in his heart was the conviction that God by his hand was going to deliver the children of Israel, and "he supposed his brethren would have understood" that such would be the case.

His brethren however did not understand, for they did not share his faith. In result they rejected him as their deliverer, wishing to pursue their own way of wrong-doing, and

not to stir up retaliation from the power of Egypt. In Acts 7, Stephen is led to make these points clear, in order to show that in the rejection of the Lord Jesus the Jews had re-enacted, on a scale infinitely more serious, what their fathers had previously done with Moses. In the Lord Jesus there was not the slightest element of imperfection. In Moses there was distinct failure. His desires were right: his action wrong.

How often this has been the case with all the servants of God save the one perfect Servant! Again and again there is with us the "seeing" of some "wrong," that should be avenged—or possibly of some right, that should be established—and then hasty action, confident that God would endorse it. We too have "supposed" that we are at liberty to do God's work in our own way and strength, and that all will understand. A New Testament example of this is furnished by Peter. To stand by the Lord in the hour of His trial was surely a good thing, and Peter "supposed" that he had grace and power to do it. As in the case of Moses his discomfiture was complete, but like Moses he afterwards did in the power of God what he failed to do in his own wisdom and strength, as we see in John 21: 19.

But if in Exodus we are given the surface history, and in Acts what was working in the mind of Moses, we discover in Hebrews the amazing **faith that illumined his mind** and led to his great renunciation — as remarkable a decision as any recorded in Scripture. To his faith the nation of slaves in Egypt were "the people of God." All that Egypt had to offer him were "the pleasures of

sin," though indeed there were "the treasures in Egypt." His faith then had about it a quality which reminds us of the X-rays, which pierce to things beneath the surface. It saw through the oppressed Israelites, unattractive as many of them were, and discovered that God was behind them and beneath them. When the treasures of Egypt with all their pleasures passed before his gaze, he discerned far beyond them, and wholly surpassing them, "the recompense of the reward."

Hence he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," and he "esteemed the reproach of Christ" to be of surpassing worth. All this happened about 1,500 years before the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. When He did appear, we have the supreme example of the One who stooped from the heights of the Divine glory to take up the cause of sinful men, with all the reproach that entailed. The step that Moses took was a slight foreshadowing of that marvellous event. The reproach that it involved for him was in its principle and character the reproach of Christ.

One thing further we must remark. The elevation of Moses, to the position of influence and power he held in Egypt, was a singular act of God's providence. Providence however is not that which is to guide us, but rather faith. His natural reasoning would have said, Providence has placed me in the court of Pharaoh in a most remarkable way, so of course I must be guided by Providence and remain here. Faith discerned that Providence was only a means to an end, preparing him for the step which faith indicated in due time. If we too, in our much

smaller affairs, remember that faith in God's word is to guide us, and not Providential dealings, we shall do well.

The immediate effect of this intervention by Moses was his flight from Egypt and consequent sojourn in Midian for forty years. When he found that the thing was known, and his action, however well-intentioned was rejected by his people, he departed. Reading Exodus, we certainly get the impression that the prevailing motive with him was the anger of Pharaoh. Rather a different light upon it is cast by Acts 7:29. "Then fled Moses **at this saying**" — the saying of the wrongdoer — "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" So evidently his rejection by his own people was what cut him to the quick. Forty years later they all had to discover that it was GOD, who made him a ruler and judge over them, but for the time being he was lost to them.

In Exodus 2, the next forty years of Moses' life is compressed into verses 15-22. We again see God acting in His providence and giving Moses a home and a wife in a strange land. The name that he gave to his son showed that he realized that Midian was not the place of God's purpose for him, and that he had expectations that lay outside of it. Only Divine support could have enabled him to endure the long years of exile, doing nothing but keeping the sheep of his father-in-law, as we are told in the first verse of chapter 3. It was a tremendous humiliation after his princely place in Egypt. What sustained him?

Personally we believe that Hebrews 11:27 refers to this period,

though some treat it as referring to the exodus mentioned in verse 29 of that chapter. The events referred to there, up to verse 31, are in chronological order, and unless verse 27 occurred before 28, the order of time would be broken in this solitary instance. Moreover, as we have seen, Acts 7 shows that what moved Moses in his flight was acute disappointment that his well-intended intervention was rejected by the very people on whose behalf he made it; so that they did not recognize him as a man sent by God. It was **that**, and not the wrath of the king, that sent him forth from their midst.

Accepting this view of verse 27, we see at once what it was that sustained him during the dreary years of his exile. The man who had led multitudes amidst the splendours of Egypt, now spends his years leading about a flock of senseless sheep! Yet, "he endured, as **seeing Him who is invisible.**" In Acts 7 it is stated that he acted as "seeing one of them suffer wrong." When wrong exists it is well that we should see it; but if that is all that we see, we easily go wrong ourselves. It is when the eye of faith is fixed on God, that we go right. We are told that, "faith is . . . the evidence of things **not seen**" (Heb. 11:1). Faith can see what is unseen to the natural eye.

Thus it was with Moses. God was before the eyes of his heart during all those 40 years, and hence the discipline to which he was subjected bore its wonderful fruit in due season. During his first 40 years he had attained to being a "Somebody" of much importance in Egypt; but during his second 40 years in Midian he learned how to be a "Nobody" in the world of men.

God was going to entrust to him a work of such magnitude that this lengthy period of discipline and humbling was needful.

The closing verses of Exodus 2 relate the death of the Pharaoh of those days, but the oppression of Israel continuing, God heard their cry and groaning, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham. Let us note that His intervention and His redemption of Israel from the house of bondage was under that covenant, and the covenant of law was not propounded until we reach chapter 19 of the book.

At the end of the 40 years in Midian, Moses had led the flock of Jethro into the vicinity of Horeb, which appears to be a more general term, embracing the mountain group of which Sinai was the chief peak. At that spot God appeared to him, so that he got his commission at the very place to which he was to lead the people after their liberation from Egypt, and where was to be promulgated the law, which is for ever connected with his name.

A number of times in the Old Testament do we get these appearances of God to men, and they vary in mode and character, so as to suit the communication or revelation that had to be made. Here the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush. Now in both Old and New Testaments the word used is one that signifies a bush of thorns, or, bramble bush; a bush of little worth and one that fire would soon consume. But God was in the bush, and therefore it was not consumed.

Here was a sight that directly contradicted all that was natural, and

Moses was drawn to it. He had to learn that though, "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12: 29), He could dwell in the midst of a people, who in themselves were thorny and fit fuel for the flames, and yet **not consume them**. It was indeed a "great sight," and surely during the forty years in the wilderness, when Jehovah in a pillar of fire dwelt in the midst of rebellious Israel, Moses must have thought upon the way in which God had revealed Himself to him at the start, in His great kindness.

In this incident the Angel, or, Messenger of the Lord is the Lord Himself, as we see if we compare verses 2 and 4. This being so, Moses had to keep at a distance and remove his shoes, as a sign that the place was holy, and he but a servant. Distance there had to be, but it was not nearly so pronounced as it was later when the law was given, and this doubtless because at the outset the Lord revealed Himself to him as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The God, who had instituted the covenant of promise, was not so awesome, as when He instituted the law from Sinai.

This is the statement to which the Lord referred when He rebuked the Sadducees, as recorded in Matthew 22: 23-33. The patriarchs had died out of the world of men, but they lived in God's presence, and this guaranteed a resurrection in God's appointed hour; a resurrection, moreover, which would involve an entrance into a new and heavenly order of things. It is noticeable too that the Lord referred to the statement as being "spoken unto you."

What was said to Moses stands good for all, and for all time.

Having revealed Himself to Moses in this way, He made a declaration of three things. First, of His attention to the cry of His people and His sympathetic concern for their sorrows. For a century or two it must have seemed as though He was indifferent. But it was not so. God is never in a hurry and He intervenes in His own time, which is the right time. The three statements in verse 7 are very touching. He had **seen**; He had **heard**; He **knew** their sorrows. Thus it ever is with all His people, with us among the rest. The deliverance of Israel meant drastic judgments upon Egypt, and our God is slow to anger. Do we wonder why the Lord Jesus, who is coming quickly, has not yet come? Let us remember that His advent will mean tremendous judgments upon a guilty world.

Second, He declared His purpose

to deliver His people from the slavery of Egypt and bring them into a land, "flowing with milk and honey." This is what Palestine was, as corroborated by the spies, in Numbers 13: 27; it is what the land will be in a coming day, though for centuries it has lain desolate. The blessings of that land were earthly, but they came from the hand of God and were not won as the result of irrigation and toil as in the case of Egypt.

Third, He told Moses that he was to be the servant, commissioned to face the mighty monarch, Pharaoh, and deliver the children of Israel out of his hand. As stated by Stephen, "This Moses whom they refused . . . the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel, which appeared to him in the bush." What he had attempted to effect in his own wisdom and strength, and failed to do, he is now to accomplish in the wisdom and power of God.

GOD'S PURPOSE STANDS

THE word to Philadelphia, in Revelation 3, is "Behold I have set before thee **an open door**, and no man can shut it." They had only "a little strength," so could not have kept it open themselves. Through the open door the light from their candle was to shine.

Laodicea had a **shut door** and the Lord outside knocking. "Any man" might open the door as an individual, though but few were disposed to do so.

Yet chapter 4 begins, "After this I looked, and behold **a door was opened in heaven**," and all the true saints were seen, seated around the throne. The failure amidst the churches had not defeated the purpose of God.

COLOSSIANS: A BRIEF SKETCH

J. HOUSTON.

THE Colossians were in danger of being drawn away from Christ, the Head, by philosophy and Jewish ordinances. Both these evils are mentioned in chapter 2. Philosophy had a great power over the Gentile; ordinances, a strong fascination for the Jew. They have been the bane and menace of the Church in all ages. The Lord warned His disciples of "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16: 6). Ritualism is embodied in ordinances; rationalism in philosophy. So, we see, this dual form of evil is not of recent date.

In recovering the Colossians, the Apostle did not use corrective measures in a disciplinary sense; nor did he persuade them with argument to clear their **mind** of wrong thoughts. He went to the root of the whole matter, and presented Christ, in His glories and fulness, as **the true Object of the heart**. Evil in the **head** can only be cured by applying the remedy to the **heart**. "My son, give me thine **heart**" (Prov. 23: 26). Out of the **heart** are the issues of life. When Christ has the **heart** of His people, all else takes its lawful course.

To win the heart, Paul gives a wonderful presentation of Christ's glories in chapter 1. These are viewed in a twofold way: His glories as Creator; and His glories as Redeemer. In relation to the former, He is "the firstborn of all creation;" in relation to the latter He is "the firstborn from the dead," the "Head of the body," His Church. The intent of this brief but comprehensive presentation of His glory is "that in all things He might have

the pre-eminence" (verses 15-18).

Two reconciliations follow: that of all things in earth and heaven; and that of persons. The former has reference to Him as Creator; the latter to Him as Redeemer and Head of the body, His Church. The reconciliation of all things has yet to take place; the reconciliation of persons has already been accomplished. "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, **yet now hath He reconciled** in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight" (verses 21, 22). Thus creatorial and redemptive glories are secured in Him by reconciliation. Reconciliation makes good His titles, Head of Creation and Head of the body, His Church.

Lastly, we have Paul's gospel in two aspects: one going out to every creature under heaven; the other presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The one gives us God going out to man in the fulness of His grace; the other, man being presented to God, "perfect in Christ Jesus." These are the two sides of Pauline ministry.

In chapter 2 we have the Apostle's combat in prayer for the Colossians, for the Laodiceans and for as many as had not seen his face in the flesh. This had in view the presentation of the saints, perfect in Christ Jesus. The first verse of chapter 2 is linked with the last verse of chapter 1. The division of the chapters breaks up the context.

Encouragement of heart was what he earnestly sought for them. The

word "comfort" does not give the sense. The idea of comfort is generally restricted to **relief**; we speak of comfort in **sorrow**, etc. This is not the sense here. It is **encouragement of heart** for the saints to lay hold of the mystery of God. "That their hearts may be encouraged, being united together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God" (New Trans.) In this mystery "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." If the saints' minds were fixed on this treasure-store, there would be no place in them for philosophy and ordinances. Divine thoughts in them, would give no place to the reveries of the human mind, in philosophy and vain deceit; nor allow place to the tradition of men, nor the rudiments of the world. When the heart is fixed on its Object, that is, Christ, and the mind is filled with divine thoughts, there is no room for the enemy to work. Thus are we secure against his wiles. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5: 18). How better could we keep ourselves, than to have our hearts filled with the love of God, and our minds filled with divine thoughts? — Christ being Object and Centre of all.

The mystery of God contemplates the reconciliation of all things in new creation. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself . . ." (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19). When this takes place, God will be all in all. Every-

thing of purpose for God's glory is in Christ; and the end in view is that God be all in all (1 Cor. 15: 28). The mystery of godliness is akin to it. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3: 16). All this speaks of Christ coming in the flesh, accomplishing the work of redemption, being justified in the Spirit, and received up into glory, where He is the Centre and Fulfiller of all God's counsels. The Gentiles are brought in; and it is this Paul calls, "this mystery among the Gentiles," which is Christ in them, the hope of glory.

Now, if all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ's body, and we are complete in Him, who is the Head of principality and power, are we to follow the phantoms of man's unregenerate mind, and get lost in his vain speculations? Or, are we to hold Christ, the Head of the body, from whom all nourishment comes, and in whom we grow, increasing "with the increase of God"? The Epistle puts these questions to us; and it is for us to see to it that we **hold Christ, the Head**.

Chapter 3 shows us that Christ is our life. He is hid in heaven till the time of His manifestation. We too, as to our life, are hid with Him in God. When He is manifested then shall we be manifested with Him in glory. What a hope! In relation to this, we are risen with Him. It is risen life that is contemplated — what we are as risen with Him. And if it be asked, What relation has this life to our residence on earth? It is well expressed in the "new man," the "old man" having been put

off. The old man did not go beyond the cross; there he met his end, and is put off for ever. In resurrection the "new man" is put on, and it is

in this life we live on earth. It is really Christ in us, the hope of glory, which is, in the main, the whole teaching of the Epistle.



THE EXACTITUDE OF SCRIPTURE

A. J. POLLOCK.

IT is the experience of Bible students, in reading the Holy Scriptures, again and again to observe something that had hitherto escaped their notice. When the discovery has thrown fresh light on the inspiration of Scripture, or fresh illumination on some truth of God, it has been hailed with joy, and esteemed "more precious than rubies" (Prov. 3: 15).

This occurred recently to the writer when reading, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also" (Gen. 1: 14-16). With a start one noticed that whilst signs and seasons and days and years were mentioned, nothing was said about months and weeks. In reading Scripture one has to take notice of what is said, as well as what is not said. The speech of Scripture, and the silences of Scripture, are both informative.

To begin with, Moses told of events, which had passed into remote history long before he was

born. No living man, not even Adam, witnessed the happening of the fourth day (Genesis 1: 14-19), when the greater and lesser lights, the sun and moon, were put into their special relation to this earth in view of the advent of man upon the scene. It will be seen that of all the measurements of time obtaining in this world, only two were entirely out of the hand of man to arrange. The alternation, of Day and Night, the result of the earth rotating on its axis every twenty-four hours, was one of them. Clearly man has no option, but to submit to this division of time. Equally so is the procession of the seasons — spring, summer, autumn, winter — caused by the earth travelling in her appointed orbit round the sun, and the time taken for this circuit occupying about a year. These two movements produce years and days, and were of God's sovereign arrangement, and in which man had no voice. How did Moses know this? Surely it is very evident that Moses was full of the very inspiration of Heaven. Who but the living God, the great Creator, could have told Moses what to write, and what not to write!

Let us take Genesis 1: 14 in order. **Signs** are first mentioned.

Romans 1: 20 gives a truly uni-

versal sign to every man, woman and child in this world as long as the earth lasts. We read, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." The same thought is put before us in poetical language in Psalm 9: 1-4, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Alas! how deaf men are to this wonderful testimony, how blind they are when they look up to the heavens, and fail to see the "eternal power and Godhead" of the great Creator, and their responsibilities to Him.

There is another way in which we can consider the signs. Romans 1: 20, just quoted, tells us that the **invisible** things are plainly seen by that which is created. This is more than hinted at in the Old Testament. We read, "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light" (Isa. 60: 20). "The LORD God is a SUN and shield" (Psa. 84: 11). "Unto you that fear My name shall the SUN of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4: 2). When we come to the New Testament we find these Scriptures are and will be fulfilled in Christ. Our Lord plainly said, "I AM the Light of the world: He that followeth Me

shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12). "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1: 4). Just as the sun in the heavens brings light and heat and well-being to this earth, so spiritually the Lord is the only Source of the revelation of God to men with all its untold blessings. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1: 18).

And if the Lord can be compared to "the greater light to rule the day," to what can we liken "the lesser light to rule the night"? In nature the sun and moon do not shine at the same time. When the sun shines the moon does not appear. When the moon shines the sun is set, though we must ever remember the moon has no light of her own; her shining is that of the sun's **reflected** light. Our Lord said, "As long as I am in the world, I AM the light of the world" (John 9: 5). Our Lord is no longer in the world, and it is plain that the Church of God is to be a testimony on this earth, whilst our Lord is rejected. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). The Church of God is "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 22). "Ye are the light of the world . . . let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 14: 16). The Sermon on the Mount was addressed to those, who were followers of

Christ, and is framed from the standpoint of our Lord being rejected. In these Scriptures we see what answers typically to the lesser light to rule the night; that is the place the Church of God has during our Lord's absence from this earth.

This falls into harmony with the place the Church of God will have in the future, when our Lord sets up His rule on the earth (Revelation 21: 9-27; 22: 1-7). The nations in that coming day will walk in the light of the Holy City, the Church, but Scripture is careful to tell us this light is **reflected**. We read, "The city had no need of the light of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF" (Rev. 21: 23). The light is not the light of the Holy City, the Church, it is but the **medium** through which the light comes from our Lord. This is a lesson we need to take to heart. The Church does not teach, but is taught. She ceases to be any worth in this world, if her testimony is not that of Christ, the sent One of the Father.

Genesis 1: 14 speaks of **seasons**. These are essential for the well-being of the earth — **spring**, the time for ploughing and sowing the seeds in the earth; **summer**, the heat of the sun ripening the crops; **autumn**, the ingathering of the fruits of the earth; **winter**, of which we read that God "giveth snow like wool; He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand against His cold?" (Psalm 147: 16, 17), all preparatory for a fresh start towards spring again. In all this we can trace the

wisdom and goodness of God towards men, and learn the lesson that if He provides for men's material wants how much more will He care for His own spiritually. The Apostle Paul testified to the men of Lystra that they "should turn from these vanities [heathen worship] unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein . . . and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14: 15-17). We need to keep this in mind.

The recurring seasons should make us feel that we are the creatures of time, passing on, and the true acknowledgment of this would prepare our hearts to take in the truth of eternal things, of spiritual and heavenly import. It is singular that the orbit of the earth annually going round the sun should not only determine the seasons, but also the years. How we are reminded as year succeeds year, that

"This is not our resting place,
Our's a city yet to come."

Abraham of old "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11: 10). He looked for something permanent and substantial. May we be just as wise. There is nothing stable in this world, and every man in the world finds this out sooner or later.

Lastly we come to days which warn us as to the brevity of time. The Psalmist of old learned this lesson when he prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"

(Psa. 90: 12). "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psa. 90: 10). We are to "redeem the time, because the days are evil . . ." (Eph. 5: 16). All these measures of time, and the procession of the seasons, should exercise us, and turn our minds heavenward.

Now we ask why the word, **month**, does not find a place in Genesis 1: 14? Scripture throws light on this we believe. The first mention of month occurring in Scripture is found in Genesis 7: 11, and coincides with the day when the flood burst on the antediluvian world in all its fury. Taking Archbishop Usher's chronology, from the creation of Adam, we find more than sixteen centuries elapsing between that start and the entrance of Noah into the ark. It is very evident that the month was not fixed as were years and days, though it may have been suggested, as men observed the time elapsing from new moon to new moon.

A week consisting of seven **days** is first mentioned in Scripture in Genesis 29: 27, where it is found in connection with Jacob's history. This would be about 2,400 years from the time of Adam. It shows that neither months nor weeks were

fixed by the movements of the sun and earth. It is evident that both these were in process of time adopted as helpful and convenient by man. It is likewise true that Scripture recognizes them, and speaks of them freely. It is more than likely that the week came into adoption through the fact of the seven days of creation mentioned in Genesis 1.

It is very interesting to note the confirmation of Genesis 1: 14 in Genesis 8: 20-22. When the flood subsided, and Noah came out of the ark, he offered up burnt offerings. These were a sweet savour to the Lord, and He said in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." How good God is, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5: 45).

Our enquiry has clearly shown how inspired was Moses in writing the account of creation in every little particular. It is indeed a happy confirmation of our faith as we recognize the wonderful exactitude of Scripture.

THE Lord trains in private those whom He brings forth at last for public service. "Not a novice" is His rule for leaders; and David, young as he might be, was not one. There was with him the shepherd's heart, which had made him venture his life, not before the eyes of many, not for a great result, but for a single lamb only. How could he now shrink when the issue was so vast, and the people of God were vainly looking for a deliverer?

A CONTRAST

J. C. TRENCH.

"The words of Job are ended" (Job 31: 40).

"The prayers of David . . . are ended" (Psalm 72: 20).

CONSIDER the contrast. Job, after fifteen chapters of self-praise, self-righteousness and self-justification, comes to a pause, having exhausted all language in the effort, and closed from sheer inability to say more. He speaks of himself ("I," "me," "my,") fifty times in the 29th chapter, and records ten of his virtues, and in the 31st chapter he enumerates fourteen sins of which he had not been guilty — pronouncing curses upon himself if it had been otherwise, and at last **"the words of Job are ended."** What a relief!

But Job had not as yet come to the end of himself. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" God enquired "out of the whirlwind." "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And then in quick succession Jehovah sets before him the wonders of His creatorial power, wisdom, and glory, as evidenced in various examples of His own hand — light and darkness, morning and dayspring, snow and hail and rain, thunder, frost and dew, astronomical marvels in "the ordinances of the heavens," the brute creation, the fowls of the air, the great sea-monsters and so forth, until at last Job speaks again, no longer to justify himself, but cries, "Behold, I am vile . . . once have I spoken . . . yea, twice, but

I will proceed no further," and so indeed Job had come at last to the end of himself. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore **I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**" "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends," and "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before," including the same number of sons (seven) and daughters (three) as were destroyed by the whirlwind.

And so, Job, at last, in the presence of the divine glory, puts the extinguisher upon himself, and God fills the vision of his soul.

Turn now to Psalm 72 where the theme is "the King's Son," yea, the King Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, portrayed in a magnificent prophetic sketch, in the position of royal power, and universal empire. As to **extent**, it ranges "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." As to **duration**, it continues "as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations," as to **power**, "His enemies shall lick the dust . . . all kings shall fall down before Him." As to **material prosperity**, even on the tops of the mountains there shall be handfuls of corn, "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." And best of all, as to its **moral features**, the kingdom shall be characterized by righteousness and peace. "The poor and needy" will be specially attended to, and their oppressors broken in pieces by the King of kings, whose "Name

shall endure for ever . . . and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed; . . . And blessed be His glorious Name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen. **The prayers of David . . . are ended.**"

All the psalmist's highest hopes are more than realized! The crucified and God-forsaken One of the 22nd Psalm is now glorified. He, who suffered so infinitely, reigns eternally. He who went down to the lowest depths of humiliation is raised to highest exaltation. His Name is on every tongue, before

Him every knee is bowed, His blessings stretch to the furthest limits of the universe of God, and everything is filled with His glory. There is nothing more that the heart could desire, and as a necessary consequence, "**The prayers of David . . . are ended.**"

Job's "**words**" are ended because of the hopelessness of his theme; namely, himself. David's "**prayers**" are ended because, in the prophetic vision of his soul, his truest, highest, dearest hopes are realized in the established glory and excellency of God's Christ, and there is nothing more to pray for.



BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 3: 11 — 4: 31).

THE hour had struck for God to act, but Moses, who forty years before had been so forward, now shrinks backward. God had declared that He would send him, and He never sends any servant without bestowing adequate power for the carrying out of the mission on which he is sent. But for the moment Moses had his eye upon himself and not upon God. His language is, "Who am I, that I should go?" During his many years in Midian he had forsaken all thoughts of his own greatness, which was good; but now he had passed to the other extreme, and occupied with himself, was obsessed with the conviction of his own littleness. He had yet to learn that it is the way of God to take up and use just those who are little in their own eyes. Their littleness makes room for God to display His

own power.

Hence the assurance God gave, "Certainly I will be with thee." This of course guaranteed everything, but Moses was slow to believe it, hence God condescended to give him a token. When God made promise to Abraham, He took account of the frailty of our faith and confirmed His counsel by an oath, as we are reminded in Hebrews 6: 17. With Moses He did not confirm His word by an oath, but by a token, which was fulfilled as we find later in this Book. But Moses had to accept the commission God was giving him and carry it out before the token came to pass; hence the assurance just given to him did not suffice to revive his confidence in undertaking the task.

So in verse 13 we find him raising

a great question by way of further objection to what was proposed. The children of Israel had been in a land of idolatry for several centuries, and therefore knew well the names of the false Egyptian deities. Moses was to approach them in the name of the God of their fathers, but, confused in their minds by all that surrounded them, they would be sure to ask, What is His name?

This led to a fresh disclosure on God's part. He made Himself known as the great "I AM" — the One self-existent, ever-existent, unchanging; and therefore ever true to what He is in Himself. Israel were to prove themselves to be an unstable yet stiff-necked people, so had it not been "I AM" with whom they had to do, they would soon have disappeared in judgment. God bore long with them and will ultimately achieve all His purpose concerning them, because He is ever true to Himself. We do well to remind ourselves that though we now know God in a far more intimate way, as He has been revealed in Christ, yet we do not lose the value of these earlier revelations. The One whom we know as Father is still the "I AM" to us, as much as He was to Moses and the children of Israel.

This fact is expressly stated in verse 15. Looking backward, the "I AM" is "Jehovah God of your fathers." Looking forward, He declares it to be His name for ever and His memorial to all generations. Evidently then this great name carried the revelation of God to a climax, as far as the Old Testament is concerned. Verse 3 of chapter 6 may be consulted at this point. He had been known to the patriarchs as

God Almighty, He had been mentioned as the Most High, but "Jehovah" carries within itself a fullness of meaning not found in these. The actual name, Jehovah, was known to the patriarchs, yet they did not understand its full import, which was now to come to light through Moses. Having come to light, it stands good for ever.

Having revealed Himself, and thereby answered Moses' question, God instructed him as to how he should approach the elders of Israel, and then with them approach Pharaoh. To the elders he was to declare God's remembrance of the fathers and His notice and concern regarding all that Egypt had done to them, together with His promise to bring them out, and then into the land flowing with milk and honey. Then to the king they were all to go with the request from Jehovah God of the Hebrews that they be let go three days' journey into the wilderness so that, free of the pollutions of Egypt, they might sacrifice to Him.

At the same time Moses was to be under no illusion as to the way the king would react to this request, so the last four verses of the chapter predict what would happen. As to Pharaoh, he would powerfully and stubbornly resist. But Jehovah would stretch out His hand in wonders, smiting in judgment, so that the king's "mighty hand" would lose its might and he would release them. And God would do this in such a way that the common people of Egypt would be glad to see them go. The children of Israel would be able to ask great favours of them and go out enriched. Thus these four verses give a prophecy which we see fulfilled as we read the

next ten or eleven chapters.

Unbelievers have seized upon the word "borrow" in verse 22, and raised the objection that it represents God as telling the people to practise deceit by pretending to borrow what they never intended to repay. The word occurs again in chapters 11: 2 and 12: 35. But the word really is "ask," and is so translated in Darby's version. The people had been but slaves, working for a mere subsistence. The position was to be entirely reversed, and their former masters would fear them and give them what they asked. All they could carry out of Egypt would be a mere fraction of what was really due to them.

Moses was still not satisfied, and raised a third objection. The people would not listen to him nor believe the Lord had appeared to him. This we see in chapter 4: 1. He knew they were incredulous by nature. The Lord knew it too, and hence He did not rebuke Moses but rather gave him three miraculous signs, by which he might convince the people of the reality of his mission. Two of the signs were then and there performed on Moses himself.

The first sign we have in verses 2—5. A rod is the symbol of authority. Cast to the ground, and thus debased, it becomes thoroughly evil, and even satanic, so that a man may flee from before it. But Moses seized the serpent by the tail, as he was commanded, and it became again a rod in his hand. The bearing of this is plain. In Egypt power was debased and satanic. As ordered by God, Moses was to seize it, when the authority, rescued from Satan, would be in his hands. We live in

a day when satanic power is increasingly in evidence. But as Christians we have no command to seize the serpent by the tail. If we attempt to do it before the time, we shall only get bitten in the process. That action is reserved for the One of whom Moses serves as a type. He will do it finally and gloriously at His second advent.

A second sign is given in verses 6 and 7. It deals, not with outward power like the first, but with inward defilement. Moses was to put his hand into his bosom and it came out leprous and defiled. It was not a case of his hand defiling his heart but of his heart defiling his hand. Here we have in picture what our Lord taught in His words, recorded in Mark 7: 21-23. Then as commanded, Moses put his defiled hand to his heart again, and it was restored whole as the other. A sign this, that cleansing must begin in the heart, which is unseen. Only thus can the hand, which is seen, be cleansed.

The significance of these signs would not have been apparent to the people, and may not have been to Moses, but at least they would be evidence that the power of God was with him. But if even these two failed to bring full conviction, a third was enjoined. He was to take some water out of the Nile and pour it out, when it should become blood — a preliminary sample of the first plague that fell upon Egypt. This was a sign of simple judgment. The river Nile was the natural source of Egypt's fertility and prosperity. The earthly fount of their life should become death; their blessing should be made a curse.

We may remark that the record of

Moses giving the people these signs is only found in verse 28, and there attributed to Aaron, who was acting as the deputy of Moses.

But even these signs did not remove the objections in the mind of Moses, and so in verse 10 we find him uttering a fourth, based upon his lack of ability in speech, as if the message of God needed human eloquence in order to make it effective. When we remember the statement of Stephen, referring to the time when he was still acknowledged as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, that he was "mighty in words," whereas he now pleads, "I am not eloquent, **neither heretofore . . .**" we are left wondering. But, knowing something of human nature in ourselves, we think it was not that he had really lost his powers of mighty speech, but that while the forty years of discipline in the desert had completely broken his self-confidence, he had also become self-occupied, and thus so unwilling to answer to the call and commission of God.

Therefore what he needed was to become so God-conscious that he might lose sight of himself altogether. Hence the words of the Lord to him, as recorded in verses 11 and 12. The mouth of Moses was to be simply like an instrument upon which the Lord would play, and whether Moses could play well upon it, or could not, was immaterial. This is a lesson which every servant of God needs to learn. The Apostle Paul had learnt it, as we see in 1 Corinthians 2: 1, and again in 2 Corinthians 4: 2 and 7.

Once more, and for the fifth time, Moses wished to decline the honour of this commission from the Lord, as

we see in verse 13. The man, who once ran unshaken, now shrinks from running at the command of God, and with the assurance of His accompanying power! But this is just how the flesh acts in every one of us, though any service that the Lord may entrust to us is so minute as compared with his. Such shrinking back may have the appearance of humility but it really springs from **self-occupation**, and in the last analysis we find that the self-occupation is produced not by humility but by **pride**.

Now of all things pride is most distasteful to God, so "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." In result part of the honour and activity of this great commission was to be transferred to Aaron, who should be the spokesman. Moses however was to be to him "instead of God;" that is, the Lord would still deal direct with Moses and Aaron would get all his directions through him. The rod that Moses had had in his hand was now, as it were, given back to him from the hand of God, as a sign of the authority with which he was vested. The subsequent history shows the fulfilment of all this. Again and again we read, "The Lord said unto Moses;" and at critical moments the rod appeared in his hand.

At last Moses is prepared to obey. His way is opened in peace to return to Egypt with the rod — now called "the rod of God" — in his hand. But while now clothed with authority he needed to know just exactly what he had to face. God would give him the words, but in spite of the words backed with mighty deeds, Pharaoh would resist and God would

harden his heart. Here we might read verse 16 of chapter 9, which is quoted in Romans 9: 17. This Pharaoh, whatever his name may have been as recorded in secular history, was evidently brought to the throne in some unusual way by the over-ruling hand of God, and had already pitted himself against the Almighty in such a way that the moment had now come for him to be abased in signal fashion. God would now harden his heart and thus seal his doom. We are to see in him what presently was seen in Nebuchadnezzar, "those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Dan. 4: 37).

The situation is graphically summed up in verses 22 and 23. God adopted Israel as His son, His firstborn, and demanded that he be released. If Pharaoh would not let him go, he would have his own son, his firstborn, slain. The preliminary judgments are passed over in silence. The ultimate judgment is threatened, and in chapter 12 we find it fulfilled.

The episode recorded in verses 24—26 is explained when we observe that God was interfering on Israel's behalf under the covenant He had made with Abraham, as recorded in Genesis 17: 1-14. Of that covenant circumcision was the token or sign, and it was definitely stated by God that if circumcision was not observed death was to be the penalty. Here was Moses, chosen to be the chief actor in Israel's deliverance under that covenant, and he had not

obeyed the sign! As the responsible person he was subject to the death penalty! It would appear that Zipporah, his wife, knowing nothing of the covenant, objected, but at last gave in and acted herself, though with annoyance. He was a husband of blood to her.

Just here the firstborn comes much into view. Israel is owned as **God's firstborn**. If Pharaoh refused to acknowledge this, God would slay **his firstborn**. And now the sentence of death has to come figuratively upon the **firstborn of Moses**. Had it not, death itself would have fallen on Moses at the hand of God. The significance of the rite of circumcision comes clearly into view here. It was the sign of death put upon the flesh. This meaning is corroborated by what the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3: 3, "We are the circumcision, which . . . have no confidence in the flesh."

Circumcision accepted by Moses, we see in the last five verses of the chapter that the hand of God was with him, and everything moved with smoothness and precision. The Lord instructed Aaron, who obeyed and met him. Together they entered Egypt, consulted the elders of Israel, who believed and worshipped. This Moses, who had been rejected forty years before, was now accepted as their God-appointed leader. He was sent "a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7: 35).

THE time will come when all our sorrow will be over, but our Friend will remain. He is our tried and true Friend. He has entered into the deepest woes of our heart, and will make us the sharers of His joy for ever.

THE COMING OF THE LORD

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE coming of the Lord has a two-fold character: first His coming into the air (1 Thess. 4: 13-18), raising the sleeping saints of both Old and New Testament times, and changing the living saints. Secondly, our Lord is coming **with** His saints to fulfil His promises to Abraham and David, to reign over His ancient people, the children of Israel, and as the Son of Man to reign over the kingdoms of this world, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14). Between His coming **for** His heavenly saints, and His coming **with** them to set up His reign over the earth, there will take place the terrible judgments upon evil men, culminating in the great tribulation and the battle of Armageddon, as narrated so largely in symbolic language in Revelation, chapters 4-19.

When the gracious movement of the Spirit of God in the early years of the nineteenth century began, earnest Christians learned the truth of the Lord's second coming, and also to distinguish between the Lord coming **for** His saints to take them to the Father's house, and then **with** His saints to reign on the earth.

The writer well remembers in his young days the earnest fervour with which the coming of the Lord **for** His saints was spoken about. The singing of hymns such as,

"I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,
Thy beauty to see, Lord,
I'm waiting for Thee, for Thy
coming again."

was accompanied by the joyful expectation of the soon coming of our Lord.

It has often been pointed out that there are no future events specified as having to take place before the Lord comes **for** His saints; whereas many events must take place before the Lord appears **with** His saints to reign on the earth. But seeing that a comparatively few years intervene between the coming of the Lord **for** His saints and His coming **with** them, it is to be expected that these events, that must come to pass in the last days, will be casting their shadow on the world, even while we heavenly saints wait for the rapture.

The Old Testament saints only had predictions of the coming of the Lord **with** His saints. This was prophesied early in the history of the world by Enoch, the seventh from Adam. We read, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14). The two thousand years of Christianity were not revealed save that there were obscure intimations in type which we may discern now, though not apparent to them.

Moreover, while Old Testament prophet after prophet foretold a terrible time of judgment on the earth before our Lord comes to reign, it is to the Book of the Revelation we turn for details of this as to the Gentile world. The Old Testament tells us that God will restore Israel to their own land again, but at first in unbelief. Is this not being remarkably foreshadowed in these days? As we write the Jews have

established a republic, and now that the British Mandate is no more, Jews are pouring into the land by their thousands. Blind indeed should we be were we not to see in it the beginning of the fulfilment of Scripture for the last days.

Then another great event must take place before the Lord comes to reign on the earth. It is prophesied in the Book of Revelation that the Roman Empire must be revived (Rev. 13: 3). We are seeing this gradually shaping. Who would have believed ten years ago that Britain would unite in treaty with France, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg? Who would have dreamed that the mighty United States would depart from her rigid isolation, and give her warm and friendly co-operation in this? We have often been asked what place the United States has in prophecy. Seeing the United States was not in existence till long centuries after the canon of Scripture was closed, one would not expect to find that mighty nation alluded to in Scripture. But seeing the peoples of the United States are largely made up of the inhabitants of the ancient Roman Empire territory, one can understand how in these closing days they will come into the scheme of prophecy. Other European nations will doubtless presently join in.

We may ask, Why has this drawing together of the European nations come about, and why is there every indication of its extension till the territory that was associated in the old Roman Empire is covered? The world will witness a revived Roman Empire. It may or may not have that name, but the fact will remain.

We believe nothing but **fear** is the

cement that will hold these nations together. It is well known that it is fear of that mighty nation, Russia, half European and half Asiatic, with an enormous population, with resources that make her self-supporting, and with a Slav temperament and outlook that threatens the whole world with an anti-God communism, that is operating.

Russia and the part she will play in the last times is outlined in Ezekiel 38 and 39, under the names of Gog, the ruler, and Magog, the land ruled over.

The atom bomb startled the world on August 6th, 1945, into a sickening dread, that will last till the Prince of Peace shall come. He only can bring security and peace to a troubled world.

Along with this there will arise two sinister figures — two men — in the last days. The Head of the revived Roman Empire, spoken of as the Beast (Rev. 13: 1-8), and the Anti-christ, spoken of as the man of sin, the false prophet (for he will have a religious aspect but utterly opposed to God and His Christ), the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2: 3).

Are there no signs of this on the immediate horizon? We think there are. On the one hand, to have a mighty military confederation with a great super-head seems to be the goal to which men are hastening, whether it be the Northern confederacy, Russia and her allies, or the revived Roman Empire, the West European confederacy; whilst the Antichrist will be King in Jerusalem, and not only King but Prophet, having a religious character.

The Head of the revived Roman

Empire will make a treaty with the Antichrist in Jerusalem, and when this treaty is publicly made (Daniel 9: 26), Daniel's seventieth week will begin. Then only seven years pass, and our Lord will intervene in the great battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16: 16; 19: 19-21).

Our Lord must first come **for** His Church, and then He will come **with** His heavenly saints, and set up His glorious reign of peace and righteous-

ness on the earth.

Things are developing at a tremendous rate. How cheering it is that before the judgments take their course, the Church of God will be summoned to her heavenly seat on high. May we be kept waiting in patience till that blissful moment comes, meanwhile serving our Lord faithfully in a very very needy world. How soon we may hear the welcome summoning shout.



“ A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM ”

D. W. PATERSON.

Brief Notes of an Address on Genesis 32: 1, 2; Song of Solomon 6: 13;
Isaiah 11: 6; Revelation 12: 1-12.

A PROPHEET brings the mind of God to bear upon the present situation. The first two Scriptures I have read show a certain aspect of the present situation. Jacob had left Padan-aram and was journeying towards Bethel, the house of God. The angels of God, as a host, met him and he called the name of the place, Mahanaim, which means two armies. Again, Solomon asks the question, “What will ye see in the Shulamite?” The answer is, “As it were the company of two armies.”

It would be true to say that we also are two armies, for there have always been in the church of God the evangelists and the ecclesiastics. The **evangelists** are warm-hearted, large-hearted, burning to bring an emancipating Gospel to precious and perishing souls. Scripturally they agree with Gentiles. Generally they are simple in soul, anxious for large meetings, a little impatient of

restraint and liable to despise authority.

The **ecclesiastics**, on the other hand, are content with smaller companies, delight in order and are painstaking to a degree in matters of detail. Scripturally they agree with the Jews. Usually they are more intelligent and enter more into sanctuary service. But they are liable to become somewhat bigoted and narrow, and even imagine they can get on without the evangelists.

There are two armies, but they must walk as one. Incidentally notice that in the first century Jews and Gentiles could walk as one. Unity should be a simple thing for us.

But there are other incipient cleavages. There are the **old** and the **young**. The young are apt to look on the old as nuisances, slow and quite unbending. The old are

apt to judge the young as ignorant, insubordinate, even rude. But the old and the young must pull together. Abraham and Isaac, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy, teach us how blessed the union can be. In 1 Peter 5: 2 and 5, the elders "feed" and the younger "submit." Here is indicated a remedy.

Then we read of the **Scythians** and the **Barbarians**. The Scythian is the aristocrat with wealth and education. The poor Barbarian can hardly string a sentence together coherently or write without murdering the King's English. But frequently it is the Scythian who causes trouble among the saints, and it is the Barbarian who is the more spiritual. There are other differences, but these will suffice.

In Isaiah 6 we find a remedy. How bring together the wolf, the leopard, the young lion, with the lamb, the kid, the calf? The situation seems impossible. And so it often is in assemblies of the Lord's people, with such a divergence of natural characteristics, temperaments, outlooks, capabilities. I repeat, the thing seems impossible. But Isaiah also gives the remedy — "A little child shall lead them." Do we believe it?

It worked in Acts 9. There Saul of Tarsus was like the wolf, the leopard, the lion. Ananias was like the lamb, the kid, the calf. Saul had been laid low. Ananias was nervous at first but eventually he too lay down. Had they not both come under the power and influence of "the little child"? Did He not lead them? Does He lead us? Incidentally, notice that of the two, Saul most distinctly seemed the less

likely to be led. So Ananias can take courage.

In Revelation 12 we get teaching as to this in a prophetic way. You remember the contrast: the "great red dragon" and the "Man-child." The former a description of the devil himself as embodied in the ruling power on earth. The Man-child, a delightful picture of Christ. Considered prophetically, we know that soon the devil is to be cast down and Christ is to be manifestly supreme over all the massed forces of evil. Our privilege now is to anticipate this, and to have the Man-child even now caught up to the thrones of our hearts, and to the place of supremacy in the assemblies of the saints.

Now what are the features of a little child? First, he is **transparent**. This marked our Lord. He said, "I spake openly to the world . . . and in secret have I said nothing" (John 18: 20). Blessed words they were, which He spake.

Secondly, he is **approachable**, whereas a roaring lion drives you away. The Lord Jesus could say more truly than Elihu, "My terror shall not make thee afraid" (Job 33: 7). The sinner of the city, the leper, the thief, these were attracted to Him. May we grow like Him in these things!

Thirdly, he is **not an accuser**, like the devil. In Revelation the accuser of our brethren is cast down. In contrast, notice the warmth of the Apostle's heart, as shown in 1 Thessalonians 2. He manifested the heart of Christ for His own, and souls flourish in an atmosphere like that.

Fourthly, what marks a child

according to God's thought is **obedience**, and consequently he is happy. A disobedient child is never really happy. And can we set out to please ourselves and disregard our brethren without sad consequences to them and unhappiness to ourselves? If obedient, we can be happy in adverse circumstances. When Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, he could still write, "Rejoice in the Lord alway." He was happy himself.

Saul had become Paul—meaning, **Small**. He was like the little child, but still he could be angry with satanic evil, as we see in his treatment of Elymas the sorcerer, in Acts 13, for he could not compromise with sin. Righteous anger is a blessed feature, but it is all too rare nowadays.

We may discern these things in the saints to some degree, but in their perfection they are only found in the Lord Jesus Christ.



THE JOY OF HEAVEN

"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

— LUKE 15: 10.

THE Lord had been charged by the Pharisees with receiving sinners, as though His ministry did not secure righteousness but gave liberty to evil. Of course He might have pleaded various answers to this charge; He might have defended His grace to sinners on the ground of their necessity, as He did on a former occasion, or on the ground of God's glory. But in this chapter from beginning to end in each of the lovely parables, He vindicates it simply on the ground of the joy that the Father and He and the Holy Ghost and all heaven itself were finding in it.

Only think of that, beloved. If the Lord God be asked His reason for His ways of salvation with you and me, He says because He takes delight in them; they make Him and His glorious habitation to rejoice. What assurance! What consolation

springs from that! Would His neighbours murmur, think you, at the shepherd's joy over his lost sheep now found by him? Or the woman's friends grudge her pleasure as she swept her piece of money into her lap? So it is with God; it is His own joy in the salvation of sinners that Jesus proposes as His warrant or vindication. And why should men either murmur or disbelieve? May not the Lord prepare joy for Himself, as well as the shepherd? Who dare deny Him this? And who dare deny our hearts the assurance and consolation of it? Let us cherish the thought deeply in our souls: the gospel of our peace is the spring of joy to Him who planned and accomplished it: our God has done nothing less than this. He has laid the scene of His own happiness in our salvation, as these parables testify to us.

EZRA (A HELPER)—NEHEMIAH (CONSOLATION)

J. B. MARSHALL.

THE position of these two books in our Bible is instructive as to their understanding.

The Pentateuch gives us the origin and history of Israel in the wilderness; the historical books, which follow after, their history in the land. Nationally Israel failed utterly in both, and at the end of 2 Chronicles they are given into captivity, disowned and scattered amongst the Gentiles. Esther follows as the preservation of Israel when disowned, God being behind the scenes though His name is not mentioned; Job bringing in the righteous Gentiles.

It would seem as though God had failed in His purpose toward them, for His throne is transferred to the Gentiles, His glory having departed from Jerusalem. It is at this point we get our two books.

The essential difference between them is in moral character as seen in the **house** and the **city and walls**, the first presenting grace, the latter righteousness after grace has acted. This can be proved by a short perusal of the books.

In Ezra the first expression of grace is in God moving Cyrus to proclaim liberty amongst the captives, and also in restoring the vessels of the house. The grace of God is reciprocated in the chief of the fathers. The altar is their first thought on returning, this being more protective than the walls, for from it all grace flows. In Chapter 4 there is no armed resistance against adversaries. This ends the first revival.

In the second revival Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people, another letter sent to the king being favourably answered; so the house is finished. All is in grace, the Lord having affected both kings and prophets.

In chapter 7, Ezra goes up to Jerusalem, yet seeks no guard. Though in weakness, yet his faith is stronger than an army. His prayer in chapter 9 links himself with the people in their trespass without reserve. He rends his mantle and plucks the hair from his own head and face, blushing and ashamed to lift up his face. Here is a third revival. In this book we have the altar renewed, the house rebuilt, burnt offerings and trespass offerings, also the feasts of passover and unleavened bread, with a cleansing of the people.

In Nehemiah the king's favour is sought from God. This does not seem to be necessary to Ezra or the early captives; grace was already there. His prayer of chapter 1, has not the intimacy of association with the people as Ezra's had.

In chapter 2 we see him with captains of the army and horsemen, his right of way is in righteousness, but faith seems less evident. He also views the walls in the night. Why the night?

Chapter 3 gives the building of the walls, the names of the builders being a commendation in righteousness. In chapter 4 comes reproach, and his prayer is to turn the reproach upon their own heads, give

them a prey in the land of captivity, cover not their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out. This is followed with resistance, using implements of war, half his men prepared for battle, and half, whilst doing the work, girded with swords. In chapter 5 the necessity of righteousness amongst the people is maintained in their commercial lives. In chapter 6 the enemy having sought to hinder by reproach and violence, now tries craft, and Nehemiah's prayer is that God would judge them "according to these their works" (verse 14). In chapter 7 the gates are put to righteous use, the early genealogy repeated and the seventh month added at the end.

Chapter 8, the book of the law of Moses is read on the first day of the seventh month; this being the day for the feast of trumpets.

The feast of tabernacles comes at the end of the chapter. The feast of weeks does not seem to be mentioned in either book. Ezra has now joined with Nehemiah in the work, and it would appear that what follows is typical of the millennium. Casting lots is reminiscent.

But on Nehemiah's return, chapter 13, he has again to judge amongst the people; the sabbath, commerce and inter-marriage all being in question; some of the violators he cursed, threatened others, drove another from his presence, smote and plucked out the hair of others. Here was righteous energy beyond indignation, of a sort unsuited to our day.

His activities are in relation to the wall and the city, having in view the government of God on the earth in Jerusalem, when Israel will have her consolation as a kingdom of priests after receiving double for her sins.

The two books would set before us the remnant of Israel in a twofold way. Ezra representing that before the death of the Lord, and Nehemiah that after the day of grace — the early and the latter day remnant. Grace is seen throughout in the first book, but in the second is rather the spirit of the imprecatory psalms. Nehemiah's words and deeds are in consistency with this, and no understanding Christian would be guided to express himself as Nehemiah did. When grace is at an end and the faithful in Israel suffer in the latter day, then such language, deeds and prayer will be acceptable unto God. James and John fell to this error as we see in Luke 9: 54, and martyrs died under condemnation which zealots imagined to be justified. We must not under-estimate Nehemiah's service, but keep it in its right place.

In granting a little revival in his time the Lord has set before us, in figure, His ultimate restoration of Israel; neither does He forget the early remnant, for Ezra joins in the glory of the latter part of the second book. Rightly dividing the word of truth in these two books we should connect them with Romans 9, 10 and 11, these being the New Testament equivalent.

DAVID measured up Goliath with the measure of faith. Faith has but to make one enquiry, Where is God in this matter? Having found this, nothing whatever on the opposite side can weigh against it.

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 5: 1 — 8: 19)

THE contrast between the end of chapter 4 and the beginning of chapter 5 is very marked. The children of Israel believed the words of God when they saw the signs, and they worshipped. Pharaoh heard the words of God with unbelief and replied with insolence.

The word to him was, "Let My people go . . ." Thus the Lord at once claimed the people as **His**, whilst for a century or two the Pharaohs of Egypt had regarded the people as **theirs**, and enslaved to them. So from the outset the issue was joined. Jehovah claimed the people that Pharaoh regarded as his own. Which claimant would prevail? The issue could not be in doubt for one moment.

It is evident that from the first Pharaoh boldly challenged the might of Jehovah. He knew very well the many gods of Egypt, but to him Jehovah, God of Israel, was **the unknown God**, and he flatly refused to obey. He adopted the hard and stubborn attitude, which became characteristic of him under the government of God.

In reply to the further appeal of Moses and Aaron he simply increased the burdens upon the people, making their enslavement more thorough and more bitter. From this incident has come the common saying about "making bricks without straw," signifying having to undertake an almost impossible task. Their brick-making was to the end that Pharaoh might pursue his building schemes. Under the task-masters

they were beaten into helping to consolidate the power of the king who tyrannized over them.

In 1 Corinthians 10: 6 and 11, we are told that the things that happened to Israel were "our examples," or, "types" for us, and at this point we begin to see the type taking shape. Pharaoh held the power of death over the children of Israel, and thereby kept them in bondage. He is thus a type of Satan, as he is presented in Hebrews 2: 14, 15. Egypt with all its magnificence is clearly a type of the world, enslaving the people of God under the direction of the devil, and, ironically enough, using them to increase the power and glory of the system that oppressed them. God was now setting in motion the power that was to deliver them.

But the first effect of this intervention was to increase the bondage and miseries of the people. They were made to realize that they were under a sentence of death, as verse 21 reveals. They had but little faith and hence their reaction was to blame Moses and Aaron, who had begun to act on their behalf. Even the faith of Moses shook under the strain and he turned to God with a complaint that had the character of a reproach, as the two verses, closing chapter 5, record. How often it is the case that, when God begins to deal with a soul in grace, the adversary is immediately stirred up and his energy increases, so that, for a time at least, things are worse rather than better.

The first eight verses of chapter 6

record, however, the gracious way in which the Lord answered this failure on the part of both Moses and the people. Let those verses be read with care and it will be seen that His answer was virtually to present Himself as, Jehovah, the I AM, faithful to the covenant of promise, made to the fathers. There are chapters in the Bible, such as Job 29, Ecclesiastes 2, Romans 7, marked by the constant repetition of "I," by foolish men. In the case of Job we listen to a self-satisfied "I;" in the case of Solomon to a self-gratified; in the case of Paul to a self-condemned. God Himself is the only One who can rightly and truly speak much of "I," and here we find it repeated 18 times in the 8 verses.

Moses had just seen and been painfully impressed by what Pharaoh had done to the people, so Jehovah's word to him was, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh." As a result of what He was about to do, the strong hand of Pharaoh, which had been at work to keep the people in slavery, should be stretched forth to drive them out of his land. Pharaoh and his kingdom would be turned upside down.

Moreover God greatly emphasized the Name under which He had just revealed Himself. He had revealed Himself to Abraham and the fathers as God Almighty but not as Jehovah. They had known the name but the significance of it had been hidden from them. Now its meaning had come to light, and it was to be displayed in His dealings with the insolent man who had begun to defy Him. This furnished the occasion for God to display

Himself as the great "I AM" — ever-existing, unchangeable, ever true to His purpose and word, supreme above all the power that would aim at deflecting Him from or thwarting His plan.

In verse 4 He specifically mentions the covenant of promise, under which He was going to act, in delivering them from Egypt and bringing them into the land He had purposed for them. Their redemption from Egypt, their establishment in Canaan, which had been the land of their pilgrimage, when they were but strangers in it, all was to be under that covenant, which was made 430 years before the covenant of the law. Galatians 3: 17 tells us this, as also that the law could not disannul the promise that had been made. Of course it could not, for Jehovah had made it, though the implications of that great name were not known to Abraham. God is true to what He is in Himself irrespective of what we may know Him to be. Great comfort comes to our souls when we apprehend this. So this great statement begins and ends with the same words, "I am Jehovah" (verses 2 and 8).

For the moment the anguish of the Israelites was so great that the recital to them of these wonderful words had no effect. Even Moses had lost heart and felt that Pharaoh would not heed anything he might say. Nevertheless the word of the Lord stood.

But before we proceed with the record of how it did stand we have a parenthesis. The last verse of the chapter repeats the words of Moses recorded in verse 12, and in verses 14-27 we are given genealogical

details concerning the sons of Reuben and Simeon, and then more particularly of the sons of Levi, leading up to Moses and Aaron and their immediate descendants. The identity of these two chief actors on God's behalf is thus established.

The dealings with Pharaoh were now to start in earnest, so the first seven verses of chapter 7 give us the instructions under which Moses and Aaron were to act. Moses directly represented God before the king, and Aaron was to act as his "prophet," or, spokesman. God is invisible, so Moses was to be His visible representative. Aaron was to speak and act under the direction of Moses, though in point of fact he was the elder. Once more we see how the first has to give place to the second.

Pharaoh, who had no faith, was sure to demand some visible and miraculous sign to accredit Moses, so the sign of the rod of Moses becoming a serpent was given. Aaron performed this, but the magicians of Egypt showed that they also could bring this wonder to pass. Acting under the power of Satan, who is the serpent, they too could show that the casting down of authority produces what is satanic. The next move they did not expect, and it was beyond them. Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. Divine power, even if cast down, proved itself stronger than the power of the foe. But in spite of this there was no softening in the heart of Pharaoh.

So the first of the plagues in Egypt was scheduled to take place in the morning, when Pharaoh made his visit to the Nile. The demand for the release of the people was again

to be made, and if refused the rod that had been turned to a serpent, and that had devoured the rods of the magicians, was to be stretched out over the river and its waters turned to blood. The river that was the very life of Egypt was turned into a river of death and stinking.

But again the magicians proved that they could similarly produce death and stinking, so that Pharaoh's heart remained hard. That Satan could produce death, or that which is symbolic of death, is not at all surprising, since he is the author of sin, and by sin death has come to pass. Though Pharaoh made light of this first plague, the common people felt the weight of it, and it lasted for seven days. This, we suppose, is what the last verse of the chapter indicates.

At the end of that time the Lord through Moses reiterated His demand for the release of His people, and announced a second plague if the demand was refused. The demand was refused and the frogs in their millions appeared out of the waters that had been smitten (8: 5, 6). The magicians showed however that they too could produce frogs out of the waters, thus minimizing the effect of the miracle in the mind of Pharaoh. Those conversant with Egypt and its history tell us that a "red Nile" is something that used to happen annually and that the river was a breeding place of frogs; but what came to pass here was quite out of the ordinary both as to time and intensity, and the invasion of the whole land by the frogs was a dreadful affliction.

Again, we are told by Egyptologists that a special goddess was

supposed to preside over the frogs, so as to protect the land from them. She was named Heki, and is represented on the monuments sometimes with the head of a frog. The Egyptians had to learn that Heki was as nothing before Jehovah. It illustrates the word, "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment" (chapter 12: 12). It is probable also that when the first plague fell, just as Pharaoh approached the river, he was going to worship the god that the Nile was supposed to represent.

While Pharaoh disregarded the first plague, as we saw in verse 23 of the last chapter, he was not unmoved by the second, as we see in verse 8. Out of every branch of the river, the irrigation canals, the reservoirs, as indicated in verse 5, the slimy creatures came, penetrating into houses, into their beds, their food vessels, their ovens, defiling everything. The magicians may have helped to increase their numbers slightly, but they could not take them away. He had to recognize the hand of the Lord was in this dreadful affliction. So he made pretence of yielding to the demand of God in order that the plague might be removed.

The removal was made the more impressive by Moses asking him to stipulate when the frogs should go. The words, "Glory over me," are rendered in the Septuagint "Fix for me." His answer was, "Tomorrow." Moses replied that Jehovah the God of Israel would prove His power by removing the plague just as the king had stipulated. It seems obvious that their removal in this fashion was an even more impressive miracle than their being brought up.

But even so, the effect of the plague was not yet over for, save in the river, the frogs all died that day in a miraculous manner, and gathered in heaps the land stank with their carcasses. Yet even this was a respite, and directly Pharaoh saw it he hardened his heart and continued to defy God. The judgment had not produced any vital change.

Hence, without further delay or appeal to the king, Moses was to stretch out his rod and smite the dust, when it was to become lice throughout all the land. This was done by Aaron on behalf of Moses and the trying plague came to pass. At this point the magicians of Egypt were baffled. Out of the dead dust the living lice had come. The magicians could not imitate it, and they had to confess as much. Only God can bring life out of death. They could only confess, "This is the finger of God," and retire from the contest. From this point we hear of no more attempts to belittle the acts of God by satanic power.

From those who are experts in ancient languages we learn that the word translated "lice" is an unusual one, and in the Septuagint is translated by a word which means a kind of small mosquito. It is of small moment what exactly the word means, but it is of interest to learn that the difficulty is occasioned by the word not being a strictly Hebrew one. It is an importation from the language used in Egypt, and is one of the many internal proofs that the Pentateuch was not written about the time of Ezra, as the "higher critics" would have us imagine. It was written when these Egyptian terms were well known and quite

intelligible to the Hebrew reader.

Darby's New Translation gives us "gnats" as the plague, which accords with what we have just written. We may well be thankful to God that He has caused to be woven into the very texture of the Scripture these little signs that Moses, who was so well acquainted

with Egypt, its words and its ways, was indeed the writer under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. This fact is the more striking, as we shall see when we consider the fourth plague, since the word, used there for the "swarms" that came up, is again not a Hebrew one but rather one that was peculiar to Egypt.

THE MAJESTY OF HIS NAME

T. OLIVER.

MANY Christians present their petitions in the name "Jesus" — "in Jesus' name." One would not seek to hinder earnest souls, but the practice is unscriptural. Holy Writ is very guarded in securing due honour to the majesty of His name.

How careful the Apostle Paul was in his salutation, and he speaks of the "Lord Jesus Christ"! We never read of the Lord being addressed on earth as Jesus. His exalted position in the glory calls for greater deference.

Earthly dignity cannot be ignored with impunity. It is related that Beau Brummel, the bosom-friend of

King George IV of Britain, when Prince Regent, over 100 years ago, foolishly wagered that he would address the prince by his Christian name. Using that name, he asked the prince to ring the bell. When the page appeared the prince was equal to the occasion, issuing an order to show Beau Brummel out, and the latter never entered his presence again. If the puny majesty of this world calls for such scrupulous recognition, how much more important it is that we should duly acknowledge the greatness of the name of the Majesty in the heavens above!

PETER speaks of living stones which are built upon the "Living Stone," which is Christ Jesus. As stones they are true and divinely created material for the house of God in contrast to Babel's bricks of human manufacture (Gen. 11), and indicate permanence and solidity.

A VERY STRIKING CONTRAST

A. J. POLLOCK.

“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.”

(PSALM 147: 3, 4).

WHAT a very striking contrast! The “HE,” who tenderly ministers to the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds, is the “HE,” who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them by their names.

Judged from the standpoint of us, mortals, it seems the most vivid and staggering contrast between the immensely great and the minutely small. When we think of the stars we are left in wonder for they are beyond comprehension. The ancients counted the stars they saw by the naked eye, and thought they were able, more or less, to number them. But the telescope and stellar photography have added immensely to the number that can be seen. They run into uncountable millions. The Milky-Way, a broad luminous zone in the sky, is produced by the light of millions of fixed stars. And it seems that man has only touched the veritable fringe of the mighty universe, which is beyond the grasp of his puny mind.

Take our sun, the centre of the solar system. It is no less than 1,300,000 times greater in bulk than this little planet called the earth. And yet this immense sun is small compared with millions, which we call stars. So astronomers tell us. So has God made them.

We are told that “sprang there even of one [Abraham], and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the

sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (Heb. 11: 12). This verse conveys a sense of immensity, impossible for our small minds to grasp. Christians, believing in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, receive this, wonderful as it is, as true. It needs no support of men to prove it, but it is interesting that not long ago a great astronomer testified to the scientific truth of it, as known by investigation of the sky by the aid of stellar photography.

It is very significant that our psalm tells how God heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds, before we are told that the same God tells the number of the stars, and calls them by their names. What do we glean from this order? We gather how intensely God cares for the sorrows and sadness of mankind.

We approach a broken down tenement in a slum. We ascend the creaky stairs, and enter a room. It contains but a bed, a chair, and a handful of odds and ends. There lies on the bed a sinner, who is paying in his poor broken body the penalty of a sinful life. He is down and out. In the mercy of God he has at last awakened to the fact that he is a sinner. As he looks back upon his shameful life he is broken-hearted and in despair. He knows not where to turn for relief to a guilty conscience. He hears the wondrous story. That in order to forgive him his many sins it was necessary that the “HE,” who tells the number of the stars, and calleth them by name;

even the mighty Creator of them and their Sustainer, should become a Man upon this earth, and die an atoning death on Calvary's cross in order that his broken heart might be healed, and his wounds bound up. What a story that HE, who is the Creator of the universe, should condescend to enter that humble room in the dingy garret of a slum, and there illuminate the mind and soul of this wreck of society, save him, bless him, and make him a wondrous trophy of redeeming love.

Or it may be a sick saint. Sorrow after sorrow has fallen upon him. Sick in body and mind, and yet here again the Great Healer enters, and ministers heavenly cordial, raises the drooping spirit, fills the empty heart with heavenly joy. Have we not seen this hundreds of times? When we felt tongue-tied in the presence of want and sorrow, often have we been rebuked as we saw how such were sustained, not only sustained, but "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8: 37).



THE WORLD: OUR POSITION AND ATTITUDE IN IT

F. B. HOLE.

Read JOHN 17.

WHAT is the believer's position with regard to the world as it exists today? And what should be his attitude towards it? The answer to the second question must be dependent upon the answer to the first. Our attitude in present circumstances must be governed by our position. It is futile for us to assume to settle things if we are not in a position to do so. So in considering what our **attitude** should be in regard to the remarkable and peculiar circumstances through which we pass, we must ask: What is my **position** in regard to them?

Let me point out that this group of chapters (14-17) has one underlying thought, that is, that the believer is absolutely identified with Christ, before God the Father. We are identified with Him in a new relationship, a new joy, and a new position which He takes up as risen from the dead.

But in chapter 16 we get another side of the story. The Lord tells His disciples what treatment they are to expect from the world. He says, as it were, "Not only are you identified with Me in My position before the Father, in all the favour and blessing that attaches to that position, but you are identified with Me in My position of reproach and rejection before the world. If you have all the assets connected with My place before the Father, you must not be surprised to find you have got My liabilities in connection with the world." He intimated to them that they were to make up their minds to share His path of rejection even unto death. Does this sound strange to our ears? We have been so accustomed to a quiet peaceful life in this land, where Christianity has greatly modified the standards of behaviour, and have for generations past had such a time of ease, that we are apt to forget what the truth is as to the position we

hold, a position of the greatest possible blessing before God, but a position of persecution and reproach, if we are true to our Master, in this world.

Now in John 17 we have the whole case presented with perfection. The Lord Himself lays down in the clearest possible way what our position is. Look first at verse 6. We have to remember that we are among those given to Christ by God the Father out of the world. Doubtless those words had special reference to the apostles, but verse 20 shows that they have every believer in view. The Lord prays for all His own right through the church's history, up to and including ourselves. It is a very touching thought that when the Lord Jesus paused outside the walls of Jerusalem, before crossing the brook that led to the garden, with His awestruck disciples about Him in the quiet night, He uttered this prayer. His eye swept the centuries, and He embraced us all in that for which He prayed on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion. We too have been given to Christ by God the Father out of this world. He foreknew us in the past eternity, for as we read elsewhere, we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. His thoughts for us antedate the establishment of this material earth on which we tread. We need not be surprised, then, to find that our ultimate destiny lies outside it.

When the Lord was here, His own were under His continual guidance and care, but the moment had now come when He was to leave them. He is in spirit here already beyond the cross. He says to the Father, "Now I am no more in the

world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee." He left the world, as we know, by way of death, and resurrection, and ascension. He left it because rejected. Let us never forget that.

There are people who say, "If there is a God in heaven, why does He not interfere? Why does He look down calmly on the atrocities that are being perpetrated?" Many answers might be given to these questions, but one very sufficient answer is, **Because Christ has been rejected.** The only One who can put things right has been here, and has been rejected, and until He comes again you need not be surprised at anything that may happen. Nothing can be right until the only One who can put things right takes them in hand. But when He does, it means judgment, and that is why God waits. God is never partial. In our wrongs and disappointments we would like God to interfere on our own particular and special behalf; but why should He? When God intervenes, He will do so in a far-reaching manner, and it means the day of judgment. When the time comes for wrongs to be righted, all wrongs will be righted. If God is going to interfere in judgment, we can only say, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psa. 143: 2). It would mean an end of us all, apart from the provision that God's grace has made, so meantime He keeps silence. But the hour of His mercy is fast running to its close, and then He will intervene to put things right.

Here are a few humble folk, who love Him, and He loves them. They are going to be left without

Him in the world, and the next thing is what we get in verse 14: "I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." We are left in the world on the distinct understanding that we are not of it. We are not part of the world-system by which we are surrounded, and for that reason the world hates the Christian. Notice the Lord here makes Himself the standard. We are identified with Him in this.

Now notice a further thing in verse 18: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." We have been taken out of the great world-system. We speak of a man being a "man of the world." By this we do not intend to emphasise the fact that he lives on this planet in contrast to dwelling in the moon, or being an inhabitant of Mars. We mean that he is absolutely and in every sense a man of the world-system that is all around us, so that he bears its stamp and impress. The Christian is taken out of the world in that sense. Notice here again that He, Christ Himself, is the standard. If it is a question of our separation from the world, it is even as Christ Himself is separated from it; if it is a question of being sent into the world, as in verse 18, that also is measured by the same standard. The Lord takes us out, breaks our links with this world, and then sends us back that we may be here for Him.

He Himself came into it with one great thought before Him. The supreme object that dominated the life of the Lord Jesus was the glory of God. Our benefit, great as it was,

was not the primary thought before Him. He came into this world, which at the instigation of Satan had cast off divine allegiance, always rightly representing God, always perfectly revealing Him, and ultimately working out redemption for sinners. In reading the Gospels, we see how again and again there was the temptation presented to Him to turn from the main line of God's purpose and run into a siding, but He never did so. I mean such instances as when a man came up to Him and said, in effect, "I have got a brother who is not straight; speak to him that he divide the inheritance with me." The Lord's answer was, "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" His business was not to deal with social matters and to remove those inequalities which are so pronounced. Socialists actually wish to claim Jesus as one of themselves, even with a scripture like this staring them in the face. Here is a great social problem presented to the Lord, and He declines to touch it. It would have been leaving the main track of that for which He was here. There was also a national or political question raised about paying tribute to Caesar, but the Pharisees did not get the answer they expected, for the Lord only used the occasion to throw into relief that which was the supreme question: the rights of God.

Now we Christians are left here on those lines. The Lord has sent us into the world that we may represent Him rightly, and promote His interests. Remember what the Apostle said in 2 Corinthians 5, "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ." An ambassador is a gentle-

man of very considerable knowledge and skill, who is entrusted by the Government with the important task of representing king and country in a foreign land. He does not belong to that land. The British ambassador in Paris is not a Frenchman. His business is not to see that the streets of Paris are perfectly swept. He does not concern himself with the latest social improvements of that land. He may be invited to do some things here and there, but if so he does them as an outsider. He is there in Paris simply to represent his country. His thought is, what will best further the interests of the king and country he represents.

Now the apostles, in a very special way, were ambassadors for Christ. We may not be so, in quite the same sense, but we are **attached to the embassy**. In Paris there is the ambassador, but he has helpers. He has a considerable number of clerks and servants. The honour of the country is bound up with the behaviour of all, even the humblest. Everyone in the embassy will so act as to uphold the credit and further the interests of the country he represents.

Let us never forget that our place in this world is to be attached to the embassy of the absent King. We belong to His country. We have got His peace, His Spirit, His joys. We are here to represent Him. If we lay this well to heart, it will answer for us a hundred different questions as to what the Christian's attitude should be. I think if I were attached to the embassy in Paris, as a Briton I should be very glad if I had an opportunity to help individual Frenchmen. (I use this as an illus-

tration). I should be glad to serve to any extent **within** my power the people by whom I am surrounded. I should like to treat everybody with kindness and consideration, but I should always bear in mind that I am not there just to do that. That is incidental. I am there to represent my King, and everything has to be gauged by that fact.

I may be asked: Does not the Scripture say, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith"? Yes, indeed, just as I would at once assist a wounded man if I saw an accident in a Paris street. Still, I should not spend my time walking about the streets on the chance of being able to do such things. Yes, and it does say, "**especially to the household of faith.**" Do not let it be said in Paris that the embassy is starving. That would be a bad testimony. Always consider **first** that you are there rightly to represent your King.

Is my little parable sufficiently plain? Our great business down here is to rightly serve and represent our Lord. Let us seek grace to do it. We are not a part of the world system, in fact our interests are outside it. As Christians we have great interests, magnificent interests, though as yet invisible to mortal eyes, and with those interests we are identified.

If we keep clearly and constantly before us the fact that our citizenship — our life - associations — are in heaven, from whence we await the coming of the Saviour, we shall increasingly realize our separation from the world, and rejoice to serve our absent Lord.

THE ATONEMENT

J. HOUSTON

THE Atonement ranked amongst Jehovah's Feasts. It was kept on the tenth day of the seventh month. The Jews regarded it as a solemn occasion; they rested from all their work, and entered into sober and serious reflection. "It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you from all work, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever." To them, the great day of its celebration was **the** day of the year. They called it "Yoma," which means "**the** day." There was reason for it. Their sins, for the whole year, were **then** confessed, and atonement made for them.

There is only one chapter in the Bible which gives us instructions for its celebration; it is the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. As we shall have occasion to refer to it frequently, we ask the reader to have it at hand; and to remember, it is the Word of God that alone can teach us. Mere comments, or dissertations on it, are not the Word itself.

Before we begin the study of our chapter, we would, for the sake of context, notice a gloomy background. The Jews had sinned grievously against God, by worshipping the golden calf. They came under His judgment; three thousand of them were slain. From then onwards, they were never owned as a **nation** of priests. Priesthood was confined to **the tribe of Levi**. Then the priestly family failed too; the two sons of Aaron offered strange fire, and were peremptorily judged. Both died in the act. Aaron, the head of the family, was debarred from entering, at "all times," into

"the holy place within the veil." Under God's government, there was not only judgment on those who actually committed the sin, but forfeiture of privilege, which affected both the **nation** and the **priesthood**. It is after the death of the two sons of Aaron instructions are given for the Atonement. This connection is noteworthy.

In consequence of this failure in the nation, and in the priestly family, two fundamental points are raised in reference to God and His people. He is **holy**, and sits on His throne, between the cherubim; they are **defiled**, both nation and priests; so also the tabernacle, and all the holy things they touched. Can they, in their defilement, approach Him? Can He, in His holiness, go on with them? The Atonement is the answer to both questions.

Aaron had to offer a sin offering, and a burnt offering, for himself and his house. The former met their need, by atoning for all their sins; the latter gave God satisfaction, by meeting all the claims of His throne, and by laying down the ground on which He could act propitiously without compromising any of His attributes. It would not answer to forgive sins at the sacrifice of righteousness; nor would it answer to vindicate righteousness to the exclusion of mercy. Mercy must flow from truth; peace, from righteousness. We have a beautiful and poetical combination of all these in Psalm 85: 10: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." In fact, we see it, in principle, on the

blood-sprinkled mercy seat. And these things are the fundamental principles of God's government, be it in the moral government of His people now, or in the world at large during the millennium. All is founded upon the blood of atonement.

After atonement was made for Aaron and his house, attention is drawn to the people (vv. 7-10). Two goats were brought before the Lord. One was for the Lord; the other, for the people. The former was a sin offering; the latter, a scapegoat. The slain one, whose blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, was a propitiation for their sins; while the live one, on which their sins were confessed and borne away into the wilderness, was a substitute. Propitiation is God-ward; substitution, man-ward.

This is more clearly seen in the New Testament. God set Christ to be "a propitiation" for our sins (Rom. 3: 25). "Who **His own self** bare **our sins** in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2: 24); which, of course, is substitution, for He bore **our sins**, as if they were **His own**. But these things are inseparable; they are two parts of **one** sacrifice, and not, in any sense, **two** sacrifices. The goat that made propitiation was offered **first**; and it was **afterwards**, the live goat went into the wilderness, bearing all the sins of the people, never again to be remembered. We get the great truth in Hebrews. It is when Christ has made propitiation for our sins, and has gone into the presence of God for us, that the Holy Spirit comes down. He testifies that God will remember our sins and iniquities no more (Heb. 10: 12-17). Precious truth! Complete atonement!

Finally, the tabernacle was cleansed by the blood of atonement (verse 16). This shows that the universe will be reconciled on the ground of the atoning blood. The tabernacle is a type of the universe. In Colossians 1: 20-22, we see three things: we have **peace** through the blood of Christ's cross; **reconciliation** of all things; **reconciliation** of the Church.

When Aaron went into the holy place, with the blood of atonement, he put on "holy garments" (verse 4). In this, we cannot fail to see a striking typical import. Christ offered Himself, "**without spot**, to God," to make atonement for sin (Heb. 9: 14). Aaron also took "a censer full of burning coals of fire," and "his hands full of sweet incense beaten small" (verse 12). The incense was burned "before the Lord." Nor can we fail to see, in this act, a striking type of the preciousness of Christ, to God, in His atoning death.

Most careful vigilance was enjoined to guard against defilement. Aaron had continually to "wash his flesh with water." Even the man that led the scapegoat into the wilderness had to "wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water" (verses 4, 24, 26). This was, no doubt, ceremonial cleansing; but it shows typically how no defilement can be in the presence of God. And it is a fundamental lesson we have to learn in our approach to God. Were it not for the cleansing power of the blood of atonement, and the application of the Word, in the power of the Spirit, we would not be able to draw near to God. We owe everything to Christ, and His atoning

sacrifice.

Before we leave the typical teaching of the Atonement, we must take notice that the veil was there, still unrent. The people were outside (even the priests were not allowed into the holy place within the veil), and Aaron alone went there, once a year, with the blood of atonement. In Hebrews, we see a different position. Christ has gone into the presence of God for us, after having made atonement, and we have boldness to enter the holiest, through the new and living way, by His blood. He is the High Priest over the house of God; and in Him, "we

draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10: 19-22).

In this infidel age, in which we live, when so many are departing from the truth, what need we have to hold fast the old landmarks! What was truth, at the beginning of the era, is truth still. It is all embodied and fulfilled in Christ. He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. And when wicked men mock at the blood of atonement they little know they sever the only link between God, in His holiness, and man, in his sin. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 8: 20 — 9: 35).

THERE is no record here of the plague of lice being removed; but Moses is told by God to present again to Pharaoh His demand that the people, whom He claimed as His, be released. He is again to intercept the king as he was going forth to the river early in the morning. Those who have studied the records of ancient Egypt have told us that the Nile was worshipped as representing one of the chief deities of that land of idols, and we remember that when the river was smitten under the first plague Pharaoh was going in the same direction in the morning (7: 15). It gives us the impression that he was going forth to worship the Nile-god, and just at that moment his god was smitten. So also there was a goddess, who was supposed to preside over frogs. This shows us

how these judgments affected the gods of Egypt, as indicated in Exodus 12: 12.

By the river, Pharaoh is threatened with the fourth plague. We notice that seven times it is described as "swarms" — to which word our translators have added "of flies" in italics, since the word in the original is evidently an Egyptian one and not Hebrew, and no one knows its exact significance. The Septuagint uses a Greek word meaning "dog-flies," and this is the word used in Darby's New Translation. Other authorities believe that it really signifies, "beetles." If so, that would again bring in the thought of the gods of Egypt, for the beetle was venerated by them.

We pause here a moment to ob-

serve that Urquhart in his "New Biblical Guide," points out very forcibly that there are a number of words used that have their roots in the Egyptian language and not the Hebrew, as well as allusions to Egyptian customs and geographical details, which would only be known to people familiar with Egypt, and that these are introduced without one word of explanation. The unbelieving "Higher Critics" insisted that the Pentateuch was never written by Moses, but was the work of Ezra, or of someone else about his time — that it was a "pious fraud" perpetrated in the hope of making the people attach more weight to the law they were supposed to observe. But Ezra, or someone else, coming from **Babylon**, would never have had this intimate knowledge of **Egyptian** words and customs dating a thousand years before, and could he in some miraculous way have obtained the knowledge, he would have had to insert explanations to make them intelligible to the readers of his day. No, the hallmark of the Egypt of the time of Moses is plainly to be seen. It is as well for us ordinary Christians to know these facts, for we may occasionally be confronted by these infidel reasonings.

Another thing we must notice is that in this fourth plague Israel in the land of Goshen is exempted entirely from its effects. The "swarms" appeared punctually the next day, as the Lord had said, and this severing of Goshen greatly heightened the impressive force of the miracle. The land was "corrupted," or "destroyed" by these "swarms," which rather supports the idea that they were beetles, for in recent times travellers in Egypt have testified to

the very destructive habits of the sort of beetles that are found there.

This plague evidently made a deep impression on the stubborn mind of Pharaoh and for the first time he made a show of yielding, but only by way of a small concession of a compromising nature. The Israelites might have a short release from their tasks and sacrifice to their God, but it must be in Egypt and not outside its borders. They might have a little bit of their religion so long as their links with Egypt were not cut. A type this, of the snare that has prevailed so largely in Christendom. The god of this age is content for us to carry on Christian observances, so long as we remain attached to, and controlled by, "this present evil world."

Moses at once rejected the offer, for the sacrifices of Jehovah were of a kind that would be a deadly offence to the people of Egypt and provoke murderous action. In this again we can see a typical significance, for that which lies at the root of all our worship is the unique excellence of Christ contrasted with the condemnation of Adam's race as fallen sinners. A doctrine which involves **that** judgment is an abomination to the world.

Pharaoh evidently had to acknowledge the force of this objection, for he at once altered his concession to giving permission for a very short journey into the wilderness, only not very far away. He wished to have them well within the reach of his arm, so that their separation from his land should be **only** nominal and temporary. Once more we see how this fits the type. If there is to be a breach between the church and

the world, let it be only of a nominal sort, and one which lends itself to the Christian being still held in bondage.

With this concession the king asked for the intercession of Moses, which was granted with a warning against the deceitful line that he had been following. The Lord acted according to the prayer of Moses and another great miracle took place. On the next day the swarms departed so thoroughly that not one insect remained in the land. But, relieved of this infliction, in spite of the warning, once more Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to allow the concession he had just promised. How true all this is to human nature! Under affliction people appear to become quite pious; the affliction is removed, and they promptly resume their godless ways.

The fifth plague is now threatened by command of the Lord. The first three had occasioned terrible inconveniences upon Egypt, the fourth had corrupted their possessions; the fifth was to smite them in one of the chief sources of their wealth. Horses and asses are mentioned first, and for these animals Egypt was specially famed. A very grievous "murrain," or "plague," would come upon them and again there should be complete exemption for the Israelites. So it came to pass. On one side of the line of separation there was death, on the other not one animal was affected. This again was plainly the hand of God, but Pharaoh was unmoved, and remained hard and impenitent. Therefore, as we see in verse 8, Moses is instructed to act without giving Pharaoh any warning of what was coming. It is worthy of note that

this feature also marked the third plague, and we shall find it again repeated when we come to the ninth. No comment is made in our chapters as to this feature, but it seems to be a part of God's ways to warn twice and if no attention is paid, then to strike the third time without any warning being given. Later on we do get the word, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (Job 33: 14). That saying of Elihu was certainly exemplified here.

This time Moses was without warning to perform an act in the sight of the king, casting into the air handfuls of ashes from the furnace. Egypt had been "a smoking furnace" (Gen. 15: 17), into which the children of Abraham had been plunged, and now ashes of the furnace were to recoil upon the heads of their oppressors, smiting them with boils and blisters. It is specially mentioned that the severity of the boils was such that the magicians, suffering from them like the rest, could not stand before Moses. They were utterly discomfited. No hint is given here why this smiting of the magicians is specially stated, but it is known that great soundness and cleanliness was imposed upon these men, who were the very highest rank of idolatrous priests, and without it they were disqualified from exercising their office and their charms.

But in spite of all this Pharaoh remained obdurate, and in verse 12 we are plainly told that the Lord hardened his heart. Yet the dealings of God with him proceeded and even worse afflictions were threatened. Again Moses was to intercept him early in the morning, and warn him of further chastisement upon his

realm.

This time the word of the Lord through Moses contained not only a plain threat of what was impending but also a revelation of how the hand of the Lord had been upon him in the past, raising him up to sit upon the throne of Egypt. Verse 16 is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 9: 17, as a striking example of the working of the sovereignty of God. Some of those who have studied the records of ancient Egypt have told us that in their opinion this Pharaoh of the exodus was not altogether of royal blood, but rather a son of the harem, who ascended the throne by being married to a princess fully of royal blood and in the line of succession. If this be so, it illuminates the position. He was "raised up" by God, not in the sense of being born into the world, but of being raised to the throne in an unusual way.

The sovereignty of God is one of the great foundation facts of Scripture: a fact that may well move our hearts to praise. If He were not sovereign in His omniscience and omnipotence, we might well tremble before the might of the great adversary. The responsibility of man, even though fallen, is another fact made plain in Scripture, and both facts we must maintain, though we may not feel able to correlate the two. Nebuchadnezzar, whose responsibility was undoubted, acknowledged the Divine sovereignty when he said, "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

God knew the stubborn self-will

and pride of this man, and working behind the scenes raised him up to where he could carry on and even intensify the ill-treatment of His people, and thus bring things to a head. The hour was now ripe for God to deal with him, and in doing so, display His power in such fashion that His name would be declared throughout all the earth. That in those days the name of Jehovah was so declared is borne witness to by such a scripture as Joshua 2: 8-11. And even in our day, 3,500 years later, the fame of it has not died away.

We must takè note of verse 17, for in it we find an early example of the principle that what is done against the people of God is accepted as done against God Himself. It came most fully to light when Saul of Tarsus was arrested by, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Again we see it in Matthew 25: 40, 45, applying there to what is done for the Lord as well as against Him, but in both cases their attitude manifested in their treatment of His people. In exalting himself against the children of Israel, Pharaoh was exalting himself against God, and thus hurrying on to his doom.

Verse 26 tells us that in this seventh plague the land of Goshen was again exempted. But there was also a new feature as regards the Egyptians in that, warning being given, there was an opportunity for any of the common people, who regarded the word of the Lord, to take action which would save them from the worst of it. The violence of the hail storm was so great that man or beast exposed to it would die. The crops were wrecked and even trees of the field destroyed. Verses 31

and 32 give explicit information, which shows us that the time of year must have been late February or early March, for then in Egypt the barley is in the ear and the flax in blossom (or, balled), but the wheat and the rye not yet in the stalk.

The visitation was so terrific that Pharaoh was frightened and inclined to make some confession of wrongdoing, as verse 27 shows, and to promise to let the people go, if only there might be a cessation of this fearful scourge. Moses however was not deceived by this fresh profession of repentance and piety, and told him plainly that he knew he would not fulfil his promise, yet he went forth as an intercessor and spread his hands out unto the Lord, when the visitation ceased as suddenly as it began. Both in its onset and in its cessation it proved itself to be an act of God.

Sceptics have raised a difficulty as to cattle being slain by the hail seeing they had been smitten under the

fifth plague. They overlook perhaps that the fifth was upon all "which is in the field" (9: 3), so there may have been a good number not in the field. And further the cattle of the Israelites were wholly untouched, and there was nothing to prevent the Egyptians, in the two or three weeks that probably elapsed between the fifth and seventh plagues, seizing many of them for their own use.

Under this seventh plague Egypt must have lost nearly all its glory and have been brought very low. Most of its live stock destroyed, its trees broken, barley and flax ruined — the latter especially a very valuable crop. But directly the chastisement ceased Pharaoh relapsed into his stubborn defiance, and not only he but his servants also. How all this should drive home into our hearts the fact that what is born of the flesh is still flesh, no matter to what treatment it is subjected; and that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

" THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND " (1 Peter 4: 7).

LET every true Christian wake up to the seriousness of the hour in which we live. A far-seeing man of the world, who had no faith in Christ, recently wrote, "The world is at the end of its tether. The end of everything we call life is close at hand."

Someone else has written, "We have too many men of science and too few men of God. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Man is stumbling blindly through a spiritual darkness while toying with the precarious secrets of life and death." This witness is sadly true.

And are we, who are Christians, going to slumber on complacently in the midst of this state of things? God forbid! Let us rather obey the exhortation that closes the above quoted verse, "**Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.**"

“ABRAHAM . . . OFFERED UP ISAAC” A. J. POLLOCK

(HEBREWS II: 17)

THE New Testament unfolds a vast amount of Divine teaching that could not possibly be known in Old Testament times. One dispensation is like a starlight night; the other like the sun shining in its strength. Christ came as the Light. He Himself said, “I am the Light of the world.” There is no doubt that the New Testament believer is in a position to understand the Old Testament more fully than even Old Testament believers, who first received it. Because of this, shallow Christians often believe they are vastly superior to the Old Testament saints. But careful study of the Scriptures will reveal the splendid characters of many of these saints, and that their faith stretched far into the dawn of the coming day.

Perhaps one of the best illustrations of this will be found in the story of God telling Abraham to offer up his only son Isaac in sacrifice. For a father to be told to sacrifice his son with his own hand is a trial too poignant for words to express. Only God had a right to make such a demand, and Abraham rose to great heights of faith in his obedience. For Isaac was no ordinary son. He was the direct gift of God, and that miraculously, for Abraham’s body was dead, and Sarah long past the age of conception when the child of promise came to cheer their hearts. No wonder they called him Isaac, which means “Laughter.” And further, God had told Abraham that his seed should be as the stars of the heaven and as the sand of the sea shore, that in his seed should all the

nations of the earth be blessed (Gen. 22: 18). Isaac was the first link in the chain of fulfilment as our blessed Lord was the last; the only One who could and will fulfil the promise.

Was there ever such a test of obedience as this? Was there ever such a trial of faith?

Abraham rises early in the morning, cleaves the wood for the burnt offering, takes Isaac and two young men with him, and sets forth for Mount Moriah, the future site of the Temple at Jerusalem, within sight of which our Lord died on Calvary’s cross.

When in sight of his destination he bade the young men tarry whilst he and the lad would go yonder and **worship**. Does this not let in a flood of light as to Abraham’s faith and trust in God? Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, but he had the sublime faith to say with assurance that he and Isaac would **worship** and then return to the young men. One stands in amazement at such a statement in such circumstances. Even as highly blessed New Testament believers we may well feel spiritual dwarfs in the presence of a moral giant. Abraham believed that, if even he carried out the bidding of God and sacrificed his son, his son would be given back to him **in life**, for God could not break His promise that in Isaac should his seed be called.

We have New Testament warrant for this statement. We read, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried,

offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: **accounting that God was able to raise him up, EVEN FROM THE DEAD**: from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11: 17-19). Is there not something sublime in this, in sharp contrast with the feeble faith we New Testament saints evidence oftentimes? Could faith at that time go further?

As Abraham and Isaac journeyed along, Isaac, evidently unaware of the fate that lay before him, asked a question of his father, a question like a poisoned dagger plunged into his very heart: "My father . . . behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Staggering question! How it must have caused him intense anguish of spirit! Again Abraham stands out pre-eminent. Listen to his answer, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Was Abraham looking at his son when he made this answer, or was he looking far, far ahead to an event that would be manifested after many centuries had run their course?

Again Scripture, indeed our Lord Himself, gives us an answer. When our Lord told the Pharisees that the one, who believes on Him, should never die, they answered that Abraham and the prophets were dead, and how could He say that the one, who believes on Him, should never die? He replied, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8: 56).

Is this not confirmed? When God

restrained Abraham's knife as it was poised to descend with a fatal blow upon Isaac bound on the altar, and the ram caught in the thicket by its horns was substituted for him, he exclaimed, calling the place Jehovah-jireh, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Abraham and Isaac die. Over eighteen long centuries roll by, and behold three crosses with three victims impaled upon them. The central cross upheld a Victim that was none less than the fulfilment of Abraham's Jehovah-jireh. The Son of God was the fulfilment of all these Old Testament types. If God demanded that Abraham should offer his son, it was to set forth His mighty love in sending His well beloved Son. There was no last minute withholding in pity as on Mount Moriah in Abraham's day.

Our Lord, indeed, died a Sacrifice for sin. There was no ram caught in a thicket by its horns in the case of our adorable Saviour. His was the only sacrificial death to put away sin, that has ever taken place. Isaac did not know what lay before him when he asked, "Where is the lamb?" Our Lord knew in all its terrible meaning what lay before Him. This was witnessed when in Gethsemane He prayed in the anticipation of it, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26: 39). As He prayed, sweat as great drops of blood fell to the ground, so past our comprehension was His anguish of spirit. If He had not died no promise could have been given to Abraham, and it could only be fulfilled in the Person of the One, who was capable of satisfying God's holy claims by

His atoning death on the cross. He was indeed God's Jehovah-jireh.

So remarkable as this, was the faith of an Abraham.

THE FORMAL AND THE REAL

T. D. BELL

DURING the time of God's early dealings with men, before He separated a people unto Himself, faith was seen in such as Enoch and Noah in the energy of a walk with God against the background only of an opposing world.

After the call of Abraham, and the setting apart of a people, the faithful are seen walking, not only before the world, but also in the presence of those who now occupied in a formal way the place of God's people. This new background to faith appears to bring out gradually further qualities, always present, but called into prominence only when this merely formal circle appeared.

Among these qualities heart affection for those standing in their day for God is beautiful to see. Elisha's devotion to Elijah before the sons of the prophets; Jonathan and Mephibosheth in relation to David, against the background of Saul's circle, are amongst the many which speak of this.

Features of this affection in their detail are shown in Song of Solomon 5. The loved one is awakened by the voice and the knocking of the beloved in verse 2. It is however only when his hand comes through the hole of the door, that with the heart moved, she opens the door, and in view of his sudden withdrawal, issues in search of him; verse 6.

The watchmen are encountered and then the daughters of Jerusalem; both presenting different aspects of that privileged but formal circle. This is indicated by the wounding of verse 7, and by the question of verse 9, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" But mark the character of truly awakened affection. Unhurt by the first, unconscious of the irony of the second, the heart simply flows out in such a description, as though all must move with her in desire after him.

This is ever so when the affections are really alive. That formal circle knew nothing of the voice calling in the night, nor of the knocking, nor of the head filled with dew and locks with the drops of the night. All this had its voice for the heart only. The rising, the myrrh upon the handle of the lock, the departure of the beloved to draw out and test affection, all this too was unknown to them. Is it not so today? The affections, of and for Christ, move ever in secret intimacies, of which those in a mere formal position know nothing. The heart truly engaged with Him, unconscious alike of the hurt and the irony, always responds in this way.

The same is seen in ever growing contrast in the New Testament. The one returning leper, the nine content with the legal rite only, speaks its word about it. John 1: 11, 12, declares it. The tender grace that

gave Paul a beloved physician, to stand with him in the face of the departing footsteps of Demas, has its own voice in our ear about it too. And in Revelation 3: 20, the Lord, outside the circle of formal privilege only, is seen standing and knocking at a closed door. He enters only when that door is opened. The glad experience follows, expressed in terms of most intimate personal communion and — Oh, the joy of it! — love is in full movement within, unaffected by the indifference and nearing apostasy of the vast formal system without.

The Song of Songs draws very close to Revelation 3: 20, in this soul-experience. In each case the door is undefined but real. Outside it in each case the same hand knocks, the

same voice calls. In each too the heart within needs arousing; for it is always true that His love precedes ours; it alone awakens ours. Although the action differs, the response too is the same; heart movement in each case, for even Laodicea may have its overcomers.

Alike too is the final outcome. "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine" is not unlike, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me," although the loved one speaks the first and the Beloved Himself the second. In each case it is responsive affection finding its own deep joy. In each case, too, the mere formal circle goes on its way unaffected.

Let us seek grace from God to be marked by reality.

THE REMNANT

J. HOUSTON.

THERE are four positions, in which God's people have stood, in their responsibility to Him: (1) in the priesthood, from Moses to Samuel; (2) under the kings, from David to the captivity; (3) in their restored position, at Jerusalem, from Ezra to the coming of Christ; (4) in the Church which now exists. In each of these positions, they have failed; and God, in His mercy and faithfulness, has spared a remnant, to bear witness of Himself. It is to the position and character of this remnant, we would draw the reader's attention.

(1) When Israel came out of Egypt, as the redeemed people of

God, they were intended to be a nation of priests. "If ye will obey . . . ye shall be unto Me," God said, "a nation of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19: 5, 6). After they sinned in worshipping the golden calf, the priesthood was restricted to Aaron and his sons of the tribe of Levi. Thus God carried out His thought of priesthood, though it was not to be expressed in a national, but reduced to a tribal and even a family character. It was the priests that led the people through Jordan; it was they that led them to battle at Jericho; it was they that maintained the order of the divinely appointed centre in Shiloh (Joshua 3: 3; 6: 4; 21: 3). In fact, at that period, it

was a priestly dispensation.

But this "holy priesthood," ordained by God, was soon degraded. We do not travel far into history to find complete failure. To quote examples: we see one Levite wandering vagrantly from the divine centre at Shiloh, the place of his service, seeking employment, and willing to accept a hireling position, in a private family, even though it involved the revolting sin of idolatry (Judges 17). We see the sons of Eli, guilty of shameful immorality, and, indeed, outrageous disorder, within the very precincts of God's holy habitation, where His name was placed (1 Sam. 2: 12-25). Such was their sin, that they caused God's people to stumble and trespass. How soon the mercenary, idolatrous and immoral conduct of the Lord's priests corrupted their office, presented public scandal and caused men to abhor "the offering of the Lord" (1 Sam. 2: 17)!

At that time, when the priesthood broke down, the remnant appeared. Elkanah, and his household, by their godly conduct, maintained the testimony of the Lord, and thus stood in the breach. "This man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh," and that when "the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there" (1 Sam. 1: 3). It baffles us to grasp how that godly man could give pure and holy worship in such a place, and in such appalling disorder, as then obtained. Defilement marred all the holy things of that holy place where God condescended to dwell in the midst of His people. But it is just in such ruin, where the remnant give testi-

mony, as salt in the corruption, and light in the darkness. This is always the **position** of the remnant. In Hannah, we see the **character** of the remnant. She was very sorrowful, as she bore the stigma of sterility, and continued in prayer and supplication to God. Her prayer was answered. Samuel was given to her; she, in turn, gave him to God. He was the saving link, as prophet-priest, between God and His people, in the transitional period, from the rejected priesthood to David.

(2) We now come to the kings. The position is changed. But the change of position did not effect a change of condition in the people. They failed under the kings, and very quickly. In fact, just as the priests failed the **first** day they functioned (Leviticus 10), so Solomon, the **first** link in the successional chain of royalty, fell into sin (1 Kings 11). This brought about the divided kingdom. Then followed a long line of bad kings, intercepted now and then by a good one, by whom God preserved a lamp to David. Evil reached the peak in Ahab, when all Israel worshipped Baal (1 Kings 16: 33). Here again the remnant came to light. Seven thousand, in Israel, did not bow the knee to Baal, nor kiss him (1 Kings 19: 18). Elijah, who prophesied then, did not know these witnesses existed. He thought he was alone. "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." This shows, God's witnesses may be contemporaneous, yet not know one another. But "the Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2: 19). This should suffice for every faithful witness in all places, and at all times. His eye is upon them; His ear open to their

cries.

(3) Now we arrive at the restored position. After the people's long servitude in Babylon, they might have shown appreciation of restored privileges by amendment of conduct. It was not so. The altar, that was raised by Ezra, and at which they worshipped with joy and gladness, was soon polluted. "Ye offer polluted bread on My altar" (Malachi 1: 7). This was the indictment addressed to the restored people at Jerusalem. Other charges are brought against them, all reflecting on their low moral state. And as the clouds of declension were gathering fast, on the unhappy people, for the last time, in the Old Testament, it was then the remnant shone, as a welcome contrast, bearing the testimony of the Lord. They are spoken of, as "they that feared the Lord" (Malachi 3: 16). God calls them His "jewels." There was nothing showy about them; nothing outwardly attractive, to draw attention to themselves. On the contrary, they were weak, poor, obscure. In such position and character, man did not esteem them as jewels. But this was of very little account, if any at all. They lived before God; bore witness of Him; and waited on Him for everything. All that is said about them, is, that they spoke to one another, and thought upon God's name. They waited for "the consolation of Israel," like Simeon; they "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," like Anna (Luke 2: 25-38). Christ was their theme, their hope, their consolation.

(4) Lastly, we have the Church. This brings us to a complete change

in dispensation. The highest privileges and blessings ever conferred on man, were conferred upon the Church. Correspondingly, man's responsibility in it reached the highest standard. When failure took place here, it assumed the worst form, because, when that which is highest is fallen, it sinks to the lowest. The gravity of responsibility is determined by the height of privilege.

The seven letters addressed to the seven churches show that responsibility in man has ended in failure. Declension began in Ephesus, and terminates in Laodicea. To the latter, Christ said, "I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 3: 16). The fact it is spurious is proof of its corruption.

The remnant appears in Thyatira, spoken of as "the rest [that is, remnant] in Thyatira." We find one also in Sardis mentioned thus: "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." If Thyatira represents Roman Catholicism, and Sardis Protestantism, as is commonly held, then there is a remnant in each of these professing bodies. This fact determines the position of the remnant; it is not in **one** church, or company, but in **two** at least, Thyatira and Sardis. It is, therefore, grossly foolish for any company of God's people today to say, or even think, "we **are** the remnant," or that "we **have** the remnant." The fact is, no eye of man can see it; for it is known only to God, who raised it up and maintains it in the very place of ruin and corruption to be a testimony to Him.

In Philadelphia, we see the character of the remnant. It has "little strength"; but it keeps Christ's word, and does not deny His name. It has no Pentecostal power, which was necessary to inaugurate the dispensation; no Pauline energy, which was necessary to raise the Church to the height of its privileges and blessings. It is at the close of the dispensation, when all is in ruins, as to testimony. In this state, it is not a question of outward power, but of love and faithfulness; and this, in sheer weakness, when patience is tried, and allowed to have its perfect work.

We are exhorted not to despise the day of "small things" (Zech. 4: 10). Again, we are warned, "seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (Jer. 45: 5). Further, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 16). Our testing today is not by violence, through persecution from without, but by sheer weakness from within. We read of "the patience of the saints"; it is in this trial of endurance the remnant testify.



"LETTER" AND "SPIRIT"

PROBABLY no people were better acquainted with the letter of Scripture than the Pharisees: but they made the spirit of it of no account. The law is fulfilled in one word: "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. 5: 14). But with all their precise splitting of the Word, they turned it simply into a weapon against their fellow men. The Lord did not spare them. (Matt. 23).

I submit that if there is anything to the distaste of the Lord today, it is this same spirit of mere knowledge, and the use of the Word technically, for the purpose of elevating the individual amongst his brethren. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." (Prov. 16: 5). Scripture is indeed a weapon. It can convict a man — arouse him to a sense of need. It can make us wise

unto salvation, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It is sharper than any two-edged sword: but it is "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6: 17). The natural man cannot wield it aright, for the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God, and "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him" (1 Cor. 2: 14). Neither will a saved man who is not in the power of the Spirit, but walking after the flesh, be profitable in the Word. "The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit" (John 6: 63). Alternatively, in Galatians 5, the first mentioned fruit of the Spirit is love, and without love nothing is profitable — we are "become as sounding brass" (1 Cor. 13: 1). One of the signs that we are passed from death to life — of the Spirit

that quickeneth — is that “ we love the brethren ” (1 John 3: 14). Now, it is love that edifies: without it, knowledge will merely increase pride. It “ puffeth up ” (1 Cor. 8: 1).

To have Scripture on our tongues, therefore, may be nothing in itself. We must rightly divide the Word of truth, by the Spirit, ministering it in the love of the brethren, that the unhindered Spirit naturally involves. It must be ministered in meekness, **even to those that oppose**, “ if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth ” (2 Tim. 2: 25). But if we minister it in pride we cannot hope for results — we are cut off from our source of strength, for “ God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble ” (1 Peter 5: 5). The word to elders is,

“ not as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock;” to the younger it is “ submit yourselves unto the elder;” to all it is, “ be subject to one another, and be clothed with humility.” But “ if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another ” . . . and that is the advice given, significantly enough, to the legal-minded brethren in Galatia.

There are seven things that are an abomination to the Lord, as we are told in Proverbs 6: 16-19. We may feel as reasonably safe from the shedding of innocent blood, the lying tongue, and the wicked imaginings, as from the false witness and the feet swift in mischief. But let us not forget also the proud look, and he that soweth contention amongst brethren. (EXTRACTED).



BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 10: 1 — 11: 10)

CHAPTER 9 closed with the fact that both Pharaoh and his servants hardened their hearts. Chapter 10 opens with a statement by the Lord to Moses that He had hardened their hearts, and thus shut them up to their doom. It furnished also the occasion for the Lord to display Himself as the God of judgment in such fashion that it would be remembered in the generations to come. Even to our day this witness stands, and it will yet be remembered until the day of grace is succeeded by the epoch of judgment. Then God will deal in His righteous judgment and

wrath not with Egypt only but with the whole earth, as is portrayed in Revelation, chapters 6 to 11 and 15, 16. Of that coming day of judgment the plagues of Egypt were a small sample.

However, such is the longsuffering of God that Moses was sent once more to Pharaoh with a remonstrance and demand that he let the people go. He is warned that, if he still refused, God would smite Egypt with swarms of locusts, and this was to happen “ tomorrow.” In the previous chapter twice did God an-

nounce a plague for **tomorrow**, thus giving at least twenty-four hours respite in view of a possible relenting on the part of Pharaoh. In contrast to this, salvation, as we know, is always presented **today**.

Locusts were well recognized as a serious plague even in those days, and the extra severity of what was coming was plainly indicated, for it would destroy all that was left in the land. The wheat and rye escaped before, but they would not escape this. Moreover while the trees of the field had been broken by the hail, they were still in leaf; they would now be stripped bare. The only way of escape was indicated: that of Pharaoh humbling himself before the Lord, and letting Israel go.

Though the locust invasion now threatened was to be of altogether exceptional severity yet such a plague was not unknown in Egypt. Hence there was remonstrance from the servants of the king, and they were so stirred as to allow themselves an unusual freedom of speech, seeing the Pharaohs of those times were regarded almost as deities. Moved by this, he recalled Moses and Aaron and proposed another cunning device, raising a question as to who should go. In reply, Moses made it quite plain that there is **no compromise** permitted when God makes His demands. The Lord claimed the people as His; men, women, children and possessions. This is an important lesson which we all have to learn. Though we are not under law but under grace, yet there are "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14: 37), and these are not issued that we may negotiate about them or compro-

mise, but that we may **obey**.

Pharaoh attempted to negotiate. He would permit the men to go and sacrifice, but all the rest should remain in his power. He knew enough of human nature to be sure that this would bring the men back under his authority. Pharaoh was a tool of the devil, who knows very well the practical working of "thou . . . and thy house" (Acts 16: 31), and wished to turn it to his own advantage. The suggestion was, Let each man go, but let him leave his house behind. But if God was to have any, He would have ALL.

This declaration moved Pharaoh to more drastic action and Moses and Aaron were simply driven from his presence, and as Moses stretched forth his rod, the Lord brought up the strong east wind on the wings of which the mighty hordes of locusts came. In the annals of the east there are plenty of records as to the havoc that is made by a bad swarm of locusts. This was a visitation so grievous that "before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such." We can imagine therefore the terrible plight into which the land of Egypt was plunged.

As a result, Moses and Aaron, who a few days before had been driven out of Pharaoh's presence, were recalled in haste. Pharaoh adopted a humble attitude, confessing he had sinned and asking for a forgiveness which should include the removal of the punishment. The Lord knew his heart, yet He listened to his plea and by a strong west wind He removed the locusts so completely that not one was left. The locusts were drowned in the Red Sea.

Not many days after Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned there too.

It now seemed as if the heart of Pharaoh had been softened, but it had not been so really. Directly the infliction was removed he reverted to his stubborn attitude of resistance. As predicted the Lord had hardened his heart. He provides us with the classic example of the sinner who defies God, but is quite prepared to adopt a humble attitude, if thereby he may avoid reaping the punishment he deserves. We have to remember this word: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28: 13). Under chastisement Pharaoh did not mind doing a little bit of confessing, but he had no idea of **forsaking** his self-willed way. The fair words he uttered in verses 16 and 17 of our chapter were merely an effort to avoid further punishment.

So, as we see in verse 21, the ninth plague was ushered in without any warning being given. Again Moses was to stretch out his hand toward heaven and there fell upon Egypt darkness of a supernatural kind. It is described as "darkness which may be felt." From this expression some are disposed to regard it as being of the nature of the hot south-west winds that do bring on Egypt great dust storms that darken the land; the wind being laden with tiny particles of sand, it can be felt. But on the other hand the expression may be a figurative one, in which the feeling about and groping in dense darkness is attributed to the darkness itself.

How it came about need not con-

cern us. It was something supernatural. It lasted for three days. It was so dense and complete that all activity stopped. Every Egyptian was isolated from his fellows in the midst of his ruined country, and none of them knew when, if ever, the visitation would end. Of all the plagues this must have been the most terrifying, because most mysterious and unprecedented. And all through the dreadful three days the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

We cannot fail to see here a pictorial representation of what we find laid down in the New Testament. Take such a passage as this: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2: 10, 11). The present-day men of the world, though refined and educated, as were the Egyptians in their day, are in spiritual darkness. Only those who are born of God, and therefore possess the divine nature, are abiding in the light.

At the end of the three days, the darkness having departed, Pharaoh was again ready to attempt a compromise. This time it was, Let all, men, women and children, go, but your flocks and herds must remain. But, as Moses pointed out, this would defeat the object of their going forth, since they would not have the wherewithal to sacrifice to the Lord. He stated again the Divine terms, in the nature of an ultimatum, "there shall not an hoof be left behind." It was the purpose of God to take His people, and every single

thing they had, clean out of Egypt.

God's purpose for us, who belong to His church today, is just the same in principle. Egypt typifies the great world-system, Pharaoh typifies the god and prince of this world. The children of Israel were to enjoy a physical deliverance: in body and in possessions they were to be free. Ours is a spiritual deliverance. We still live on earth and in the midst of the world-system, but it is the purpose of God that we be completely delivered from its enslaving power.

The uncompromising stand which Moses took on this point evidently angered Pharaoh, and his heart being still hardened of the Lord, he broke off all negotiation at this point. On God's part the ultimatum had been presented: on his part it had been rejected with a threat of death to Moses who had presented it to him. In reply to that threat Moses spoke as a prophet, and foretold in a veiled form his doom. It was not Moses who was about to die but first Pharaoh's firstborn and then himself.

As we commence to read chapter II, we realize that all God's preliminary dealings are over and the final strokes must now fall. As the preliminary judgments proceeded they increased in severity, and we are sometimes tempted to enquire why they should be necessary. We may ask: Since God knew in advance all that would transpire, why should He prolong the agony in this way? Why did He not eliminate the preliminaries and strike the final blow at once?

The answer surely is this: His

ways and judgments are always **right**, yet He so acts as to **manifest their rightness** before His intelligent creation. Being omniscient, He knew that all nine plagues would not subdue the stubborn heart of Pharaoh; but the angelic principalities and powers in heavenly places are not omniscient, nor are men upon earth. So by testing Pharaoh, and giving space for repentance as plague succeeded plague with increasing severity, no one could rightly question the final stroke when it came. The same thing may be said as to the judgments of seals, trumpets and vials of the Book of Revelation, preceding the final destruction of the power of the adversaries at the glorious appearing of Christ.

Moses therefore was prepared of God for this "one plague more," that was very soon to fall. It was to be of such a nature that panic-stricken Pharaoh would not merely let them go but hasten to thrust them out. In view of this he was to instruct the people both men and women to ask of their neighbouring Egyptians "jewels" or "utensils" of gold and silver. By this time fear and respect had been instilled into their hearts, and Moses himself had become very great in their eyes. Hence they readily yielded up all that was asked of them. It is not an uncommon thing that humbler and more simple people are impressed by the acts of God when the great ones of the earth are undiscerning.

It would appear that verses 1-3 are somewhat parenthetical, for in verse 4 we again have Moses speaking, and as verse 8 indicates, he was still in the presence of Pharaoh. What he announced as about to happen was an act of God, both in its character

and its severity, lifted far above all that had gone before. In the nine preceding plagues God had used things of His own creation in such a way as to chastise by them. But now He, the Creator, was going to step in after a personal sort: "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt."

Now if the holy and righteous God comes down thus into the midst of His fallen and sinful creatures there can be but one result. The death penalty must fall, for "the wages of sin is death." Yet even so the mercy of God is displayed, for death was not to fall upon all the Egyptians but only upon the firstborn of both man and beast. Many of us may have seen a "genealogical tree," showing the descent of some well-known family from the days of old. In such a tree the outmost twigs show the firstborn sons of the various branches of the family. Now using this as a figure, we may say that God was about to cut off all the young twigs, as a sign that His sentence of death rested upon the trees, though He would not at that moment cut down every tree.

But again there would be exemption for the Israelites, for the Lord was going to put a difference between them and the Egyptians. There was no fundamental difference between them; had there been it would not have been needful for the Lord to put a difference. Here then we have foreshadowed the "no difference doctrine" of Romans 3: 22,

23. The Israelites were sinners as the Egyptians were, and equally subject to the death sentence, and God is no respecter of persons. Hence, if God puts a difference, it must be done in a righteous manner. We have to pass on to the next chapter to discover how the difference was to be put.

In Romans 3 the "no difference doctrine" is followed by verses 24-26, which reveal the righteous basis of the justification of the believer, which puts a difference between him and the unbeliever. When we reach Exodus 12, and read of the blood of the Passover lamb, we find in type the basis of the difference that is to be put between the Egyptians and Israel.

In speaking thus Moses gave Pharaoh and his servants full and clear warning of what was impending, and his words were prefaced by, "Thus saith the Lord." Having delivered this final message with the full weight of the Divine authority behind it, he went out from Pharaoh "in a great anger," or, "in a glowing anger." It is no sin to be angry with sin, and there was in Moses merely a reflection of that which was in the heart of God.

Our chapter closes with Pharaoh brushing aside all that had been said, and for the last time but one we read of the Lord hardening his heart. His stubbornness however would only furnish further occasion for the multiplication of God's wonders in the land of Egypt.

THERE comes to each of us this word:—"Have faith in God." Difficulties there must be, but this faith will enable us to surmount them. It has been well said that confidence in God turns the steepest stairway of life into an escalator.

THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY

A. J. POLLOCK.

WHEN God instructed Moses as to the making of the Tabernacle, of which He said, "Let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25: 8), it is very striking and instructive to note how these instructions **begin**. Architects generally begin with plans for the foundation of the building to be erected. They then proceed with the walls, and finally plan the roof to cover the building, all in preparation for the housing of that for which the edifice is designed.

But in the Divine instructions for the erection of the Tabernacle, **God BEGINS where man leaves off**. This is most significant and illuminating. What then was the initial instruction in this case? It was as to the construction of the Ark, with which was incorporated the Mercy Seat.

The Ark is definitely typical of our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything in the Christian faith emanates from and depends on our Lord. There is no knowledge of God apart from Him. He is the only "Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2: 5). Apart from Him believers have nothing and are nothing. The construction of the Ark was simple, and yet typically it set forth that which presents us with the most fundamental truths connected with the Christian faith, which at the same time are profound and beyond the power of man to grasp in all their fulness.

The Ark was made of shittim wood, obtainable in the neighbourhood where the Ark was to be constructed, setting forth that our Lord must partake of our common hum-

anity (sin apart), if, as we shall see, His atoning death was necessary for the furnishing of full satisfaction to God about man's sin, so that "He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3: 26).

Our Lord alone of the Persons of the Godhead — Father, Son and Spirit — became incarnate. It is good that this most wondrous event in the history of the world should have been foretold by prophet after prophet centuries before the birth of our Lord took place at Bethlehem. It was as Man that men first saw the Lord. "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2: 16, 17).

When our Lord appeared in public testimony He arrested attention as none others had done. The reading of the four Gospels will show how He was followed by thousands, who hung on His lips, wondering at the gracious words that flowed therefrom; how Nicodemus, a ruler among the Jews, testified, "No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him" (John 3: 2); how the woman at Sychar's well said to our Lord in her wonderment, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things," and our Lord replied, "I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4: 26).

But passing wonderful that our Lord should not only be a true Man on this earth, but at the same time God — God the Son in the unity of the Godhead, “God . . . manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3: 16). This was typically set forth in the fact that the Ark of shittim wood was covered with pure gold, setting forth our Lord’s true Deity. This was strikingly set forth by the prophet Isaiah long centuries before the advent of our Lord on this earth. We read in chapter 9: 6, “Unto us a Child is born [**typically, shittim wood, humanity**], unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God [**typically, pure gold, Deity**], The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” — a title to be won by “the blood of His cross” (Colossians 1: 20). No such amazing statement is found save in the Holy Scriptures — a statement no uninspired writer would dream of making — a statement fitting in absolutely with the whole tenor of Scripture, whether in the Old Testament typically and prophetically, or in the New Testament historically.

Our Lord’s Manhood and Godhead are well illustrated in that scene on the Sea of Galilee. Our Lord was asleep in the hinder part of the fishing boat, a picture of one seeking restoration in sleep. The sudden storm descended on the sea. A great tempest arose, and the terrified disciples cried aloud, “Lord, save us: we perish” (Matthew 8: 25). Then our Lord arose, rebuked the winds and the sea, and lo! there was a great calm. Here our Lord’s Deity, though veiled, shone out before the eyes of His terrified dis-

ciples. His disciples marvelled saying, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him.” They could not find a human category in which to place Him. It was plainly their confession of His Deity.

Further instructions as to the Ark were given, “And thou shalt put into the Ark the testimony which I shall give thee” (Exodus 25: 16). By this was signified the two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments. The Commandments were hid in the ark. It could be said of our Lord as of no one else, “Thy law is within My heart” (Psalm 40: 8), and again, “Thy word have I hid in Mine heart” (Psalm 119: 11). It was a necessity, if our Lord was to die for sinners, that He must be perfectly sinless in thought, word and deed, One on whom death had no claim whatever. Here we would utter a word of caution. It is widely held by some that our Lord’s life, being so perfect, atoned for the imperfections of sinners. This could not be. Scripture states plainly: “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9: 22). If it were true that our Lord’s blameless life sufficed for our salvation, there would be no necessity for our Lord to die an atoning death. His blameless life was indeed most necessary. One flaw in it, and He could not have been our Saviour. The sacrifices on Jewish altars all emphasized that it must be by a sacrificial death that atonement could be made. It is the precious blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin (1 John 1: 7). Death was the Divine penalty for sin, and death alone can be its expiation. The offerings of old time were to be

without blemish in order to be fit for sacrifice. So with our Lord. His blameless life was necessary, if He were to die an atoning death on the cross.

But now we come to further emphasis as to this. A Mercy Seat of pure gold was to be an integral part of the Ark. This set forth the righteousness of God that must be satisfied, else there is no meeting the sinner in grace. How then are the righteous inexorable claims of Divine righteousness to be met? It is typically seen in what happened on the great day of atonement. A bullock was offered for a sin offering to make an atonement for Aaron and his house. So we read, "He shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the Mercy Seat eastward; and before the Mercy Seat shall he sprinkle of the blood, with his finger seven times" (Leviticus 16: 14). See the slab of pure gold typically demanding full satisfaction, and the blood typically furnishing full satisfaction, so that the Ark becomes a Mercy Seat, where a thrice holy God can meet a degraded sinner, and with no abating of His holiness bless the seeking sinner.

Not only so, but two cherubims of gold were modelled and with outstretched wings, covering the Mercy Seat, and looking towards each other, they typified full and complete satisfaction of Divine justice, as they gaze on the blood-stained Mercy Seat.

*"The judgment fell on Jesus' head,
'Twas in His blood sin's debt is paid;
Stern justice can demand no more,
And mercy can dispense her store."*

The blood was sprinkled **once** on

the Mercy Seat to typify God's full acceptance of the work of our Lord on the cross of Calvary — God **fully** knows and appreciates the value of the work His Son performed there. The blood was sprinkled **seven** times before the Mercy Seat, setting forth God's patience in His testimony to us of the finished work of His dear Son; and how slow we are to take it in! **Once** for God; **seven** times for us.

How gracious and helpful are these shadows on the page of the Old Testament; how glorious is the Substance, as set forth in Christ, in the New Testament. So we read in the great Gospel Epistle, "Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation [same word as Mercy Seat] through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3: 25, 26).

Much more might be written on this theme, but we have seen wondrous things typified, the spotless humanity of our Lord, the Deity of our Lord, His perfectly sinless life, His sacrificial death meeting all God's claims, and now the throne of God which would have terrified us has been made into a Mercy Seat, a place where God can meet and bless the guilty sinner, and where God can "meet" and "commune" with us (Exodus 25: 22). All this in view of the once-for-all atoning death of our Lord on the cross of Calvary, where His shed blood suffices for the believing sinner's eternal blessing.

PRIESTLY SERVICE

G. DAVISON.

BOTH Eleazer and Ithamar, the two sons of Aaron, had a share in the service of the Tabernacle, and in type their service portrays the priesthood of believers today in the House of God.

Eleazer is mentioned in the book of Numbers over thirty times, and in chapter 4 his particular function in the Tabernacle service is clearly outlined.

“And Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest, shall have the oversight of the oil for the light, and the fragrant incense, and the continual oblation, and the anointing oil, the oversight of the whole Tabernacle, and of all that is therein, over the sanctuary and over its furniture” (v. 16, New Trans.)

It is clear that he was responsible to see that all the daily needs of the Tabernacle service were supplied: oil, incense, etc. These would need to be at hand every day to keep the system in function. Upon Aaron devolved the task of dressing the seven lamps on the lampstand and lighting those lamps every evening. When he went in the morning to dress the lamps, and again at even to light them, he put incense on the golden altar. Here we have a beautiful picture of the priestly service of our Lord. We are under His care today, so that He may order our circumstances and grant us the supply of His Spirit, that during the darkness obtaining in this world, we may “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2: 15). Along with this dressing and lighting, Aaron burned the fragrant in-

cense which again reminds us of the priestly intercession of our Lord who “ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7: 25).

Now, as we read in Numbers 4: 16, Eleazar was responsible to see that these requirements were in supply: the oil for the light; the incense for the golden altar and the daily oblation, which also burned on the altar of burnt offering, all the time Aaron was in the Tabernacle, both morning and evening. These three things were all in function together. The savour of the evening oblation, the fragrant incense on the golden altar ascending, and the light shining, one in the court, and the other two in the holy place. These things typify for us the daily service of the House of God and the daily need connected with that service, if we are to be found today in the exercise of our holy priesthood in association with our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Priest over the House of God.

Ithamar was responsible for the building itself, as we may gather in the following verse.

“These are the things numbered of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, which were counted, according to the commandment of Moses, by the service of the Levites, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest” (Exodus 38: 21, New Trans.)

So in this chapter in Numbers we find him mentioned twice, in verses 28 and 33. Gershon and Marari came under his hand, that portion

of the Levites who carried the curtains, the boards of the tabernacle and the pillars of the court. In this way both Eleazar and Ithamar exercised their priesthood as we read in 1 Chronicles 24: 2, "and Eleazar and Ithamar exercised the priesthood" (New Trans.)

This brings to light another point of interest in this chapter. It seems that in the exercise of his priesthood, Eleazar was associated in the work of the Kohathites when the tabernacle was in transit, while Ithamar was associated with both Gershon and Marari. Kohath had the honour of carrying the holy vessels which speak of the personal, moral and official glories of our Lord Jesus Christ. To Gershon fell the lot of carrying the curtains, the tabernacle, and the tent, which composed the house in which these vessels — which speak of Christ — stood in their respective places before God. Then to Marari fell the lot of carrying the boards of the tabernacle and the pillars of the court, that which gave support to the curtains of the tabernacle and the hangings of the court. This speaks of what is practical, for the boards and the bars, the pillars, the pegs and the cords, were calculated to give stability to the tabernacle and the court hangings. For us this would indicate the maintenance of practical righteousness towards the world. In carrying all these vessels and materials, Kohath came under the hand of Eleazar, and Gershon and Marari under the hand of Ithamar.

Now this association of levitical and priestly service is clearly outlined for us in Numbers 8. There

we read that the Levites were given ("gifted" according to Young's Concordance), to Aaron and to his sons to do the service of the tabernacle. Does this not indicate that all true Levitical service has in view the supporting of priestly service in the presence of God? This is the real end in view of all true ministry, that worship to our God and Father and our Lord Jesus Christ may be the result obtained.

Now in attempting to give the New Testament answer to these things, we have thought that the service of Marari suggests what we may call a **practical** ministry; the service of Greshon a **doctrinal** ministry; both under the hand of Ithamar. But the service of Kohath under the hand of Eleazar a **devotional** ministry concerning the greatness and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then all would come under the hand of Aaron as the High Priest upon whose shoulders lay the responsibility to see that all was done according to the mind of God as given through Moses.

If we think then of Aaron as setting forth Christ in the presence of God today, we see in Eleazar and Ithamar his sons, the priesthood of believers who are fitted to be in association with Him and to share, under His control and guidance, in the holy and royal priesthood. So we read in the type, "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him" (Exodus 28: 1).

So today we have been called to share in the priestly service of God's spiritual system. This necessitates true priestly conditions in sanctification; and allied with this, a ministry

of all truth to instruct us in the knowledge of God. Answering to the service of Eleazer, we should see that all that is needed in a spiritual way is supplied and maintained. Like Ithamar, who was more concerned with the building, whether being carried or erected, we should see the need of rightly assembling together for the service of God, meeting according to Scripture, so that the service may go on. If then a **devotional** ministry, a **doctrinal** ministry and a **practical** ministry are maintained, right conditions will be produced in which our priestly service will go on for the present pleasure of God. It will lead us into

conscious association with our Lord and into holy liberty in the presence of God inside the veil, where we can give to our God the praise and worship of our souls. For this we have the indwelling Spirit, and thus the heavenly system may be in activity today, the grand answer to all these types.

This is but a suggestion as to these typical matters, but may this slight consideration of one of the beautiful types of Scripture lead us into a greater appreciation of our heavenly calling, and the privilege we have today of answering to it for the pleasure of our God and Father.



THE MAN OF GOD

R. THOMSON.

IN the two Epistles to Timothy, where we have the characteristic features of the last days brought to light, we have also the marks of the man of God defined — see, 1 Tim. 6: 11 and 2 Tim. 3: 17. As the coming of the Lord for His saints draws ever nearer, we behold the rising flood of evil and godlessness on the one hand, and the resources of God for His own, who are surrounded by this growing infidelity, on the other.

The term "Man of God" is used in the Old Testament Scriptures of such servants and prophets as Moses, Elijah and Elisha; marking them out as men raised up of God to perform definite service for Him in connection with His people. These men of godly character and purpose are

brought to light in times of crisis and testing, bringing from God the word of encouragement, exhortation or rebuke in its season.

In the New Testament, "Man of God" is only mentioned on these two occasions, and both are addressed by Paul to Timothy. In the first, the exhortation is for his guidance as to holy behaviour in connection with the house of God, which is the pillar and base of the truth. Things are looked at here as in a state of order, where godliness is the becoming character of the saints of God.

In the second, however, wickedness in relation to the things of God is more pronounced; evil teaching and opposition to the truth are evils

to be shunned and refused. It is here where the man of God appears, perfected and completely furnished unto all good works by the knowledge and application of the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God.

The work of the adversary has always been such as to corrupt and pervert the Scriptures of truth, to deny their divine authority and power as breathed of God. Thanks be to God, regardless of the open or treacherous attacks upon His word, He has preserved it to us in all its completeness for our instruction in righteousness, and the maintenance of the truth of the testimony. Thus equipped by the knowledge of the word in the power of the Holy Spirit, the man of God maintains the outline of sound words, and is enabled to stand for God and the truth in a day of adversity and opposition.

Such men are very much needed today, who are prepared to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; to be wholehearted in meditation upon the Scriptures, that personal profiting might appear unto all. Writing to young men in 1 John 2: 14, the Apostle says, "Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."

What delightful credits to be given to any young man — **but they must be earned!** Let us have the desire to go in for these things; to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed,

rightly dividing the word of truth.

Jeremiah, in the day of his peculiar testing, said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15: 16). There has to be the searching, finding and appropriating of the word, to experience this rejoicing of heart.

The Psalmist asked the very important question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" Immediately he furnished the answer, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." He himself rejoiced at the word of God "as one that findeth great spoil."

Job in his sore affliction said, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth, more than my necessary food" (Job 23: 12). Thus he was sustained and his faith strengthened in the God of resurrection. Even so today the man of God is refreshed and equipped for the testimony.

Finally, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples in view of fruit-bearing, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15: 7). In His prayer to the Father for them, He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17: 16, 17).

Let us earnestly seek to be men of God, furnished by the word of God, spiritually strong and able to stand for the testimony of the Lord in an evil day.

To have the words of our Lord abiding in us, filling our hearts and controlling our lives, is what He desires for us. But how shall they abide in us except we give ourselves to the reading and study of the Scriptures?

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTER 12: 1-36)

WHEN Pharaoh heard Moses speak the words, commencing with, "Thus saith the Lord," as recorded in chapter 11, he was listening to the voice of God for the last time, though doubtless he did not know it. The preliminary judgments had run their course. The time for talking was over. Decisive action was now to start. Chapter 12 begins with the Lord speaking to Moses, but all, that He now has to say, concerns the people, whom He had chosen as His own.

There was now to take place an event of an epoch-making character. This is indicated in verse 2. By it the Jewish calendar was to be entirely recast. They had, and still have, their reckoning on a secular basis, since their New Year 5712 fell on October 1st, last. Now, however, their reckoning, in the Divine estimation, was to begin in the month of the Passover, which comes, as we know, in our spring.

Here we reach a point when the typical value of all that happened to them becomes very conspicuous. Reading verse 2 we have to remind ourselves that the appropriation of the death of Christ lies at the very beginning of everything for us. If we have not started there we have made no real beginning at all. What was typically represented in the Passover lies at the basis of all God's dealings with us.

In verses 3-5, our attention is centred upon the many lambs that had to be selected by the Israelites. Their number was to be determined

by the number of households, except that, when those included in a household were unusually few, two houses were to be combined. Thus early do we see that a house formed a unit in the Divine reckoning, and the principle of "Thou and thy house," is emphasized.

It was a stringent condition that the lambs selected were to be without blemish, and this was not to be determined in a hurried way, since though chosen on the tenth day they were not to be slain until the fourteenth, and hence their unblemished state carefully ascertained. The lamb was to be a faint foreshadowing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who passed through every possible test, thus displaying His perfection before He died. It is worthy of note that though the fact is made quite clear that there were **many** lambs, yet after verse 3 the word is always in the singular. It is "the lamb," or "your lamb," or, "it." So we have before us the lamb that typifies, "the Lamb of God."

On the fourteenth day between the evenings the lamb was slain, and its blood applied to the two side posts and the lintel, outside the house where they dwelt, and inside the house its flesh was to be eaten by the family. The blood marks on the door were the external witness that death had already taken place within. The eating of the flesh within the house typified the realization and appropriation of the death of the lamb by those who were sheltered by its blood.

The way in which this was to be

done, as recorded in verse 8, is very significant. It was to be roast with fire, and accompanied with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. All three details are important.

First, roast with fire, and not sodden with water. To boil is to apply the heat indirectly through the medium of water. To roast is to subject the body of the lamb to the direct fierceness of the flame, which is ever figurative of the searching judgment of God. If we are sheltered from judgment by the precious blood of Christ we are ever to digest inwardly as applying to ourselves, the fierceness of that judgment, which He endured in order to accomplish our deliverance.

Second, the bread which they were to eat with it must be unleavened. This is not the first mention in Scripture of unleavened bread for we had it mentioned in Genesis 19: 3, where it formed part of the food offered to and accepted by angels; but consistently leaven is used as a figure of sin, and its fermenting properties make it a very apt type. If we enjoy the benefits that reach us as the result of Christ bearing the judgment of our sins, then the sins for which He died, and the sin to which He died, are not to be countenanced by us. How plainly the antitype is seen in 1 Corinthians 5: 7, 8.

Third, the bitter herbs typify that inward work of self-judgment, which must ever accompany the benefits we receive. Sin and its judgment, from which we are delivered is a very bitter thing, and it is the plan of God that we should be made to realize it deeply. And let us once more emphasize that eating implies,

an inward appropriation.

Let us further notice that the lamb was to be roasted whole—"his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." There was to be no mutilation of the carcass as it was exposed to the fire. And further, in the eating of it no bone was to be broken — see verse 46 of our chapter. The force of this we see when we read John 19: 36, "A bone of Him shall not be broken." Moreover what could not be eaten was to be burnt with fire. Nothing was to be put to unholy use or left to some chance happening. Even about the type there was a sacredness that was to be observed.

And further again, they were to realize that these solemn acts to be performed were not only designed for their safety but also had a great end in view. They were going to be sheltered from the impending judgment in order that they might be delivered from the grip of Pharaoh and from the bondage of Egypt. Hence they were to eat it in the manner prescribed in verse 11. They were not to eat it reclining, as though it was an ordinary meal, but standing with staff in hand, girded for the journey and in haste, as just about to depart. The import of this we must never forget. God has sheltered us from His judgment in order that He may deliver us from Satan and from the world-system, of which he is the god and prince, and bring us to Himself. This is plainly stated in Galatians 1: 4.

The word "passover" occurs for the first time in Scripture at the end of verse 11. We are told that the Hebrew word thus translated means to pass over protectively, rather like

a bird stretching its wings over its young, and not merely the negative idea of omitting to notice when it is a question of judgment. On that fateful night Jehovah was going to smite the firstborn and execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, but, wherever the token of death was seen **on** the house, **over** it His wings of protection should be spread and the plague should not enter to destroy.

In this we may see another delightful Gospel type. In virtue of the blood of Christ the believer is clear of the judgment. But it is not merely that, righteousness having been satisfied, the believer can be exempted from judgment when the stroke falls upon the world, but rather that the very righteousness of God instead of being a **sword** to **smite** him has become a **shield** to **protect** him. This fact, when we really lay hold of it, exerts a very establishing effect upon our souls.

It is also important for us to remember that the blood of the lamb was **outside** for the eye of God. The word was, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Once the blood was there, God would not fail to see it. They had not to see the blood, but rather, knowing it was there, to rest content with the definite word of God that, since it was there, He would pass over them. The blood was for the eye of God: His word was for the ears and hearts of those within.

Verses 14-17, contain further words of the Lord, showing that what He now was instituting was not something to be observed on that particular night only, and then to be treated as having served its

purpose and to be dismissed from their thoughts. It was rather to be perpetuated as a yearly feast, so that they might never forget that their links with Egypt had been broken by God, in order that they might be brought to Himself as His own special possession. The Passover was to be followed by the feast of unleavened bread, extending over the next seven days. It was to be marked by the absence of leaven. It was to begin and end with "an holy convocation," in which no manner of work was to be done. If "no manner of work," then even the sort of work which would have been considered the most meritorious was excluded. Man's work was to be shut out, and only God's work was to be considered.

The word, "memorial" occurs in verse 14, and this describes the bearing of the Passover feast among the Jews. It guaranteed the objective reality of the basis of their deliverance from Egypt, and kept them in yearly remembrance of it. They may often have failed to observe it properly, or even observe it at all; but such was its intention. The observance of the Lord's Supper by the saints of today has, amongst other things, a similar intention, as we see in the words of the Apostle — "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11: 26). We are to shew forth, or memorialize, His death, thus establishing its objective reality for all who have eyes to see.

The Passover feast was a matter of a few hours at the most, whereas the feast of unleavened bread covered seven days. This had a typical bearing. The Passover was a

prophecy, as well as a memorial commemorating a past event. The prophecy was fulfilled in the death of Christ which, though of eternal importance, took place within a few hours. But the seven days of the unleavened bread feast set forth a whole cycle of time, as signified in 1 Corinthians 5: 8. For each believer today it covers the whole period of his life of responsibility. As long as we are in this world of sin, we are to keep clear of the "leaven," as those that are, "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" (Rom. 6: 11).

In verses 21-24, we have the record of how Moses conveyed these instructions to the people, and one or two additional features are mentioned. The blood was to be applied with hyssop, a small plant that grew freely on walls. Several times in Leviticus cedar wood and hyssop are mentioned together. Now the cedar is an emblem of majesty, and by way of contrast hyssop is an emblem of what is humble and insignificant. It was fitting that the hand that applied the blood should be covered with humility. It is when we are brought down into the dust of repentance that we are covered by the blood of Christ.

And further, those covered by the blood had to remain in the house until the morning. While judgment was falling upon the Egyptian world the firstborn were to remain safely housed beneath the blood. When the morning appeared their deliverance from Egypt became an accomplished fact. We pass through the night of this world to the brightness of the morning that is coming. Thanks be to God, the efficacy of the blood of Christ abides through-

out the night. No fresh application of it is needed.

Verses 24-27, show how Moses impressed upon the people that the Passover ritual was to be carefully observed, so that future generations might be kept in remembrance of God's work of judgment and deliverance. For the moment the people received the words, and worshipped the God who was intervening on their behalf. Verse 28 tells us that they rendered obedience to all the instructions that God had given. Obedience is always the way of blessing.

At midnight the Lord did exactly as He had said, and the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast, died by the stroke of the destroyer. Egyptian custom demanded much wailing when death occurred, so there must indeed have been a great cry in the darkness of that night. We may take it as a forecast of that "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in the "outer darkness," of which the Lord spoke three times in Matthew's Gospel.

Under this tremendous and unprecedented stroke the resistance of Pharaoh collapsed, and he conceded all that had been demanded by Moses. The Egyptian people also were urgent that the children of Israel should depart. They realized that they were all under the death sentence. There was not one house in which there was not one dead. Death indeed had been universal. In the houses of the Egyptians it was the death of the firstborn. In the houses of the Israelites it was the death of the lamb.

The fear of God now lay heavily

on the minds of the Egyptians and they were disposed to give to the people all that they asked. Hence they were laden with plenty of raiment and also with "jewels," or "utensils" of gold and silver. Their departure in such haste also helped to the fulfilling of the instructions as regards the leaven. There was no time to leaven their bread, so that any forgetfulness in this matter was

avoided. Under these circumstances they could not but eat unleavened bread for the next seven days.

These facts here recorded show how it was that the people had such an abundance of materials and of gold and silver when the time came in the wilderness to construct the tabernacle according to the word of the Lord.

OUR SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

WE need the spiritual education of the present hour. For most of us there is little persecution by the world. May it not be that "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground" (Job 5: 6), yet it is permitted in order that we may turn to God our Father and find refuge in Himself.

Danger besets us in the world lest we should forget our heavenly calling, and become earth-dwellers, settling down into some sort of nest. So we need to have our nest stirred as the eagle stirs hers, that we may learn to use our spiritual wings and rise into the sunshine of His world of everlasting blessing. "Arise ye and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted," may be His voice to us.

This life is but a chapter in our history and our eternal prosperity is before the mind of our gracious God and Father.

Earthly ease and affluence are no proof of God's favour. The path of our Lord Jesus was a path of suffering — He was the Man of sorrows, the grief-acquainted One.

As to the sorrows and trials which come upon us in our pathway, someone has quaintly said: "Every bottle of medicine from His dispensary is labelled, 'To do thee good in thy latter end.'"

So it was with Israel of old and so it is with us today, and there are no mistakes made in the ingredients compounded for our healing. The bitter ones are as necessary as the sweet. "The end" is ever before Him.

"I would not have been without that trial for a thousand worlds," cried one after a period of testing most severe. "Had I missed it I should not have known the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's care and support in the midst of my sorrow."

— EXTRACTED.

GOD'S SECRET THINGS

J. HOUSTON.

THERE are three periods that mark God's dispensational dealings with man: (1) that of the law; (2) of the prophets; (3) of the Church. The first is essentially Mosaic, and commonly called "the law of Moses"; the second began with Samuel, and ended with John the Baptist (Matthew 11: 13; Acts 3: 24); the third began at Pentecost, and will end at the rapture (Acts 2; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18). The law has to do with the earth, and an earthly people; the prophets give promises to faith, not only of earthly blessing, but also of heavenly. The Church has nothing to do with God's dealings with the earth; it is heavenly by calling, and has its citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3: 20).

The revelation, which God has given to man, in these three periods, is progressive. At the beginning, there were things He did reveal; other things He concealed. He gave light, as was suited to the particular dispensation in which He was dealing with man. As time advanced, the light increased; till, at length, the full revelation was given. It was God who spoke, in the beginning as well as at the end; but He spoke in divers **manners** and **measures** (Hebrews 1: 1), keeping His secret things for disclosure at the appropriate time.

(1) Beginning at the law period, we find the first mention of God's "secret things" in Deuteronomy 29: 29. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever,

that we may do all the words of this law." The former belonged to God, and were not known to man; the latter belonged to the children of Israel, and to their progeny, that they might do all the words of the law. Their revelation from God consisted of a law, which they had to do. It was a rule for man on earth, which made no reference to, nor gave promise of, God's secret things in heaven. It was wholly occupied with man doing things on earth. This, in brief, was the scope and character of the legal dispensation.

(2) Coming to the prophets, we see an increase of light. God's secret things become a subject of promise. Isaiah says: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (Isaiah 64: 4). It is not now a question of **doing** things that **were revealed**; but of **waiting** for things that **were not revealed**. Here lies the essential difference between the law and the prophets. Certain things were laid before man for **him** to do — this was the law. Certain things were held out to man, in promise, which he received by faith, and waited on God for **Him** to accomplish them — this was the prophets. How often it is said of the first, who lived by faith, that he **waited** on God! In fact, we find this all through the prophets. "This is our God; we have **waited** for Him . . . this is the Lord; we have **waited** for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in **His** salvation." And.

in this waiting time, they found their strength in the Lord. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 25: 9; 40: 31).

(3) When Christ came, the legal, or **doing**, period, and the prophetic, or **waiting**, period, ended. He was "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10: 4); and all the promises of God, in the prophets, were fulfilled in Him (2 Corinthians 1: 20). But the unbelieving Jews would not give up their **doing** system (the law), and receive Him, who brought it to an end; hence it was left for the remnant, who waited for Him, by faith, to receive Him. "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 believe on His name" (John 1: 11, 12). All through the Gospels, we see the unbelieving Jews clinging fanatically to their law, and rejecting Christ in all His overtures of grace; and we see the believing remnant gladly receiving Him wherever He went.

Now it was to the latter God revealed His secret things, so far as they could be known, before the advent of the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, addressing the Father, "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" (Matthew 11: 25). He calls His believing remnant "babes" because of their helplessness and inability to know anything, save what was shown them. The "wise and prudent" credited themselves with the **ability** of knowing, and the

actual **possession** of knowledge. Such need no teacher; and admit of no teacher. It is to them the Lord refers when He says: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see [that is, His babes]; and that they which see [the wise and prudent] might be made blind" (John 9: 39).

He presents the same contrast elsewhere. Of the unbelieving nation, He said: "this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." To His own (His babes) He said: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13: 15-17).

There were things which the babes could not receive while the Lord was on earth. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16: 12, 13). The Apostle Paul, referring to the same thing, and quoting the same passage we saw in Isaiah 64: 4, said: "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the

deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2: 9, 10). The Apostle Peter refers to the same thing, showing that the prophets did not know these secret things, though they prophesied of them. In like manner, the angels desired to look into them, and could not. They were only known, by the Gospel, preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1: 10-12).

It remains to show what God's secret things are. In the main, they are embodied in the mystery, "which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit . . ." (Ephesians 3: 5). Comprehensively this mystery is stated, in all its parts, in the first three chapters of Ephesians. We, the Church, composed of those called of God from among Gentiles as well as Jews, are blessed with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies, in Christ. We are, in Him, before God, holy and blameless, in love, having been predestinated to sonship, and graced in the Beloved.

Further, in this place of unprecedented and unparalleled intimacy with God, He has made known to us the mystery of His will, that, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, He will head up all things in Christ, as Man, both which are in heaven and on earth. In Him, we have an inheritance, sharing with Him as His co-heirs all He takes up as Man, which is the whole universe. We are to know by the Spirit the riches of the glory of this inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of God's power, by which He wrought

in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things under His feet, giving Him withal to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness, or complement, of Him that filleth all in all.

A fuller, more comprehensive statement of God's secret things we know not. It is the richest exposition of His grace, as proceeding from His eternal counsels, in Christ. These secret things, now made known by the Spirit, are the "unsearchable riches of Christ," which Paul preached to the Gentiles.

In the light and joy of them, in the power of the Spirit, we can understand the Apostle's earnest desire for the Church, that God would grant it, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might, by His Spirit, in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in the heart by faith, to the end, it might be able to comprehend, all saints included, what is the breadth and depth and length and height, and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, and to be filled "unto all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3: 16-21).

It is no wonder prophets and righteous men have desired to know these things. It is no marvel angels should desire to know them. The wonder and marvel is that we should have so little desire to know them, and enjoy them, when they are ours.

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE aged Simeon was told by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ, and he went by the same Spirit's guidance to the Temple. There he took the young Child in his arms, and had the ineffable blessing of seeing the Saviour of mankind, when he bowed his head in worship and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation . . . a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2: 29-32). It is not a little remarkable that Simeon mentioned the Gentiles before he alluded to Israel in his giving of thanks.

Our Lord was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and yet the first worship recorded as being rendered to Him was offered by **Gentiles**. Who were these wise men of the east? They were evidently Gentiles, earnest seekers after the light. Heaven must have taken notice of them when a star was sent to give them direction in making the distant journey. When they arrived at Jerusalem they made enquiries, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matt. 2: 2). Such an extraordinary request, and from such men, produced a great sensation. It got even to King Herod's ears, and right at the outset of our Lord's life on earth we see the bitter opposition of man's evil heart against God and His Christ. Herod himself demanded where Christ should be born. The chief priests and scribes informed him of

the prophecy of Micah, written over seven centuries before. When the wise men departed from the king, they again saw the star they had seen in their own land, and rejoiced at the sight with exceeding great joy. We can but faintly realize their feelings as the star stood over the very house where the young Child was, guiding them to a sight long centuries had waited to see.

Entering the house they saw the young Child and His mother. Falling down they worshipped Him. Was ever a babe worshipped before? Yet here before their eyes was the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace" (Isa. 9: 6). Could that Babe in His mother's arms be the Mighty God? It was so; wonderful mystery, the food of the Christian's faith.

Opening their treasures, carried from afar, the wise men presented their gifts — gold, frankincense and myrrh. We may wonder why they chose these particular gifts. Scripture puts a particular meaning upon them, and it will be profitable, if we consider it.

GOLD

In the symbolism of the Tabernacle we find gold and shittim wood mentioned again and again as surely typical of the Deity and Humanity of our Lord, the combination of

which lies utterly beyond our understanding — “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father” (Matt. 11: 27). But here the gold is by itself. Was it the acknowledgment on the part of the wise men that the Holy Babe they worshipped was GOD, and therefore they presented their gift of gold? Whether or no, it was true that “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3: 16) in the Person of the Babe they worshipped. This is the great test of all time. Do we believe that Jesus Christ came in flesh? (1 John 4: 2). Everyone, who so confesses Him, is of God.

Some will press in a one-sided way the truth of the Deity of our Lord, so as to weaken or deny His true Manhood. On the other hand, still more widely many press the Manhood of our Lord to such lengths as to deny His Deity. We do well to receive all that the Scriptures teach, and surely here we have the truth at our Lord’s very Infancy, since the wise men worshipped the Holy Child. Whom could they in their true wisdom worship but God?

FRANKINCENSE

We are very indebted to the types seen in the Tabernacle and its accompanying offerings. There we get instruction as to frankincense and its use. We read in Leviticus 2 of the meat offering, symbolical of the wonderful life of our Lord as a Man, who perfectly glorified God in all He said and did. Upon this meat offering was poured oil, typical of the Holy Spirit, in whose power Christ walked as a dependent Man on earth. Upon that was put frankincense. That caused a perfume to ascend. We wonder if the

wise men understood this, even dimly. Whether or no, frankincense stands as symbolically featuring the beautiful life of our Lord that was ever fragrant to God. And yet the type in Leviticus 2 does not take the Meat Offering by itself as complete, but leads on to the handful of its fine flour with oil and frankincense being burnt upon the altar. Indeed the beautiful life of our Lord, so fragrant to Heaven, would have only condemned us sinners, throwing our sinfulness into deeper shade by its contrast, if there had been no redeeming sacrifice at the end of that wondrous life.

The fine flour typified the perfection of our Lord’s Humanity in His every word and deed. Just as fine flour is without grit, so there was nothing uneven or faulty in Him. The oil poured upon the handful of fine flour sets forth how all in our Lord’s life was effected in the power of the Holy Spirit, whilst the handful of frankincense sets forth the fragrance of our Lord’s life, fully manifested in His atoning death. How beautifully woven together is Scripture. How any observant person can doubt its inspiration is difficult to understand. There is no book like it in the world, even as there is no Person like our Lord in His perfection and glory.

MYRRH

Unlike frankincense, which is sweet-smelling, myrrh is a bitter exudation from the bark of balsams, and it is said that bruising is needed to bring out its strength and full quality. When our Lord was crucified they offered Him wine mingled

with myrrh to deaden the pain, but our Lord refused to drink. And when our Lord was buried, Joseph and Nicodemus brought about a hundred-weight of myrrh and aloes (both bitter tasting) in which to wrap our Lord in His linen shroud. May this gift of myrrh of the wise men not have a significant meaning, even pointing to the bitter sufferings of our Lord when He wrought atonement for us on the cross?

It seems as if the three gifts of the wise men were in keeping with our Lord's Person and work. His Deity, in the gold; His Manhood, in the frankincense; His atoning death on the cross, in the myrrh. It is wonderful to see these men so seeking after God that they had the high honour of being guided from afar by a heaven-sent star to behold the Holy Infant and to worship Him. **And they were Gentiles.**

THE WALK OF A CHRISTIAN

J. J. ANNING.

WE may well consider first: Who or what is a Christian? Just to say: "A follower of Christ," leaves much unsaid, and we shall do well to go back to the Christian's past.

He was dead in trespasses and sins, without God and without hope in the world. He has been raised out of the dust, and lifted up as a beggar from the dunghill to sit among princes, to inherit the throne of glory, just as Hannah stated in 1 Samuel 2. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians reveals to us the source of this wonderful transformation:—the grace of God in all its glory and wealth, revealing love that passes all understanding.

He tells them in that Epistle of acceptance in God's beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Then follows that we are blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings in the heavens. The counsels and will of God with regard to those accepted in the Beloved are revealed, also the hope of His calling, the glory of

His inheritance in the saints and our union with the heavenly, exalted Christ as part of His body, the church, with His power for us and in us. All these are disclosed in the three opening chapters.

Naturally, the riches and glory of such grace are beyond our comprehension, hence the prayer that we may know the greatness of His mighty power for us, and the second prayer that we may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, so that, knowing the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, we may be filled with all the fulness of God. The Apostle's heart was so filled to overflowing with what God had given him to reveal to these Ephesian saints, that he concludes his prayer with worship. "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

See, then, how keenly desirous the Apostle was that the lives of those to whom he wrote should correspond to their union with a

heavenly, exalted Lord, for he devotes the rest of his letter to the importance of a walk that is worthy of all the wealth, that Divine love and grace has made ours.

First of all, in chapter 4: 1-2, our walk is to be "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." We used to be familiar in every day life with the "new rich," who made an ostentatious parade in their fresh surroundings, not only in display but also in arrogance of manner and life. For us, if we look back to our past condition, and realize even a little of what Divine grace has bestowed upon us, the effect must necessarily be to humble us, so that we walk more as our Lord walked on earth, in lowliness and meekness. So verse 17 of this same chapter emphasizes, "that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." Spiritual pride is not unknown amongst us, but it is foreign to the one who has taken His yoke and learned of Him — the "meek and lowly in heart."

Then, in the opening of chapter 5, the injunction is to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." Here we find the power for the forbearance of one another and the display on our part of His love.

Verse 8 of that chapter brings us back to what we were — "darkness." We are now "light" in the Lord. We are to "walk as children of light," for God is light, and we are to manifest His nature. Its fruit will be in goodness, righteousness and truth. In John 1, we read of

the Lord Jesus as the light of men, shining amid the darkness. He is no longer here, but God has shone in the hearts of His own for the shining forth of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). The only real light in this world's darkness is that displayed by the Holy Spirit in the children of light. Our Lord's injunction to His disciples is just as important for us today — "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16). How much does our life correspond to this purpose?

Verses 15 and 16 of this chapter give an exhortation much needed today — "Walk circumspectly . . . redeeming the time." To be circumspect is to be careful, looking all round, taking everything into account. Here surely we all fail. Though here it is connected with buying up every opportunity for fruitful work in these evil days, it surely covers our personal deportment in all circumstances, and especially in our attitude before God. Some, like the writer who was brought up in Victorian days, when respect for authority was much more marked, notice the signs of the times in the ways of professing Christians. This is often seen in lack of reverence in public gatherings for worship or prayer or ministry. No doubt the attitude is unconscious, but it does not conform to a circumspect walk.

I remember, during the first great war, when on leave, attending a meeting and being struck by the sight of young men singing hymns with hand in pocket, and lolling in a lazy manner during prayer. Being

used in those days to standing to attention, saluting officers, and otherwise being respectful to those in authority, I felt that such behaviour came far short of what was becoming in the presence of God. I mention this because others are sometimes stumbled by such behaviour.

Our walk in the world is a solemn responsibility; as we read, "He that

saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2: 6). That Divine life on earth must ever be our pattern. In His presence that which was light or unworthy was never found. If we know more intimately fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, we shall walk more worthily whilst left down here.



BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTERS 12: 37 — 14: 20)

THE latter part of chapter 12, and the whole of chapter 13, are occupied with two things. First, certain historical details concerning the actual departure of the people from Egypt. Second, the record of certain instructions, conveyed to them from God by Moses.

Verses 37-39, show us how greatly God had multiplied the people under the afflictions of Egypt. They went out about 600,000 men, whereas when Jacob went down there the number mentioned in Genesis 46: 27 is 70. They went out complete with children, flocks and herds, as verse 38 records, but also with "a mixed multitude," who presently became a source of weakness and trouble. This is a very significant statement and worthy of note.

We do not find such a thought as God having a people of His own until we come to the children of Israel in Egypt. How striking then that as soon as God takes a people for His own and calls them out of bondage to be for Himself, there

should be the intermingling of a foreign element, which helped to develop the corruption innate in the people themselves. Thus it was with Israel, and thus it has been in the history of the church.

Verses 40-42 show us the exactitude with which God keeps to His own appointed time. He had mentioned 400 years to Abraham, as we see in Genesis 15: 13. We are not told the exact point from which the calculation of the 430 years starts, but on the very day it ended the people went out of Egypt, and they are designated, "the hosts of the Lord," though to all appearance they were but a large collection of liberated slaves. That night of their deliverance they were never to forget. That it was the "selfsame day" of the Divine purpose is again affirmed in verse 51.

We have, in the intervening verses, further instructions from the Lord as to the observance of the Passover. It was to be what we may call a household feast, for all out-

side Israelite households were excluded from it. The hired servant, who might at short notice quit his job, was not regarded as of the household, whereas the bondman, who had sold himself for money, according to the regulations of chapter 21: 1-6, was considered as belonging to it, under one stringent condition, that he was circumcised.

This feast was for all Israel and none could excuse themselves from it. All were to join in this observance which kept alive the memory of the great deliverance from Egypt, while at the same time it had a prophetic value, as pointing forward to the death of Christ. This is apparent to us though in all probability the children of Israel did not know it. In the same way the intention of the Lord in instituting His supper is that all His saints should observe it; the memorial of His death on the one hand, while pointing forward to His coming on the other.

But whether the native Israelite or the servant bought with money or the stranger, all must be circumcised. This outward rite — a cutting around and off of man's flesh — pointed on to that which was effected in the death of Christ, as is shown in Colossians 2: 11. In this verse the words "of the sins," have very little manuscript authority. It should read, "putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ" (New Trans.) As Christians we are to recognize that we have put off the flesh in its totality in the death of Christ. We are "circumcised" in His "circumcision;" that is, His death.

plied to the males among the people. They had to suffer the pain and inconvenience of it; the female was regarded as circumcised in the male. In this respect also the type is a fitting one, for all the suffering entailed fell upon Christ and we are circumcised in Him. Now that the type has been fulfilled in His death, those who would merely enforce the outward rite are dismissed as the "concision," which means a mere cutting down, a lopping off, and not a complete removal. The true circumcision today are those who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, as said in Philippians 3: 2, 3. Such treat the flesh as condemned, and hence are not merely trying to lop off its more objectional habits.

Chapter 13 opens with another very important matter. In the previous chapter the firstborn had been sheltered by the blood of the lamb. They are now formally claimed by God as belonging to Him. "They are Mine," is the word, and hence Moses was to "sanctify" them; that is, set them apart for God's special pleasure and service. If we turn to Numbers 3: 40-45, we find this confirmed, but that the Levites were taken in substitution for the firstborn to do that service. This is the first mention in Scripture of sanctification as applied to persons. The previous use was in Genesis 2, when God sanctified, or set apart, the seventh day of creation. Both scriptures help to show the simple meaning of "sanctification" — "to set apart for God." It is because we are thus sanctified that practical sanctification is incumbent upon us. We have not been sheltered from judgment by the blood

The rite was one which only ap-

of Christ to set us free to please ourselves but to be for Him.

Verses 3-10 made clear to Israel that the feast of Unleavened Bread was not something to be observed just as they came out of Egypt, and then to be dismissed as done with. It was for all time, as a memorial of the great deliverance. If we had only the record in the three Gospels of the institution of the Lord's Supper, it might be thought that the bearing of that did not extend beyond the night in which He was betrayed. But the fourth record, in 1 Corinthians 11, settles the point. It is to be observed, "till He come." Israel was to "keep this ordinance in his season from year to year." We observe the Lord's Supper from Lord's Day to Lord's Day.

Verses 11-16, present another commandment to be observed in Israel, as a further reminder of how God delivered them from Egypt. All the firstborn in Israel, whether of man or beast, were to be regarded as the Lord's. That the firstborn of Israel should be linked together with the firstling of a donkey is a humbling thing, but thus it is in verse 13. The firstborn of man must be redeemed. The firstling of an ass might not be, and in that case it suffered death itself. If redeemed, it was by the death of a lamb in its room and stead, just as the firstborn were redeemed in chapter 12. Thus again do we have presented to us that redemption is made effective on a substitutionary basis.

From verse 17 we learn that the Philistines were already settled in the coastal plain of Palestine, and that they were a warlike race. Now for the pilgrim people of God war

is inevitable, but God in His compassion did not mean Israel to be faced with it within a few days of their deliverance. Hence what looked like the short and easy cut to Canaan was avoided and the longer route by the Red Sea was ordered of God. There was therefore a good reason for the longer and more difficult route, just as there are good reasons for difficult passages in the lives of saints today. Though the more difficult road had to be taken, they went under authority. Translators, it appears, have some difficulty as to the exact meaning of the word translated "harnessed," but in a general way it surely indicates that they went forth in good order as a host and not as a disorderly rabble.

We see from verse 19 how observant Moses was of the dying charge of Joseph, though uttered long before Moses was born. In this charge, as Hebrews 11 shows, the faith of Joseph expressed itself, for he knew it would be better for his bones to rest in the land in which Messiah's glory should shine than lie entombed in the elaborate and costly sepulchres of Egypt. God did not permit the desires of his faith to be overlooked.

The closing verses of the chapter record how God put before His people the visible symbol of His presence. He became their Leader in this striking way and in spite of all their subsequent failure and faithlessness did not forsake them. In the pillar of cloud He was their guide by day. In the pillar of fire He was their light by night. And what He was, He was always. What they had in this visible way we have in His word today and in

the presence of His Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14 opens with definite direction being given through Moses as to the first movement they were to make. There was nothing haphazard about this, though it led them into what seemed an impossible position. God knew exactly what Pharaoh's reaction to this move would be. Panic-stricken he had let the people go, but he was just the same Pharaoh. His heart was quite unchanged and the hour had now come for his destruction. When God hardens a man's heart his doom is fixed, and God would be honoured in the judgment of him and his hosts.

Thus it turned out in the event. The move they made, as Divinely directed, appeared to the warlike eye of Pharaoh as a colossal military mistake. They were entangled in the land, with the sea before them and the wilderness on either flank. It was so apparent that Pharaoh could not resist the temptation to have his last revenge upon them. So collecting the very flower of his formidable army, he planted his forces behind them; the obvious thing to do from a military standpoint. The children of Israel were now hemmed in by death on every side — death by drowning in front; death by wilderness starvation on the right hand and on the left; death by the sword of Pharaoh behind.

This the people saw quite clearly. They cried out to the Lord, which was right. But they also cried out against Moses, which betrayed their lack of faith. Modern discoveries of the many graves of Egypt and their treasures enable us to appreciate the

sarcastic sting in their words, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" A few days before, "the people bowed the head and worshipped" (12: 27). How different now! Immediately danger appears they betray their lack of faith and claim that they had asked to be let alone to serve the Egyptians. Here at once we see the germ of that unbelief which eventually led to their carcasses falling in the wilderness. They did die in the wilderness, not because Moses or God failed them, but "because of unbelief" (Heb. 3: 19).

Their words were a cutting blow to Moses, but his answer to them is very fine. No recrimination, but rather a word of calm faith, calculated to still their panic and assure their hearts. The people put their unbelief between themselves and the Egyptians, whereas he saw the Lord between them, and about to act on their behalf. It was not theirs to act, but to see the salvation of the Lord as He acted on their behalf.

While Moses displayed this calm faith, that may well fill us with admiration, he yet made a mistake. He bade the people to "stand still," whereas when he cried to the Lord the command was that they "go forward," and he was to act on behalf of the Lord. Their going forward was to be an act of faith by which they would appropriate the remarkable salvation that God was about to effect. If they had remained stationary, the dividing of the sea would not have delivered them.

Can we not see a striking type here? The great salvation which is ours is not something that we accom-

plish, but it is something that we appropriate in faith, and we are warned against neglecting it. By His death and resurrection Christ has wrought salvation on our behalf, and we have no hand in it. But this does not shut us up to that species of fatalism which would say that there is nothing we can do about it, and that, if we are to be saved, we shall be without any move on our part; and that if we are not going to be saved, that is final and nothing we can do will alter it. Truly only Christ can accomplish the work but it is ours to go forward in faith and receive for ourselves the benefit of what He has done. Let us endeavour to hold evenly the balance between these two sides of Gospel truth.

Moses was to act, lifting up his rod over the sea, when the Lord would carve a way through it for His people. That way would be salvation to Israel but destruction to proud Pharaoh and his host, and that in such signal fashion as to be remembered through many generations. We see in type that a way of life was to be made through the

waters of death.

Verses 19 and 20 record what we may venture to call the decisive move in this tremendous drama. The Angel of God in the pillar of cloud removed from the van of the Israelites and planted Himself between them and the pursuing Egyptians. The Angel was about to walk with them through the waters of death, but He would do so as covering their rear with the cloud of His presence. Whatever was now about to happen, no Egyptian would be able to strike a single Israelite unless he could pierce through the cloud. Before he could touch any of those who were escaping from slavery he would have to overcome God Almighty!

Was not this move then the most decisive of the whole remarkable series? It happily illustrates the great word that the Apostle wrote in Romans 8: 31, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, indeed! Who can be? Let us never lose the sense of the security and the triumph of this wonderful fact.

Man's scientific knowledge has no beneficial effect upon his morals and behaviour. It has been very aptly stated that it may give some light to them that sit in darkness, but it cannot guide their feet into the way of peace, and it can give no hope to them that are in the shadow of death.

"I will give thee the treasures of darkness" (Isaiah 45: 3).

God sometimes shuts the door and shuts us in,
 That He may speak, perchance through grief or pain.
 And softly, heart to heart above the din,
 May tell some precious thought to us again.

In the sorest trials God often makes the sweetest discoveries of Himself.

THE KINGDOM

A. J. POLLOCK.

Is there a difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God? The answer is, sometimes the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God stand for one and the same thing; but the Kingdom, whether presented as being of "Heaven," or of "God," is looked at from one of two aspects: sometimes from that of **reality** with no failure, no false profession connected with it, and sometimes from **profession** in which there is found the work of Satan, mixing evil with the good.

The following remarks will confirm this statement:—

The expression, "Kingdom of Heaven," occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew, about 30 times.

The expression, "Kingdom of God," occurs in all the four Gospels, especially in Luke, also in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles.

The context easily shows whether the terms "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God," stand for the same thing.

For instance, compare Matthew 13: 3-11 with Luke 8: 4-10, and it is clearly seen that both evangelists speak of the same thing, though Matthew speaks of "the Kingdom of Heaven," and Luke of "the Kingdom of God."

Again compare Matthew 13: 31-33 with Luke 13: 18-21, and it is clearly seen the evangelists speak of the same thing, though Matthew speaks of "the Kingdom of Heaven," and Luke of "the Kingdom of God."

But notice how in Matthew 13: 1 the Lord sits by **the seaside** and speaks to **the multitude**; whereas in verse 36 of the same chapter He dismisses the multitude, and goes **into the house** and speaks to **the inner circle** — **His disciples**. When he speaks to the multitude it is evident He presents the Kingdom of Heaven as **committed to man in responsibility**, and we find evil, too soon, alas! connected with the good — tares with the wheat — the good seed symbolizing "the children of the Kingdom," and the tares "the children of the wicked one." In a similar way we find the parable of the mustard seed, "the least of all seeds," developing from the greatest among herbs, to a tree; showing the coming in of evil pretentiousness in the things of God, as seen full blown in Rome. Lastly, we find the woman inserting leaven in three measures of meal, setting forth the introduction of evil doctrines, as seen today in the inroads of Higher Criticism, Modernism, Christadelphianism, Millennial Dawnism, Christian Science, etc.

But when we get "into the house," and hear the Lord speaking to the inner circle of His disciples, He presents three parables, all said to be of the Kingdom of Heaven, yet it is clear He only had the side of **reality** before Him, with no admixture of evil. It is a case of looking at the Kingdom of Heaven from the aspect of God's work only.

So we find the parable of the man buying the field to possess the hidden treasure — setting forth our Lord by His atoning death purchas-

ing redemption rights over the whole world. No word of "tares," or "leaven" here. Then we have the beautiful little parable of the merchant man seeking goodly pearls, finding a pearl of great price, selling all that he hath to possess it; setting forth, we believe, the way in which the Church of God finds its place in the Kingdom of Heaven during the time that Israel is set aside. Again no word of evil in this.

Finally we get the Kingdom of Heaven likened to a net gathering in fish of every kind. Here we have good fish and bad fish, but the whole occupation of the fishermen is with the good; they cast the bad away, and retain the good, and the good only. In these three cases we have the Kingdom of Heaven seen from the aspect of reality.

Mark 4: 14-20 and 26-32, as well as the passage in Luke, present parables of the Kingdom of God, which most clearly cover the same ground as Matthew 13, which refer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The following Scriptures most evidently refer to the Kingdom of God in its reality, for any work of God in that direction must be good, and only good.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6: 33).

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9: 27).

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3: 3).

"The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace,

and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14: 17).

These passages, selected out of many, clearly show the Kingdom of God — or the Kingdom of Heaven, as seen in the last three parables of Matthew 13 — viewed as God's work, which can be only good.

Finally, we find the Apostle Paul, a prisoner at Rome,

"Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28: 31).

He certainly presented the good and the good only. And it is the good that will prevail. So the day hastens on when the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God (the good only), will be in display, when our Lord shall take His rightful place as King of Israel and as the Son of Man, and shall reign over the whole earth. Well may a groaning creation wait for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8: 19).

At the same time we must not forget that the Kingdom of God does not consist of meat and drink and outward observances, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Surely Paul would lay great emphasis on this side of the Kingdom. Walking under the sway of the Holy Spirit these qualities — righteousness, peace, joy — would mark the believer. The Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, laid down clearly the moral features that should mark the believer living in a world where the King is rejected, and the Kingdom is more seen in its moral character.

So we find the one truly in the Kingdom will be poor in spirit, yet

the Kingdom is his. He will mourn and be divinely comforted; be meek and one day inherit the earth; hunger and thirst after righteousness and be filled, be merciful, pure in heart, be a peacemaker, and rejoice even in persecutions for Christ's sake.

The Kingdom aspect has the world for the sphere of activity, and teaches the Christian today how to comport himself in a Christ-rejecting scene. The assembly has God's presence as the sphere of its activity, and is heavenly in character and destiny.

HOLDING THE HEAD

J. HOUSTON.

THE relationship in which Christ stands to the Church is that of Head; and the relationship in which the Church stands to Christ is that of His body. "He is the Head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1: 18). The union thus formed is the work of the Spirit. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12: 13). Being the work of the Spirit, it is indestructible; indeed, it is unassailable by evil. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16: 18). The Church, therefore, can never be severed from Christ, the Head, in this vital and invulnerable union, happen what may within the sphere of human responsibility and failure. What a comfort to have the sure work of God on which to rest, and enjoy His unchanging love!

Though the union is perfect and inviolable, the Church, nevertheless, can easily lose the sense of it, and fail to respond practically to it, through insubjection to the Head. Hence the warning given to the Colossians about "not holding the Head" (Col. 2: 19). In point of fact, insubjection to the Head has opened the door to all the evils that have come into the Church, multiple

as they are. We do well, then, to take heed to the warning.

The case of Eve, in relation to Adam, her head, will suffice as example. She was in the place of insubjection to Adam when she yielded to temptation and fell into the transgression. So we read, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2: 14).

Since the enemy succeeded in bringing in sin through the woman, to spoil God's first creation, it is not surprising he should seek to bring in sin through the Church to spoil His new creation. In order to do his fell work of destruction, he seeks the vulnerable place. He found it in Eve; and he seeks it in the Church. Hence the concern Paul had about the Corinthians. "I fear," he said to them, "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3). So then, the enemy who beguiled Eve through his subtlety, could also beguile the Church. That is what we have to learn; and keep near to Christ for protection. Our safety always is in nearness to Him.

There is a difference between Adam and Christ; in fact, they are set in opposition, one to the other. Adam followed Eve. This was, in itself, an inversion of divine order. And he followed her into sin. Thus he became the head of a fallen race. Everything under his leadership, as originally set up by God, in first creation, was spoiled. Thus it must be; for when the head falls, all that is under it must fall with it. Now we have, in him, a fallen and groaning creation (Rom. 8: 19-23).

Christ does not follow the Church when it departs from Him, leaving its first love in that happy subject state in which it primitively stood. He remains, "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3: 14). "The beginning of the creation of God" is new creation; showing that He remains the faithful and true witness to all that God has made in it, in Him, the Head, for His eternal glory. In that new creation, under His leadership (for all things in heaven and earth are headed up in Him), the Church has its own distinctive place as His body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 23). Most happy day, when the Church will be manifested with Him in His glory! What remains for it now is to hold Him, the Head, "from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2: 19).

When God would show His earthly people the gravity of their sin in departing from Him, He invariably used the figure of a woman departing from her husband. Under this figurative language He made

strong appeals to them when they had failed in faithfulness to Him. Paul, too, uses the figure of the human relationship of husband and wife to set forth the divine relationship of Christ and the Church (Ephes. 5: 22-23). What he insists upon, for the wife and the Church, is **subjection**. Departure from this place of divine order means a virtual denial of the relationship that He has made, which, of course, brings serious and far-reaching consequences.

To explain this point clearly we would avail ourselves of the instance of the failure of Abraham and Sarah. They left Canaan, the land of promise, to sojourn in Egypt, which is a type of the world. This was, indeed, departure. On entering Egypt, Abraham sensed that the fear of God was not there. He feared that he might be slain because of his relationship to Sarah, his wife, who was "a fair woman to look upon," and likely to attract the attention of the Egyptians. He denied she was his wife; and thus exposed her to a fall into sin. Granted, she was providentially protected; nevertheless, when the relationship was denied she was placed in a false position in which she was exposed to a fall. Even Pharaoh reprovved Abraham for this misrepresentation, which might have ended in sin, and brought guilt upon that monarch and his household. As it was "the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abraham's wife" (read Gen. 12: 10-20). Now, we have in Abraham and Sarah a double type of the Church. Abraham prefigures the Church, in its denial of Christ, through fear of the world; and

Sarah shows, in figure, what happens to the Church in its exposure to a fall as result of this denial.

We find the same expediency of falsehood was practised at Gerar. On that occasion, Abimelech reproved Sarah by saying to her: "Behold, he [that is, her husband] is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved" (see Gen. 20: 16).

Sad it is, when God's people are reproved by the world for not confessing their true relationship to Christ! Humiliating it is for them, to be told by the world that their place is that of subjection to Christ! That is what is meant by the expression, "a covering of the eyes;" to be sheltered and shielded by Him, their Head, in that place of union

to Him.

In conclusion, we cannot refrain from giving the words of Paul, the minister of the Church. He said to the Corinthians: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 2). What a worthy object in ministry! He knew that Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. This love never changes. The Church is still the Church though centuries have passed, and changes have taken place. It is dear to Christ now, as it ever was, even in apostolic times. They who love Him, must have "godly jealousy" for it, and long for its presentation to Him, "as a chaste virgin." It will be with Him, the Head, in glory. May it hold Him, the Head, **now**, in view of that day!

SOME GLORIES OF OUR LORD

N. ANDERSON.

WHILST each of the Gospels gives its own presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ; viz., Matthew — the King of Israel; Mark — the steadfast Servant-Prophet; Luke — the Perfect Man; John — the Divine greatness and glory of the Son; we remember that He **is all** that He is in **each** of them. Let us consider some presentations of Him in Matthew.

In chapter 1: 1, He is the Son of David. As such the government shall be on His shoulder, and from Zion He will send forth the rod of His strength, ordering the earth according to God. But in chapter

22: 41-46, He emphasizes the fact that David's Son is David's Lord. The complex glory of His Person is here before us. A Man — yes, truly a Man — but more, He is God. Hence the prophetic word, "They shall call His name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is, God with us."

Long before, Isaiah had cried, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!" (64: 1). He pleaded for a terror-striking, judgment-executing intervention of God. Now God **had** come down, but in wondrous mercy. Hence the angelic intima-

tion, "He shall save."

But had not God before this interposed in mercy in Israel's history? Yes, assuredly. Read His words from the burning bush, as recorded in Exodus 3: 7, 8. He came down then to deliver, but it was after an impersonal sort in the pillar of cloud and fire, and as the Angel of the Lord, delegating authority to Moses and Aaron. It was even as Isaiah had said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them" (63: 9).

But now, God had visited His people of a truth for, said the angel, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." So that at once there is intimated to us the proper Deity of Jesus, as well as His true Manhood. The lowly Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the burning bush.

Then too He is presented to us as the Son of Abraham, to whom the promises were given. He shall bring to fruition every promise of God, for all the promises of God are yea and amen in Him. As Son of David He will establish God's kingdom in the earth. As Son of Abraham He will fulfil the promises to Israel, and in Him all the families of the earth will be blessed.

At the close of chapter II, we see Him as the Son of the Father, for there He addresses the Lord of heaven and earth as "Father." In that day when Israel refused Him He uses the confident language of victory. In the day of Abraham's victory Melchizedek came on the scene as priest of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and

earth; and here the Son says, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." Compare with this, John 3: 35.

Though Israel despised and rejected Him, the Father wrought in sovereign power and grace, producing a new generation, whom He speaks of as the "babes." These would receive the revelation, and treasure every precious thought of Him to the Father's praise. Yet, with all that is revealed, there is an unrevealed depth of glory in the Person of the Son; for, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." So while we worship and adore Him in the appreciation of all that has been made known, we gladly confess at the same time that there is in Him that which is beyond our finite comprehension, and defies all exposition.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame
The creature's grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend."

Then in chapter 16 He asks, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" He adopts this title when Israel's attitude of hostility and rejection becomes apparent. In chapter 8 it bespeaks His lowly path — "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." But it is also the title of His official glory for, as such, all things are put under His feet, as stated in Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2.

Men's opinions at their best extolled Him only as a servant of God, and they had in common the thought that He was only a Man. Being thus astray as to His Person, they were sure to be astray as to His work. His work is **what it is be-**

cause of **who it is**, that has done it. But Peter — one of that new generation — the “babes” — declares that **He is the Son of the living God**. Resurrection power is implied here and on this rock-confession of who He is the assembly is to be built. Death's portals must be passed before Hades' gates come into view. The Son of the living God has stooped to death, and has prevailed. Praise Him for evermore!

He is also the Christ, as Peter here confessed. This marks Him out as the Lord's Anointed, who, as the Man of God's good pleasure, will be the Head of all things in heaven and earth, and who will fill all things to the glory of God. To Peter it meant that He was the promised Deliverer, who would fulfil to Israel all that God had promised them. But Israel refused Him, and so the old must give place to the new.

In chapter 13 we read, “Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven . . . bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” The “Christ” in chapter 16 has reference to the old, and hence the injunction that follows to “tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.” On His rejection the time had come to set aside the old and reveal the **new** — all that is connected with Him as the Son of the living God.

Flesh and blood could not perceive this glory of the Lord Jesus. It lies outside the natural order. It belongs to the unseen, spiritual order and can only be apprehended as the fruit of the Father's revelation. The Son now speaks to Peter, in the consciousness of His oneness with

the Father, and gives to Him a new revelation — “I say also unto thee . . . upon this rock I will build My church.”

He has now gone from the earth by death and resurrection. But such is the Divine work that, in the very world that crucified Him, an entirely new thing has been built — His assembly. It is distinct from all that preceded it, and is that which will answer for God's pleasure to the revelation that has been made. This building is the house of God. It is here in testimony now, and will be for the manifestation of His glory in the coming Kingdom, and finally His eternal abode.

Then there is the unique relationship of the assembly to the Lord Jesus Christ, for by the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost it was constituted not only the house of God but also the body of Christ. We are united to Him the glorified Man, and “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Just as Eve was taken out of Adam, to be presented to him for an helpmeet, so the assembly is of Christ as His body, and awaits the day of presentation to Him in heaven, then to display His glory. Meantime it is here in testimony to all that has been revealed.

The assembly is the object now of Christ's affection, and as His body is to be the expression of His life in the world where He was crucified. Ere long it will radiate His glory, when, “He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day” (2 Thess. 1: 10).

May it be ours then, as forming part of His assembly, increasingly to

grow in the apprehension of His glory, that more affectionately, intelligently and faithfully we may

represent Him now, while waiting for the day when He shall fill all things.



BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(Chapters 14: 20 — 15: 27)

NOT only did the Angel of God in the cloud plant Himself between Israel and their foes, but He so ordered it that, while to the Egyptians the cloud presented itself as an impenetrable fog of darkness, to Israel it was a powerful light. Verses 21 and 22 tell us of the dividing of the sea by a strong east wind, so that there was a dry passage across, and there was a wall of water on their right hand and on their left.

Now consider the situation. Behind the very last of the host was the presence of the Almighty, like an immensely powerful searchlight — not in their eyes to dazzle them, but so placed that reflected from the glassy walls of water, it must have illumined all their way. All that night Israel walked in the light, and the foe, in spite of their swift chariots, was stumbling in the darkness. All that night too the Angel of God Himself was walking through the sea of death, and the Angel was the representative of Jehovah, as we see, comparing verse 19 of our chapter with chapter 13: 21.

We may say therefore that not only did Jehovah make the way through the sea, but He went that way Himself, and Israel went through inasmuch as they appropriated the way that He had made. Here then we clearly have the second type of the death of Christ,

that is furnished in Israel's history. The first, of course, was found in the lamb sacrificed on the Passover night, but this carries us a step further, since it typifies not only death but resurrection also.

Before we reach this point however we are shown how the Lord acted not only for His people but against their foes. For most of the night they were vainly pushing forward into the cloud of darkness, so that they were well into the midst of the sea. In the morning watch the Lord took off their chariot wheels, which must have reduced them to a crawl. Then once more they realized that the Lord was fighting against them. They would have retreated, but had lost the power to do so with any speed. When the morning appeared Moses once more stretched his hand over the sea, and it returned in its strength. The mighty walls of water collapsed upon the Egyptians to their total destruction. We can but faintly imagine what an irresistible overthrow it must have been.

The type is a very striking one. In the death of Christ, death itself has become the way of life to the believer. But only to the believer — the one who by faith appropriates the way that has been made. It guarantees the judgment of the unbeliever, for if God did not spare His Son when He became the Sin-bearer,

how shall the unbeliever be spared when he has to bear his own sins?

But the Angel of the Lord with Israel did not only go down into the sea passage in the evening: they came up out of it when the morning was come. In their coming out we see a type of resurrection. So, Jesus our Lord was not only delivered for our offences; He was also raised again for our justification. This it is that brings us into peace with God, as we see at the end of Romans 4, and beginning of Romans 5. The believer is as clear of the judgment of his sins as Christ, who once bore them, now is.

When Israel stood on the further bank of the sea and saw all their enemies dead on the shore, their doubts and fears, as to what Pharaoh and the Egyptians might do, were over. As to that, every question was settled to their peace of mind — a peace that was not theirs in Egypt, even though they were sheltered from God's judgment by the blood of the lamb.

God's work is ever marked by thoroughness. Every soul of Israel was triumphantly saved, and every Egyptian was dead on the shore for we read, "there remained not so much as one of them." Has ever an army, before or since, been so completely destroyed? We doubt it; the only possible approach to it being the case of Sennacherib's army, recorded in 2 Kings 19: 35.

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day." We do not read of Israel being "saved" as long as they were in Egypt, though they had been sheltered from judgment. Egypt typified the world and Pharaoh typified Satan, the god and prince

of the world. When clean delivered from these, Israel was said to be saved, and similarly in the New Testament salvation means not only that we have been forgiven and justified, but also delivered from the authority of Satan and from the world-system that he dominates.

In 1 Corinthians 10: 1, 2, this passage through the Red Sea is spoken of as being "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The first record of Christian baptism, as distinguished from John's baptism, is found in Acts 2. There we have Peter saying in connection with it, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Again in his first Epistle, Peter writes of baptism as that which, "doth also now save us," likening it to the passage of Noah and his family through the waters of the flood. These passages are by many looked upon as difficult and obscure, but we believe the key to them lies in what we are now pointing out. The prime thought in baptism is, in one word, **dissociation** — the cutting of the links with the old life, the old world-associations, the old slavery to the power of the of the adversary. God means His people to be delivered in this real and practical way. And when they are thus delivered He pronounces them to be **SAVED**.

The last verse of the chapter speaks of all this as "that great work which the Lord did." The people saw it and they believed; yet their belief sprang from sight, and hence later on it so easily evaporated. It was not the sort of which the Lord Jesus spoke to Thomas, when He said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20: 29). The faith

that springs from sight so largely characterized Israel all through their history, and will do so again in the coming day, as we see predicted in Zechariah 12: 10. Ours is the privilege to believe in, and love, the One whom we have not seen.

Chapter 15 opens on the note of triumph. If chapter 12 is that of **shelter** from judgment, and chapter 13 that of **sanctification** to God, and chapter 14 that of **salvation** from the foes, chapter 15 is that of the **song** of triumph. Redemption by power had been accomplished and song was the natural outcome. This is indeed the first mention of singing in Scripture, for Genesis 31: 27 only mentions songs as something that might have been, but did not take place. This first recorded song has certain clearly defined features, which we shall do well to notice.

First of all, the song had one great theme — the glory and might of Jehovah their God, as displayed in His acts of power before their eyes. It begins with Him, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." It ends with Him, "The LORD shall reign for ever and ever." Twelve times in all does His sacred Name occur in the song. Moses did not lead the people to sing about themselves, not even of their experiences of wonder and delight in all that they had witnessed. We venture to think that one of the weaknesses in our modern hymnology is the frequency with which we are led to sing about the depth of our feelings and experiences in praise and worship. It is spiritually damaging to tell the Lord in song that we praise Him "in strains of deepest joy," when as a matter of fact our joy is very

shallow, and we have never known that of which we read in 1 Peter 1: 8. Joy of that depth would reduce us to silence for it is "unspeakable." We avoid all extravagance when we celebrate the grace and glory of our Lord, for here it is impossible to exaggerate.

Secondly, though they did not sing about themselves, they did appropriate for themselves that which the Lord had done. They owned Him as their strength and salvation, in verse 2; as their Leader, their Redeemer and their Guide, in verse 13. All this He had proved Himself to be. They thankfully acknowledged Him in these things, and praised Him accordingly, confessing Him to be supreme above all the gods of Egypt that they had known, marked as He is by holiness and by powerful wonders.

Thirdly, that this deliverance was only the beginning, that He had a purpose in it, and that He would certainly carry it to fruition, completing what He had begun. The faith of Moses realized that God would overcome the opposition of Edom and Moab and bring them into Canaan, planting them in the mountain where the Sanctuary was to be established, and that they as a people would have the honour of preparing His habitation.

Moses was so sure that God would not fail of His purpose that at the end of verse 17 he speaks of the Sanctuary as something which His hands had already established. It is a fact that as soon as we view anything from the standpoint of Divine purpose questions of time become relatively insignificant. If God has purposed it, the thing is as

good as done. What an establishing fact this is!

We cannot doubt that in this song Moses spoke as a prophet and in an inspired way. It was his song at the beginning of the 40 years in the wilderness, and Deuteronomy 32 records his song at the end of the 40 years just before he died. How different is the second song! The sad deflection of the people had to come into that, though he ends it on a note of victory. In Revelation 15: 3, we read of those who had got the victory over the beast singing, "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." Singing the song of Moses, an allusion, we judge, to our chapter rather than Deuteronomy 32; they will glorify the power of God in the victory that had been given to them, whilst the song of the Lamb would indicate that they had gained the victory through weakness and apparent defeat.

Verse 19 of our chapter reiterates the completeness of the overthrow that overtook Pharaoh and his hosts, when the floods that had stood upright as an heap because congealed, were loosed and the watery walls collapsed upon their heads.

In verse 20 Miriam is mentioned as a prophetess. She and the women of Israel had their part in this jubilant praise to the Lord. Thus all Israel was as one in ascribing all the glory to God.

But how great the change of scene when we read the six verses that close the chapter. Israel had been redeemed from the bondage of Egypt and now they take their three days journey into the wilderness, a land without natural resources of

water or food. We are told that they carried some food with them out of Egypt, but water quickly became an urgent necessity. The typical significance of this is plain. To the unconverted, who know not God's redemption, the world is the scene of their pleasures and the gratification of their natural desires, and consequently it is anything but a wilderness to them. To us, who have been redeemed, it is a wilderness for it offers nothing to please or feed the new nature that now is ours.

After the three days water was found, but it was bitter and undrinkable. So the name Marah was given to it. This is the third time that the adjective "bitter" has occurred in this narrative. First the Egyptians made the lives of the Israelites bitter with hard bondage. This is recorded in chapter 1: 14. Then in chapter 12: 8, we read of "bitter herbs" with which the Passover lamb was to be eaten. Now they find bitter water in the wilderness. In this type is enforced the bitterness of sin. It enslaves into bitter bondage. If we appropriate the sacrifice of the Lamb of God it is as those who have to realize inwardly the bitterness of the judgment of death, that it entails. In the world, now turned for us into a wilderness, bitterness still meets us. Water normally would speak of refreshment and life. But the world's water becomes bitterness to us, for its sweetest joys are polluted by sin.

The people were not prepared for this, and forgot the power and goodness of God. They only saw Moses and uttered their murmurings and complaints to him. Moses, however, saw God in this emergency, and cried to Him.

At once the remedy was revealed. The Lord showed him a tree which, when cut down, was cast into the waters and they were made sweet. It was the tree that removed the bitterness and brought in the sweetness.

Here again a type confronts us. In Eden there were two living trees. By man's disobedience the fruit of the tree of knowledge became death to him, and the way to the tree of life was barred. Now we have not a living tree but a tree cut down. It was on a tree cut down that our Lord was crucified, and, as we know, "cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3: 13). But as that chapter in Galatians proceeds to show, by bearing the curse on the tree the blessing is secured for those who believe. It is the "tree" of the cross of Christ that turns bitterness into sweetness.

Let us make up our minds that in our wilderness experiences we must of necessity find much that is bitter to us on a natural basis. But as we take up the cross and follow our Lord we shall find our circumstances are transfigured, and what is bitter to the flesh becomes sweetness to the spirit.

This first wilderness experience was a landmark in Israel's history. They were tested and for the result we have to read verse 26. We meet

with that ominous "If." They were not exactly put under the law as yet, but a certain measure of probation was established and God's governmental dealing declared. They should be spared the diseases common in Egypt, **if they obeyed**. Their obedience was to be practical and not nominal. They were not only to "hearken," and "give ear," and "keep," but also to "do" what was right in the sight of the Lord. He is satisfied with nothing short of reality.

But though bitterness is found in the experiences of the wilderness, God in His mercy provides oases in it. It was thus for Israel. Passing on from Marah they came to the oasis of Elim, and here there was an ample supply by which they could rest. God acts similarly in regard to the spiritual needs of His saints. An illustration of this is seen in Acts 9: 31. Under the persecuting hand of Saul of Tarsus the churches had a "Marah" experience. But the grace of God acted in his miraculous conversion, and then for a season the churches reached their "Elim."

And God's ways with us as individuals conform to this pattern. So when we reach our "Marah" let us seek to profit by the experience; and when we are conducted to an "Elim" let us not forget to bless God for it.

Faith in Christ, as He **was** in His humiliation and resurrection, makes a man a Christian.

Faith in Christ, as He **is**, guides Christians in fellowship.

And faith in Christ, as He **shall be**, gives a hope that maketh not ashamed.

A TESTIMONY TO MOVE OUR HEARTS

The following article is translated from the Portuguese. It was written by a sister in a leper colony in Brazil, Dona Armezinda Gomes Moreira, and published in Brazil. I first met the writer when a bright young girl in her teens, a daughter of Christian parents. She married and had three children. Then she was declared to be leprous. She said a final farewell to husband, her three young children, parents and family, to see them no more on earth. After arriving in the leprosarium she went to the hospital, one mass of sores. They had not there the means of alleviating her suffering, for they lacked the necessary remedies. Then she wrote me saying that she thanked God she was better, only having lost her sight. Instead of falling into despair, she set herself to serve the Lord in that dreadful place. This article tells her secret of consolation and sustainment in her suffering and separation from her family. — W. ANGLIN.

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble [anguish]: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” (Psalm 50: 15).

DIFFICULTIES, cares and anguish are the experience of all people in some measure, and we may be certain that the above text has reference to a great number of persons. We should like to call attention to four points: (1) The day of trouble; (2) What we ought to do then; (3) What God will do in response to the appeal; (4) The end God has in view.

The Day of Trouble

Let us see first how great is the term, “The Day of Trouble.” It does not mention any special trouble. It is a great comfort, because if it specified a particular one, it might not deal with ours. The troubles and the difficulties are so diverse, and what troubles us now, may not be known to others. Perhaps someone who reads these lines may be disposed to say: “Certainly no one has suffered what I am suffering now.” Even then the text applies to the case, because it says, “The day of trouble” without specifying its nature.

Call Upon Me in the Day of Trouble

The day of trouble for many may be the day of illness. How many wish they might not pass that way. There was a time in which they could go where they wished and do as they desired. Perhaps like the Apostle Peter, once “thou girdest thyself and walkest whither thou wouldest” (John 21: 18). But now it is different. Nights of suffering and weariness are thy experience constantly. It is for thee, the day of trouble. There was a sister, although very strong, who was struck by leprosy and lost totally her sight. She has suffered frequently most horrible pains and has been for years interned in a leprosarium and blind. This verse was her comfort: “Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Leaving her husband and three beautiful children, though loving them dearly, she is now interned these 12 years in a leprosarium. Many times those who are in similar circumstances to this sister, say that they cannot under-

stand why God put them into such a position. Here is the explanation, "thou shalt glorify Me."

No one can preach a sermon like one who is suffering. Without uttering a word, one can be a living example by patience, manifesting thus the way that the grace of Christ can make anyone apt to bear everything. How will they realize this? "Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me." Not delivering thee, perhaps, from the infirmity, but giving thee even greater deliverance, that is, to be completely free of the moral effect.

But there are other tribulations and troubles, such as come from poverty, the loss of goods, or what is worse, loss of some loved one; troubles in relation to business, or a thousand other things. The trouble that comes perhaps is due to our own fault, and that at times, is worse than what may come from the sin or fault of others.

Thank God, all this is included in the **Day of Trouble**. The day of trouble is familiar in one way or another to us all. Let us pay attention to the imperative exhortation, "**Call upon Me.**" This has a double value. In the first place it is always a great relief to be able to speak to someone in our trouble, and in the second place, there is the hope of ultimate relief. It does not say how many times we have to call. The call, however, implies sincerity and an intense desire on our part. It does not say merely, "Speak to Me." At times we speak to God in a manner which shows little desire. But here it is with vehemence, "Call upon Me!" It means that

we sincerely desire the Lord to hear us.

The Psalmist says: "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me" (Psalm 138: 3). A child finds itself in danger or fear, calls his father, and does not speak in a way that no one will hear. Though God knows everything and can hear a murmur, for He reads our thoughts, His exhortation is "Call upon Me." If you have not already been relieved, continue to **call**. The relief will certainly come in some way or other, and meantime the blessing for the soul is great. You will learn more of God.

"I Will Deliver Thee."

It does not say "**perhaps** I will deliver thee. There is no doubt as to the result. Let us note that it does not say **when** we shall be delivered. At times we mark a time and if the deliverance does not come then, we are disappointed. It does not say **how**. We should like it to be this way or in that manner. When it does not happen as we **desire** we lose heart. Let us leave the **when** and **how** to Him, trusting absolutely in the certainty of the promise, "I will deliver thee."

There may be good reasons why the deliverance is delayed. You, reader, have perhaps waited for days or months or even years, and sometimes feel tempted to imagine that God has forgotten you. But He has His own time. He knows all your life, present and future. God desires that all should contribute for eternal good. Let us have a clearer idea of **life**, and not be over-occupied with this short life only. The hour of our deliverance is fixed. So

that we may say with the Apostle Paul: "I take pleasure in infirmities . . . in distresses [troubles] for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12: 10).

"Thou Shalt Glorify Me"

When God delivers us He does so in a way that glorifies Him, not only in the deliverance but afterwards. When it comes to us we learn that God works in our life by means of the trouble and by the way in which he delivers us. We learn to trust in the power and grace of God and we glorify Him.

The people of God have passed such vicissitudes, as we read of them in the Scriptures both Old and

New Testament. Still more extraordinary is the fact that the Lord Jesus suffered such anguish. Yes, the Son of God knew pain. He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53: 3). He passed a day, the blackest that we can conceive of, with a confidence and unshakable faith in God. He suffered anguish in a deeper way than it is possible for us. Yet that day of anguish produced such rich fruit (Heb. 12: 2).

What precious jewels the verse contains! The day of trouble is like a black stone placed in the centre of beautiful jewels. These shine more brightly in contrast to that.

ARMEZINDA GOMES MOREIRA.



KEEP YOUR LIGHT BURNING

IN their athletic games, the Greeks had a foot race in which speed and endurance were not the only tests. Each man at the start was given a lighted torch, and the laurel wreath of honour was given to the man who came in first with his torch alight.

Dismissing the elements of emulation and competition which are natural to the contestants, we may learn our lesson — Keep your light burning — is the message for us as Christians, and an important one in truth.

The Lord has left us here to be light for others. "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5: 14) was His word to His earliest disciples, and it is passed on to us today. His exhortation still is, "Let your light so

shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our Father is the source of all good for us and for others. His glory is to result from our lives, as men see the effect of His grace in us.

In Hebrews 11, we find the light-bearers down the centuries. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah and worthies well-known in faith and endurance. Then others, whose names are unknown to us, but "whose names are in the book of life," come before us for our instruction in that chapter.

Today the light is committed to us. May we be faithful in our trust, ever remembering that whether we live or die we are the Lord's.

CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE

E. W. DIEHL.

WE read in Genesis 1: 26, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." It was God's eternal purpose that man should be like Him, so "God created man in His own image."

But sin having come in and death by sin, man, who was created in the image and likeness of God, had now put himself at a distance from God; and when God came down to walk and enjoy His creation with His creature, he hid himself. Sin had marred God's fair creation, and God had to say, "Where art thou?" Adam said, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked." Now man's nakedness was seen, which speaks of the flesh, and now came under the judgment of the God who had created him in His own image.

Yet the blessed God could not, and would not, give up His eternal purpose that man should be like Him. There were men who gave a measure of pleasure to God such as Enoch, who walked with God, though we do not read he was like God. God had One in His thoughts, the Eternal Son who was yet to come, first of all to reveal God to man. He was, "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person" (Heb. 1: 3). This was the One who came to redeem man, whom God had made in His likeness, by His death and resurrection bringing in a new creation, so that God's purpose might be fulfilled, first in Christ, and then in men, brought into blessing through the atoning work of Christ, and then, "to be conformed to the

image of His Son" (Rom. 8: 29). So first of all we see the express Image of God in Christ, then God by His Holy Spirit working in us to the same end. While we wait for this in its fulness, Christ is to be reflected in our life now.

It is the delight of the Father to see His Son reflected in us. Oft-times it is His will that we pass through deep trial, even pain and suffering, that we may become more like Christ. Then it is good to ask ourselves the question, Why am I laid aside and passing through such pain? The refiner of gold sits over the pot, taking the dross off all the time, and looking down upon the gold so that, when the last bit of dross is taken away, he sees his face reflected in the precious metal, and the work is done. We read in 2 Corinthians 3: 18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed unto the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." We are lifted up from this scene of sin and death to view that glorious Person in the Presence of God.

"Like Thee in faith in meekness
love,
In every beauteous grace;
From glory into glory changed,
Till we behold Thy face."

We are often troubled by our own failure and breakdown, and we should feel these things much. We have part in the failure of the Church which was left here to represent Christ. The Church has sadly failed, but individual responsibility

remains, and therefore we are to reflect Christ personally. Our talk may be high, and yet our walk and ways not conformed to Him. How often we grieve the Holy Spirit by lightness and levity instead of reflecting our blessed Lord and Master in meekness, gentleness and love. Peter speaks of, "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible . . . a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

God will carry out His own purpose of grace and blessing in spite of all the evil and weakness that is in the world and in us. We shall be conformed to the image of God's Son at His coming. He will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3: 21), and again we read, "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3: 2). But God's desire is that we should be like Him now.

What a beautiful picture of this we have in Stephen, reflecting Christ as he died a martyr's death. They saw his face "as it had been the face of an angel." He was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." At the end of Acts 7 we read how he "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." As a result he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." This was indeed the Spirit of Christ, for upon the cross the Lord Jesus could say, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Stephen was conformed to the image of

God's Son in a most beautiful way.

"Lord we shall see Thee as Thou
art,
In all Thy glory there,
We shall behold Thee face to
face,
Thy glorious image bear."

Satan will try to prevent it, but may it be our deep exercise to manifest the Spirit of Christ continually, whether in the assembly, one to another, or in our home life, in business, or in all our dealings with men, showing grace and love until He comes. Thus we may reflect Him in this world which is soon to come under the judgment of a Holy God for refusing His beloved Son.

The Son of God came down into Manhood, so that we who believe may become the sons of God. This speaks of relationship, but it also brings in the thought of likeness. So, through redemption, we are not only saved from our sins and from judgment, but to be like Him, and filled with His Holy Spirit. He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The deeper our love toward Him, and the deeper our desire after Him and a closer walk with Him, the more it will help us to reflect Christ in our lives. The more we shall have grace to walk worthy of Him, and to say with the Holy Spirit, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." Then with Him, and like Him, for eternity.

"Father of glory, thought beyond
all thought,
In glory, to His own blest like-
ness brought."

SOME UNIQUE FEATURES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

G. S. HEPBURN.

The Love of God. In the synoptic gospels the only mention of God's love is when the Lord charges the Jews with passing by judgment and the love of God.

In John we have the wondrous and blessed statement that "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).

The Lord's Love for His Own. In the synoptic gospels the only mention of the Lord's personal love is in relation to the young man who declined His gracious invitation to give up all and follow Him, and went off very sorrowful, being very rich.

In John we read, "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15: 9), marvellous statement, surely. The love of the Father to the Son is infinite, measureless, and eternal, and beyond all human comprehension.

Then, "Jesus, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John 13: 1). His love for Martha, her sister and Lazarus, and His love for the evangelist himself are blessedly stated.

The Father's Love. The revelation of the Father by the Son is the principal theme of John's Gospel, and in the opening chapter we have the most blessed statement found anywhere in Scripture, "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared

Him" (John 1: 18). Again, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17: 26).

New relationships. In chapter 20 the Lord associates us with Himself as His brethren, not only as risen, but as ascended to His Father. Mary Magdalene thought to resume the old relationship, but no, — The Lord said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God.'" (John 20: 17). As His brethren we stand in the very same relationship to the Father, as He does as the risen, ascended and glorified Man.

The Father's House. This is the prospect that awaits us at the end of life's pilgrimage here, a place with the Son in that home of love and joy and infinite delight, the Father's house above.

Eternal Life. John alone speaks of eternal life as the present possession of the believer, and this he does in no uncertain language (John 5: 24).

The other Comforter, The Spirit of Truth. The Lord had a great deal to say on this subject in view of His departure to be with the Father (John 14: 15 and 16). All this and much more was fittingly disclosed by the disciple, who leaned on Jesus' bosom and lay on His breast at supper.

The Kingdom. The Lord said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3: 12). The earthly things were the New Birth, and the Kingdom of God; the heavenly things, the things we have been referring to. Even the Trans-

figuration (foreshadowing the Kingdom glory) is omitted by John, and he alone of the evangelists had witnessed it. The other three all record it, and refer to the Kingdom again and again. The only other mention of it in John is when the Lord said to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18: 36).

THE WORK OF THE LORD

THE Lord's work must ever be regarded as being beyond man's reach; and it matters not what the character of the work may be, it is all alike beyond the power of man to accomplish. It requires the same character of power to slay a bear in the desert as to slay a giant in the view of contending armies — to drop the glad tidings in the ears of a pauper by the roadside, as to proclaim it before a crowded assembly in London — to pay a visit to the other end of the street as to go to Africa as a missionary. I say, the same **quality** of power — for the power must be divine, if the thing be done to the Lord — **the measure**

may differ.

Why is there so little work done for the Lord? Why are there so few conversions? Why is there so little fellowship and true co-operation in the spirit? Is it not because we are not sufficiently simple in our way of working? Do we not lack more unaffected energy? Do we not often imagine that the Lord's work lies **there**, when in reality it lies **here**? Are we not often vaguely looking for something like eloquence, when the Lord would make use of whatever might be within our reach — like the rod that was in the hand of Moses?

Extracted from

"Present Testimony," 1849.

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

Man delights in exhibition. The testimony is simply to be lowly in heart. This is not a natural habit of the mind. In seeking to avoid display one may easily make an idol of apparent humility. There is the humility of flesh as well as the pride of flesh and they come both under the category of pride. To make an exertion to appear humble is to be proud. God resists the proud (Jas. 4: 6); He know them afar off (Ps. 138: 6); A proud heart is sin (Prov. 21: 4). The proud heart never gets near to His sanctuary. God has respect only to the lowly! Moreover pride of life is a hindrance to seeking after God (Ps. 10: 4). "The pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2: 16). The world is passing; even so must the pride of life as a constituent element of the world be passing. Its consummation will meet its end in the day of the Lord (Is. 2: 12).

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 16: 1 — 17: 16)

THOUGH a pleasant and refreshing spot, Elim was not the permanent resting place to which Israel had been called. So it had to be left behind just one month after they had come out of Egypt, since it was on the fourteenth day of the first month that the passover lamb was slain. Immediately they entered the wilderness of Sin the murmurings of the people broke out afresh.

Not water but food was now the urgent necessity. By this time doubtless all that they could have brought out of Egypt had been consumed, and in the wilderness there was no visible source of supply. Sad to say, the people were walking by sight, and though the marvels of both the passover night and the passage of the Red Sea had taken place within the month, the power of their God was completely forgotten. Only the flesh pots of Egypt were remembered, and they reproached Moses and Aaron. They saw nothing before them but death, and would have preferred it in Egypt rather than in the wilderness.

The people were not yet formally put under the law, hence the Lord at once intervened in mercy, though by the bread from heaven there would be a preliminary testing to see whether they would walk in His law when given or whether they would not. This we see in verse 4. It was made very plain to them however that their complaints were really directed against God and not against His servants, and that God would take up the challenge they had flung down.

This therefore immediately took place by the appearing of the glory of the Lord in the cloud, when He spoke to Moses, promising that by evening they should have flesh to eat and be filled with bread by the next morning. They were still being treated not on the ground of law but of grace.

The word of the Lord was fulfilled by an extraordinary flight of quails that evening in the first place. This bird is known for its migratory habits and being easy to capture, but the immense numbers of this flight settling on the camp gave a miraculous turn to the episode. Nothing more is said here as to them, but when under the law this miracle was repeated, it was followed by judgment, as we see in Numbers 11: 31-34.

Then, in the second place, there was in the morning the falling of the manna round about the host. This was a miracle not of a moment but one that continued all the wilderness journey. The miracle of the quails is dealt with in part of one verse only, but all the remainder of our chapter is occupied with details of the manna inasmuch as it is a type finding its fulfilment in Christ, as the wilderness food of His saints. The Lord's own words in John 6 make this manifest. The manna was the type, but He is the "true bread from heaven." Again He said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."

Let us notice a few features that are marked in the type. First of all, the manna fell during the quiet

hours of the night and not amidst the heat and bustle of the day. Silently and unseen by the eyes of men it fell, and only revealed itself lying on the dew when the morning was come. It is not mere fancy when it is asserted that we Christians need times of retirement and quiet that the spiritual manna may descend upon our souls.

Secondly, in appearance it was "a small round thing," so small as to be compared to the tiny particles of hoar frost. By coming down from heaven into Manhood, so that He might give His flesh for the life of the world, the Son of God did indeed make Himself small and of no account in the eyes of men. Moreover it was round, and not angular and uneven. Even so, in Christ once humbled here, there was manifest an evenness that was produced by perfection in every detail.

Thirdly, as we see in verse 31, it was like a certain seed — not a crystal, which though attractive is but lifeless matter, but a seed which has life — it was white in its purity, and in taste it had the sweetness of honey. It was not honey though when made into wafers for eating it had the sweetness of honey. In all these things we can see a foreshadowing of the purity and sweetness found in the humbled Christ, who became through His death the true seed of life for all His people.

The way in which it was to be gathered is very instructive. There was enough for all but it was to be gathered according to the capacity of the individual to assimilate it. Verse 18 reads almost as though the manna had ability to accommodate

itself to each person, so that he that gathered much had nothing over and he that gathered little had no lack. It is often said that we enjoy Christ and His grace according to our capacity and our diligence, and here we have in type the basis for such a remark.

We inserted the word, **diligence**, as well as, capacity, because of verses 19 and 20. The manna was given according to capacity and was to be assimilated up to capacity, so that none was left until the next morning. There were some who did not use diligence to eat all they gathered and, leaving it till the next day, it bred worms and stank. Thus it became worse than useless. We all know the proverb, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting" (Prov. 12: 27), but here we have the case of the slothful man who did not eat all the manna he gathered, with a very displeasing result. We may make an application of this, if we say that what we gather of Christ from the Scriptures is for our immediate food and enjoyment, and not something to be put aside for display to others. If we treat it thus it will only stink when we display it.

But every week there was one exception to this. They gathered it every morning, but on the sixth morning there was a double supply and the half could be retained so that there was no gathering on the sabbath. Before the sun waxed hot it had to be gathered. Thus from the outset God emphasized the rest of the sabbath day which was to be the sign of the covenant shortly to be established. It had been "given" for man's benefit, even from the

days of creation. But in this matter the people were careless. Some retained the manna when they should not, and some transgressed in going forth on the sabbath, expecting to find it, and they did not.

In the light of all this, how remarkable is the instruction to Moses, recorded in verses 32-34. A small pot — an omer, the tenth part of an ephah — was to be filled with manna and laid up before the Lord. In due time Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, and thus it was preserved, without stinking or breeding worms, from generation to generation and from century to century.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, as is well known, furnishes us in several places with details not mentioned in the Old Testament. Here is one of them — “the golden pot that had manna” (9: 4). It was deposited in the Ark, which was made of shittim wood overlaid with gold, speaking of the Deity and Humanity of Christ. So similarly, the manna, typifying the marvellous grace as manifested in His Humanity, as come down from heaven, was laid up before God in a golden vessel, which typified His Deity.

The promise to the overcomer of Pergamos, “to eat of the hidden manna” (Rev. 2: 17), refers to this, and indicates that the reality typified will endure for ever. When in our Lord Jesus Christ the Deity entered into Humanity and was manifested before the eyes of men, there was such a display of excellence and beauty as shall be remembered for ever. Tested, as it was, by the malignity of the adversary and the sin and sorrow of man, these things served as a dark background,

throwing its brightness into relief. It is indeed true that,

“The touch that heals the broken heart
Is never felt above,”

yet the remembrance of the gracious and powerful touch, that once did the healing, will be the worshipful joy of saints through an eternal day.

Another move forward now took place, as we learn in the opening verse of chapter 17. Rephidim was reached, and again there was an emergency. At Marah there was bitter water; here was no water at all. Again the people proved themselves to be a generation in whom was no faith, and therefore no ability to profit by their past experience of the power of God. They demand water from Moses with bitter upbraiding, so bitter as to be almost ready to stone him. Moses however, as a man of faith, knew where his resource lay, and referred the matter to the Lord.

The rod of Moses had become the symbol of the Divine authority that had been conferred upon him, and from this point we find the word used in Scripture with this significance, as, for instance, “The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou . . .” (Psa. 110: 2). There was the rock in Horeb on which Jehovah would stand, and with the rod Moses was to smite the rock.

Now, remarkably enough, this is the first mention of a rock in Scripture, and as 1 Corinthians 10: 4 tells us, “that rock was Christ.” The rock being smitten, the waters gushed forth; a clear type of the Holy Spirit, as a river of living

water flowing forth as a result of the death of Christ. Here was all the water that the people needed, furnished in grace in spite of their complainings.

We cannot refrain from a slight digression. As we read Matthew 16: 18, again we have to say, "that Rock was Christ," the Son of the living God. How great the error of those who imagine that the rock was Peter! Why, a little lower down we find Peter trapped into doing the devil's work, and wishing to hinder that smiting of the Rock in His death, that would bring to pass the flowing forth of the Holy Spirit. No adverse power can prevail against that church which is built by the Son of the living God upon Himself, the Rock, from whom proceeds the Holy Spirit of God.

But to return to our chapter, Moses saw that the people's cry of unbelief was in effect a tempting of the Lord; inviting from His hand some drastic display of His might to show that He was amongst them. The fact that He displayed His power in an act of mercy, and not one of judgment, did not alter the fact that it was a tempting. If there is one thing worse than unbelief it is self-satisfied presumption, such as we find in Micah 3: 11. At the beginning of their national history Israel **doubted** if God was amongst them, **when He was**. Towards the end of their history they were **dogmatically sure** that He was amongst them, **when He was not**, and they were ripe for judgment.

In the previous chapter we had Israel hungry and crying out for bread. In contrast to this, we find in Matthew 4, that our Lord was

tested by hunger in the wilderness, but waited on God and would not act for Himself. Now we have the people tempting God at Massah and Meribah, whereas the Lord, when faced with the second temptation in the wilderness, quoted, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In Exodus 32, we find Israel worshipping the golden calf, but in contrast to this the Lord replied to the third temptation by saying, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Israel had 40 years in the wilderness and Jesus 40 days, but He re-trod their wilderness way, and where they failed He displayed His perfection.

The closing section of chapter 17 is occupied with the record of the first fighting in the people's history. At the Red Sea they saw the Lord fighting on their behalf, and they had but to enter upon the fruits of His victory. Now Amalek appears and they have to arm themselves for the battle. Amalek was descended from Esau, the man of fleshly appetite, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright; and so he becomes very aptly a type of the **flesh**.

Now let us recapitulate a little. In type, Israel had been sheltered from judgment by the blood of the lamb, and redeemed from the world and Satan at the Red Sea. They had been miraculously fed, and now through the smitten rock the gushing water, typical of the Spirit, had been given. Immediately after Amalek, typical of the flesh, appears. How fitting all this is! We read that, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5: 17), so it is not until as believers we receive

the Holy Spirit that this conflict begins. In our unconverted days the flesh reigned supreme, and its power in our lives was unchallenged.

Many Christians are very disturbed in mind when, soon after conversion, this conflict begins within them. But at least it is a sign that they are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Now Amalek was a very subtle foe, as we discover when we read Deuteronomy 25: 18, and in our experience the flesh acts just in this way, attacking us in what we may call our weak points — though these may often be what we may fancy to be our strong ones! Now God put the sentence of death, in its extremest form, on Amalek, as we see in verse 14, just as God has "condemned sin in the flesh" in the death of Christ.

Still in this conflict Israel had to fight, but under the leadership of Joshua, the man who at the end of the 40 years was to be the captain who led them into Palestine. This is the first time we meet with his name, and from this point onwards he is presented to us as a man of faith, and consequently as a man of conflict in a variety of ways.

In this incident he is seen acting under the direction of Moses, deriving the power through him. Moses was on high; Joshua was below leading the fighting men. The fortunes of the day hung upon the intercessor on high who, being but a man, soon became weary with his hands lifted up to heaven. It is easy to discern the spiritual application of this. In our conflict today all depends upon our great Intercessor

on high. Truly the Spirit is also an Intercessor with us here below, but He is with us as "another Comforter," who represents the Man, Christ Jesus, who is out of our sight, having gone on high. The interceding hands of our great Priest on high never hang down with weariness; thanks be to God!

Amalek was repulsed and discomfited but he was not yet utterly destroyed, as he will be. The victory was a great one and commemorated by an altar, Jehovah-nissi, for the victory belonged to Him. This fact too has a voice for us. There is power for us to keep the sentence of death on the flesh, so that we do not fulfil its lust, and are preserved from doing the things that otherwise we might, but it still remains in us, though we have received the Spirit. Hence the Spirit still lusts against it from generation to generation. A time is coming when it will be blotted out from under heaven, but that time is not yet.

Even today there are to be found some who foolishly and falsely imagine that for them the flesh has been utterly blotted out, and, in those who hold it, this idea much distorts the understanding of what the flesh in its subtilty really involves. It is too often reduced into meaning only the grosser sins of the body, to the exclusion of many more refined and less obvious sins. Let us never fall into this snare, but humbly acknowledge that the flesh is not only a subtle but also an implacable foe within us, and that only as we walk in the Spirit will the victory be ours.

“THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD”

A. J. POLLOCK.

YOU cannot find the equivalent of these five words, heading this article, outside of Holy Scripture. In all the literature of the world you will find nothing like them for sublimity and wealth of meaning. As men and women born into this world, we begin with life and end in death. But here we have something quite different, not life ending in death, but life springing from death. Not only so; note carefully the word, “Firstborn,” implying there are others, who share the same life and condition. Needless to say, “The Firstborn from the dead” is our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Those associated with Him in His risen life are those, who believe in Him to the saving of the soul. We read, “He is the Head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1: 18, 19). Our glorious Head is in heaven; we, the members of His body, on earth, linked up with Him and each other by the indwelling Spirit of God. “There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4: 4).

When our first parents sinned, death was the righteous penalty — spiritual death, physical death, eternal death. Death being the penalty, nothing short of a sinless Saviour, on whom death had no claim, could “deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.

2: 15). If in nature we begin with life and end in death, in the spiritual realm we begin with Christ’s death, and find in Him the entrance into eternal life. At what a great price was this effected! Surely nothing less than the gift of God’s “only begotten Son” (John 3: 16). Apart from our Lord’s sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary, offered to and accepted by God on our behalf, no divine life could be ours.

There are two great results flowing from the death of Christ. Thus we read, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** [mercy seat] for our sins” (1 John 4: 9, 10). The first-named result of the death of Christ, life through Him, may be correctly described as **moral** cleansing; the second-named, Christ our propitiation, as **judicial** cleansing. Thus we read, “One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19: 34). “This is He that came by water and blood” (1 John 5: 6). In the first Scripture the blood and water, that flowed down from the side of a dead Christ, were literally blood and water. But in the second Scripture we find they are given a symbolic meaning, water of **moral** cleansing, blood of **judicial** cleansing.

Note carefully the order of 1 John 5: 6, just quoted. Water is men-

tioned first, and blood, second. The reason for this is plainly seen. Man is possessed of a sinful nature, of a carnal mind. This nature is not said to be **at enmity**, but that **it is enmity against God** (Rom. 8: 7), that is, it is completely irreconcilable in its very nature. That being so, nothing short of the impartation of a divine life, a life with desires after God, of truth, of holiness, will suffice. Hence the water is mentioned first. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). Then comes the mention of blood, judicial cleansing, propitiation for our sins, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). Thus the believer's state and standing are settled to God's glory and our eternal blessing. How wonderful and glorious!

It is a study of deepest interest to mark how Scriptures deal in more or less measure with the same truth, whether found in the Old or New Testaments, though the writers may be separated by centuries, with no knowledge of what each other wrote, and that without contradicting each other in the slightest degree. Surely this is one of the most impressive and conclusive proofs of the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture, the clearest demonstration of one Divine mind controlling and governing the whole outlay of Divine teaching.

An example of this comes to mind. When our Lord comforted Martha in the loss of her brother, Lazarus, saying with emphasis, "Thy brother shall rise again" (John 11: 23), she replied that she knew her brother would rise in the resurrection at the last day. How startled must Martha have been, when she heard our Lord

saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (verse 25). Note carefully the order of the words: (1) resurrection, (2) life. For resurrection there must have been of necessity death. In this order of words our Lord intimated His death. But that death had others in view. If He is the Resurrection, He must go through death, and rise again. But did our Lord stop there? No, He went on to show how His resurrection is the pledge of the resurrection of all who believe on Him. He went on to say, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall He live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (John 11: 25, 26). This truly will be fulfilled at the second coming of our Lord, when all the dead in Christ, all that are Christ's, shall be raised unto life eternal, while the saints living on the earth when our Lord comes for His heavenly saints, will never die, their bodies changed, made like to Christ's own glorious body (Phil. 3: 20, 21).

But note how this is in keeping with what we have already been pointing out. He who is "**The Firstborn from the dead,**" could say, "**I am the Resurrection and the Life.**"

Another Scripture illustration comes to mind. Some Greeks had repaired to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover. They approached Philip with the request, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12: 21). Philip told Andrew of their request. Andrew in his turn told the Lord. How did our Lord respond? He said to them, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall

into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 23, 24).

We are all familiar with our Lord's illustration from nature. The corn of wheat falling into the ground, and in dying communicating the vital germs, producing up to a hundredfold, each grain like the parent grain. But there is a contrast between the illustration and the truth illustrated. The parent grain dies in giving life, but in the case of our Lord, on completion of His atoning work on the cross of Calvary, He cried with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED," and then was buried. Did it stop there? Did He die, never to rise again? No, a thousand times No. We read, "And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 4). He gloriously triumphed over sin and death and hell. He became "the Firstborn from the dead" — "the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8: 29) — "The Resurrection and the Life."

Rising from the dead, He sent this message to His disciples, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (John 20: 17). Again we read most wonderful words, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2: 11). Could anything be grander or more wonderful? Our Lord, as a blessed risen Man, spoke of us as His brethren; His Father as our Father; His God as our God. To think that we are one with Him, and that He is not

ashamed to call us His brethren is passing wonderful. We have heard attempts made to define this wonderful oneness, but how much better to leave it as Scripture presents it. To define it is to lose the lustre of the Scripture, this complete oneness between us and the Lord is only short of His Deity, which we can never share. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1: 18).

The topstone as far as we are concerned seems to be reached in the following words, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are

COMPLETE IN HIM,

which is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2: 9, 10). These words of wondrous richness and blessing could only have originated in the very heart of the most blessed God.

Some converts, recently saved out of the abysmal wickedness of heathen idolatry, were engaged in the work of helping the missionaries in the translation of the Holy Scriptures into their own tongue. No wonder that when they came to translate such passages of Scripture as we have been considering, they could not believe that such nearness to God, and such blessings, could possibly be theirs. They conceived that the very highest approach to God would be to fall before the Saviour, and kiss the soles of His feet. To acknowledge that believers are the children of God, and complete in Christ, and all that this means, was too much for them to dare to believe. But the missionaries

insisted that these were the very words of God, that these Scriptures were inspired of God, and wonderful as surely they are, were intended to be received into our hearts. When this at last dawned on their minds they were speechless in wonder and worship. Well might it have been so.

We too may well be overwhelmed, but never let us doubt God, or belittle His statements, or

His wonderful grace, that enriches His redeemed people with such untold blessings. Our Lord is indeed

“THE FIRSTBORN FROM
THE DEAD,”

and we are blest, and,

“COMPLETE IN HIM.”

To Him be all the glory. Amen,
Amen.

THE ETERNAL SON

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.”

— Galatians 4: 4.

“Is it not strange,” a child once asked his father, “that St. Paul should tell us that our Saviour was born of a woman? Everybody that I know is born of a woman, and it is hard to see why such a thing should be mentioned as if it were remarkable.”

“Born of a woman!” Surely, there is nothing remarkable in this circumstance, if we take human life as we find it. For us men to be “born of a woman” is not merely the rule, it is a rule to which there is no known exception . . . So that we are constrained to ask why a circumstance which might have been taken for granted should be invested by the Apostle with such prominence in the case of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Surely, the real question is

whether, in His case, such a circumstance could have been taken for granted. If St. Paul mentions it thus emphatically, it is because he, at least, does not make such an assumption. If, indeed, the Christ whom St. Paul loved and served was only a son of God by grace, while by nature He was only and purely a man, then to have said that He was “born of a woman” would have been an unmeaning truism. But if, in naming Him, St. Paul is thinking of a Being whose nature is such as to make any appearance of His in this earthly sphere in a high degree extraordinary, then to say that He was “born of a woman” is to advance an assertion of startling significance.

When St. Paul says, “God sent forth His Son,” he uses the same word as when he says, “God sent forth the Spirit of His Son” (Galatians 4: 6). It is a word which does not simply describe the action of God’s providence, whereby He

places a being on the scene of created life; it implies a sending forth of one who shared the very nature of the Sender. The Son of God, whom God sent forth, and who was born of a woman, was God's Son, not by grace, but by nature; not as being begotten after a lapse of ages, but as before all worlds. God of God; the Son of God, in a sense unshared by any other, because no other or less than God the Son.

At His birth, as St. Paul says, He was "manifested in the flesh;" but whether in this passage He is called God or not, the Apostle's words at the least imply that our Lord existed before His manifestation in time. The Father "sent forth His Son, made of a woman." But the Son existed before He was sent forth: the expression is evidently chosen to imply this.

— EXTRACTED.

FROM JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY

W. KERR.

(Romans 9: 4, 5; II: II)

THE magnitude of God's salvation is such as to cause the hearts of His children to bow in wonder and adoration. "God was manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3: 16). This stupendous event, with all that was involved in it, inaugurated a new epoch in His dealings with men, and there could be no limit to the grace which flowed from it.

In the Gospel of Matthew the coming of the Lord is presented to us as relating to Israel. To them He came as Son of David, Son of Abraham: thus He answers to the true Solomon, heir to the throne of Israel, and the true Isaac, the son of promise, the heir to the land.

If we refer to Romans 9: 4 and 5, and couple with those verses Romans II: II, we may see how privileges that belonged to Israel are realized in Christianity in a far fuller way. In the first place to Israel pertains the "adoption," or sonship. In Exodus 4: 22 God said, "Israel is My son," thus intimating that His

desire was to have this people free to come near to Him, to serve Him, indeed that He might dwell with them. He delivered them from the yoke of Egypt for this purpose, but we see that while God was faithful they completely failed to answer to Him. Why was this? Because they were men in the flesh, and SIN, that lawless principle that controls the natural man, was the barrier between them and God.

But verse 5 brings before us the One who came out of Israel according to the flesh, but who is "over all, God blessed for ever." He came to deal with this condition, and in His death that which kept man from God is removed and a new generation is found capable of answering to God as His sons. For today it is written, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4: 6). So that now not only is the relationship established but there is an answer to it, begotten by the Spirit, in this cry.

Now consider the second point in our verse, "**the glory.**" We see it, overshadowing the people whom He called His sons, in connection with the tabernacle in the wilderness. But we have only to read Exodus 19 to see that they could not draw near. Hence the bounds to Sinai, that had to be set. When Christ came the glory was there, though it was veiled in His body, and He died in weakness. He was raised by the glory of the Father, and then exalted to the right hand of God. Now, glorified as Man, He has opened the glory to His own; and so, "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3: 18).

"The Spirit brings His glory nigh,
To those who for Him wait."

Next we have, "**the covenants, and the giving of the law.**" The former would carry our minds back to Abraham, with whom God made a covenant in the first place. The covenant with him was unconditional, for whether in Genesis 12: 1-3, or in Genesis 17: 1-8, the word again and again is, "I will . . ." "I will . . ." God is ever faithful to His word. Later on, in Exodus 19, when Moses made known to the people the words of God, they say, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." This was the expression of their confidence in their own self-sufficiency. Consequently we have the people put under the covenant of the law, and immediately after comes that humiliating scene — the golden calf! Truly Israel's great mistake was in failing to own that the sentence of death lay on man, as is the mistake of many in Christendom today.

Again we are directed by the Holy Spirit to the One who, in the shedding of His precious blood in death, and in His resurrection from the dead, has established the New Covenant, which is characterized not by law but by grace. Under the blessing of it we come, to be known and enjoyed by the Spirit now, and which in the day to come will fill the whole earth to God's glory.

Then in our verse we have further, "**the service of God.**" It was God's desire for Israel that they should serve Him. This we see in Exodus 4: 23, "Let My son go, that he may serve Me;" and hence the tabernacle system in the wilderness, erected for the service of God. But when the system was set up, Aaron installed, sacrifices offered, the people blessed and the glory of the Lord comes upon them — what then? Strange fire is offered and death takes place. All this shows clearly how impossible it was for that people to respond aright to what God had established — "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8: 8). Hence the necessity for the new birth, and a new man.

We can rejoice to see that all God's ways in past dispensations pointed on to the coming of the One who answered to God in all things. Not only did He fulfil all that God required in Israel, but also all that God ever looked for in man; so that the heavens could be opened upon Him and the pleasure of God in Him declared. How fitting that, after God had made such a declaration, those who were privileged to be eye-witnesses of His majesty should see no man save Jesus only. Yet He, who thus answered to God, went to the cross, and there by His death put

away sin to the glory of God and came forth in resurrection, as First-born of the new creation.

Now then, the tabernacle and temple system are set aside, and we start that which is the first thought of God in service; namely, worship in spirit and in truth. This becomes a blessed reality in those who are born again and redeemed by the blood of Christ. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4: 23). We now have boldness to enter the holiest, as we are told in Hebrews 10. Thus in the church now is experienced what was God's desire for Israel — "a people near unto Him. Praise ye the Lord" (Psa. 148: 14).

Finally, in our verse we have the **promises** pertaining to Israel. They were made to Abraham, taking in the good and pleasant land, and going out from Israel to all the nations

of the earth. This carries our minds on to the millennial reign, where by faith we see everything brought into blessing under our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, indeed, "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1: 20).

And yet there are in Christianity promises which indicate more intimately our portion as those who are partakers of the heavenly calling. There is that blessed hope of being with Himself in those heavenly scenes of endless bliss. Israel shall walk in the light of the glory, and the nations shall be blest through them, but the church shall dwell in the glory in association with Christ.

"O day of wondrous promise!
The Bridegroom and the bride
Are seen in glory ever:
And love is satisfied."



WORDS TO NO PROFIT

NOTHING can be more truly sorrowful and humbling, as regards the Lord's work at the present day, than to see dear brethren spending their time, talents, and energies in mere controversy "about words to no profit." We "lift up our eyes and look on the fields, and behold them white already to harvest;" and then, when we proceed to ask "the Lord of the harvest" to send forth more labourers, the mind instantly recurs to the thought, that at this very moment there are gifted men of God wasting time in the mere

effort to build up some theory or other, which, after all, can only tend "to the subverting of the hearers." Oh, that we could be made to feel the surpassing importance of the Lord's work in this day of need. We see deadly error spreading rapidly around us, and yet we will spend our strength in the attempt to set forth and establish speculative points. We want to live, work and preach for eternity.

Extracted from
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BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 18: 1 — 20: 11)

THE eighteenth chapter is somewhat parenthetical in its nature, inasmuch as it recounts an episode in which Moses' father-in-law played a considerable part. To get the more direct dealings of God with the people we have to read straight on from the end of chapter 17 to the beginning of chapter 19.

Jethro must have known the full story of Israel's sufferings in Egypt for Moses had dwelt with him for forty years. Now he had heard the wonderful story of their deliverance, and he came to rejoice with them, bringing Zipporah and her two sons. Only now do we learn that Moses had sent her back to her father, and what was the name of the second son.

The episode related in chapter 4 had shown us that Zipporah was not prepared for circumcision, the sign of the covenant with Abraham, and the type of the cutting off of the flesh. And, in that chapter it is "son," in the singular, which we take as applying to Gershom, previously mentioned in chapter 2. In naming his elder son Gershom, Moses revealed his consciousness of strangeness in the world where he sojourned, and the cutting off of circumcision was very appropriate in regard to that. Now the second son is mentioned, and we pass from what is negative to what is positive, since Eliezer signifies, "My God is an help." This had now been made very plain, and in these two names we find Moses saying in principle what Joseph before him had said in the names of his two sons, which

meant, "Forgetting," and "Fruitful."

Many see in this chapter a picture, though perhaps a faint one, of what will take place at the end of Israel's history. It is given to us before we turn from God's dealings with the people in grace, under the old covenant with Abraham, to the fresh covenant of law, with which chapter 19 is occupied. Let us consider this picture in its broad outlines.

In the language of Deuteronomy 33: 5, Moses was, "king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." In our chapter we find the heads of the people being selected, as Jethro counselled under God; for he only advised it, if "God command thee so." So it seems that here we have a little sample of the coming kingdom. Moses is king; the people are subject to him; the Gentile, in the person of Jethro, comes to rejoice with him and his people. Moreover his Gentile wife is there, though she had disappeared during the time when God was redeeming His people by powerful judgments, and in her we see a faint type of the church.

Further, in the men appointed as rulers under Moses we see a type of those who will reign with Christ in the day of the kingdom. This is in keeping with Daniel 7: 14 and 18, where we are told that while the Son of Man will take the kingdom as the supreme authority, the saints also will take the kingdom in that day. The men who took authority under Moses were to be, "able men, such

as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." This reminds us that the places of authority in the coming kingdom of Christ will be given to those who have approved themselves as worthy during the present time of responsibility here.

Chapter 19 opens with the people camping at the foot of Sinai in the third month after their deliverance from Egypt; and, reaching that spot, Moses was called by God to go up into the mount in order that he might receive from God and convey to the people a fresh proposal.

The people were reminded what God had done on their behalf, bringing them to Himself in His grace. They however had not responded aright. They lacked faith in God, and did not really know themselves. Would they now have their footing with God established on a legal basis? Should God's attitude towards them be governed by their attitude towards Him, so that, if they obeyed they should be in favour, and if they disobeyed they should be rejected?

In order more fully to grasp the difference between law and grace we may note the contrast between verses 4 and 5 of our chapter and 1 Peter 2: 9. In Exodus the people were to be "a peculiar treasure," "a kingdom of priests," "an holy nation," but only **if** they obeyed God's voice indeed. In Peter the Christians of Jewish nationality are reminded what **they are**, without any "if." They are not only "a royal priesthood," "an holy nation," "a peculiar people," — three things almost identical with the three things of Exodus — but they are a fourth thing, which does

not appear in Exodus. They are "a chosen generation," and that made a difference of immense import. They were a new generation of God's choice — a born-again people.

As a result of this, grace had set them in a new and wonderful position, and being this they were to show forth the praises of the One who had called them into it. In Exodus, the position of privilege before God was only to be theirs if their conduct merited it — if they obeyed. And, as we see in other Scriptures, they had to obey in **everything** and **all the time**. Hence the position was forfeited. They never had it, and on that basis they never will. Law can only say, "Do and live," whereas grace says, "Live and do."

This legal proposal was laid by Moses before the people, and their reply was promptly given, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Evidently it never occurred to their minds that they lacked both **inclination** and **power** to do what the law of God would enjoin. It is just this that both they and we have to learn. But did not God know it? That, He most certainly did.

We may wish then to ask why did God propose the law, if He knew from the outset what the result would be? This is virtually the question that Paul raises in Galatians 3: 19. He answers it by saying, "It was added because of transgressions," while they were waiting for the advent of Christ, the promised Seed. The force of this becomes clearer if we read Romans 5: 13; 7: 7-13. God gave the law to Israel that by it they might have their sinful state brought home to them. Sin

is lawlessness, and it was filling the earth from the days of the fall; but, immediately the law was given, a clear line was drawn, and stepping over that line a man became a definite transgressor. His sin could now be imputed to him in a way not possible before. God intended that in Israel definite proof should be given of the fallen and sinful state in which men were found.

Let us not forget that Israel was chosen, not only to be the central nation in God's scheme for the government of the earth under Christ, but also to be the sample nation, in whom was to be made the test as to the real state of fallen humanity. They are a nation that has sprung from the finest human specimen — Abraham, who was "the friend of God." Moreover they came into being by a miracle — the birth of Isaac. They were specially separated from the idolatrous nations and divinely educated by the voices of the prophets. Nothing could be fairer than this test of humanity in this people, who were the finest obtainable sample. We Gentiles were never put under the law, but we must never forget that, when we speak of how the law brought condemnation on Israel, we are thereby condemning ourselves.

In our chapter then, we see the people accepting the law as the determining factor in their relations with God, and doing so in the confidence that they would be able to keep it **all**. Had they had any true knowledge of themselves they would never have done this. Having accepted it, however, a complete change came over the scene. God veiled Himself and came to Moses in a thick cloud, as verse 8 tells us, and

from thence He would speak with Moses and make him His mouth-piece to the people.

Moreover, there would have to be special preparations on the part of the people. For two days they were to be set apart; they were to wash even their clothes, and bounds were to be set, preventing any from touching the mountain, under pain of death. The law was now to be given, and it was important that the people to whom it was given should be impressed with the holiness of the One who gave it.

From verse 16 to the end of the chapter we have a vivid description of the tremendous scene that took place on the third day when the law was given. The people were marshalled at the foot of the mount that they might meet with God, as far as it was possible for them to do so. On the crest of the mountain Jehovah descended in fire, heralded by thunders, lightnings, cloud and smoke, and also the loud sound of a trumpet and quakings in the earth. It must indeed have been a scene to strike terror into every heart. If we turn to Hebrews 12: 21, we discover a detail which is not mentioned in Exodus — "So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." Exodus tells us that the people trembled, but that Moses, accompanied by Aaron, went up into the mount. Hebrews tells us how he quaked as he did so.

Verse 22 shows us that there were already in Israel men who were acknowledged as priests, and in chapter 24: 5, we read of certain young men who were sent to sacrifice unto the Lord. Who these were is not disclosed, and not until we reach

chapter 28 do we find Aaron and his sons named, as to be set apart for the priest's office. What does appear clearly in our chapter is that the special privilege connected with priesthood is that of drawing "near to the Lord," and that such nearness demands sanctification in no ordinary degree.

Verses 1-17 of chapter 20 put on record the ten commandments which specially summarized the demands made by the holy law of God. The next chapter opens with the "judgments," which were to be set before them. If we turn to Malachi 4: 4, we find both "statutes" and "judgments" mentioned as well as the "law." The three words evidently cover all the legislation that reached Israel through Moses, and as we begin to consider the legislation we shall do well to note that in the days of Malachi, nearly a thousand years after it was first given, it was still as binding as at the beginning. It was for "all Israel," and valid **all through** that dispensation. What God originates at the beginning of any dispensation stands good, and He never swerves from it, however much His people may do so.

In giving the commandments God presented Himself to Israel as Jehovah, who had become in a special sense their God by having delivered them from Egypt, the house of their bondage. He addressed Himself therefore at the outset directly to the people, as verse 19 indicates.

In the first three commandments God demanded that His rights as Creator, and their Redeemer from bondage, should be respected. He

alone is God, so they were in the first place to recognize no other "god."

In the second place they were to make no attempt to have an image or material representation of any unseen power. God is "in heaven above," and anything purporting to be an image of Him is forbidden. Many other powers there are both invisible and visible, and no representations of such are to be made. All the idols of the heathen are strictly forbidden, and in this connection the warning is issued as to the sins of the fathers descending in retribution on the children. God knew how terribly infectious such idolatrous practices are; and, that if the fathers start them the epidemic rages with tenfold virulence in the children, and brings down the judgment upon their heads.

On the other hand the government of God would be in favour of those who are obedient because they love Him. Thus at the outset was it indicated that love is what is really enjoined in the law. Love is the fulfilling of the law, as we know very well.

In the third place the name of the Lord is safeguarded. Though Jehovah Himself was unseen, His Name had been manifested, and His supreme place in their midst would soon be disregarded if His Name were to be used in an unworthy way.

It is remarkable that the commandments given with the object of asserting and safeguarding the glory and the rights of God should be three, and this long before the reality of the three Persons in the Godhead was brought to light. We cannot but see in the second the clearing away

of all that would be calculated to confuse the issue when our blessed Lord Jesus appeared as "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1: 15). In Him, and in Him alone, is found the true and perfect representation of all that God is.

Similarly it is remarkable that when the Holy Spirit — who is not incarnate, but invisible — was sent forth He was sent by the Father **in the name of the Son** (see, John 14: 26). That name has to be safeguarded, and it is further to be noted that it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, who has come in that name, which is the unpardonable sin.

The fourth commandment concerns the due observance of the sabbath day, which was to be the sign of the covenant which was just being established. The first three commandments lay down man's duty in regard to God; the last six his duty in regard to his fellows. Between these two divisions stands the sign of the covenant, for it of necessity drew a clear line of demarcation between Israel, who as God's people were to observe this weekly day of complete rest, and the rest of the nations, who did not observe it.

The Gentile nations had by this time lost all knowledge of the true

God and of His work in creation. Israel alone had the knowledge of this and of the fact that God had rested on the seventh day. In the law God was enforcing His creatorial rights over man, and by Sabbath observance Israel was to have His creatorial work in constant remembrance.

We Christians are not under the law but under grace. The Sabbath, as the sign of the law covenant, has therefore lost its significance for us, as we see in such a Scripture as Colossians 2: 16. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that a rest of one day in every seven is the wise and beneficent intention of God for man. The resurrection of Christ is the seal of our faith, and hence the first day of the week, on which He rose from the dead, became the day that Christians have from the **very** beginning devoted to His worship and service, and it has become the day on which we cease from our ordinary toil. Israel's week **worked up to** the day of rest. The Christian's week **starts from** the day of rest, based upon the resurrection of Christ.

The world around us has turned it into a day of amusement, sport and sin. Let us take good care to use it aright for the glory of God and our own blessing.

About fifty years ago a well-known Christian man stated that in his judgment the chief dangers confronting the twentieth century were the preaching of: "Christianity without Christ; Forgiveness without Regeneration; Morality without God; and Heaven without Hell."

What he feared has come to pass. Let us not cease to declare the truth of God.

"THE LIKENESS OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD"

A. J. POLLOCK.

(EZEKIEL I: 4-28).

No wonder that the Prophet Ezekiel, beholding this overwhelming vision, fell upon his face to the ground. It must have been a wonderfully arresting sight! We read, "And above the firmament that was over their [cherubims'] heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it . . . **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.**"

What could this extraordinary vision portend? What was its significance? A man on a throne seen as the glory of the LORD! Not merely in the glory, but being Himself the glory of the LORD?

It waited for the New Testament to show how the vision was fulfilled in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been well pointed out, that two things stand out as stamping Christianity in a very full measure. One is, that when our Lord was here on earth, in Him GOD was here. "GOD . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . . unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1: 2, 8). "GOD was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16). "Christ came, who is over all, GOD blessed for ever" (Rom. 9: 5).

And when our Lord ascended to glory, MAN was there. Hence Ezekiel's vision. We read, "This

MAN, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10: 12). "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). So spake the angel to the disciples, as they watched their Lord ascending into heaven.

How much Ezekiel understood by the vision we cannot say, but it stands out most pre-eminently on the Old Testament page, as a peculiarly bright ray of prophetic light, illuminating the twilight of Judaism, the period of prophecy and type, both of which find their fulfilment only in the Person of our Lord.

At the time of Ezekiel's vision the children of Israel were captives in the land of Babylon, delivered by the Lord into the hands of their enemies because of their idolatrous ways. In exile the Psalmist broke out in bitter lament, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof . . . How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?" (Psalm 137: 1, 2, 4).

The manner in which in vision the glory departed is given in detail. It stands in very vivid contrast to what occurred when King Solomon dedicated the Temple at Jerusalem. We read then that, "the priests could not enter into the house of the

LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house" (2 Chron. 7: 2). In Ezekiel's day how sadly different. We read, "The glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims" (Ezek. 10: 18). The glory reluctantly and unwillingly withdrew. Next we read of the cherubims that they "stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above" (Ezek. 10: 19). Here we find the cherubims definitely leave the house of the LORD. Whither then did the cherubims proceed? We read, "And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. 11: 23). This is plainly the Mount of Olives (see, Zech. 14: 1-4, in proof). The glory in vision then left this earth, and returned whence it came.

All this, which we have been narrating, reminds us of its fulfilment in the life of our Lord upon earth. We recall the very touching and heartbreaking lament of our Lord: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate**" (Matt. 23: 37, 38).

The glory of the Lord was here on earth in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was "the brightness of His [God's] glory, and the express image of His Person" (Heb. 1: 3). In the refusal of our Lord,

the house of God was indeed left desolate. They crucified Him. He was buried. He rose triumphantly. Finally He led his disciples "as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24: 50, 51). And where was the spot from which our Lord ascended, when a cloud received Him out of the sight of His disciples? It was the Mount of Olives. In Ezekiel's vision it was the same Mount of Olives from which the glory of the LORD ascended up to heaven. Here the prophecy and its fulfilment clasp hands together. The glory had indeed departed!

It is interesting to note that amid their sorrow God would comfort the hearts of these exiles in a foreign land. "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little Sanctuary in the countries, where they shall come" (Ezek. 11: 16). Not only so, but the very next verse gives them wonderful hope for the future. "Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. . . . And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (Ezek. 11: 17, 19).

However sadly Israel might fail, the Lord does not fail. Far be the thought! Had He not promised

unconditionally to Abraham, that in His seed all nations of the earth should be blessed? Will He not be true to His own unconditional promise? Assuredly! Ezekiel is bidden to say, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy Name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went" (Ezek. 36: 22).

And when the glory returns, as it surely will; and the day is not very far off, we feel assured; how will it come? In Ezekiel's vision we read, "Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and His voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate, whose prospect is toward the east. So the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (Ezek. 43: 2-5). This will surpass Solomon's dedication of the Temple, when it is fulfilled.

And what about the fulfilment of this prophetic vision. The glory left the Mount of Olives. The glory will return to the Mount of Olives. Zechariah of old in prophetic vision saw the glory of the coming kingdom of our Lord. We read these remarkable statements, that the

LORD'S feet "shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof . . . And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea [the Dead Sea], and half of them toward the hinder sea [the Mediterranean Sea]: in summer and in winter it shall be. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name one" (Zech. 14: 4, 8, 9). Thus will the glory return to Israel. The Lord will set up His kingdom on earth. Then "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14).

Lord, we pray, hasten the day of Thy return.

* * * *

Christians have a heavenly hope, and are waiting for the second coming of the Lord to take them to **the Father's House on high**. At the same time, everything that concerns our Lord Jesus Christ concerns all His people. All that is of deep interest to our Lord, even His relation to Israel, and through them to the whole world, must be our deep interest too. Moreover we know from Scripture that the Christians of this dispensation are to be associated with our Lord in His millennial reign on the earth. This opens out a very wide subject. One can only make this intimation as we close.

THE WAYS OF THE GLORY

T. D. BELL.

It is instructive to note that generally when a special manifestation of the glory appears to men, however blessed they may be, there is sudden shock, dismay, questioning and unreadiness to respond.

Moses at the burning bush shows this. Manoah in Judges 13: 18 exhibits it and receives the rebuke, "Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret." Isaiah expresses it, "Woe is me for I am undone" (Isaiah 6: 5).

New Testament saints express it too. Peter's mistake at the transfiguration, "not knowing what he said." Saul, his face in the dust outside Damascus, shows the power of it. The resurrection morning and the women at the opened grave: "Fear not ye for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified" (Matt. 28: 5) show the presence of the same fear. Even the beloved Apostle knows this power in Revelation 1: 17, and though carried in vision into heaven, his tears witness that he does not yet understand (see Rev. 5: 4).

Why is this so constantly seen? Is it not that in each case, the glory, so to speak, leaves its own proper sphere to effect God's purpose in the moral distance of this world. A vessel to be formed for a great work, like Moses. Instruction to order for a coming deliverer, like Manoah. A prophetic testimony to be given, as with Isaiah. The message of resurrection to be carried, an apostle to be formed, and in Revelation, the rights to be declared, of the Lamb to rule over all. In all this there is distance to be bridged, moral resist-

ance to be overcome, and darkness to be enlightened; hence the apparent confusion and shock.

Instructive it is too, to note how varied but how very certain, are the ways the glory takes to effect these purposes. Lengthy reasoning as with Moses, a rebuke as with Manoah, a touch in Isaiah's case, and the servant is prepared, the vessel is ready.

As we see this it is well to remember that whatever the failure of the vessel and however public it is, the purpose of the glory is reached. Moses may fail in the wilderness, but Israel is brought through, and passes over Jordan. Delilah's knees may be the sad symbol of Samson's sin and failure, but "he judged Israel twenty years," and in his might destroyed the enemies at his death. God will bring His purposes of grace in the glory of Christ to light in each one of us, our sin and failure may govern circumstances, but the end is certain!

It is, however, in viewing those few Scriptures where we read of men being received into the glory, that we notice at once, no sign of fear, or dismay. "Enoch was not for God took him." "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." In 2 Corinthians 12, the same character appears. A man in Christ is "caught up to the third heaven." No word is here of unreadiness. The glory acting in its own proper power, without question or challenge immediately effects its purpose. Acts 7 confirms this strikingly, Stephen is about to reach the risen Christ in the glory, but through

death, and is allowed to stand, so to speak, on the fringe of the glory and tell us what He sees. No questioning or dismay, "the glory of God and Jesus" fills his whole being at that moment.

This surely is the character and power of the Church's rapture for which we wait. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," is the way Scripture presents it. How the words thrill us with that mighty manifestation of power, first "wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the

dead" (Eph. 1: 20). The dead in Christ raised, and we, the living, changed. All caught up, like Paul a man in Christ, and like Stephen, blessedly conscious only at that moment of rapture, of the glory of God and Jesus, meeting His own in the air.

It is good, surely, to accustom our hearts to such thoughts of the power, as well as the blessedness of the glory, whilst waiting for the Lord.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

J. HOUSTON.

THE Lord Jesus instituted the supper as a memorial, which we, His redeemed people, might celebrate week by week in remembrance of Him. He can never forget us; we can readily forget Him. Hence the need for us to have an ordinance by which we can, in a regular way, have Him in remembrance. It has been called a "sweet feast of love divine" by one of the Christian poets, for it appeals to our hearts in a very powerful way, and calls forth warm response to Him. His love, His intense suffering, His death, are brought before us as we sit round the symbols of His body and blood. The bread is the symbol of His body, given for us; the wine, the symbol of His blood, shed for us.

There are a few things to which we would draw the Christian's attention in reference to this. They may help him to understand it, and lead him to partake of it both intelligently and worthily.

(I) Simplicity of the ordinance. —

The Lord sat at table with His disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, just before His passion and death on the Cross. He gave them the bread, after He had given thanks; and, in like manner, gave them the cup. He told them to eat the bread; and also to drink the wine. In doing it, they show forth His death, till He come. Thus the supper was instituted.

It is to be noted there was no priestly mediation; nothing of clerical intervention; nothing of ecclesiastical officialism. All this has been introduced by man since; no trace of it is found when the Lord instituted it on that memorable night. He and His disciples were together. He gave them the symbols of His body and of His blood. They received them **directly from Him**; and in turn, **handed them to one another**, as they were told. How simple it is! What need to preserve its simplicity!

(2) **The night of His betrayal.** —

Attention is drawn to the fact that it was the night of His betrayal when He instituted the supper. Paul says it was "the same night in which He was betrayed." The object in drawing attention to that night in the actual celebration of the supper, is to bring before our hearts the sorrow and sufferings He endured, and the fact of His rejection. Of all the nights in His pure and holy life, it was **that** night. It was then His enemies were clamouring for His blood; it was then Judas, the traitor, had gone out to sell Him into their hands; it was then the Cross loomed ahead, with all its horror, when death had to be faced, and all the judgment against sin had to be borne. Moved deeply in our hearts, we may well sing,

"On that same night, Lord Jesus,
When all around combined
To cast its darkest shadow,
Across Thy holy mind.
We hear Thy voice, blest Saviour,
This do, remember me:
With grateful hearts responding,
We do remember Thee."

(3) **The ordinance was given to Paul.** — Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles and minister of the Church, received the ordinance **directly from the Lord**. Referring to it, he said: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Cor. 11: 23). Now, it is to be carefully observed, the Lord was **in heaven** when He gave it to His apostle Paul. Paul was not with the disciples when the Lord instituted it **in Jerusalem**. Nor did Paul receive it from the twelve apostles; he received it from the Lord directly, to give to the Church.

There are some who say the Lord's supper is a **Jewish ordinance**, and they do not keep it. Their loss, to say nothing of their indifference and disobedience, is irreparable. How can they fail to answer to the Lord's request, to remember Him in His own appointed way? It was His last, most touching appeal to our affections! Others there are, who are wholly occupied with **outward** service, and have no time or place for this **inner** sanctuary service. They do not keep up the remembrance of the Lord. Sad too is their loss.

(4) **With the bread is connected "the body."** — Paul connects the ordinance of the supper with the teaching that the Church is the body of Christ. He says: "For we being many are one bread [loaf], and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10: 17). This would prove, if nothing else did, it is not a **Jewish ordinance**. What is there in Jewish teaching that has anything to do with the Church as the body of Christ? The loaf, or bread, is connected with the unity of the Church. We are all partakers of **one** loaf, and are **one** body. This ought to keep us from sectarianism, seeing we are one body, all the members included. This prevents us from narrowing down in our thoughts, to a **party** or **company**, that is, a part of the whole. We need all the members to form the one body.

When Elijah restored Israel from idolatry, he erected an "altar in the name of the Lord" (1 Kings 18: 31, 32). He raised it on **twelve** stones, symbol of the nation's unity as twelve tribes. He ignored the fact that there were **ten** tribes in Samaria,

and **two** in Jerusalem, in a state of division. In the sight of God, His people were **one**. So it is today; we partake of the loaf, and see the symbol of the **one** body of Christ. It is not a question whether **all** the members are in one locality to celebrate the remembrance (this cannot be), but a question of those who celebrate it in any locality keeping before them the blessed fact of the unity of Christ's body.

(5) **The Lord's coming.** — Paul also links the supper with the Lord's coming again. It is to be celebrated "till He come." Hence the supper has a prospective, as well as a retrospective, view of the Lord. It looks back on His suffering and death; and it looks forward to His coming again in glory. This remembrance

has to continue "till He come."

What divine wisdom there is in this! On every occasion when the remembrance is made of Him in His death, there should be the memory of His promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14: 3). This link with the Lord's return keeps hope burning brightly, and adds real significance to the supper, since all is to culminate in glory at the Lord's coming again.

In conclusion, we would urge all who remember the Lord in partaking of the supper, to keep Him ever before them, and never forget that this is the whole import of the occasion, since it has to be done, as He says, "in remembrance of Me."

A WORKER'S EXPERIENCE

FROM nearly a half century of such practice (individual soul-winning) I can say that I have spoken with thousands upon thousands on the subject of their spiritual welfare. Never to the present time can I speak to a single soul for Christ without being reminded by Satan that I am in danger of harming the cause by introducing it just now.

If there is one thing that Satan is sensitive about, it is the danger of a Christian harming the cause he loves by speaking of Christ to a needy soul. He has more than once or twice, or thrice, kept me from speaking by his pious caution, and he has tried a thousand times to do so.

Therefore my experience leads me to suppose that he is urging other persons to try any method for the salvation of souls except **the best one**.

H.C.T.

IT has been well observed, that, in Jotham's parable of the bramble king, we learn the important truth, that, wherever there is real power or gift in any one, he will be lifted up above the desire for mere official standing. The vine, the fig-tree and the olive would not take the office of king because they were already endowed with inherent competency to bless; but the bramble that had **nothing** was glad to assume office to make himself **something**.

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 20: 12 — 22: 31).

WE now have to consider the six commandments that are concerned with man's duty in regard to his fellows. Sin has not only estranged man from God, so that the rights of the Creator have to be safeguarded, but utterly disorganized society, so that fundamental human rights have to be maintained. Only the first commandment of the six is of a positive nature. The last five are of a negative sort — "Thou shalt **not**."

The honouring of both father and mother is the one positive command. In God's ordering of human society the family is the fundamental unit, and of that unit the father and mother are the responsible heads, and to be recognized and honoured as such. If they are not so honoured rapid disintegration sets in, and all the relations of life are adversely affected. Proof of this stares us in the face today. Men of wholesome mind — magistrates, and others — join in deploring what is called "juvenile delinquency," as directly traceable to the break-up of home life. In most cases the parents themselves are mainly to blame. Obsessed with the pleasures of sin, parental discipline is neglected, and the children left to their own devices.

The Apostle Paul points out in Ephesians 6: 2, that this is "the first commandment with promise;" the promise being long life in the land which was to be given to them. Conversely, the flouting of this command was to entail severe penalty, as we see in Deuteronomy 21: 18-

21. The penalty pronounced against the "stubborn and rebellious son," who would not, "obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother," may seem to us very drastic, but it serves to emphasize the great importance of this fifth commandment in the thought of God. Were it faithfully and universally observed, there would be very little infringement of the remaining five commandments.

In the sixth commandment there is the safeguarding of human life, of which God is the Source. Man cannot give life and he has no right to take it away, except he does so as ordained of God. After the flood Noah was authorized to slay animals for food, and government was established and the sword committed to his hand, so that death should be the penalty for murder. In the New Testament we are reminded that the earthly authority "beareth not the sword in vain" (Rom. 13: 4), which shows that the introduction of **grace** in Christ has not nullified what has been established as to **government** in the earth. Authorized government takes its course, but murder is strictly forbidden.

The seventh commandment safeguards the purity of human life. "Adultery" here has the widest sense, covering what are considered to be lesser forms of this sin between the sexes. The history of peoples shows those who have widely practised this evil have degraded themselves both physically and mentally, and out of it spring a host of other ills.

The eighth commandment enforces the rights of personal property. There was some measure of communal life amongst the children of Israel, and in the New Testament we read of a brief period of Christian communism, when many sold properties, and in Jerusalem they had all things in common. But even then the rights of private property were not set aside, for Peter said to Ananias, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5: 4). Yes, it belonged to Ananias, and no one had the right to grab it away from him. The law forbade stealing, and when today anyone is converted the word is, "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. 4: 28).

The ninth safeguards truth against man's sinful propensity to distort it into positive lying. A man may lie as to almost anything, but what is specially prohibited is his tendency to lie at the expense of his neighbour. The devil, we know, is the father of lies, but since man fell under his influence he has become a very apt pupil in that direction. In this world lies have become one of the most potent forces of evil. We may note that while killing and stealing are two of the commonest and worst forms of **violence**, adultery and lying are two of the commonest and worse worst forms of **corruption**. All four are most destructive of human happiness. When they vanish in the millennial age the world will become a paradise.

But of all the commandments the tenth is the one that most surely brings conviction and a sense of the

death sentence into the soul, if it be honestly faced. We find the Apostle Paul saying, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7: 7); and he goes on to say, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." We all know that fallen human nature is such, that the fact of anything being prohibited stirs up a desire for that very thing. Quite possibly, before the prohibition reached us, the thing was not even in our mind; but, reaching us, the thing was presented to our mind, and at once the covetous desire was there, and we realized we were dead men in the sight of the law.

In the tenth commandment, then, God legislated against not only evil things but against the desire for evil things, and this makes it so death-dealing for the awakened conscience. It was in keeping with this that the Lord Jesus removed the weight of the law against both murder and adultery from the **act** to the **desire** and **impulse** that prompts the act, when He gave His Sermon on the Mount, reported in Matthew 5. Hence also the warning against covetousness, which the Lord uttered, in Luke 12; and the statement of the Apostle Paul, "Mortify therefore . . . covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3: 5).

When the rich young ruler approached the Lord with his question as to eternal life, Jesus tested him with five out of the ten commandments. He did not cite the first four, dealing with what is due to God; nor did He mention the tenth. The young man could say he had kept the five that the Lord mentioned. No doubt he had, if only the prohibited **acts** were in question. Had he

been tested on the basis of the tenth, he would have been hopelessly condemned.

Verses 18-21 give us the immediate reaction of the people to the giving of the law. Twice we get the words, "afar off." They had not yet had time to commit any breach of what was enjoined, but they were conscious at once that distance had supervened between themselves and God. Further, they begged Moses to act as mediator, saying, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." So these two things — **distance** and **death** — laid their fear upon them. To the Galatians it was written, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (3: 10). Paul did not say, "As many as have broken the law." Such are of course under the curse. But man being what he is, it is sufficient for him to be, "of the works of the law," that is, standing before God on that basis, to be under the curse. That is just what we see in the passage before us.

Moses realized that the law was given as a test, for he said, "God is come to prove you." The people moreover were to realize the gravity of the position in which they had set themselves. They appear to have taken up that position in quite a light-hearted way, and God intended that His fear should be before their faces, so that they might not sin. If fear could induce the fulfilling of the law all would have been well, for there was everything present to provoke fear. We have to turn to the New Testament to learn that, "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13: 10).

In the closing verses of the chap-

ter we get what the people were not to make, and what they were to make. They were **not** to make gods, even of the most precious substances. They **were** to make an altar of earth. In the next chapter we get the "judgments" that accompanied the ten commandments, and the first of these is concerned with the "Hebrew servant."

Now at first sight the sequence of these subjects may seem strange, and especially we might be tempted to regard these regulations as to what was to be done when an Hebrew undertook the modified form of slavery that was permitted, as a descent into something very trivial compared with the thunders of the law. We discover it to be far otherwise when we consider their spiritual import. The giving of the law became a ministry of death. Nothing could meet that situation but sacrifice; hence next comes the altar. But where can a sufficient sacrifice be found? Only in the One, of whom the Hebrew servant was a type.

As to the altar, it was to be of earth or of unhewn stone. If men were to lift up their tools upon the stones to shape them according to their thoughts, they would pollute it. An altar of earth or of unhewn stone might seem very crude and offensive to æsthetic taste, but since it typified death — the death of Christ — God intended it to stand in its native roughness and not be embellished by art and human device.

Neither was the altar to be placed in an elevated position and approached by steps, as was the custom apparently with the altars of

the heathen. We may give this a present-day application if we point out that in the sacrifice of Christ God has come down to us, so that we are not to attempt to climb up to Him. When men endeavour to do this, they only expose their own nakedness in a spiritual sense.

A peculiar form of bond-service was permitted amongst the children of Israel, details of which we have in the early verses of chapter 21. An Hebrew might place himself under such a bond for six years, but in the seventh he was to go out free; and if he came under it with a wife, she went out free with him. If, on the other hand, he obtained his wife through his master, and children were given, complications ensued, as we find in verses 4-6. In these complications we find a remarkable type.

If the bondman should declare that for love of master, wife and children he will not go out free, saying this plainly and distinctly, then his master shall take him before the judges, and to the door — normally the place of exit — and there shed a few drops of his blood by piercing his ear against the door or door post. Then henceforward he should be a servant in perpetuity. Such was the first of the "judgments" under the law.

We cannot but wonder if ever a Hebrew servant did say, "I love my master, my wife, and my children," thus placing his master before wife and children. We can only say that the master would have to be a most wonderful person to gain such a place of ascendancy. But when our blessed Lord took the servant's place, He came primarily to do the

will of God in devotion to His glory, and secondarily to establish a relationship with redeemed men that nothing will be allowed to break. The Antitype of this we see in John 13: 1 and 14: 31.

In that Gospel, while the Deity of our Lord is fully stated, the place He took of subjection and dependence is made very manifest. At the close of the discourse in the Upper Chamber the Lord went forth to Gethsemane and Golgotha that the world might know that **He loved the Father**. The Evangelist had previously told us that having loved His own in the world **He loved them to the end**. His declaration of love to the Father, whom He came to serve, and of love to those that He brought into relationship to Himself, could not have been more plainly made.

His love led Him into death. In the type we have only a faint type of this, but the spot of blood on the door post, where the ear was bored, does lead our thoughts to the true shedding of blood, when our Saviour was hanged on the tree.

Verses 7-11 deal with the case of the woman who becomes a bond-servant. As the weaker party she might become the victim of wrongful treatment, so her rights are clearly defined. We may remark that under the law things were permitted that would not be tolerated by Christians today. That this was so is shown by the Lord's own words recorded in Matthew 19: 7, 8. We must ever bear in mind that, "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7: 19), since it set forth **the minimum of God's demands**, so that all, who **in any way or at any time** fell short of it, came under the sentence

of death. The **maximum** of all God's thoughts and desires are realized and set forth in **Christ**.

From verse 12 to verse 27, we get judgments in regard to acts of violence, beginning with the differentiation between manslaughter and murder. For the former a place of refuge is promised. Later we find how amply this promise was fulfilled, for no less than six cities of refuge were appointed.

On the other hand, we notice that the severity of God is displayed in the law. The death sentence is pronounced against sins that today are not accounted worthy of the capital sentence — verses 15, 16 and 17, for instance — though we must remember that the wages of sin — of all sin — is death. The sentence of verse 17 is one that our Lord quoted in Matthew 15: 4. To deprive forcibly a man of his liberty comes near to depriving him of his life, and this is legislated against in verse 16.

Verses 23-25, summarize the demands of the law as to these things, and to them the Lord referred in Matthew 5: 38; but there we see the grace of Christ beginning to appear.

The rest of the chapter is occupied with judgments connected with the ownership of cattle, and the violent acts they may perform, or violences that they may suffer. All is to be settled on a strictly righteous basis.

If in chapter 21 we get judgments which give an extension to "Thou shalt not kill," we find in chapter

22 judgments giving an extension to "Thou shalt not steal." Men may defraud each other in a variety of ways, and this theme continues to the end of verse 17; for a maid may be defrauded of her virtue, and a penalty lies against this as against all the rest. The first demand is for "restitution," and, if that be not possible then damages to be paid. No fairer form of penalty than this can be devised.

From verse 18 to the end of the chapter we get sundry judgments that may not seem very closely connected, but they evidently cover both the rights of God Himself and also of the poor among His people. The witch commits an outrage against God by trafficking with demons. The sinner of verse 18 outrages His order in creation. He who sacrifices to demon powers is to be destroyed. Verse 28 demands that the "gods" — the "elohim" — who represented the one true God in matters of earthly judgment, were to be respected, and the following verses demand a steady yielding of the firstfruits to God, as befitted holy people.

The verses in between (21-27) safeguard the rights of the less important and more defenceless folk — strangers, widows, fatherless and poor. The tendency of fallen mankind is to take advantage of these, oppressing and defrauding them. Such conduct is abhorrent to God, and His kindness shines out, even as He gives His law. He will be their Defender. As He thinks of them His word is, "I am gracious."

The spirit of obedience is the secret of all godliness. There is no case whatever in which we ought to do our own will.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

J. A. TRENCH.

Notes of a Bible Reading on John 14.

(Vv. 1-3). We can estimate but imperfectly what it was to **have the Father's House** presented to the disciples for the first time — for nowhere else is it spoken of. Jewish hopes looked for the manifestation of Christ on earth, but now, instead of that, it is the full revelation of the Father's house to which the Lord directs their hearts. They had believed in God without a manifestation of God; now they were to have the Lord as the direct Object of their faith. Then He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Redemption having settled every question of our sins — and thus prepared us for the place — His presence there prepares the place for us. He is coming again to receive us to Himself, but, between His going and His coming, He has sent the Holy Ghost that in heart and spirit we may know the Father's house before we get there. The coming is dropped in the rest of the chapter, which is the unfolding, all through, of the power of the Spirit.

(Vv. 4-7). "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." It is as if He had said, "Ye know the Father's house." Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus immediately says, "I am the way" — the way to the Father's house, and the way to the Father. We have come to the Father, and thus to all the deepest blessedness of the Father's house. It is the Father's presence that makes the Father's house. Christ is the Revealer of the Father: to re-

ceive Jesus as the Sent One of God is to have the Father revealed in the fullest sense. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (17: 3).

The question arises, Is the Father's house for others besides the Church?

What John presents is only for this dispensation. The Father's house will not be revealed to saints in the Millennium. But we have entrance, by the Spirit, to where He is gone. Hence while it is no question of corporate blessing, only those who compose the Church know this blessedness **now**. Not that Abraham, and such, will not know the Father in the future, but they never knew it on earth.

(Vv. 8-11). Philip seizes the thought of the Father, and so he says, "Shew us the Father," proving how little he had grasped the glory of the Person of the Lord. In reply, the Lord says, "Believest thou not that I am **in the Father**, and **the Father in Me**?" His "words" and "works" were a full manifestation of the Father, in whose bosom He dwelt — that life of communion, that life of relationship, into which He was then introducing us. Thus we have the path of Jesus in His words and works; then the work of redemption to set us there, and then His coming again to bring us there actually.

(Vv. 12-14). The works that He

had done, they would do also, and more wonderful works, from the greater nearness to the Father as **Man** which He was to take. A poor sinner who receives His words now is brought into greater nearness than could be while He was on earth. "If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it." That is the new blessing into which we are introduced.

(Vv. 15-24). Now comes the path by which we can enjoy it unhindered. Love leads into the path, and then there need be no check to the enjoyment of all the Lord leads us into. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." Then the power of it — the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who shall abide with you for ever, whom the world cannot receive. The Spirit is here because the Lord is not here. "I will come to you," is a present thing, come for you is a future thing. The revelation of the Father was here, but the enjoyment of that revelation could only be in His going away. In touching words He almost reproaches them for not having discerned Him.

What are the commandments, and what His words?

The commandments and words are very like each other. They differ essentially from the law. All that manifested His life here is given to us to form that life in us. The commandment is the direction of the Lord in certain things; but His words are connected with a higher spiritual intelligence that leads to the obedience to the word, when an actual command might not be

found. What I see true of Him is now given me. The commandments have to do with certain details, but the word expresses the whole life, all that is seen true of Him is seen now as a commandment **for me**.

The keeping of His word is the fruit of close communion with Him. "If a man love Me, he will keep My word." One walking in nearness to the Lord will not wait for a command, but seeing the life of the Lord — what is in Christ — the Holy Ghost produces it in me. As the Apostle could say, "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 1). I am formed by that life, in occupation with it. "I will come to you" is the result of the Spirit's presence — the opened eye to see Him who has withdrawn from the world. "Because I live ye shall live also," is not merely **security**, but it takes in all His present service for us, **that we may hang upon Him moment by moment**.

"That day" is the Holy Ghost's day. Then "Ye shall know." This leads to the development of the words, "I in you." The having the commandments is the proof of love. A careless child forgets the commandments, but an obedient, intelligent child is glad to get his Father's words and treasures them in his heart.

(Vv. 25, 26). What a comfort to them that the Lord speaks of the One He would send from the Father, bringing back to their remembrance all that He had said to them. The Spirit would teach them, so lighting up the path of the Lord Jesus as to bring them into the intelligence of it, and this He does for

us too.

(Vv. 27, 28). "Peace I leave with you." What a legacy! The peace in which He had ever walked down here, bringing us into association with Himself — not giving away. He was leading them into an unknown path. "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice because I go unto the Father." He had taken the subordinate place on earth as Man, but

was now going back as Man to the place of nearness.

(Vv. 29-31). The chapter does not close until the perfection of the path He had trodden is brought out — **love and obedience**. The love the spring of obedience — doing His will instead of our own. This would lighten up the loneliest path of each one, that every act may be in obedience to that blessed One.

"THE HOUSE OF GOD"

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE word, **house**, is used with two different meanings: one, that of a building of stone, brick or wood, erected for habitation; the other, designating a family, as for instance the royal family of Great Britain, **The House of Windsor**.

It is in this former sense the term "House of God" is used in Old Testament times, referring to the Temple at Jerusalem. This was where God saw fit to put His name, and it became the gathering centre for God's earthly people. In New Testament times the House of God denotes His people on earth, standing in a certain relation to Him. It has ever been God's thought that His people should be united. "God setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68: 6).

The New Testament describes a fellowship, the like of which had never been seen before — a fellowship that knows no frontiers, and which makes no racial distinctions, embracing Jew and Gentile alike,

rich and poor, young and old — a fellowship of which every believer on the face of the earth is an integral part. It is the only fellowship that death cannot destroy, the only fellowship that enters eternity and lasts for ever.

The illustration of the House of Windsor will be useful as showing us what sort of behaviour becomes every Christian in relation to the House of God on earth. Wherever a member of the royal family may happen to be — in a palace or a slum, at home or abroad, on land or sea or air — it is their privilege and responsibility to behave in such a fashion as to sustain the dignity and character of the royal house of Great Britain.

The House of God is

A Place of Good Behaviour.

Wherever the believer may be, whether with his brethren assembled, in his home, at his

business, during his leisure, when in complete privacy, he has ever to remember that he belongs to the House of God on earth.

So we find the Apostle Paul, as inspired of God, addressing Timothy, his son in the faith, a young man of gift and prominence. We read, "These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 14, 15). Did the Apostle pen these words for the benefit of Timothy alone? Surely not, they are written for the instruction and edification of every Christian from that time to this. We should study the Apostle Paul's epistles to Timothy, as if they were written to ourselves. After all, we must remember we are under the eye of God in all that we do. We heard of a clergyman, who wrote to the manager of a theatre, asking that he might be admitted by a side door, so that his entrance might not be observed by the members of his congregation. The manager of the theatre answered wisely and well, "Sir, there is no door in this theatre through which those, who enter, cannot be seen by God."

Pre-eminently Paul presents our Lord Jesus Christ as the great Example for us all to follow. He immediately says, "Great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**" (1 Tim. 3: 16). Our Lord was and is for ever God, who became Man for our salvation, and in His life we see what true godliness is. There we see the perfect life! What an Example!

The House of God is

A Place of Testing.

We read, "Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if **we hold fast** the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3: 6). The vital necessity of **continuance** to the end of our pilgrimage in this connection is pressed upon each one of us. We are warned lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and we are told definitely, that "we are made partakers of Christ, if **we hold** the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3: 14). We have this double **if**, this serious warning twice repeated in this chapter. Let us pay heed to it. Let the warning not be in vain. Let us fear lest any of us should "seem to come short," and "labour," positively labour, to enter into God's rest. (Heb. 4: 1 and 11).

The House of God is

A Place of Privilege.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, setting before us the contrast between the poverty of the types and shadows of the Old Testament economy, and the glorious and surpassing fulfilment of them in the New Testament times, rises to the highest peak of the doctrine therein unfolded, when we read, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10: 19-22). To the believers converted out of Judaism, this must have seemed almost an incredible

contrast between the shadows and their fulfilment. In the type the children of Israel had a priesthood, but not a single priest dare put his foot in the holiest of all as long as he lived.

Only once a year; that is, on the great Day of Atonement, did the high priest enter, first making ceremonial atonement for his own sins, for he was a sinner, as others; and then to enter a second time into the holiest of all to make ceremonial atonement for the people. He then retired, not to enter for another year, when the Day of Atonement should come round once more. The veil still stood, barring the way of the priests into the holiest of all. The blood of bulls and of goats could never "take away sins" (Heb. 10: 4). What a contrast when our Lord made the efficacious sacrifice of Himself on the cross of Calvary, and cried with a loud voice, "**It is finished.**" His cry was answered by God rending the veil from the top to the bottom, which declared the way was to be open to all believers at all times into the holiest of all — the conscious presence of God. There they may exercise their priesthood in prayer and worship. The Father seeks the true worshippers, who shall worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 23). There can be no higher privilege! It has to be enjoyed to be understood.

It is seen then that the House of God is

A Place of Worship.

The Apostle Peter emphasized this. He tells us God's House is made of living stones, who "are built up a

spiritual home, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2: 5). No longer is it a Temple made of "goodly stones and costly," but of living stones, attracted to Him, who is the **Living Stone**, the chief Corner Stone, elect, precious, giving character to the whole, His life permeating every believer. Not only so, but this happy service of praise and worship is to be answered by corresponding testimony to all with whom we have to do.

The House of God is

A Place of Testimony.

We are, "a chosen generation; a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2: 9). The **holy** priesthood in the holiest should be duplicated by the royal priesthood when out in the world. What a privilege! If we display the meekness and gentleness of Him who could say, "I am meek and lowly in heart," we will assuredly shew forth the praises of God, who has called us out of the darkness into the marvellous light of the full revelation of Himself in Christ Jesus.

It was one of the marks of a bishop or overseer in the House of God, that he must have "a good report of them, which are without" (1 Tim. 3: 7). It is possible, alas! for the name of the Lord to be blasphemed by the worldling, as he is stumbled by the faulty walk of the professed Christian. Christians carry the very name of God upon them in the way of testimony. It

has been said, believers read their Bibles; the unbelievers read believers. What do they read in you and me? How good it would be if it could be said of each one of us, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3: 3).

Lastly, the House of God is

A Place of Government.

The Apostle Peter tells us that, "The time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4: 17). Holiness becomes God's House. We must never forget that Ananias and Sapphira his wife, forgot that salutary truth, and paid the penalty with their lives at the feet of the Apostle Peter, when they lied "to the Holy Ghost" (Acts 5: 3). The saints at Corinth forgot it, when they turned the solemn occasion of the Lord's Supper into an opportunity for

gluttony and drunkenness. Hence God's discipline, for we read, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11: 30). God removed many of them from the place of testimony, where they had so disgraced His holy Name. The fact that they were divinely disciplined was the proof that they belonged to the Lord. Through the sovereign grace of God, on the righteous basis of the atoning death of Christ, these Corinthians were saved with an everlasting salvation. And yet the holy government of God was obliged to remove them from the place of testimony, and take them to heaven. This is plainly seen when we read, "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should **not be condemned with the world**" (1 Cor. 11: 32).

What grace! What government!
The one supporting the other!

May these few thoughts as to the House of God help us to walk more worthily of the place to which we are called by infinite grace.

"THE CLIFF OF DIVISIONS"

T. D. BELL.

THE name, Sela Hammahlekoth, occurring in 1 Samuel 23: 28, means the rock or cliff of divisions. It was so named as it divided at that time David and his band, from Saul and his men — God's anointed from the wilful king. On one side prophet and priest securing divine order, on the other violence, disorder and pride.

How often is this presented in Scripture. The natural and the spiritual man shown side by side, but with a rock of division between them. We learn thus to discern the motives ruling each. Ishmael in contrast with Isaac; Jacob with Esau. There was weakness, dependence and failure, yet faith in the one: self-assertion and pride ruling

the other.

This cliff of divisions assumed many shapes in type in the past. The pillar of fire witnessed its presence to Israel when it came between them and the Egyptians at the passage of the Red Sea. Balaam saw it, and his spirit was made to bow before it, in the top of the rocks. "Lo, the people shall dwell alone" (Numbers 23: 9) was his tribute to it. The uplifted hands of Moses took that form too when Joshua smote Amalek. It runs on until unseen it separated the godly remnant from the apostate nation in Malachi's day.

Side by side these two different kinds of men are seen engaged often in the same things, moving in like circumstances. Only thus are we enabled to judge what morally rules each and to estimate the immense distances between them. How the Lord traces for instance the solemn form of that cliff in Luke 15. Not between two men widely different in circumstances, but running between two sons — elder and younger — of the same father. At the awful hour of the betrayal we may seek to compare the action of Judas with Peter's denial; but who can estimate the far distant sources from which the sorrows of each were drawn?

How necessary for us too to note that the same lips spoke the Gospel message to Simon the magician, and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, but how infinitely different the effect in each. This constant presentation of the contrasting men and the division between them helps us to disengage each in our own souls, to recognize the features of the man of the flesh there, and, mortifying his deeds,

make room for the fruit of the Spirit. For we must remember too that this division is presented as separating between the same man before and after conversion, and our own souls realize it there. It is only the grace of God with each of us that will enable us to know something of that moral distance, which could so sharply distinguish between the man who described himself as "a blasphemer and a persecutor" (1 Tim. 1: 13), and the same man who writes to Philemon; "Paul the aged" now beseeching instead of blaspheming. Truly wherever we see him the man of the flesh stands apart from the spiritual man, and the cliff of divisions ever runs between.

The final form of this separation in our own day is surely reached in Revelation 1: 5-7. Christ - ever the same - is presented as coming. As soon as that name is spoken the response rises from true hearts, "Unto Him that loves us." How different the effect on the natural man! They "shall wail because of Him." On this side those to whom the Lord is everything stand waiting to be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4: 17). On the other, great movements are going on which at His appearing will show men of the earth, led by the beast, mustered to hold the world against Him coming in glory (Rev. 19: 19).

Whatever then is happening on man's side of the cliff of divisions, it is our happy portion to know the Lord is maintaining faith and affection in His own on His side of that cliff, and it is ours to leave all in His hands, to labour for Him, and to wait for that meeting in the air.

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 23: 1 — 25: 9)

CHAPTER 23 continues, and carries to a conclusion, these "judgments" that Moses was to set before the children of Israel. It appears to divide quite naturally into four sections.

The first — verses 1-9 — prohibits those perversions of righteous judgment which are so common amongst men. They were not to be practised in Israel, and there is much instruction here for ourselves. It is to be noted that the first thing to be prohibited is "a false report." Against the word, "raise," the word "receive" is put in the margin as an alternative translation, and other versions rather confirm this. What great harm has been wrought amongst Christians by false reports! That it is wrong to raise them we all admit. Do we all realize the wrong of receiving them? When a matter of argument or dispute arises among Christians and an evil or disparaging report is brought as to one's opponent in the matter, how tempting it is to receive it at once as certain to be true, when it is after all a false report. Any evil report should be scrutinized with care and verified before it is accepted. We do well to note the care Paul took as to reports of evil at Corinth — see, I Corinthians 1: 11 and 11: 18.

The injunction against following a multitude in wrongdoing is to be noted. All too often have Christians gone off on a wrong course, assuring themselves that it must be right because many of their friends are travelling on that road. A multitude

of real saints may pursue a course that is wrong, but that does not make it right. Our responsibility is to be governed by the Word of God, even if that means diverging from a multitude.

It is noticeable how human feelings are eliminated in these matters of judgment. Not only is all unrighteous witness prohibited but one's feelings of dislike for an enemy must not be allowed to withhold assistance in a time of need, as we see in verses 4 and 5. And further, one's feelings in regard to the poor must not sway the judgment, either for him (verse 3) nor against him (verse 6).

Verse 8 prohibits all forms of bribery, which is an appeal to the feelings of the one who is bribed. Where bribery is rampant, justice is practically unknown. "The bribe blindeth those whose eyes are open" (New Trans.). Let us read this verse in the spirit of it as well as in the letter, for it is possible for self-interest to blind the eyes of a sincere Christian, who would not for one moment entertain the idea of accepting a bribe.

This first section ends with throwing the protection of the law over one who might be a stranger in Israel, and therefore likely to be treated differently. In this we see the compassionate interest of our God for those outside "the commonwealth of Israel" (Eph. 2: 12).

In the second section — verses 10-13 — we have rest enjoined, not only

for man and beast but even for the land. The natural tendency undoubtedly would be to say, "But if we follow out verse 11, as to one year's rest in seven, how are we to live the seventh year?" The answer surely would have been, "As to that you must trust in God." This accounts, we think, for the closing injunction to be "circumspect," or, "on their guard;" and not to name other gods. No false god could give them any such assurance. They would only destroy the assurance that would enable them to obey. As a matter of fact Israel did not obey this law, as is intimated in 2 Chronicles 36: 21.

The third section — verses 14-19 — gives in brief form regulations as to the three great feasts of the year. They were to be observed, and in them all the males were to appear before God. When Deuteronomy 16: 16 is reached we learn that they were to appear in the place that the Lord would choose; so the place as well as the times was settled by God and not by them. Brief details are also given as to the manner of their offerings — leaven utterly excluded, and the fat treated as wholly belonging to God, and all firstfruits of their land duly rendered up.

The closing sentence of verse 19 is certainly remarkable. One may wonder why it comes in here, and why repeated in Deuteronomy 14: 21. May it not be to show us that while God demands that His rights and the rights of His house be scrupulously honoured, it is His will that what is seemly be observed as to even the lowliest of His creatures? The goat gives her milk, as ordained of God, to sustain the life of her kid. It is not seemly therefore to use what

God has ordained for life as an instrument connected with its death. Let us all ponder whether the principle involved in this may not have some spiritual application for us today.

The fourth section extends from verse 20 to the end of the chapter, and introduces us to the Angel, who was to be their Protector and Guide. The word for Angel is sometimes translated "messenger." It is so in Malachi 3: 1, where it occurs twice. In its first occurrence there John the Baptist is indicated, as we know. But "the Messenger [or, Angel] of the covenant, whom ye delight in," is evidently to be identified with, "the Lord, whom ye seek," mentioned earlier in the verse, and therefore refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. In our chapter therefore we believe that the "Angel" is to be identified with Him. Hence full obedience to Him in all things was essential if they were to experience the power of God acting on their behalf.

Obedience to Him would ensure that none of the nations then in the land would be able to stand before them, but would be utterly dispossessed. They were to be most careful not to touch their idolatries but completely to destroy them. Then they would be blessed with health and plenty; that is, with fullness of earthly good.

But in all this God would so act as not to create a vacuum. He would drive out these nations, "by little and little," just as the Israelites increased in number and were able to fill up the land. One can see the wisdom of this, and also note that God acts after this fashion in

His dealings with our souls. We have to grow in grace, and as we do we enter into the fulness of the blessing that is ours in Christ, and the old things are dispossessed in our hearts and lives. Hence we progress spiritually "by little and little."

While thus the process went on by stages there was the danger ever present of Israel being entangled in the ancient idolatries of the land. They are once more warned as to this, and we must accept the warning for ourselves. Seeing that we have within us the flesh with all its evil tendencies, we cannot but feel the pull of the world and its sinful attractions. Hence we too continually need the word, "Keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5: 21).

In the closing verse of chapter 19 we read how Moses went down to the people, and through him the words of chapters 20-23 were given. He was now called to go up the mount to the Lord. He was to take others with him who could worship afar off. Moses alone might come near. The people could not approach at all. This we learn as we commence chapter 24. Before we come to details we have an important parenthesis, extending from verse 3 to verse 8.

In this parenthesis we learn firstly, how faithfully Moses carried out the task with which he was entrusted. Again the people promised complete obedience. All the people promised, and they promised all. They promised this in chapter 19: 8, before the law was given. Now that it had been given they repeat their promise. Thereby they reveal to us that they were quite ignorant of their own sinfulness and weakness. But the

law was given that these painful facts might be made manifest, as is indicated in such Scriptures as Romans 4: 15; Galatians 3: 19; 1 Timothy 1: 9.

Secondly, he committed to writing the words that had been uttered. Unbelievers used to assert that he did nothing of the kind, inasmuch as the art of writing was unknown in the age in which he lived. It is now proved that the art existed long before his day. God intended His law to be authoritatively recorded for all time. Putting the law thus on record, Moses instinctively felt that the condemnation it inevitably brought could only be expiated by sacrifice, hence next is recorded the building of an altar, and the twelve pillars as a memorial of the tribes. Young men acted as the priests, while as yet Aaron and his sons had not been formally inducted to the priest's office.

Then thirdly, Moses applied the blood that had been shed, first upon the altar and then upon the people. The sprinkling on the altar came first, then the reading of the law that had been written, hearing which the people for the third time promised obedience, and then came the sprinkling of the people. It is of interest to note that when this is referred to in Hebrews we are furnished with details not given to us in Exodus. He took, "water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop," and further he sprinkled not only the people but also the book that he had written.

There had not as yet been time for the people to have broken the law, to which they had just listened, so this blood-shedding was not so much

an act of atonement, but rather penal in its bearing; that is, a solemn reminder that on the law-breaker the death sentence rested. The book was sprinkled with blood, inasmuch as every infraction of its holy demands or prohibitions meant death to the sinner.

Verses 9-11, record what was seen by Moses and the privileged company that began the ascent of Sinai. They "saw the God of Israel," and this is not contradicted by 1 Timothy 6: 16, which refers to God in His essential being and glory. As Ezekiel saw, "the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezek. 1: 28), and as John in Patmos saw One who sat on the throne, who was "like a jasper and a sardine stone" (Rev. 4: 3), so these saw a manifestation of God. We note that no attempt to describe Him is made. We are only told that what was beneath His feet had the appearance of "paved," or "transparent" sapphire and the "clearness" of heaven. To this extent they "saw God," and were sufficiently sustained in their spirits to eat and drink before Him.

It is noticeable that of the sons of Aaron only Nadab and Abihu are mentioned. The two who died under judgment, almost as soon as they were consecrated as priests, had no excuse for their sin. They fell in spite of this great privilege; whereas Eleazar and Ithamar, who carried on as priests, did not apparently have this unique experience. It is often the way that failure is most pronounced in those who are most highly privileged.

Then Moses alone was called up into the mount of God, though it would appear that Joshua accom-

panied him for some little way. On the top of Sinai there was the cloud of the Divine presence and the glory of the Lord like a devouring fire. Into the midst Moses went and there abode for forty days and nights. We must remember that, though we now know God as revealed in Christ in the fulness of grace, it is still true that, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12: 29). He is unchanging in nature and attributes, though under the law one feature may specially be emphasized, and another emphasized under grace.

How striking the contrast between the sojourn of Moses in the mount with God and the forty days and forty nights, spent by our Lord fasting and tempted of Satan in the wilderness. Moses was shut up with God and His holy things, totally separated from the failure and evil that transpired below. Jesus, on the contrary, was cut off from all human sustenance, and subjected to the attacks and wiles of the adversary; but it was as true then as later that, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14: 30). On the mount Moses received the "shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10: 1). In the wilderness Jesus proved Himself to be impregnable and therefore the Redeemer, accomplishing the work that made these "good things to come" an assured reality.

We may also note a contrast between the prolonged sojourn of Moses in the mount and the brief sojourn of Paul, whether in the body or out of the body, in the third heaven. Moses heard and saw things that he was expressly commanded to give to the people. Paul heard, "unspeakable words, which it is not

lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 4). The shadows of the law, revealed through Moses are indeed wonderful, and we do well to study them. But the Gospel will ultimately put us into touch with wonders that cannot be revealed to us while we are in our mortal bodies. Our very language has no words in which they could be expressed.

We now arrive at seven chapters (25-31) in which are recorded the details of the tabernacle system and the priesthood, which served as a shadow of the good things that were to arrive in due season. As we start to consider them we emphasize afresh that here we have "not the very image of the things," but only the "shadow." As we observe the evening shadows, we can say with confidence that this is the shadow of a house and that of a tree. But we cannot from the house - shadow deduce the position of the front door nor how many windows there are. We shall not therefore attempt to discover minute details, but consider these shadows in their broad outline.

The first nine verses show that when a sanctuary was to be constructed, that God might dwell in the midst of Israel, the people were privileged to furnish the materials of which it was to be made. The New Testament contrast to this is found in Ephesians 2: 22. We often observe, when reading the Epistle to the Hebrews, that there is a

strong contrast between the shadow and the substance. So it is here. The saints today are, so to speak, the material out of which God's present habitation is constructed. We are that by reason of the quickening work of God in us (see Eph. 2: 1), and it is far more wonderful than just bringing gold, silver, precious stones and other things.

Verse 9 emphasizes the importance of observing the word of the Lord. God Himself furnished the pattern of the tabernacle and all its details. The business of Moses and the people was to adhere to God's pattern and not deviate from it according to ideas of their own. Here is a broad principle of action, which is valid today, in regard to all that God has revealed, as much as it was then. The thoughts of God, embodied in His instructions, are perfect and cannot be improved. The thoughts and ways of men can only spoil them.

The detailed instructions begin at verse 10, and the first word is as to that which was to be the centre-piece of the whole typical system. Here at the start we see that God's thoughts are not ours. We should have begun with the tabernacle in which all was to be housed, working from the circumference to the centre. God begins with the centre, and works outward from that. The shadow definitely declares that the centre of all God's thoughts is — CHRIST.

THE very weakness of my body becomes an opportunity for the grace of Christ to shine out, so that "when I am weak, then am I strong." The power is to be known in the weak point . . . You may suppress a vice in the power of nature, but that does not put a virtue in its place . . . When a Christian is walking in grace, the defect in his nature is supplanted by a virtue.

CHOSEN IN CHRIST

J. A. TRENCH.

Notes of an Address on Ephesians 1: 3-7; 5: 1, 2, 8, 25-27.

IT is a wonderful thing for our souls to be carried back, as we are in this Epistle, to God's counsels for us from all eternity, in contrast with His ways with man on earth. There are these two distinct lines in Scripture — the whole history of the first man, and God's counsels in the Second. How blessed to have all that belongs to the first man blotted out, as it were, so that nothing remains before our eyes but the perfection of the Second. Have we been able so to learn the history of the old man, as to have done with it, so that we may be free to bask in the presence of the wondrous truth of this first chapter of Ephesians. I know we cannot begin there. The first thing God has to deal with our souls about is our sins, that our links may be broken with the first man.

All through the Old Testament we have the history of the failure of the first man when tried in every way. Placed in innocence in Eden man is given one command, and he breaks it: Noah, set over all the world after the flood, fails to govern himself: God chooses one nation and commits to them His testimony, and the first, and cardinal commandment is broken before it reaches the camp: He sets up priesthood, strange fire is offered before Him, and the priesthood breaks down: He gives them a king, and how soon the kingdom fails. Turn where we will, we find the same thing. The last test was applied to man when God said, "I have yet one Son, it may be they will rever-

ence my Son." The only answer to this was, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him." Stephen sums up that history in Acts 7, the promises despised, the law transgressed, the prophets slain. What a history of sin! From the first act to the culminating point, nothing but sin, and all this ended in the cross of Christ. It is a blessed thing when the trial of the ages, carried into the conscience, discovers me to myself as belonging to a lost race before God.

There is, however, another side to the presence of the Lord Jesus here on earth; it was the dawn of the accomplishment of God's eternal counsels. How sweet to trace Him in that lowly path down here, as we find Him in the Gospels, fulfilling God's pleasure. We see the heavens opened over Him, and hear the Father's voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But God's glory had to be made good. We follow Him to the cross and there we see Him, who knew no sin, made sin for us — identified with all that we had been found to be; the infinite One infinitely enduring God's judgment of sin, and sin turned into the occasion of infinitely glorifying God. All that I am, there, judged, condemned, and crucified with Him; the history of the first man ended, so that now God can reveal His own eternal counsels for us. Up to the cross man was dealt with as alive in the flesh, now as dead, — dead in trespasses and sins. Into that scene of death God comes to raise up one Man from the dead. Before the dear

women could be at the grave, He had been raised by the glory of the Father.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Spirit of God fixes our eyes on the risen Christ in the glory of God. Carried back into God's eternal thoughts and counsels, the apostle's heart can only find relief in worship. Then the Spirit of God leads him on, and leads him back. Having chosen us before the foundation of the world, Christ was there before Him, and we chosen in Him, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. He was alone in that perfection when down here. Except a corn of wheat die it abideth alone. Now we see in Him the full fruit of His death, in that He has united us to Himself where He is, and we stand before God in all His perfection. How sweet to be able to drop everything connected with ourselves, and to enjoy His eternal thoughts and counsels for us.

He has "predestinated unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to Himself." This is not something for you and me merely, to satisfy us; but to satisfy His own heart. He could have made us angels, but that was not what was in His heart for us; He has made us sons. Christ's place before God, is the only measure of the place which He has had for us before Him, in His eternal counsels. Redemption is but the threshold of all the fulness of the blessing into which we are now brought, and now revealed that faith may know it. By redemption, God the Holy Ghost is given to us, as surely as we have received salvation. He is the earn-

est for us, of all that lies before us in the glory. What rest, to be set up in all the perfection of Christ! If responsibility entered into that glorious position, how soon would it break down. Blessed be God, there is no question of responsibility there. Have we entered into the truth that we are in the perfection of the Second Man?

Now we come to the responsibility that flows from this position. With the first man, his position depended on how he walked, therefore he had no standing before God: now our responsibility flows from the place in which we are set. We come, as it were, out of heaven, to walk here on earth as sons before the Father. God, the Holy Ghost, given to us, as that mighty power working in us: He must not be grieved. Oh! that we might have a deeper sense of it, that there may be nothing of the old man in us to grieve that blessed Spirit of God.

As children beloved we are before the Father, sent out here to shine before men. If God, Himself, has shined into our hearts in all the perfection of the revelation of Himself, so He is to shine in the two characteristics of His life, — love and light. What a confirmation of the place that the responsibility which flows from it, should be that we, as it were, come from heaven, and manifest nothing but what God is (Eph. 4: 17, 30; 5: 1, 2, 8).

We may say, Who is sufficient for these things? We have the power working in us to walk according to it. Turn to the service of the Lord Jesus for us, as set before us in chapter 5: 25-27. He "loved the

church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." This is not only a love of the past; He is **now** sanctifying and cleansing it, presenting Himself to our hearts, so that we may be more and more answering to Him, that He may at last present us to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." The distinct object before His heart is, that we should answer perfectly to what we are in Him as we find it

revealed in chapter 1. How blessed, when humbled at the thought of all the failure to be able to turn to Him. He did not cleanse that He might love the church, but because He loves it.

Oh that we may yield ourselves to the power of the truth, so that we may be formed more and more like Him, until He will be satisfied, when He has us before Himself! What rest to know that not one will be missing there!

NOTES ON HAGGAI

J. HOUSTON.

HAGGAI, Zechariah and Malachi are post-exilic prophets. Their prophecies should be read with the contemporary historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

By the mercy of God, a remnant of captive Jews in Babylon were permitted to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. For a time, the work prospered, though the difficulties were many. Eventually a prohibition came from King Artaxerxes, and the work ceased. During the time of cessation, Haggai and Zechariah were raised up to prophesy (Ezra 5: 1). The prophecy of Haggai was calculated to reach the consciences of the builders, who had abandoned their work; not so much on account of the prohibition, which could have been overcome, as on account of their lack of faith, spiritual zeal and energy. Haggai reproves them for this inertia, and

exhorts them to rise up in the spirit of self-judgment to continue the work that was put in their charge. It is gratifying to see his prophecy had the desired effect, for we read: "Then rose up Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them" (Ezra 5: 2).

The time during which the work was suspended was marked by poverty. The builders were not actually idle; but they were occupied with their own interests. They built houses for themselves; but not the house for God. As might be expected, their work was unblest. They sowed much; but they reaped little. They ate; but they had not enough. They drank; but they were not satisfied. They clothed them-

selves; but they were not warm. They worked for wages; but they lost their earnings, because they put them in bags with holes. Such is the graphic description Haggai gives of unblest labour.

But, experience has shown, it takes God's people a long time to learn that it is "the blessing of the Lord" which gives true enrichment, and with which He adds "no sorrow." It takes them, too, a long time to learn that they must put **first** things in their **proper** place. They must seek God's kingdom, and His righteousness **first**; then all other necessary things will be **added** with His **blessing**.

The excuse the builders gave for suspending the work was that the time had not come to build the house of the Lord. "This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (Haggai 1: 2). They evidently judged the time had come for them to build their **own** houses. Hence the searching question: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" A very pertinent question! It casts God's light on the conscience.

When self comes into our life, and claims, as it always does, **first** place, then all other things are relegated to a **secondary** place, if not to **entire oblivion**. Self does not serve God or others; it serves itself. If it covers its base motives with a religious cloak it may make a **show** of doing something for God or for others; but this does not **materialize** into anything **practical**. It says, for example, to the destitute, "Depart in peace,

be ye warmed and filled;" but it does not **give** them "those things that are needful to the body" (James 2: 15, 16). The whole luke-warm state of the Laodicean Church revolved around self. It was rich because it gave nothing to others. It was increased with goods because it did **not** distribute them where need required distribution; but hoarded them up for self. It had "need of nothing because it was self-satisfied" (Rev. 3: 17).

"Consider your ways" was God's word to His people at the close of the past dispensation; and it has a definite application to us at the close of the present dispensation. David's word to Solomon was, "Arise therefore, and **be doing**, and the Lord be with thee" (1 Chron. 22: 16). This word was given when the first house was to be built. Haggai gives it to the remnant when the restored house was to be built. In fact, the substance of the prophet's message is summed up in that word, "Arise, and **be doing**."

Three things are set before the remnant which not only encouraged them to take action, but sustained them in it: (1) the assurance of God's presence with them; (2) the fact that the Spirit was among them; (3) the certainty that the glory of the latter house, to which they looked by faith, was greater than that of the former.

(1) "Then spake Haggai, the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, **I am with you** saith the Lord" (chap. 1: 13). Everything hung on that. Moses asked God not to send him with the people to Canaan, unless His presence was to go with them.

Full well he knew everything depended on it. We know it well ourselves now. There is no restored position whatever, that can be assumed, unless God's presence is vouchsafed to us. But we have the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20). And it is not the display of the **glory** of His presence, as will be in the millennium; but the **comfort** of His presence in a day of weakness and ruin.

(2) Much had been lost which was not restored to the remnant. They had no king; they were under Gentile rule. Nor was there the Urim and the Thummim (see Hosea 3: 4). One thing remained with them which did more than compensate the loss: **God's Spirit was amongst them**. "My Spirit remaineth among you" (chap. 2: 5). Zechariah insisted that this was their strength in a day of weakness and failure: "not by might, nor by power, but by **My Spirit**, saith the Lord of hosts." In a poor and feeble remnant there was nothing of outward **show**; no kingly glory, no priestly order, as in the palmy days of Solomon; all was marked by weakness and ruin. Yet, God's Spirit was among them. Precious consolation! As for ourselves, we have the Spirit in a way that the Jewish remnant never had, nor could have. He is "**with us for ever**" (John 14: 16).

(3) There was a "first glory" in "the former" house; it is irretrievably lost. There is the glory of the "latter house" which is greater than that of the former. We, like the remnant, look for the greater glory. There is no such thing as the

restoration of the former house. "This latter house" (here the Spirit connects it with what Zerubbabel was building), is the object of faith. We do not, therefore, look back and mourn over what is lost; we look forward and rejoice in what is secure for God's eternal glory in the risen and glorified Christ. He is the true Zerubbabel. God will shake "the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." He will also shake all nations; "and the desire of all nations shall come." All the silver and the gold are God's. He will build "this latter house." In view of this, the remnant were exhorted to be strong. God would have His poor people know their labour in Him was not in vain, since it was connected with the "latter house," in which His eclipsing glory is to be displayed.

To sum all up, we have to deny self and give ourselves wholeheartedly to the work of the Lord. In other words, we have to rise up from our ease, and perhaps sloth, "and **be doing**." We must not leave till tomorrow what has to be done today. **Now** is God's time. We must not mourn over an inglorious past of failure and breakdown; but be occupied with a glorious future of triumph, security and everlasting bliss in the risen Christ. We should never have the fear of desertion, however few we may be; God is with us, and His comforting presence more than compensates the loss of human friendship. Paul was forsaken by his friends; nevertheless the Lord stood by him. And whatever may have been lost, the Spirit is among us, in whose strength and power we labour in love and wait in patience in view of coming glory.

WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?

A. J. POLLOCK.

BERNARD, Abbot of Clairvaux, was widely known in mediæval times as a saint of God. He was born in 1090 and died in 1153. His writings and hymns bear testimony to a soul aflame for the truth of God, and a strong desire to walk in communion with His Lord. It is cheering to trace the growth of a soul in those dark middle ages, when the church was drugged to sleep by a corrupt and dead superstition. Thank God, there were many hidden souls in those days, of which Bernard was a signal example. Such heard in their inmost souls the gracious invitation of our Lord, "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" (Matt. 11: 28-30). And those who responded to this invitation were never disappointed. They experienced the truth of our Lord's words that "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John 6: 35).

Bernard wrote a hymn in Latin, well known to us in its English dress, setting forth the satisfaction of heart that the Lord Jesus Christ alone can give, and which the world cannot emulate.

*"JESUS! the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.*

*JESUS! our only joy art Thou,
As Thou our prize wilt be;*

*In Thee be all our glory now,
And through eternity."*

Multitudes of Christians have sung that hymn the last eight hundred years with joy and delight, and doubtless multitudes will continue to do so, till the summoning shout of our Lord is heard in the air, calling us all to the Father's house on high.

Not only was Bernard a poet, he was also very practical. There hung up a motto in his library with the searching question inscribed thereon,

BERNARD, what are you here for?

A very salutary reminder day by day, and it is well for us all to ask ourselves the same question. Life is a very precious gift from God, and we are responsible for the use we make of it. Not only should we be concerned as to how we spend our life, but we do well to remember, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5: 10).

We are not here to make money. If that is our desire it will make us idolaters. Such a lust becomes a canker in the soul. We are not here to get earthly fame. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 10: 39). Nor are we here to put human relationships first, however dear and preci-

ous and a gift from our Lord, they may be. Our Lord says, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10: 37).

We may well ask, What are we here for? Surely for the will of

God, for the glory of the Lord, to be a blessing to others. Let this question, What are you here for?, be often asked by us each, and may we give a true answer on our lips, **and above all in our lives day by day.**

BABYLON AND THE BEAST

"Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy." (Revelation 17: 2, 3).

BABYLON is a great system in the earth by which men's hearts are drawn away from God. It supplies them with something to have natural enjoyment in besides joy in God. In this Babylon is the great whore drawing out corrupt affections. She is supported by the great power of the earth; but power is not what is presented in Babylon, but the withdrawal of affection from God to have it spent on what ministers to natural lust.

There are the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and all nations brought in as acted on by Babylon. She ministers to the enjoyment of kings, to the wealth of merchants, and to the excitement of

the nations: she is borne by the beast whose character is blaspheming power; but she, by corrupt fascinations, rules over the kings of the earth. When she is judged then the beast will rule by blaspheming power, drawing out the wonder of the whole world, and their worship too: but before the beast comes to rule, he supports the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

Open blasphemy is not the character of prevailing evil in the present day: neither is it an astonishing display of combined power, because the beast still carries the harlot. But the evil of the present day is enjoyment in the world, not in Christ; riches in the world, not in Christ; and the excitement of these things intoxicating men's minds, that all engagement in the things of Christ are out of mind. All this may be under a profession of the truth; because it is the beast that is the blasphemer, who, before he himself rules, supports the mother of harlots — the parent of all who draw affection from God to the things of the world.

Extract from PRESENT TESTIMONY,
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BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTERS 25: 10 — 26: 30).

THE details as to the ark are given to us in verses 10—16. It was the very centre of the whole typical system and yet in itself nothing could have been simpler. It was a rectangular wooden box, but made of the very durable "shittim," or "acacia" wood, and then overlaid both without and within with pure gold. It is clear then that the wood gave to the ark its form, and the gold imparted to it its character.

At once we can see how aptly this typifies the incarnate Saviour, in whom both Humanity and Deity were perfectly found. The very durable shittim wood, which gave form to the ark, indicated His humanity, for He was in "the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2: 7). But when the ark was completed only gold was visible, though it was supported by the wood. His Deity gave character to all He said and did.

In Paul's address to the Athenians he said that, "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17: 29). In keeping with this, art and man's device were wholly excluded from the ark. It was just pure gold without ornamentation, but with a "crown," or "border" round its top, and the gold was as much within it as without. What our Lord was externally, where He could be observed, He was internally, where no one could see. There was no discrepancy.

Further it was so constructed as

to be adapted for journeying on their way to the land. It had rings of gold into which were inserted staves of wood overlaid with gold. Thus it was until a permanent resting place was found for it in the temple which Solomon built, when the staves were drawn out, as we learn in 1 Kings 8: 8. Lastly, Moses was instructed to put in the ark the testimony that he was to receive from God, engraved on the tables of stone. This too turns our thoughts to Christ, for He alone could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psa. 40: 8).

Verses 17-22, give us details of the mercy seat and the cherubims. The mercy seat formed the lid of the ark, and it was of pure gold without wood. When we reach Leviticus 16, we learn that once a year the blood of atonement was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and thus propitiation was brought to pass. Now while it is man who needs to be justified, redeemed, reconciled, it is God who must be propitiated. The claims of His righteousness and holiness must be met: hence, we believe, only pure gold — typifying God in holiness and righteousness — was employed in constructing the mercy seat.

The two cherubims were also of gold, beaten into the required shape, and really all of a piece with the mercy seat, one at either end of it. Genesis 3: 24, plainly indicates that the cherubims are a special order of angelic beings, that are concerned with the execution of God's right-

eous judgments. The next time they are mentioned in the Scripture is in our chapter, where they are to be represented in gold. Beyond the mention of their wings and their faces no attempt is made to describe their form.

The fact that they had faces indicates that they had perception — eyes to behold. Their wings declared that they would be swift to act in righteousness against sin. But their faces were to be, “toward the mercy seat,” and not looking outward toward the sinful people. They were to be represented as gazing on the spot where the blood of propitiation was to be. So in Genesis 3, we see them with the flaming sword of judgment against sin. Here as in repose, because their eye is on the blood. In Ezekiel we find the cherubims more fully described, and there they are seen supporting, “the likeness of a throne,” and on that, “the likeness as the appearance of a man.” Thus these foreshadowings advance step by step, and we see them first, with the sword of justice; then with the blood of sacrifice; lastly, upholding the Saviour on His throne.

For the moment however the Lord emphasized that the mercy seat was to be the place where He would meet with Moses, and commune with him of all the things as to which He would command the children of Israel.

Verses 23-30, give us details as to the construction of the table, on which the shewbread was to be placed. It was smaller than the ark and serving a different purpose, but otherwise the details are very similar. This was to stand outside

the veil in the holy place where daily it was under the observation of the priests. Again here we see a type of Christ, but as supporting the shewbread, or “bread of the presence,” which became food for the priests. We do not get the details as to the shewbread until we reach Leviticus 24. All the vessels connected with it were to be of pure gold.

Verses 31-39, give us details as to the candlestick, or lampstand of pure gold, and here we have very clearly a type of the Spirit of God. There were to be three branches on either side of the central stem; seven lamps in all, and these provided all the light that was necessary in the holy place. The table with its shewbread were only visible in the light that the lampstand shed. In that light the priests went about their daily service. The branches were so constructed that both flowers and fruit were to be seen, and though there were six branches they were to be of one piece with the central stem — “one beaten work of pure gold.”

We can see here an indication in type of the truth announced in 1 Corinthians 2: 10-16. The things of God are not to be apprehended by any powers which are resident in ourselves, but only by the Spirit of God. No other light than His illuminates God's holy place and things.

In the seven lamps, which yet were but one lampstand, we see a foreshadowing of that presentation of the Spirit of God which we find later in the Bible, when we read of the Lamb having “the seven Spirits of God.” With this we may connect Isaiah 11: 2, where we read of the Spirit of God — like the central stem

— but connected in detail with the three couplets, “of wisdom and understanding,” “of counsel and might,” “of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” In Revelation 1: 4, the seven Spirits are “before His throne,” as typically the lamps are found in our chapter. In Revelation 5: 6, they are, “sent forth into all the earth,” as preparing for the work of judgment, about to be directed by the Lamb. It is made abundantly clear in the New Testament that the Spirit of God is **one**; yet in the fullness of His power there is a seven-fold completeness.

The chapter closes with an admonition to Moses that he was to follow with exactness the pattern of all this, which he was to see while in the mount with God. He was not to be tempted to alter anything or improvise anything. Moses saw the pattern, but he did not see the mighty Realities which, in a shadowy way, the patterns represented. Had he altered anything the good things to come would have been misrepresented. God’s patterns were perfect, as far as they went, for perfection marks all the works of God. If man alters he spoils. Let us take this to heart in regard to the far more wonderful teachings of the New Testament.

Chapter 26 is occupied with instructions as to the construction of the tabernacle. But, before we consider these, let us raise the question as to why the instructions of chapter 25 do not embrace the details as to the golden altar of incense — which was the third article of furniture in the holy place, standing just before the veil. We believe the answer to be that the three that are mentioned — ark, table, lampstand — set be-

fore us God’s approach to man, in Christ and by His Spirit. The altar of incense is connected typically with man’s approach to God, conducted through the high priest. Hence we find the details in chapter 30, after details of the priestly garments and of the consecration of the priests, given us in chapters 28 and 29. What looks like disorder from a human standpoint, we find to be God’s order, when its spiritual import is understood.

The first fourteen verses of chapter 26 give details of the curtains which composed the tent, which is called the tabernacle. As in the previous chapter so here the instructions start with the innermost curtain. God works from the within to the without, from that which was only visible to the priests within to that which met the eyes of the people without.

Before considering the details given to us, we must ask this question — What is the typical significance of the tabernacle as a whole? And we must attempt to answer it.

The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it plain that it was “the patterns of things in the heavens” (9: 23); that Christ is, “an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands” (9: 11); that there is, “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (8: 2). Consequently we must regard it in the first place as a type of God’s mighty universe. The people were on the earth, and they had to stand without. Between the door of the court and the door of the tabernacle stood the altar of burnt offering, as we learn in the next chapter. This

typified the first heaven; and into the first heaven the Lord Jesus was "lifted up" to die.

The holy place, where stood the table and the lampstand, was a type of the second heaven. The holiest, where the ark, the mercy seat and the cherubims were placed, typified the third heaven, the immediate presence of God, where the only light was the glory cloud. Aaron was the minister of the tabernacle: Christ is the Minister, who will uphold God's universe of blessing for ever.

But, in the second place, we may discover in the tabernacle, and particularly in the curtains, that which is typical of Christ Himself. God dwelt in the tabernacle, and later in the temple that Solomon built, and it was the Lord Himself who, "spoke of the temple of His body" (John 2: 21). Typically, God was in the tabernacle, when Moses had made and pitched it. In a far more wonderful way, "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 19).

Thirdly, we may see, in certain details at all events, that which is typical of the saints as God's present dwelling-place by His Spirit. This is referred to in Ephesians 2: 22.

Now let us consider the details of the curtains as typical of Christ. They were in four layers. Only the bottom one would be visible in the holy place and the holiest of all. It was of fine twined linen, shot through with blue, purple, scarlet, embroidered with cherubims. Fine twined linen itself was cloth of a beautiful texture. Blue is the heavenly colour. Purple is the royal

colour, while scarlet is emblematic of earthly glory, and also of the blood of sacrifice. Cherubims represent God, acting judicially in righteousness. All that was represented by these things were found in perfection in Christ. His holy Manhood was perfect in its texture, not one thread missing or out of place. In Him was manifested every heavenly grace and all royal power, whilst in the blood of His sacrifice every judicial claim of the Divine nature was met and satisfied for ever.

This inner covering was composed of ten curtains of the same length and width, coupled together by loops of blue attached to taches or clasps of gold. These things, which typified what was heavenly and Divine, brought the ten curtains into one whole. The wonderful life of our Lord might be divided into different parts — for instance, the days of His infancy, of His childhood, of the early, hidden years of His manhood, of His baptism, of His temptation in the wilderness, of His public ministry, of His sufferings and death — but all was of a piece, coupled together by the Divine and heavenly fulness that dwelt in Him.

On these beautiful curtains were laid curtains of goat's hair. They are called the "covering," or "tent," of the tabernacle. So evidently the ten inner curtains were considered the tabernacle proper. This tent was a size larger, for each curtain was two cubits longer, and though of the same width — four cubits — there were eleven of these, so that in the front one could be doubled over. The goat's hair curtains therefore made a complete covering.

Now curtains of goat's hair would be rough and unattractive in appearance compared with those of fine twined linen beneath. They would typify therefore that holy separateness from the ways of sinful men, even when our Lord received sinners and ate with them, and that brought Him into severe conflict with the Pharisees and scribes. We are reminded that truth as well as grace came by Jesus Christ.

If the beautiful curtains of fine twined linen formed the tabernacle, and the goats' hair curtains formed the tent, we lastly have in verse 14 two coverings that were to be placed over all. First, one of rams' skins dyed red. In chapter 29 we find repeated several times the words, "ram of consecration." Two rams were slain in the consecration of the priests. Hence here we may see a type of Christ filling up the full measure of His consecration to God in death itself. His beautiful life, so fully maintained in holy separation to God, was offered sacrificially to God, and this filled up the measure of His devotion.

Second, there was the rough outer covering of badgers' skins. This protected all that lay beneath from any defilement. There was in our Lord that which was wholly repellant of all evil. But this stirred up the antagonism of the world, and it explains why the prophet had to announce that, "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. 53: 2).

Verses 15-30, give us the details of the boards and bars which formed the framework of the tabernacle, and on which all the curtains rested.

Here, we think, we have a type of the saints, who are "fitly framed together," and who are "an habitation of God," as we see at the end of Ephesians 2, though there it is the temple rather than the tabernacle that is referred to.

Each board had two tenons, which fitted into sockets of silver. Thus they were enabled to stand upright. Silver, as we presently find, was the metal used in the redemption money, and it is only on the ground of redemption that the saint can stand upright in the presence of God. But even so, without the bars there would only have been a collection of separate boards standing upright in the wilderness.

It was the bars that braced together the individual boards into one structure. There were five bars, and the middle one was to stretch from end to end. That middle bar it was that specially imparted a unity to the structure. Today there are more things than one that bind the saints together, but the one supreme bond is found in the indwelling Spirit of God.

Lastly, we notice, that all the boards and bars were covered with gold, and the rings through which the bars were inserted were also of gold. That which was to characterize the ark was also to characterize these. The saints are by no means divine, but as God's workmanship, "created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 10), they bear Christ's character. There is a fulfilment of the prayer of Moses, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" (Psa. 90: 17).

Let us never cease to praise God that this is so.

HEAVEN OUR HOME

J. A. TRENCH.

Notes of an Address on John 13: 1-10; 14: 1-18; 26: 11-18.

IT is a wonderful thing for our souls to have the Father's house revealed to us, so that we can enjoy it before we get there. There is no moral link between the Father's house and this world; no possibility of putting them together in our hearts. Do we know anything of the complete break between these two scenes?

The moment the Lord knew His hour was come, His first thought was, to give those whom He left in this world part with Himself where He was going. There is first the communication of divine life and nature, that brings with it the capacity for the entrance into our souls of all these things: it needed the knowledge of what He had wrought, to enter into them. But He knows the need we meet at every turn, and He provides for it, as figured in the feet-washing.

All this is preliminary; up to this the Father's house has not been mentioned. When the Lord Jesus is able to count upon the sorrow of hearts that will miss Him, He says, "Let not your heart be troubled . . . in my Father's house are many mansions." What a revelation! There had been no such thing up to this time in Scripture. Much of the Lord's ministry had prepared the way for it; now the moment has come for the full revelation to break on us, — a home where He has gone, His own home, now revealed and made ours.

Then He goes on to address His disciples, "Whither I go ye know,

and the way ye know." How were they to know it? Philip thought, if only he knew the Father, he could know the Father's house. Jesus says, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Every trait of the blessedness of the Father's house was revealed and shining forth in the Person and ways of the Son here below. The heart that knows the Son, knows the Father too, even the feeblest babe, for it is no matter of attainment. The Lord Jesus would start us with it.

The cardinal truth of the revelation of the Father is found in the Gospel of John, as the One to whom I am related. For this reason we all turn to the Gospel of John, for there we have all the precious revelation of the Father in the Person of the Lord Jesus here.

"I go to prepare a place for you." There is nothing more important than to seize the meaning of that little sentence; it is not that any preparation is going on now, but how did I ever come to have a home prepared up there? Accomplished redemption prepares us for it. The Lord Jesus closing our whole history here, opens to us a heavenly home, fitting that home for us by His presence there, and fitting us perfectly for that home. Thus, at the very opening of our way, we can give thanks to the Father; He has made us meet.

Truth only becomes real to us as it

supplies a need created in our souls. That need had been created in Mary Magdalene. The disciples were satisfied when they had inspected the sepulchre; they returned to their homes; but Mary had no home to go to, and she stood without the sepulchre weeping. He had delivered her from the fearful power of Satan, and the sense of what He was detained her there, until His voice broke upon her ear. She wished to resume the intimacies with which she had known Him before, but He says, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." He was going to introduce her into a far deeper and fuller blessing than she could have known before. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God." What additional light this is upon all that we have found of the revelation of the Father's house. He is now able to open to us the place where He has gone and to associate us in the fullest way with Himself.

"I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." How simply this gives us our place; the yesterday of my life closed in the cross of Christ; the tomorrow to be with Him in glory, and the present so wonderfully filled with all we have been brought into while here. Are we living in the power of the things that are ours already? Do we know what it is in a little measure to bask in the light of the Father's love? We have the Holy Ghost to be the power of the enjoyment of all these things in our souls, while we are waiting on the tip-toe of expectation for Him to come again, that where

He is, there we may be also.

What I seek is that we may enter into the power that is given us for the enjoyment of these things. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2: 9). Arrested by this thought, many of us stop there, and put it all off to the future; but the Apostle only quotes this from Isaiah to contrast it with what we have. "But God hath revealed them unto us, by His Spirit." The things that God has prepared in His eternal counsels, are now revealed to us by His Spirit, that we may know them, and enjoy them as our present possession; that our hearts might live in them as a present reality.

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4: 18). Do we know anything of such an attitude? Have we been looking at the things which are seen, today, or at the things that are unseen? These things are revealed so that we can look at them. "Set your affection [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3: 2). Associated with Him, risen with Him, our minds are to be set — for that is the word used. The affections and the mind are distinct things; the Spirit assumes that the affections will follow Christ there, but is the mind there? The cross upon earth answers to the heavenly glory. How fatal the influence of man that comes between me and that risen, glorified Christ. Are our hearts lingering in the scene out of which He has gone? Or are our hearts and minds set upon Him, where He is in the glory?

Our commonwealth, or citizenship, is in heaven, as we find in Philippians 3: 20. Citizenship was everything to a Grecian, it came before the dearest relationship. All that forms the moral life is in heaven now. How feeble is our grasp of these things! What is the practical formative power of them? Does everything about us, bear witness to them, so that we are only waiting for Him to come, to take us to Him-

self, in whom all our joys and our hopes have centred while here? Not one thing has been withheld from us, and He is engaged in service for us in the glory, so that there may be no hindrance to our enjoyment of these things, so that we may be going about this dark world with our faces lit up, or at all events our hearts, with His love. We have found what satisfies us divinely and for ever.

“THESE THREE”

A. J. POLLOCK.

“AND now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love].” So ends the great love chapter of the Bible (1 Cor. 13). Do we ask why love should be thus singled out as the greatest of the three? The answer is, that faith and hope are qualities, expressing themselves in Christian outlook, and practice. Love stands forth as the Divine nature, for **God IS love**” (1 John 4: 8). No heathen philosopher, not even Socrates, that earnest seeker after the light, ever rose to such a lofty height. No wonder the Bible keeps its living power unimpaired, when we think of what is implied in this wondrous statement.

Faith is very great, but it is not the greatest. Faith is essential for the Christian. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him [God].” (Heb. 11: 6). Designed by the Creator we have five senses — hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling. These are all receptive. The eye receives light, and we see. The ear receives sound, and we hear. These five senses put us in

full correspondence with our environment in this world of time and sense. But, if we may so say, Christians have a **sixth** sense, that puts them in touch with another world, an eternal world, a spiritual world. What a marvellous privilege this is! How great is faith! It is like a spiritual telescope, enabling us to see what men of the world cannot see. Moses endured, we are told, “as seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11: 27). To see what is invisible seems a great contradiction, but Moses had a spiritual power that enabled him to see what unregenerate men and women can never see, however intellectual they may be.

It has been often observed that the intimation of creation is packed into a verse of ten words (Gen. 1: 1), yet eleven and a half chapters are taken up with the life of one man — Abraham, who is set before us as the great example of faith. Man is more to God than the material universe with its innumerable orbs of night. Every Christian is a spiritual child of Abraham as he shares

Abraham's faith. The great difference is that the Christian has a fuller faith put before him. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 3). Abraham could not believe in Christ, seeing our Lord was not known in his day, though faith pointed on to the time when the promises of God should become effective, and Christ should be "manifested to take away our sins" (1 John 3: 5). But now that Christ has come, and died on the cross, and has risen the mighty Conqueror over sin, death and hell, we are exhorted to "believe on Him [God] that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4: 24). Faith has an immense place in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter of the Bible, tells us **what faith does.**

Hope is very great, but it is not greatest. The Apostle Paul wrote: "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" (Rom. 15: 13). The same Epistle connects patience with hope. It tells us we are saved in hope, and then proceeds to say, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with **patience** wait for it" (Rom. 8: 25).

The difference between earthly hopes and heavenly hopes is very great. Earthly hope is never sure, and, therefore, if great things are at stake, there is bound to be fever of anxiety connected with the hope. But with God how stable everything is. He is called "The God of HOPE;" that is, He ministers hope to the one that has faith. Will he

disappoint us? Will he change His mind? We read, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11: 29). "Without repentance" does not mean on the part of the sinner, for our Lord's own words are emphatic, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13: 3 and 5). No, it means that on God's side, there will be no change in His mind, nor will God ever fail in His resources.

Hence there is no uncertainty. Our God cannot lie, and our God cannot die, and our God will not change His mind, and His promises are as secure as if they were already fulfilled. So we read that Divine hope is "as an anchor of the soul, both **sure** and **steadfast**, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 6: 19, 20).

No wonder then that with patience, calm and assured, and yet divinely deep in joyful expectation, we can wait for the fruition of all our God-given hopes.

Faith is very great, but it is not the greatest; hope is very great, but it is not the greatest. "Now abideth . . . these three; but the greatest of these is **love.**" Here we get to the Spring and Source of everything. "**God is love.**" That is God's nature. The expression of that nature is not confined to the love that flows between Divine Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We find Solomon, the very wisest of men, telling us "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1: 7), and then taking us to the very Source of it, presenting the

Lord to us under the name of Wisdom, saying, "I was by Him, as One brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. 8: 30), surely a delightful picture of Father and Son from all eternity rejoicing in the love that flowed mutually. But does it stop there? No, Nature must express itself. So we read further, "Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8: 31). Thus we begin to see how love is the greatest.

Divine love has come to sinful

man as his only hope and blessing. Was love ever so expressed before? "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). As believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, we become "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter 1: 4). This is seen in us as the fruit of the Spirit — "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness" (Gal. 5: 22). The Divine life expressing itself in us begins with **love**. "The greatest of these is **love**."

"PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH"

Extract from E. DENNETT.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings."

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

(Malachi 3: 8, 10).

IT is to awake His people if possible, that the Lord proceeds to bring a specific proof of their departure from Him. He would fain open their eyes, and compel them to see; and thus He says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me." Then comes the usual rejoinder of this misguided and deceived people, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?"

The answer is clear and distinct, "In tithes and offerings." It was impossible for them to evade the truth of such a charge; for the Lord through Moses had laid down the most minute directions concerning tithes and offerings, and they could not but know whether they had complied with them. They knew precisely, therefore, what was required of them, and they had no excuse for their disobedience. They might indeed have argued within themselves that it was a matter of no consequence, but their thoughts were not the thoughts of God; for He tells them, "Ye are cursed a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation."

We are not under law but under grace, and we therefore have no such prescriptions as to what we are to give to the Lord; but may there not be some most valuable instruction

for us in these solemn words? Nay, is it not true that now all that we are and have belong to Him who has redeemed us through His precious blood? Much more then, should we enter into such a word as this, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase," if we have understood at all the responsibilities of grace, the grace which has been displayed in our redemption through God's unspeakable gift. Or if any have failed to apprehend the bearing of this truth, let them read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the teaching of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. And with these chapters before us, let us be candid with ourselves, and solemnly interrogate our hearts in the presence of God, to learn whether we have risen to the height of our privilege in this respect, in honouring the Lord with our substance, in devoting the firstfruits of our increase to His service. Let us not be afraid even of figures, asking ourselves if need be, "How much have we given of our income for the Lord's use?" or "What proportion have our gifts borne to what we have received?"

Ah! beloved, if we thus examined ourselves on this subject, would not many of us have to own that the Lord might also have a controversy with us, and truly say, "Ye have robbed God"? Or else how comes it to pass that almost in every place the saints have to be reminded, again and again, that there is not enough money in the Lord's treasury for even necessary uses, and that collections, private and public, are continually being made to conceal our shortcomings, and to provide means for the sustenance both of the

Lord's poor and the Lord's work? All this only reveals the fact how feebly grace is operative in our hearts, and how unlike we are to the giving God, by whose bounty it is that we have been set in the possession of such priceless blessings. And may we not ask also whether our own barrenness, and whether the lack of blessing among the Lord's people — in their meeting for praise and edification — may not be traced to our own barrenness of heart, to our withholding from God the substance, small or great, which He has entrusted to our stewardship? (See 2 Cor. 9: 8-15). For here the Lord expressly connects His blessing His people with their faithfulness to Himself in the matter of tithes. "Bring ye," He says, "all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it."

But this Scripture demands a still closer examination. Remark first, that the Lord desires the tithes to be brought that there may be meat in His house; that is that those whose office it was to attend to the service of the sanctuary might be properly cared for and sustained. For it was a grievous thing in the eyes of Jehovah that the Levites and the priests should be neglected. Moreover the Lord condescends to say, "Prove me now herewith, and I on my part will bestow abundant blessing upon you." It is not, be it observed, "Pray, and I will open the windows, of heaven," but "**Bring ye** all the tithes into the storehouse."

It would be well if this passage

were sometimes read at meetings for prayer, as it might be used to remind us of the real hindrances to blessing. To pray is always well, but to pray while we are withholding from God, and without self-judgment on this account, is useless. Our prayers may be enlightened and fervent, and may commend themselves to the children of God; but let us not forget

that He is the heart-knowing God, and may therefore be keeping back the answers to our petitions because we are not practically responding to the " Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich " (2 Cor. 8: 9).

AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

J. B. MARSHALL.

IN Acts 20: 7 we are told the disciples came together to break bread on the first day of the week. This doubtless is the ordinance of 1 Cor. 11: 23-24, and considering that Paul preached until dawn, one concludes that the church was in assembly. Therefore we learn that the first day of the week was recognized as the day to keep the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2, connect that day with the collection for the saints. Everyone was to lay up in **store** as the Lord had prospered him. So the first day of the week, when we keep the ordinance of breaking bread, is a convenient time and place for the collection.

2 Cor. 9 tells us the collection was to prove the sincerity of the love of the saints; love the incentive. So that in the Scriptures we are taught that the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread, and bring their **store** as the Lord had prospered them. They were to add the grace of their liberality to their faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence and love. All this is our side of this matter, and if

there was no other it would be sufficient to encourage our generosity.

But there is another side; for in Philippians 4: 18 we learn that the Spirit sanctifies the gift as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. Here we come into the true expression of Christianity in us, at the same time that we enjoy the full expression of God's grace. The Lord's love in death removing everything that hindered our approach to God, His blood cleansing us from all sin. Then comes our appreciation of these truths in the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. Let us think of the connection between these two things, His love expressed in death, and His grace effectuated in us, that the testimony may go forth to bring others into the blessings of the love of God.

What a privilege that God should make it known to us that the very thing that men crave, money, can be an acceptable sacrifice, after the breaking of bread, well pleasing to the Lord. May He grant that we should abound in this priestly service.

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTERS 26: 31 — 29: 28)

MOSSES having been instructed as to the tabernacle and the tent, there follow details of the veil, that was to separate between the holy place and the most holy, and also of the hanging that was to screen the holy place from the outer court. These are described in that order in verses 31-37.

The veil was to be made of the same materials as the curtains, which formed the tabernacle. It was to be hung upon four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Though very different from the ark, as to their form, they were made of the same materials. When the camp moved, the veil was to be taken down and used as a covering for the ark, as we read in Numbers 4: 5. By the veil therefore the ark was to be hidden from every eye, save from that of the high priest once a year.

The Epistle to the Hebrews shows us that the veil had a twofold significance — the immediate and the prophetic. All Israel could see its immediate effect. It hid the ark and the glory of God resting thereon; as we read, "The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9: 8). The cherubims, cunningly wrought in both veil and curtains, were not depicted as gazing on the mercy-seat, where blood was to be sprinkled as were the cherubims over the ark. Consequently they depicted the holy judgment of God, which kept sinful men at a distance, excluded

from His presence.

But there was a prophetic meaning, which could not be revealed until Christ had come and redemption was accomplished. Now we have, "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10: 19, 20). Earlier in the Epistle we are told that He took part of flesh and blood that "through death" (2: 14, 15), He might annul the adversary and deliver us. Through His death and resurrection He has opened for us the new and living way into the holiest. That which spoke of separation and exclusion to the Israelite speaks of access and nearness to us.

The hanging which formed the entrance into the holy place was of the same materials as the veil and to be "wrought with needlework," but no mention is made of cherubims upon it. Its pillars stood in sockets of brass and not silver as did the boards and the pillars of the veil. The altar of burnt offering standing without was to be made of brass. When God's righteous demands were met by sacrifice at the altar, the priests could step over the brass sockets and enter the holy place.

Chapter 27 opens with a description of the altar made of acacia wood and overlaid with brass, which seems to be typical of God's righteous judgment against sin, which can only be met by the blood of sacrifice. This altar was big enough

to consume a sacrifice of the largest size, such as a bullock. It was so placed in the outer court that he who entered at once came face to face with it, plainly declaring that there was no entrance until the claims of God's righteousness were met by sacrifice. Typically therefore it indicated the death of Christ by which every claim has been satisfied.

The description of the altar is followed by that of the court, which enclosed the whole tabernacle system. It was to be 100 cubits long by 50 broad, and composed of fine twined lined fabric suspended on pillars of brass, standing in sockets of the same metal. The entrance was to be on the eastward side. It was to extend to no less than twenty cubits, and there the plain linen was to give place to the blue, purple, scarlet, fine-twined linen, wrought with needlework, similar to the curtain at the entrance to the holy place. He who only entered the court had to realise the character and the glory of Him who dwelt in the tabernacle, as much as did he, who entered the holy place. Extending for twenty cubits it was a broad entrance, indicating that God is marked by largeness of heart, with no desire to exclude any. But all who would enter must approach by the altar of sacrifice, which stood straight in front of them.

The chapter closes with the direction that "pure oil olive beaten" be brought to cause the lamp in the holy place to burn continually. Only twice before have we read of oil, both times when Jacob poured it on a pillar (Gen. 28 and 35), but there the nature of the oil is not specified. Here its nature is speci-

fied. It was to be beaten out of the fruit of the olive and pure. This first mention of pure olive oil is clearly typical of the Holy Spirit, and fixes its significance right through the Scripture. The golden lampstand would have been of no service without the oil. In the New Testament the churches, as well as the individual believer, are likened to lamps. But apart from the oil of the Holy Spirit they have no ability to shine to the glory of God.

Chapter 28 is occupied with details of the priestly garments that were to be prepared for Aaron and his sons, that they might be inducted to the priest's office. We have to note that Aaron alone was a type of Christ in His priestly office, though even in him we have to observe that in many things there is more in the way of contrast than of resemblance, as the Epistle to the Hebrews so plainly shows. When we consider the sons of Aaron, even though Aaron himself be linked with them, we find rather a type of the priestly company, in which we as believers are included. The saints of today are priests by reason of their association with Christ, the great High Priest on high.

Aaron was to wear holy garments of a very special type. They are described in verse 2 as being "for glory and for beauty." Now if we read Leviticus chapters 8, 9 and 10, and then chapter 16: 1-4, it appears that Aaron only actually wore these beautiful robes on the occasion of his consecration. Failure having supervened with his two elder sons, he had henceforward to appear before God clad in only the linen coat and breeches. The garments for

glory and beauty had to be laid aside as a memorial of what might have been. In Hebrews 2: 7 we read of Jesus, who is our High Priest, being "crowned with glory and honour." His garments of glory and beauty are never laid aside, since He is a Priest for ever. What a contrast!

The special garments that were to be made for Aaron are specified in verse 4, and according to verse 3 supernatural wisdom was given to the workers, who had to make them under the difficult conditions imposed by the wilderness journey. Verse 5 mentions the various materials that were to be used, and we notice that they are the same as were employed in the tabernacle itself. The ephod with its girdle was distinctively the priestly garment, and just as the tabernacle and the vail set forth Christ as the One in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt, so these garments spoke of Him in His priestly office.

Then on the shoulders of Aaron were to rest two frames of gold enclosing onyx stones on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. A type this of how the Lord Jesus in His priestly grace bears His saints before God on the shoulders of His strength. Here, we know, is the secret of the perseverance of the saints. Hence the Apostle could say of a saint who might come under criticism, "Yea, he shall be holden up" (Rom. 14: 4).

Next comes the description of the breastplate. The same materials were used, in connection with a golden framework, secured by chains of gold and connected, it would seem, with the shoulder-pieces above. In the breastplate were to be

placed twelve different precious stones, on each of which the name of a tribe was to appear. Thus Aaron was to bear the names of the children of Israel "upon his heart," as verse 28 says. They were as much on his heart as on his shoulders, and the typical import of this is apparent in Hebrews 4: 14-16. Our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is passed into the heavens in His strength; but at the same time His heart is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. How boldly then may we draw near to the throne of grace.

Several times does the expression occur, "the breastplate of judgment." It is so called because in it was also placed "the Urim and the Thummim." These two words have the meaning of "Light" and "Perfection" respectively. Just what these were, and how they worked is not known, and after the captivity in Babylon they were lost, as Ezra 2: 63 indicates. What seems certain however is that by means of the Urim and the Thummim enquiry might be made of God and answer received, so that dark points in Israel's history might have Divine light shed upon them in a perfect way. It is a striking fact that in Hebrews 4, to which we have already alluded, the verses as to the priesthood of our Lord are coupled with two others (verses 12 and 13), which emphasize the light and perfection of the word of God, since, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

In verse 31 we find that "the robe of the ephod" was to be "all of blue," forecasting the heavenly

priesthood of the Lord Jesus. Moreover, on its bottom hem were to be suspended pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet, alternating with bells of gold. When Aaron went in and out before the Lord his sound was to be heard, but equally the fruit was to be seen. What this signified was perfectly realized in Christ. In Him both fruit and testimony were found in equal perfection, and His testimony was golden; that is, Divine. Saints today are brought into a priestly place, so in principle the same thing should mark us. If the fruit of the Spirit is not manifested in our lives the bells of our testimony will not give a certain or a convincing sound.

Aaron was also to have a coat and a mitre of fine linen, and connected by blue lace to the latter was to be a plate of gold on which was to be engraven the words, "Holiness to the Lord." This plate was to be in front, upon Aaron's forehead, where it would be visible to all. He was not to forget, and no one else was to forget, that he was wholly separated to the service of Jehovah. As thus separated he was to bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the people would set apart as gifts to the Lord. By this remarkable expression God would teach the people that there was no perfection in anything they might offer. The solemn fact is that man being a sinner, he defiles all that he touches, if it be viewed in the light of the sanctuary.

This is not an easy lesson for any one of us to learn. It is clear that Israel forgot it. When a remnant returned from Babylon they had to be reminded of it by Haggai the prophet. Read chapter 2: 10-14,

and see how the word of the Lord came through him to the people. The nation, and their work, and that which they offered was marked by uncleanness. It is a lesson that we too need to learn. Let us not think that the finest offerings we ever made, whether of praise and worship or of service, were marked by perfection. They were not. The flesh is still in us, and in subtle ways it tarnishes the fairest things we offer. But we have a great High Priest who bears the iniquity of our holy things, and presents to God our defective worship or service in His own perfections, just as He will ultimately present us all "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

The closing verses of our chapter give much shorter details as to the much plainer linen garments that were to be worn by the sons of Aaron in their lesser service. Nevertheless they too were to be "for glory and for beauty." Whether in the case of Aaron or in the case of his sons the glory and the beauty was something that was put upon them and not something native to themselves. So indeed it is for us today.

The instructions as to the formal investiture of Aaron and his sons follow in chapter 29. At the door of the tabernacle they were first of all to be washed with water. Then Aaron alone was to be robed in the garments of his office and the holy anointing oil was to be poured upon his head, without there being first an application of the blood of the sacrifice. This was suitable inasmuch as he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His perfection needed no sacrifice. Viewed as a man Aaron

did need a sacrifice, as we see in verses 20 and 21 of our chapter, and thus the contrast is drawn which we find in Hebrews 5: 1-3 and 7: 27. But here it is not Aaron as a man but as a type, and so the blood is omitted.

The washing all over with water is typical of the new birth, and to this the Lord Jesus alluded in John 13: 10, when He said, "He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The ceremonial bathing when the priests were consecrated was not repeated, but they had to wash hands and feet at the laver every time they entered the sanctuary, as we are told in chapter 30.

Aaron having been invested and anointed alone, the second part of the ceremony followed in which he and his sons were joined together. The commencement of this was sacrifice. The bullock of the sin offering was to be slain, its blood placed on the altar and its flesh consumed without the camp. The ram of burnt offering was to follow on this; its blood sprinkled on the altar, and its whole body burnt as a sweet savour to the Lord. Then a second ram was to be slain and its blood not only sprinkled on the altar but also applied to Aaron and his sons, who had identified themselves with this sacrifice by laying their hands on the head of the ram. Only after this was the holy anointing oil to be applied to Aaron, his sons, and their garments. The order was: first, the water; second, the blood; and third, the oil.

Only when all this was accom-

plished were offerings to be placed in the hands of Aaron and his sons that they might wave them before the Lord. Verses 22 and 23 tell us what these offerings were to be. They were typical of Christ in the perfection of both His life and His sacrifice. Certain parts of the offering moreover were to be taken as food both by Moses who was to officiate, and by Aaron, and by his sons, as we are told in verses 27 and 28.

The typical value of all this is clear. When Aaron stands alone he represents Christ as High Priest, as we have seen. When linked with his sons, the priestly company is represented, and here the saints come in. To be priests we come under the new birth, and then the application of the blood of Christ by faith, and on this we receive the anointing of the Spirit of God. In Peter's first Epistle it is noticeable that before we reach our priesthood in chapter 2, we have redemption by the blood of Christ and the new birth mentioned in chapter 1. Then we find that as a holy priesthood we are to offer spiritual sacrifices, of which the material sacrifices that Aaron and his sons waved before the Lord, are a type. And we may know that the One whom we offer is to be the food of our souls.

To this we must add just one word: let us be much concerned that we not only understand the type, and appreciate the New Testament truth that it typifies, but also enter in our experience and in practice into the priestly activities that thus are indicated to us.

“THEIR OWN COMPANY”

A. J. POLLOCK.

WHAT a poor empty world this would be, if there were no Christian company, with whom we may happily walk, and seek the presence of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We read of the early believers, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2: 42). It is significant and interesting to notice how Scripture rarely speaks of the saints as **individuals**. Reference to them is generally connected with the collective idea of a company.

For instance, our Lord laid down His life for the sheep, that there should be one **flock** and one Shepherd. A single sheep cannot make a flock (John 10: 16). The Apostle Peter writes of “lively stones . . . built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2: 5). One stone cannot make a house. One priest cannot make a priesthood. This to be known and enjoyed must be in the company of the saints. The Apostle John wrote of “the children of God” (1 John 3: 10 and 5: 2). One child does not make a family, at any rate not in God’s family. It takes in the whole family of God from every nation. The Apostle Paul wrote of the one body of Christ, but is careful to add “the body . . . hath many members” (1 Cor. 12: 12). One member cannot make a body.

Sometimes the whole church is presented as one person, but the meaning is plain, it is the **whole**,

made up of the many, that is symbolised, as for instance the Holy City, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 9-27 and 22: 1-5), the presentation of the church as taking an administrative part in the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the future day. Again the church is presented in that same Scripture and in chapter 19: 7, under the figure of the bride, the Lamb’s “wife,” an individual, symbolical of the whole church of God, as seen in closest union with our Lord; His affections to be reciprocated on our part for all eternity.

With these thoughts before us, we see how the company of the saints is a very blessed spot for the individual believer, where he can find himself one of many likeminded. We would urge that we all should put the assembly much before us as God’s help for us as we pass through the Vanity Fair of this world with its allurements. No saint should neglect any assembly meeting they can attend. They may get much or little from their attendance, but do we **bring** something to it? Each member should contribute to the whole.

These thoughts were started in the writer’s mind when reading Psalm 122; one of the fifteen songs of degrees.

It begins with, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” True in Old Testament times there was a definite building erected in a definite place, even the Temple of Jerusalem. But in the New Testament dispensation Christians know that we have no building or special city

to which to repair; the house of the Lord is made up of **living** stones, the house is a **spiritual** house. An old believer used to say that Christian men observe the custom of taking off their hats when they enter a church, treating it as a sacred building, but he took off his hat, not to any building on earth, but to the saints, who form the spiritual house to which is vouchsafed the presence of our Lord. It ought to give us a thrill of joy every time we set out to meet a few saints for meditation, prayer, fellowship or worship. It ought to be a little foretaste of heaven to our souls. If this feeling actuated all the saints, how it would lend freshness of spirit and give spiritual anticipation of meeting our Lord in the midst.

Next in Psalm 122: 3, we observe, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Compact is a fine word, and it raises in our minds the New Testament truth, when we read of, "the whole body fitly joined together, and **compact**ed by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4: 16). Do we as individual saints help this compactness? A steady brother who is always present at all the assembly meetings certainly yields a feeling of compactness. Another, who refuses to countenance anything of a sectarian nature, refusing to join a clique in the assembly, declining to work for an ambitious place of prominence, a brother of humility and graciousness, will surely give the sense of compactness.

We read in Psalm 122: 4,

"Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD." This verse at once brings to one's mind the oft-repeated words, as to the children of Israel resorting to "the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there" (Deut. 12: 5). In the chapters Deuteronomy 12 to 16, we have these words repeated in slightly different forms no less than fourteen times. The children of Israel were not free to go where they liked, but only to the place where the Lord should put His name, which in Old Testament times was at first the Tabernacle and then the Temple at Jerusalem.

No wonder the Lord, who ministered in Galilee most of His time of public testimony, should go to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover year by year, though He knew full well the high priests and rulers were plotting to take His life all the time. But the place where the Lord put His name was dear to Him, though He avoided the Temple on which was written **Ichabod** (the glory is departed from Israel), and was content to meet His disciples the last time He so went to Jerusalem in the "large upper room furnished" (Luke 22: 12), just before He was betrayed and crucified by wicked men. But has this no word for us today? It surely has.

Our Lord said to the poor erring woman at the well, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain [Gerizim] nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in

truth " (John 4: 21, 23). It is not the question today of the place, but of the Lord's presence and the answering attitude of soul in the Lord's people, for He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them " (Matt. 18: 20). But surely this carries with it subjection to God's word, since it is the apostles' doctrine that makes the fellowship, which in these days has been so much departed from. In these sad and broken days how important it is to keep these fundamental things in mind.

Next we read in Psalm 122: 5, "There are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." Today we read that, "Judgment must begin at the house of God " (1 Peter 4: 17), and that, "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world " (1 Cor. 11: 32).

We must ever remember that God is holy, and holiness becometh God's house. Not only is there the blood of the sin-offering in the type, but also the water of the brazen laver; not only were the priests to be cleansed by blood, but purified by water. It is said of our Lord, "This is He that came by water and blood,

even Jesus Christ " (1 John 5: 6), that is to say, He came that the water (**moral** cleansing) and blood (**judicial** cleansing) might be applied to us on the basis of His sacrificial work at the cross. All these blessings flow from His atoning death.

Psalm 122 ends beautifully with an impassioned desire for peace — peace for Jerusalem; peace within her walls; prosperity within her palaces. Then lastly, and how touching it is, "For My brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee, Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good." Thus David pours out his heart's desire, and shall ours be any the less for peace? There is at the moment no real peace in this world, at best a very troubled uneasy peace. But should there not be peace in the assemblies of God's people?

If we walk in the Apostles' doctrine we shall enjoy the peace flowing from its practice. Peace will surely be enjoyed in the sanctuary of God's presence and the assembly of God's people — "their own company " (Acts 4: 23). This is the true home of a pilgrim church, till we reach our heavenly goal, the glory of God.

THOUGH the Christian is **in** the world he is **not of** it; that is, not part of the world-system. It has been rightly observed that he resembles a ship in this respect.

A ship lives in the water but the water must not live in the ship. Fill her with the water and she sinks.

Christians live in the world; indeed the Lord sends them into it to represent Him — see John 17: 18. But if the world soaks into them they sink as far as their testimony is concerned.

LOVE AND JEALOUSY

G. S. HEPBURN.

“Love is strong as death,
Jealousy is cruel as Sheol. The
flashes thereof are flashes of
fire, flames of Jah [Jehovah].”

(Song of Songs 8: 6,
New Trans.)

KING SOLOMON spoke 3,000 proverbs, several hundreds of which are recorded for us, the object being to render the reader of them intelligent and wise.

He composed 1,005 songs, but only one of them is recorded, the title thereof, “The Song of Songs.” It is a song of loves throughout, and the object is to produce and develop bridal affections in the hearts of the saints for Christ.

So the Holy Spirit, for the Song is Spirit-breathed throughout, seeks to engage our hearts with Christ’s love, and then stresses the value that He places on our response thereto.

In Him is found in all its depth and fulness the love that is strong as death. We read, “Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father [by way of the Cross, let us never forget], having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” (John 13: 1). So when confronted by that Cross in which were concentrated all the malice and hatred of which the heart of man is capable, all the powers of the infernal regions, and what is more afflicting than all else, all the wrath of a righteous, sin-hating God, the anticipation of which caused sweat to fall like great drops of blood falling to the ground, yet all these things combined could

not turn Him aside from that path of love, on which He had entered. Love to the Father in the first place, surely, but none the less love for His own, those given to Him by the Father. Absolutely alone He went on the Cross, and there in the place of distance, darkness and death, forsaken by God, whose will He had ever done, and whose delight He had ever been, He endured what must have been our portion throughout an endless eternity, but for the intervention of His great love.

But His love is a jealous love, a love that will brook no rival, and will not be satisfied with less than the undivided affections of its object, even though it involves the removing of their nearest and dearest, cruel though it may seem.

In chapter 1: 2 the language of the Bride to the Bridegroom is “Thy love is better than wine,” but in chapter 4: 10 that of the Bridegroom to the Bride is “How much better is Thy love than wine!” What an appeal to all our hearts! Then in chapter 8: 7 we read, “If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” The Church at Ephesus had much that was commendable to their credit, but lacked the essential thing in the Lord’s estimate, “First love” (bridal affection), hence the call to repentance. Nothing can be a substitute for love in the heart.

Even under law we find something similar to this. The Christian is not under law, either for righteousness, or as the rule of life, but yet the law is spiritual and has valuable

lessons to teach us, foremost among them being the value God places on the love of His people. He loved Israel, and in demanding that they should love Him in return, presented Himself as a jealous God and a consuming fire (Exod. 20: 4-6; Deut. 4: 23). In the minds of some jealousy and envy mean much the same thing, but envy, however, is a very bad and evil thing, and it is impossible for God to be tempted of evil.

The simple truth is that divine love is a jealous love, and will suffer no rival for the affections of its object. And this accounts, no doubt, for much of the discipline

we are called on to endure. In 1 Corinthians 10, where we are enjoined to flee from idolatry, the question is asked, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?" See also 2 Corinthians 11: 2-3.

May the Lord in His great love provide in these last days a ministry, oral and written, that will bring all our hearts into line with Revelation 22: 17, where the Spirit and the Bride, in answer to the Lord's presentation of Himself as the Bright and Morning Star, say "Come."

It is vain to look back, and sigh for a return of Pentecostal times; what is needed today is the forward and upward look.

NEARNESS TO CHRIST AND ITS EFFECTS

J. N. DARBY.

THE pretensions and energy of man are strongly manifesting themselves.

But to learn, in a day of grace, to be still, and know that God is God, is completely above the education of the flesh.

The spirit of the age affects many Christians, who labour to restore old things for the service of God, instead of being broken before Him by the sense of their downfall.

To confess openly that which we are in the presence of that which God is, is always the way to peace and blessing. Even when only two or three are together before God, if it be thus with them, there will be no disappointments nor deluded hopes.

The word for the remnant is "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." He is the only centre of gathering.

The Holy Ghost does not gather saints around mere views, however true they may be, upon that which the church is, upon that which it has been, or that which it may be, on the earth, but He always gathers them around that blessed Person who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20).

We need to be watchful against boasting, as people do in these days; need to be still, in the presence of God. There is much independence and self-will almost everywhere.

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

Now I know, at the present time, of no service which is worthy of Him, if it is not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the church of God, so dear to Christ, is dishonoured in this world; if it is scattered, ignorant, afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. True service of love will seek to give according to the need, and because of their need, he will never think of slighting the objects of the Master's love because of their necessity.

Men taught of God, for His service, go forth from a place of strength, where they have learnt their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Jesus is everything in the presence of God, and Jesus is everything for them in all things, and everywhere. Such men, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, are real helps for the children of God, and they will not contend for a place, or a distinction, or for authority, amongst the scattered flock. The communion of a man with God about the church will shew itself in a willingness to be nothing in himself, and such an one will rejoice in his heart to spend and to be spent.

Many thought of the church, but

it was rather the church in power. There is great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel, recounted in the book of Ezra.

Heir of the place which Solomon had occupied in days of prosperity and glory, he spoke not of his birth, nor of his rights. However, he is faithful in all the path of separation, of sorrow, and of conflicts he is obliged to pass through.

If we speak of our testimony upon the earth, it will soon be evident that all is but weakness, and, like the seed lost upon the wayside, the testimony will likewise end to our shame.

Neither the anger, nor the prudence, nor the pretensions of man can do anything, in the state of confusion in which the church is now. I freely own that I have no hope in the efforts which many make to assure themselves an ecclesiastical position. When the house is ruined in its foundations by an earthquake, it matters little how one tries to make it an agreeable dwelling place. We shall do better to remain where the first discovery of the ruin of things by man's deed has placed us — with our faces in the dust. Such is the place which belongs to us by right, and, after all, it is the place of blessing.

I have read of a time when several were gathered together in such sorrow of heart, that for a long time they could not utter a single word; but the floor of the meeting room was wet with their tears. If the Lord would grant us such meetings again, it would be our wisdom to frequent these houses of tears. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy" (Psa. 126: 5).

It is not only for the earthly remnant that this is true, it is also written for us. I would willingly take a long journey to join these afflicted ones; but I would not go a step further with the object of receiving from the hands of most excellent men power to overturn all today, and reconstruct tomorrow.

We need to watch ourselves, lest,

after having been preserved from the corruption of the age by the very precious truths revealed to us in our weakness, we should be taken in the net of presumption, or thrown into insubordination.

These are things which God can never recognize or tolerate, since we are called to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"BE ZEALOUS THEREFORE"

IN these Laodicean days we greatly need to heed the Lord's injunction: "Be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. 3: 19). How does our zeal stand in comparison with that of a woman, who was, as a missionary from China tells us, brought to a hospital for treatment, having an incurable disease. She was ignorant of her physical danger; she was ignorant also of the great salvation. Her gentle nurse hastened to tell her the "old, old story of Jesus and His love." It was new and wonderful to this heathen mind, but she at once believed the good news and accepted the freely offered salvation. Then she was eager to go to her friends with this glad message of the Saviour's love. She said to her attendant:

"Will you ask the doctors how soon I shall be well?"

"The doctors says that we must tell you the truth — you will never be well."

"Please ask them how long I shall live?"

The reply was, "Three months, with the care and comforts with which you are now surrounded."

"And how long shall I live if I go to my old home with this blessed message from heaven?"

"Possibly not more than three weeks."

When the answer came this new convert exclaimed: "Get my clothes. I will start today."

Expostulation was useless, for she argued: "Do you think I count the loss of a few weeks of my life anything when I have such news to tell my people who have never heard of the Saviour?"

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTERS 29: 29 — 31: 18).

AARON and his sons being consecrated and having waved their offering before the Lord, they are to be reminded of the temporary character of their appointment, as we see in verses 29 and 30. No priesthood for ever was theirs: it was transmissible from father to son, in contrast to that which we read of our Lord in Hebrews 7: 24. Moreover the special garments mentioned were soon to be unused, as we have seen. The Lord Jesus is crowned in His glory and honour for ever. So that here again, when we view the type in the light of the Antitype, it is the contrast rather than the comparison that strikes us.

In verses 31-37, Aaron and his sons are again in view, and two things are mentioned. The first is that certain parts of the ram of consecration and of the bread, which had been waved as an offering before the Lord, were to be food for Aaron and his sons. As priests they were to eat and assimilate that which had been offered as a sweet savour to God. The saints of God today are a holy priesthood, as we are told in 1 Peter 2. As such it is our privilege to "offer up spiritual sacrifices," but in the same chapter we are reminded that "to you therefore that believe is the preciousness" (New Trans.), which infers that we assimilate for ourselves the excellencies of the One, whom we present to God in our praises.

The second is the holiness of God, and all that it demands in the way of sacrifices. The consecration of

Aaron and his sons had to cover seven days, and on every one of those days a sin offering had to be slain for atonement, and thus the altar at which they were to officiate was to be cleansed. Having thus been cleansed by the blood, it was to be anointed and thus set apart for God. An inanimate thing, such as an altar, could be sanctified, inasmuch as "to sanctify" simply means, "to set apart for God." The two things that we saw in Exodus 12, — the blood applied, and the flesh of the victim eaten — reappear here.

This leads to the ordinance as to the daily sacrifice of two lambs, one each morning and one each evening. Thus priests and people were to begin their day and end it with a reminder that they only stood in acceptance before God on the ground of sacrifice. Only thus was it possible for God to dwell among them and sanctify the tabernacle with His glory and communicate His mind to His people through Moses.

The order of the priesthood with the appropriate sacrifices having been prescribed, there follows at the opening of chapter 30 the instruction as to the making of the altar of incense, which was to stand in the holy place immediately in front of the vail. As with both ark and table of shewbread, it was to be of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. In size it was smaller and in use it was different. It was never to be used for burnt or meat or drink offerings,

as verse 9 shows, and the incense burnt thereon had to be only that which was made according to the instructions which we have at the end of the chapter.

In this type, it would appear, we have again two things. In the first place it set forth the perfect fragrance and acceptance of Christ in the presence of God, in which acceptance the priestly company today can draw near to God. Aaron drew near, when on the day of atonement he was permitted to enter the holiest with the blood of the sin offering, but he had to be enveloped in the cloud of incense. He only entered once a year, signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet opened. We have a boldness of entrance which was unknown to him.

In the second place, we see a type of the service of our Lord as Intercessor. In this capacity He stands as the great Priest over the house of God, through whom the praises of His saints come up before God as an odour of a sweet smell. As we have previously remarked, we are still in a condition of weakness, the flesh still being in us, and consequently, as it was in the days of Haggai (see, 2: 10-14), so today, there is an element of what is unclean and defective in the holiest and most spiritual of our worship. What we offer He presents in the fragrance of His own acceptance.

Just as a lamb was to be offered as a burnt offering both morning and evening, so the sweet incense was to be burnt before the Lord morning and evening. The burnt offering was on the altar **without** and the incense on the altar **within**. Thus both within and without there was

to be an odour of a sweet smell before the Lord. The fragrant excellences of Christ are ever before God, and in His acceptance we are accepted.

Yet, once a year on the day of atonement was the blood of the sin offering to be upon the golden altar. Aaron, who ministered there, was a sinner like the rest of Israel, and as such there was an element of defilement in all that he handled. There was no perfection in the Levitical priesthood, as we see in Hebrews 7: 11. So the ceremonial worship of the people, carried out through the high priest, had to be based on the blood of sacrifice.

Aaron thus represented the people; but what about the people themselves? They had been redeemed as a nation out of Egypt, but the necessity of redemption had now to be brought home to every man among them in an individual way. This we discover as we read verses 11-15. Every man numbered among them from twenty years old and upward had to give half a shekel as a ransom for his soul, and this was called the atonement money. If we turn to chapter 38: 25, we find the statement that this atonement money was silver, and it was used for the sockets of the tabernacle. Hence we regard silver as typical of redemption.

Let us take note that every man had to give this small silver piece, no more and no less. The rich man might have wished to display his wealth and generosity by giving more; the poor might have felt he should be excused from giving anything. All had to give alike. Here we have a foreshadowing of the

“no difference” doctrine, which is stated in the Epistle to the Romans, both 3: 22, 23, and 10: 12. In the presence of the holiness of God all human distinctions dwindle and disappear. The way of atonement is the same for all.

When we reached chapter 26, we pointed out that in the description of the whole tabernacle system we had first those items that typified God’s approach to man; then details of the tabernacle tent itself with the altar of burnt offering. After that we had details as to the consecration of Aaron and his sons; and lastly the items that typify the approach of the worshipper to God. We have had the priest, the altar of incense, and a people for whom individually a ransom had been given. One thing more was needed, and that we have described in verses 17-21.

The laver was to stand between the brazen altar and the door of the tabernacle, and it too was to be made of brass — typical of the demands that flow from the holiness and righteousness of God. Those demands were met firstly by the blood on the altar; and secondly, for the priests who would enter the sanctuary, by the water that filled the laver. There they had to wash both hands and feet every time they entered. They were never to carry anything of the dust or defilement that was outside into the presence of God.

In this we see a striking type of that which is often overlooked. The Christian, being introduced into priestly nearness, needs the water as well as the blood. It seems evident that the Lord Jesus referred to this when He spoke the words recorded

in John 13: 10. The priest who had been bathed all over, needed this oft-repeated washing to draw near. Peter had the initial washing of the new birth, but he needed the feet-washing if he was to have the “part with Me,” of which the Lord spoke. When we reach John 15: 3, we find that this secondary cleansing is ours “through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

This washing of water, then, is by the word, which cleanses **morally** and **spiritually**. It is important to remember this, and to keep it in our minds distinct from the blood, which cleanses **judicially**. Both blood and water were necessary for the Aaronic priests, if they were to enter the sanctuary without dying. In type, the blood witnessed that the judicial penalty of their sins had been borne: the water that worldly defilement had been removed.

These things help us to understand such a Scripture as 1 John 5: 6. Jesus Christ came, “not by water only, but by water and blood.” In that epistle the introduction of anti-Christian teachings is contemplated, and in our day similar teaching is common; to the effect that He did come simply as a reformer of morals, both social and individual, by the power of His word; that is, “by water only.” But He came “by water and blood;” dying to pay the penalty of sin.

Before we pass on it may be helpful to remark that in Numbers 19 we get the ordinance of the “water of separation,” which was a “purification for sin,” available for any of the people that contracted defilement by such a thing as touching a

dead body. This shows that God demands moral fitness **from all His people**. Our Scripture shows that for **priestly** nearness and **service** there must be a cleansing by the word from any defilement of the outside world that might otherwise cling to our actions, typified by the hands, or to our walk, typified by the feet.

The rest of chapter 30 is taken up with detailed instructions as to the composition of the "oil of holy ointment," and then of the "perfume . . . tempered together, pure and holy," which was to be used for incense. The holiness of both these is strongly emphasized and any attempt to imitate them stringently forbidden. When we consider their typical import, we can understand this, for the former was typical of the Holy Spirit of God, and the latter of the fragrant excellencies of Christ.

The oil was to be used to anoint the tabernacle and its vessels, and also Aaron and his sons, as we have seen. All the ingredients were to be "principal," or "best," and the proportions of each to be as prescribed. Upon man's flesh it was not to be poured since it prefigured the anointing of the Spirit, that characterizes our day. Man's flesh is sinful flesh, and the anointing of the Spirit is only received where the blood has been applied.

In verse 34 the spices of equal weight are specified, and verse 35 says, "thou shalt make it into incense, a perfume . . . pure, holy" (New Trans.) Before use it had to be beaten "very small," evidently into a powder. This of course was to release the maximum amount of

fragrance. The beating very small may remind us of the way our Lord was tested in all things, enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself, all of which only served to make manifest the fragrance of His perfection. No man could possibly produce anything like unto it, but men might have tried to copy the incense which was the type of it; hence the attempt was forbidden.

All these instructions having been delivered, one can imagine Moses standing rather aghast at the minuteness of the details and the solemn warnings against any deviation, and wondering by what means they could be carried out. His mind must have been set at rest by God's words recorded in the first eleven verses of chapter 31. God Himself had made provision by calling and equipping two men, whom He names, Bezaleel and Aholiab. The former sprang from Judah, the very foremost of the tribes; the latter from Dan, which as to its subsequent history we should place amongst the last. In His choice of these two men God revealed His sovereignty, calling whom He will and endowing them as He sees fit.

The thought of this should be a great encouragement to us, for we may be sure that God always raises up the necessary servants for the carrying out of His work. If God orders work to be done He supplies the workmen, and if the work is not done it implies failure in the workmen and not in God. As all these things that were ordered had to be constructed in the wilderness, far from the civilized surroundings of Egypt, supernatural wisdom and understanding must indeed have

been needed for their accomplishment. God gave that wisdom, and He also endowed with skill many other wise-hearted ones, whose names are not supplied. They helped in a subsidiary way. This we see, as we read verse 6.

From this we ought also to accept a word of warning. It is evident that to do God's work mere natural ability is not enough. Bezaleel may have had a natural aptitude for such work; if so, it was not enough. He had to be filled with the Spirit of God to accomplish it. If this was the case when material things were being dealt with, how much more so when the service of God concerns spiritual things, and the welfare of the souls of men. Let us never take up the work of God as though we had in ourselves the power or the wisdom to carry it out.

That which God spake to Moses when he was in the mount for forty days and forty nights began with chapter 25, and now in verses 12-17 of our chapter we have God's closing words. They concerned the proper observance of the sabbath, which He declared was to be "a sign between Me and you throughout your generations." This fact is twice stated — verses 13 and 17 — so it is evidently of much importance. Based upon God's rest after creation the seventh day was chosen for it, and the penalty for its infringement was to be death. This may appear to us a very stringent enactment, but we must not forget that now everything was on the basis of law, which the people had just accepted, as that which should govern their relations with God.

Now in order to be a sign a thing

must be of an outward nature which can be observed of men. The sabbath was such an outward observance. Its careful observance would at once have made Israel a peculiar people amongst the nations of the world, and signified that they were in covenant relations with God. In the light of this fact we can at once see how full of meaning were the repeated actions of our Lord in mercy on the sabbath day. He was not only showing that the mercy of God is not restricted by the law God had given, but also that the grace He brought was setting aside the law of Moses as the basis of acceptance before God. This is particularly marked in John 5: 17, 18. The sabbath, which spoke of **rest**, was the sign of the law system, but no rest had been reached on the basis of the law. It was now set aside in favour of **work** — that work which was shared by both the Father and the Son. After the foreshadowing of Abraham and Isaac, in Genesis 22, Father and Son were working together towards the sacrifice of the cross.

Our chapter ends with the statement that to Moses were given two tables of stone, on which as a testimony the commandments were inscribed by the very finger of God. On stone — be it noted — which is of all things most rigid. It cannot be twisted as rubber can be, but it can be broken.

It is of interest to observe the three occasions on which the finger of God wrote. The law on tables of stone. The judgment of the impious Belshazzar and Babylon on the plaster of the wall — Daniel 5: 5. The grace of God written on the dust by our Lord — John 8: 6.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE LAST DAYS

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE writer read a paragraph recently, which set up a whole train of thought in his mind, which he would like to share with others. This paragraph was written by a young woman, who died at the early age of thirty-three. She is described as a French Jewish Roman Catholic, an unusual combination. She evidently saw further than her creed. These were her words:—

“ The Church of the thirteenth century had Christ, but also had the Inquisition. Science in the twentieth century has no Inquisition; but neither has it Christ, nor anything equivalent to Christ.”

These words are very illuminating and explain much. At the time to which the paragraph refers, Europe was dominated by a super-national Church, the Roman Catholic, which had a name to live, but was dead, smothered beneath endless forms, ceremonies, ritual and superstitions; in the world, and of the world. At that time there was, thank God, a real work of God beginning, which ultimately rendered such a positive testimony to Christ, that it drew forth pitiless persecution on the part of the dead, worldly, corrupt Church.

Hence the Inquisition with its diabolical system of torture, its thumb-screws, its dislocating pulleys and the like. The agents of the Inquisition, masked and hooded friars, would suddenly and without warning descend at the hour of midnight, snatch suspected heretics from their beds, carry them off, never to be seen again, for no other

crime than that they had the grace of God in their hearts and the word of God in their hands. Cruelly tortured and murdered in the name of Holy Mother Church by thousands, sorrowing relatives were afraid even to enquire what had become of them. It was indeed a dark, dark story in the history of the professing Church, yet, thank God, gloriously lit up by the courageous testimony of multitudes of Christian martyrs, who joyfully laid down their lives, rather than renounce their Lord. Yes, in the thirteenth century and onwards they had Christ and — **the Inquisition.**

Six centuries have rolled by since then. The twentieth century has arrived with a vastly different state of things meeting our eyes. Note carefully the paragraph we have quoted, speaks of the thirteenth-century Church, but does not speak of the twentieth-century Church, **but of Science** and the twentieth century. This is emphatically the age of Science. In this article it is not our purpose to speak of the strides science has made in electricity, in rail travel, in motor cars, in steamers, in aeroplanes, nor of the invention of missiles of war, capable of destroying human life on a colossal scale, especially the atomic bomb, which has cast a sickening dread over civilised nations. Our thoughts move in the region of what is moral and spiritual, and of that we wish to write.

It is not that Christians make light of true science. That is ever welcomed, for it is realised that the God of science and of revelation is One

and the Same. True science and divine revelation can never be contradictory, for God is the Author of them both. The tactics of Satan seem these days to have altered. No more is it the torturing and murdering of men's bodies, but the torturing of men with doubts as to spiritual things and slaying their faith in Christ, destroying their very souls.

And when scientists with no grace of God in their hearts take up their pens and criticise either God's place as Creator, and His ordering of His universe, or God's message of salvation to sinful men in the Bible, they are bound to go far astray.

It was very early in the Christian era that we read the warning as to false science. The Apostle Paul solemnly and earnestly warned a young man as follows:—

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of

SCIENCE FALSELY SO CALLED :

which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” (1 Tim. 6: 20, 21).

The scientist may have the title of Reverend, and wear the Roman collar, may be a professor, or even the head of a theological college, yet many today come under the withering condemnation of the Apostle Paul's phrase; their effusions are nothing but “science falsely so called.”

We find all this unhappily exemplified in Modernism, Higher Criticism, Unitarianism, Evolution; whilst Spiritism, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses and many

other isms, mostly of American origin, are travelling in the same direction.

Modernism and the like are at the bottom nothing more than infidelity with a very thin veneer of what looks like religion, but which in reality comes straight from the bottomless pit. Modernism, like infidelity, is destructive and not constructive; it will rob the soul of faith, but put emptiness in its place.

And what is the condition of things that faces us today? In the professing Church deadness, sloth, lethargy, complacency, a lack of evangelistic aggression. Even the companies here and there, who are careful to accept only those who profess faith in Christ, and show it in their lives, are affected by the general weakening of the Christian testimony, and are often marked by complacency, lethargy, a lack of zeal in evangelistic work. Many are feeling alarmed about this state of affairs, and cry to God for revival. They see a mere handful at the prayer meeting, and that open-air testimony is almost obsolete, and draw their own conclusions.

It may be that revival will come, but be brought about by different means than we expect. Does Scripture then indicate what our future will be in the last days? It does. Our Lord foreshadowed the terrible condition of things at the end of the age when He asked the question:—

“When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18: 8).

The Apostle John wrote before the canon of the New Testament was completed:—

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (1 John 2 :18).

Christendom has travelled very far since those days in the wrong direction.

One of the most sinister signs of the last days is the rise of Communism. It is a hundred-fold worse than the dreaded Inquisition. It is anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Holy Spirit, anti-Bible. Its aim is to dethrone God, and deify man. Its followers are to a man fanatics, their propaganda is ceaseless and carried out by underhand and foul means. It eats its way like a cancer into the life of the nations. It is a spreading leprosy.

The deification of man in the last days will be seen in the antichrist, the false prophet in the Temple at Jerusalem (2 Thess. 2: 1-10); and in the head of the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 16: 13, 14). The great trinity of evil will be the dragon (Satan); the beast (the head of the revived Roman Empire); the false prophet (antichrist), in Palestine. They will work miracles and gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world to the great battle of Armageddon, which will be their final doom, and lead to the setting up of Christ's millennial kingdom of peace and security (Rev. 16: 13-16). May that day soon come!

We have seen Communism working in Russia, making that country a sinister threat to the whole world. We have seen how recently China went communistic. And what is the

result? Hundreds of devoted missionaries, who had devoted their lives to the evangelisation of that vast country, have been turned out. This shows what we have to expect if Communism gets a strangle-grip on these favoured lands.

Scripture prophesies the final struggle between an apostate religion and Communism. At first apostate religion and communism will be ranged side by side, but when communism, identical with the Revived Roman Empire, rises to the domination of the world, it will throttle apostate religion. We read:—

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put it in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” (Rev. 17: 16, 17).

The ten horns are ten kings under the headship of the revived Roman Empire (Rev. 17: 12). The whore stands for an apostate church. Revelation 18 gives the character of the whore in detail, and foretells her end.

Universities, cathedrals, abbeys, churches, monasteries, nunneries, lands, precious jewellery, money, will all be burnt up or confiscated. Little does Roman Catholicism know what lies in store for her in the near future. Then the prophetic words will be true of her:—

“For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath re-

membered her iniquities." (Rev. 18: 5).

But before these days come, thank God, the Church of God will be raptured to glory in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (1 Thess. 4: 13-18).

We are indeed in Laodicean days,

the last phase of the Church's history on earth. May we be over-comers. May we wake up to the opportunities that are ours on every hand. May we be as men that wait for their Lord. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22: 20).

THE PLATES, THE ROD AND THE SONG

T. D. BELL.

IN the account of the sin and judgment of Korah in Numbers 16 and 17, we read of two memorials which were left to keep this ever in memory. The first was the covering for the altar made of plates formed from the censers of those overthrown, and the second Aaron's rod that budded laid up before the testimony in the holiest. The word used for covering in 16: 38, 39, is not the usual word for covering as from above, but means, overlaid on. The plates therefore formed part of the altar.

Korah's sons we read in Numbers 26: 11, died not in that judgment, they were subjects of delivering grace. Since they were Levites, they would subsequently have part in Levitical, not priestly service. Some of the features marking true Levitical service appear in this connection. It is engaged in by those delivered by sovereign grace from judgment. In its exercise, those occupied in it are to move in the light of these two memorials. One in the place of sacrifice, the altar, and the other in the holiest.

In its application today the one

engaged in this service, the Lord's interests here, must know that judgment has come in on the sin and presumption of the flesh, and as the plates were overlaid on the altar, he who moves in true service, ever identifies that sin with the altar; that is, the cross of Christ. Like a son of Korah in service in the holy things, he remembers the pure grace which has delivered him from judgment, and seeing that memorial ever on the altar, learns to see the sin with which he was identified, only in that one place, where its guilt was removed from the eye of God.

Weakness remains even though guilt has been perfectly removed, and the one who moves in the current of the Lord's mind in His service here, must experience that weakness. The rod, the second memorial, speaks its own word of comfort as to this. Emblem of authority, it witnesses to the subject heart that God has secured in Another all high priestly authority and grace. In true subjection the son of Korah moving in his service should see the memorial on the altar, but, hidden from his sight, he knows the rod is in its place in the holiest.

He should know too, as he touches each detail of that holy service, all that comes into his hand is maintained in order by the high priest, and moreover he should ever be conscious of the ordered grace reaching him from the high priest, secured by the rod in the holiest.

True service today is wrought out in the light of the cross and the glory. The servant, remembering God's judgment on the flesh, sees that perfect atonement in the cross of Christ. He knows the One who died there for him, has gone into the glory, and is there the great High Priest. Walking humbly here he can be blessedly conscious of the sympathy and grace of Christ reaching him at every point where he experiences the weakness left by the failure of man. Though often cast down by his own weakness and

failure, he knows every question of God's righteousness has been answered by the one sacrifice on the cross, and there is every resource for all the service he undertakes in the grace from the great High Priest in the glory.

This leads to the song, and it may be noted that the inscription, "maschil," that is, "for instruction," is prefaced to thirteen psalms. Three of these "maschil" psalms are among the nine psalms of the sons of Korah. Deep lessons had been learned by them of the judgment of the flesh, and of the plates on the altar, and too, of the rod in the holiest. They are the ones skilful — for that, too, is the meaning of "maschil" — in song. May we not seek to be "maschilim" — wise, skilful ones — too, in this holy service, and instructed singing.

THE SMITTEN ROCK AND THE FLOWING WATERS

R. THOMSON.

IN the account of the wanderings of the children of Israel through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan, we have not only the record of their failings, which are for our admonition, but also a graphic account of the fulness of God to meet them in all their need. In the smiting of the rock and the waters flowing forth, we behold in type the atoning death of Christ and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit of God.

Other types had been given of the wonderful effects of the death of Christ, such as the deliverance from judgment by the blood of the lamb in Egypt, the crossing of the Red

Sea, with the final overthrow of Pharaoh's hosts, and the casting of the tree into the bitter waters of Marah. These fresh and advancing lessons were shown to the children of Israel in their beautiful order, and now in Exodus 17 we behold not only what God can do for His people, but also what He can do in them and through them.

This can be viewed as the subjective work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers in the present dispensation. We have the opposition of Amalek, a type of the flesh in the believer, striving against that which is of the Spirit. Amalek

sprang from Esau, and was marked by profanity and opposition to the purpose of God. As the type of the flesh, God will have conflict with it for ever. Saul the king failed to exterminate Amalek in sparing Agag, and eventually lost his kingdom through his disobedience to the word of the Lord. Haman, who sought the death of the Jews in Esther's day, was an Amalakite, and was hanged on the gallows.

In Exodus 17, we have Amalek fighting with Israel, and it is immediately following the flowing waters from the smitten rock; for as we read, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." (Gal. 5: 17). Previously God had fought for them against their enemies, instructing them to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Now they have to choose out men of war, and fight the foe who sought to hinder their progress. In this continuous struggle between the Spirit and the flesh we can count upon the never failing intercession of Christ for us, at God's right hand.

Of this there was a picture when Moses went to the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. In this our day we know that Christ as our High Priest has gone on high, and His priestly work concerning those who are in the conflict enables them to gain the victory. Moses was finite in strength and needed the help of Aaron and Hur. Christ is infinite in power and will ever maintain the cause of His people. His hands are never weary with intercession, and victory over the flesh is assured us, as we continually trust in Him.

Jehovah-nissi — the Lord is my banner.

God would ever keep before our hearts the greatness of the atoning work of Christ, and the consequent blessing of the Spirit, flowing ever toward us; for the smiting of our Rock and the flowing waters are presented to us in many following Scriptures. Let us take Isaiah 53, which gives to us in wondrous detail the vicarious sufferings of Christ. Here we are told that He, the Servant-Son, was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted on account of the transgressions of His people.

Then the opening verse of Isaiah 55 presents the flowing waters. It declares, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." This is good news to the poor, bringing satisfaction to the thirsty and hungry, and life to those who abide in death. Then follow the detailed glories of Christ as the Witness, Leader and Commander of His people, with the blessings of the kingdom, over which He will rule.

Again, in John's Gospel we have the first reference to the actual uplifting of Christ on the cross in chapter 3. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." As the Object of eternal life, available for all on the ground of faith, He, the Originator and Sustainer of life, must go into death to break its power and bring deliverance to whosoever will. This He has gloriously accomplished for God's eternal satisfaction; although it meant the deep sorrow and suffering of the cross,

with the unsparing judgment of God upon the sinner's Substitute.

Then in that same Gospel we have the fruits of Christ's work brought before us. First, in chapter 4, worshippers brought to the Father: then, in chapter 7, the testimony of grace going forth to the world. One is the springing well of water in the heart of the believer, rising up to its Source, even praise and worship to the Father, as empowered by the Holy Spirit according to the truth of God. The Son came to seek and to save the lost; the Father was seeking worshippers; and, blessed, precious truth, each have found that which they sought. Then, the waters flowing forth from the inward parts, as stated in John 7, indicate the outgoing of testimony concerning Christ, energized by the Holy Spirit, sent down to earth, consequent upon the ascension of Christ to the right hand of God.

We turn to the last recorded writing in the Word of God; and in Revelation 5 we contemplate a scene in heaven. The Centre of the worship and the Theme of the song is Christ, the Lamb of God, as He had been slain. Here the "Smitten Rock" is to be gloriously commemorated in heaven, causing the hearts of the redeemed to respond in spontaneous praise, adoration and worship to Him who fills the throne.

But again, almost at the end of the prophecy, we see the waters gushing forth. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (21: 6). A wonderful, divine offer of grace to whomsoever will, in view of the joy and bliss of the eternal state. Then

again, when the Spirit and the bride have invited the Lord to come and fulfil His faithful promise, we get the invitation repeated, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (22: 17).

God's wonderful promises of blessing for Israel in a coming day are based upon this same foundation — the Smitten Rock and the Flowing Waters. In Zechariah 13: 7, we have the smiting. "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." This account of the substitutionary work of Christ, Israel's Messiah, will once again be declared in the ears of God's chosen people, and this time it will be believed, and Himself received.

But, in the next chapter, we read of days that will be the climax of their great tribulation, when the Lord will take up the cause of His people, bringing deliverance to them and destruction to their enemies, and the blessing is thus described: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be" (14: 8).

Thus we behold, to the joy and delight of our hearts, that God will perpetuate the effect of the atoning work of Christ, and minister the refreshing that flows from the energy of the Holy Spirit until the day of eternity.

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTERS 32: I — 33: II).

AT the beginning of chapter 32, our thoughts are carried from the mount, where God communed with Moses, to the plain where the people were encamped during his absence. We can well imagine that as the forty days drew toward their close they became restive. They had seen him disappear into the cloud on the crest of Sinai and to them it seemed as though he was gone from them for ever. Tested as they were in this way, they showed very plainly that they walked by sight and not by faith. Moses had at least been a visible leader, though already a rebellious and unbelieving spirit in regard to him had been manifested. They had not the faith which would have made the unseen Jehovah a reality to them.

Consequently they desired a visible something which should represent the invisible before their eyes. They had been familiar with the veneration of bulls and calves in the depraved idolatry of Egypt. Aaron weakly acquiesced. The ears of the people, which should have been used to hearken to the Word of God, were adorned with gold rings like the ears of the heathen, and these were taken to make the golden calf, which they saluted as though it were a god.

Verse 5 shows that in some way the unseen Jehovah was to be represented by the visible calf — so they thought. Now it is a fact that among the heathen the visible idol does represent an unseen power as 1 Corinthians 10: 20 shows. The idol

is nothing, but the power it represents is that of a demon. Hence, if any power was behind the golden calf, it was of a Satanic kind and not of God.

In this crisis Aaron appears in a very unfavourable light. He had not had the schooling that Moses had endured during the 40 years in the backside of the desert, and hence he was less in touch with God, and more influenced by the wishes of the people, who began to attribute their miraculous deliverance from Egypt to the calf. By instituting an altar and sacrifices he did indeed attempt to give the festivities the semblance of a feast to the Lord. But it was something that he devised out of his own heart and not a feast ordained by the Lord.

The real character of what ensued is indicated in verse 6. "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." This is quoted in 1 Corinthians 10: 7, as a proof that they were idolaters, and a later verse in our chapter (verse 5) indicates how such idolatry at once degenerates into licentiousness and obscenity.

Do we wonder at such a warning being needed by the church at Corinth? But if we know how sodden Corinth was with these evils, we are not surprised; nor shall we be surprised that we need the warning today, if we realize how full the present world is of idolatry of a subtle nature. For what is the chief good, to which all the peoples of the earth hope to arrive? It is

summed up in the words of the parable; to have, "much goods laid up for many years," so that they may say to themselves, "take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12: 19). These words are almost identical with what we have just read in verse 6. The Lord stigmatized the attitude of the rich fool of Luke 12 as covetousness, and in Colossians 3: 5, the Apostle Paul writes, "covetousness **which is idolatry.**"

The programme of the rich fool was: plenty of leisure, plenty to eat and drink in spite of slacking as to work, plenty of fun and pleasure to fill up the hours of leisure. This is precisely the ideal dangled before mankind today. If attained, it means idolatry. As Christians may we have grace to mortify our members which are on the earth, one of which is this covetousness which is idolatry. Israel enjoyed these "pleasures of sin" for a very brief season, until Moses reappeared; a man who, rather than enjoy them, had chosen to "suffer affliction with the people of God." (Heb. 11: 25).

The forty days were expired, and God sent Moses back to the people, revealing to him first how they had corrupted themselves and utterly broken the law in its most fundamental requirement. Verses 7-10, indicate the completeness of the collapse of the people under the law, that so light-heartedly they had undertaken to keep in all its details. They had revealed themselves to be a stiffnecked people, subject to death and the hot wrath of God. Everything had been lost, and God disowned them, speaking of them to Moses as "thy people," and not "My people," as He had spoken of

them to Pharaoh in Egypt.

So fully had they placed themselves under the death sentence that God spoke of removing them entirely, and of raising up a new and great nation from Moses himself. He had already set aside the old world and started afresh in Noah and his sons. Again He had turned from the idolatrous world and started afresh with Abraham and Isaac, the child of promise. He could have done the same thing in principle the third time, starting afresh with progeny derived from Moses.

In verses 11-13, we have the reply of Moses, which is very fine, and reveals him indeed as, "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12: 3). Here was an offer at which the natural heart of man would have jumped — an offer which would have given Moses a place of extraordinary prominence and renown. Yet Moses besought the Lord against it. He insisted that after all the children of Israel were not his people but Jehovah's people. This comes out in verse 11.

In verse 12, he displays his zeal for the name of the Lord, lest it should have its glory dimmed in the minds of the Egyptians. They had felt the mighty power of the arm of the Lord in the deliverance of His people. Were they now to hear that those that had been acknowledged as His people were likewise destroyed? The proposed act of judgment would be right; but would it have the appearance of being right in the eyes of men?

In verse 13 we have a third thing of great significance. Moses, the servant of God through whom the

law was given, falls back, not on the law covenant — all was lost on that basis — but on the unconditional covenant made much earlier with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel — using that name, and not Jacob, the name after the flesh. By an instinct divinely given, Moses in his plea forsook law for grace. On that ground his plea prevailed, in keeping with what is stated in Galatians 3: 17, “the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

So the Lord “repented” of the proposed evil, and this statement does not in any way clash with Romans 11: 29, but rather confirms it. When it is a question of God’s gifts and calling, which are according to His purpose, no change of mind is possible. When it is a question of His ways with sinful men, they vary in detail, though ultimately all achieve His purpose. God tested Abraham, telling him to offer up Isaac, but when he had fully responded, God cancelled the order, having reached His purpose. Similarly here, He tested Moses by this proposal, so attractive to a self-seeking mind, and the test completed, He turned from the proposal and reverted to the ancient covenant which was the expression of His purpose.

In keeping with God’s command Moses descended from the mount, meeting Joshua on his way down, and having the two tables of stone in his hand. The tables themselves were the work of God, and the testimony inscribed on them was the

writing of God. In the coming day under the new covenant the law will be written in the hearts of the people. At the present time the Spirit of God is writing not the law but Christ upon the hearts of those who receive the Gospel. But here God’s righteous demands on men were inscribed on stone.

Hence, bearing in mind the condition of things in Israel, we see at once that the tables of the testimony brought a ministration of condemnation and death. Approaching the camp in its dreadful state, Moses instinctively felt this, and he broke the tables before he came amongst the people. We read that, “Moses’ anger waxed hot,” so, directly he saw the evil for himself, he shared the Divine anger, which was made known to us in verse 10.

Moses had pleaded for the people and they were not to be destroyed, but the very man who had acted as intercessor on their behalf, now acted in a governmental way to bring home to them the bitterness of their sin. He burnt the golden calf and then ground it to powder — a humiliating end for the supposed “god,” that brought them up from Egypt! And not only this. He also mixed the burnt dust with water and made the people drink their “god,” instead of drinking in honour of it, as they had been doing.

The chemical process involved in doing this unusual thing was known to the Egyptians, and Moses, we must remember, was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,” and so knew well how to do it. There was, we are told, an ironic suitability about this punishment inflicted

upon them, since gold thus treated and made into a drink has a most nauseous taste. In this literal and material way the people had brought home to them the filthiness and bitterness of their great sin.

The chief weight of the sin lay upon Aaron, and his attempted defence was feeble in the extreme. He attempted to remove the blame from himself and put it upon the people. When sin first entered, Adam attempted to put the blame on to Eve, as we saw in Genesis 3: 12. The same thing in principle appears now that we have reached the first and greatest sin under the law. Moreover he attempted to minimize his sin, as we see in verse 24. He did indeed cast the gold into the fire, but, as verse 4 recorded, the calf was not only "molten," but also he "fashioned it with a graving tool." By telling a half truth he tried to disguise the whole truth.

In Hebrews 3: 5 we read, "Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as a servant," and though this is not stated specifically of the incident we are considering, it was exemplified here in a striking way. The calf was a direct challenge to the supremacy and glory of God. Moses fresh from the presence of Jehovah was altogether on His side in the controversy, and he challenged all the people to declare themselves. They had been dancing round the calf: now let them gather round Moses, and thus declare themselves as on the side of Jehovah. To this challenge the sons of Levi responded.

The sin was of so drastic a character that judgment was inevitable. They were now under the law, and, "the law worketh wrath" (Rom.

4: 15). The sons of Levi, who had cleared themselves from the evil, were chosen to execute a limited judgment as a token of the judgment that lay upon all, and about three thousand men died. They had to consecrate themselves to the Lord in this way, for the claims of God are supreme. In Matthew 10: 37, we find a similar claim made by the Lord Jesus, though He was revealing grace and not law.

Only in Galatians 3: 19 is Moses spoken of as a mediator, yet in verse 30 we see him formally taking his place as such. In consequence we see at once the contrast between him and the Lord Jesus, who is "the Mediator of a better covenant" (Heb. 8: 6). Moses realized that nothing short of an atonement for the sin was needed, and he proposed to go up to the Lord and offer himself; such was his fervent love to his erring people. His plea was for the forgiveness of the sin, and if not that he instead of the nation might be blotted out of the Divine Book. But he was only able to undertake the office with "Peradventure" on his lips. How great the contrast between this and what we have in 1 Timothy 2: 5, 6.

Moses, though so eminent and faithful a servant, was not a perfect man, but himself a sinner. The words of the Lord, which are recorded in verse 33, reminded him that consequently he himself was liable to be blotted out of the book, and hence he could not stand as a ransom for anybody else. The true Mediator, "the Man Christ Jesus," has given Himself a ransom, not merely for the one sin of one people, but for "ALL." The efficacy of His

ransom is guaranteed by the fact that He is God as well as Man.

The answer of the Lord nevertheless assured Moses that He would act in forbearance toward the erring people and lead them onward by His Angel, as He had originally promised in chapter 23: 20-23, though His governmental judgment would still further come upon them. This came to pass, as verse 35 records, though details of the plague are not given.

Chapter 33 opens with the command that the people prepare themselves to go forward to the land, which was to be theirs, not because they deserved it under the law, but because of the unconditional covenant that had been given originally to Abraham. God would still act on their behalf, driving out the nations before them and bringing them in, but this would be done by the Angel. On Sinai God was in their midst in a special way. Henceforward He would be amongst them by His Angel. His presence in a more immediate way might involve judgment upon them. Verses 4-6, show how near they had been to complete destruction, and how their only becoming attitude was to stand mourning in the presence of God, and stripped of all that they might imagine beautified them.

Verses 7-11, record how Moses took an action, which was endorsed by the Lord, though there is no record of it having been commanded by Him. He took a tent and pitched it outside and afar off from the camp, calling it the tent of the congregation. We must remember that

Moses had only just come down from the mount, having received the instructions as to making the Tabernacle, and there had been as yet no time for its construction. The word used here is not the one indicating the tabernacle proper, but rather the outer covering, as we saw when reading chapter 26. Yet God honoured the action of Moses and placed the pillar of cloud on this tent outside the camp.

The significance of all this must have been plain to the people. If any of them sought the Lord, outside the camp they had to go, in order to find Him, for they had forfeited His presence by their sin. Communion between Jehovah and Moses was not broken, for he had not participated in their sin. To him God spoke face to face on a friendly basis, but they could only witness this and not in any way participate. Joshua was with Moses in this, for he too had not been involved in the transgression.

This withdrawal from the camp was only provisional and in order to impress on the people the gravity of their sin. Presently normal conditions were restored, and when the Tabernacle was made it stood in the midst of the camp. The reference in Hebrews 13: 13 is not to this incident but to the law of the sin offering. The "camp" out of which the Hebrew believers were to go forth was not one which they were to re-enter long after. The rejected Christ, slain as the sin offering, has been "outside the camp" for nineteen centuries, and we are to be outside with Him, and not return to it.

THE SON OF GOD

OUR Lord's own words, that "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father," may well make us take up with reverence the theme before us. There is none where it is more needful to remember, that it is the province of the Word to judge us, not ours to judge it. We have only "with meekness to receive," bowing the pride of our intellect, and checking the wanderings of our imagination, and restraining the unholy curiosity which would fain so often indulge itself even in the presence of the "deep things of God."

But while there is no subject as to which controversy is more to be deprecated, there is at the same time no point of faith upon which it is more important to have possession of the Scripture truth in its simplicity. The Person of the Son of God is one of faith's foundations. To touch it is to bring everything into question. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also." The Lord give us, beloved reader, unfeigned humility and subjection to the inspired Word, our only guidance here or elsewhere.

The declaration of the Son of God is given us even in the Old Testament. We know to whom it is said, "Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee" (Psa. 2: 7). There has been, however, even here, to begin with, a most serious mistake made. The language of the psalm has been applied to the Lord as a Divine Being; and hence the way opened to low and dishonouring

thoughts concerning Him; while the forced explanations of those who held the truth substantially did not commend the truth they held.

It should be plain that "this day have I begotten Thee" could only apply to the Lord's birth as Man. And the not seeing that as Man also He has the title of Son of God, has been the cause of much confusion and perplexity. Yet it is plainly stated in the angel's answer 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). Here there is no room to question that the manner of His conception is the justification of the claim of the "Man, Christ Jesus," to be the "Son of God."

And in Acts 13, the very passage in the psalm is in this way applied to His begetting as Man: "And we declare unto you glad tidings; how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus,* **as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.**" It is not resurrection that is spoken of here, as some have thought, for the Apostle goes on to speak of that separately directly after: "and as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will

* "Again" is not in the original, and should be omitted.

give you the sure mercies of David.”

But while not seeing this claim of the Lord as **Man** to be the **Son** of God, has been the mistake of some, and while positive error has in this way come in, — others have made this the whole thing as to His Sonship. They have conceived it to be a lowering of His dignity, and inconsistent with His having equal honours with the Father, to speak of Him as eternally the Son. They call it even an “inferior name,” unworthy of Him. They maintain that it is inconsistent with co-eternity as well as with co-equality. Hence they believe Him Son only as **Man**, and deny Him to be **Eternal Son**, ever in the bosom of the Father.

It is impossible to deny, on the other hand, that some maintainers of the **Eternal Sonship** have drawn from it conclusions of this very kind; and in this very way the **Arianism** of the fourth century came in. Scripture, however, which clearly states the doctrine, is in no wise responsible for the conclusion of men, against which, moreover, it carefully and jealously guards us. We have only to cleave fast to it, and the simplest and most childlike among us will be certain to go least astray.

Let us turn, then, to the Scripture statements as to this. We are told that “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent His **only begotten Son** into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 John 4: 9). The language here is plain and expressive. It surely tells us God had a Son to send. And not, mark, after He was in the world, He sent Him to the Cross; no, but He sent Him into the world. Surely then, before He was in the world,

God had a Son to send. Before “that holy thing” was begotten at all on earth, there was a Son, an **only-begotten** Son, in heaven.

This is so clear that not another word ought to be needed; and it is only one out of many like passages. But I have been asked, could not the title of Son be given **by anticipation** here? Might He not have been the decreed, the fore-ordained Son, and so have been spoken of before He actually came into that place, or assumed that relationship?

I would answer by another question, Does not the Apostle tell us that this was how God manifested His love to us, in that it was His Son He sent? And would it not in any wise cloud this manifestation, if it were **not** One then in that relationship He sent, but only One who was to become that after being sent?

But again. What glory was it that the disciples saw in Him who, when He was upon earth, could say, “I and My Father are one,” and, “he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father”? Was it anything short of **Divine** glory that they saw in the “Word made flesh”? Let them say then, who had seen it, what it was. What do they say of it? “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt* among us, and we beheld His glory” — the glory proper to the **Divine Word** made flesh: what was it? — “the glory as of the **only-begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth” (John 1: 14).

* “*Tabernacled*” is the word, as if to assure us it was the full reality of His presence whose glory had filled the tabernacle of old.

Once more, I do not see how it could be plainer. If it was the only-begotten Son, whom God had sent, it was equally the glory of the only-begotten which shone out from Him while here. Is that, I would ask again, a glory properly Divine or not? Would it be enough if it were the glory only of a Divinely begotten **Man**? for Man it was, let us remember, true Man, that was born of a virgin; not blended Godhead and manhood. I am sure as to what the heart of every saint will say: it was true and Divine glory. Then I urge, the Apostle can find no better way of describing it to us as such, than to say, that it was "glory as of the only-begotten of the Father," — glory such as that!

And when he goes on to add, contrasting that revelation of God then made with the darkness of former dispensations: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him;" surely it is not one begotten on earth that he has in mind, but One from all eternity in the nearest and dearest and most intimate relationship to the Father, who is come to speak of Him.

And once more. If there be a precise and formal statement anywhere, of the two natures in the One Christ Jesus, it will be admitted, perhaps, such a thing is to be found in Romans 1: 3, 4. What then is the Apostle Paul's statement concerning the Lord Jesus there? "Which was made of the seed of David **according to the flesh**;" that is the one, the human side; what is the other? "But declared to be the Son of God with power, according to

the spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead." Is this also "according to the flesh"? Clearly not, for it is plainly and pointedly distinguished from it. What He was according to the flesh, His human nature, he was "of the seed of David." Outside and beyond all that, He was "SON OF GOD."

Need there be more said? Surely the Word is not indistinct or uncertain in its utterances here. In none of these places could the thought of the title of the Son of God being anticipatively used of Him before He came in flesh and had the place, be possibly admitted. In the last case, He is definitely stated to be Son of God in **distinction** from what He was according to the flesh.

And as to men's conclusions, Scripture is not responsible for, but, as I have said, guards carefully against them. If they say, the doctrine supposes the Son not equal to the Father, even the Jews rebuke it, who sought to kill Him because He had said, "that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5: 18).

If, on the other hand, men would draw, as they **have**, alas, drawn, such dishonouring conclusions from the Scripture truth, once more the Word enforces "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (ver. 23).

Can they not understand that the poor human relationship is after all but a faint and broken reflection of the Divine, and that to press a resemblance any further than the Word itself sanctions, is to pervert, not to receive the Word?

"Into the name of the Father,

Son and Holy Ghost" are we baptized. That Name is the expression of all with which we are for ever identified. May this Triune God

keep His saints true to all implied in it.

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FINALITY AND DISPLACEMENT

A. J. POLLOCK.

THERE are two descriptive titles of our Lord Jesus Christ, found in the great resurrection chapter of the Bible. There we read of "The Last Adam" and "The Second Man" (1 Cor. 15: 45, 47). The former title illustrates **finality**; the latter illustrates **displacement**.

THE LAST ADAM.

The word, **last**, denotes finality. There can be nothing after the last. The word, **last**, certainly implies a first, and it may be many intermediate links, but the **last** means completeness, nothing further to expect, conclusiveness, finality. We read:—

"The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. 15: 45, New Trans.)

The first Adam received life, and was a dependent man; the last Adam is the source of life and the communicator of it. The first Adam sinned, and dragged down his posterity after him in ruin and shame. The last Adam is Divine as well as Human, never to be superseded, for there is, and can be, no breakdown with Him. The first Adam was the Head of a fallen race; the last Adam is the Head of a new creation.

"As in Adam all die; even so

in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15: 22).

That is to say, all, that are "in Christ," shall be made alive in resurrection, for in Christ there is a new creation, in which every believer has his part. (See 2 Cor. 5: 17).

There is finality in our Lord. None will succeed Him. He will never die, nor break down. He continueth ever. It is a trying experience to lean upon a friend, a counsellor, who becomes by age and experience more and more able to give wise counsel, but death comes along, and just when he is most valuable and helpful, in a moment your prop is no more. But it is not so with our blessed Lord, for He continueth ever, "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7: 16). There is, blessed be His holy name, finality with Him.

We read the difference between the types and the Antitype:—

"They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man [the Lord Jesus], because He continueth ever, hath **an unchangeable priesthood**. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing **He ever liveth** to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7: 23-25).

The poverty of human language to express divine thoughts, entirely outside the range of time and sense, is seen in the following Scripture:—

“ I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, which is to come, the Almighty.”
(Rev. 1: 8).

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, but here is human language, utilised to present to us the thought that with the Lord there is no beginning and no ending, that He is from eternity to eternity. We do not read that in the beginning **is** the word, but that “ in the beginning **was** the Word ” (John 1: 1). That “ **was** ” stretches back without a beginning. In this verse our Lord is described as having a present, a past, a future, and in that order — a present, that is always a present; a past, that never had a beginning; a future, that will never know an end. This is our Lord, whose Being is stamped with finality. How comforting in this changing scene to be told of

“ **Jesus Christ, the Same yesterday, and today, and for ever.**”
(Heb. 13: 8).

We have to do with One, who can never die, who will never cease His tender solicitude and activities on our behalf, the One who sticketh closer than a brother, One who is able to save to the uttermost, to the very last step of the journey home. “ Underneath are the everlasting arms ” of love and power (Deut. 33: 27). How wonderfully well off are we! What resources we have in our Lord!

Scientists may tell us this earth

was created millions of years ago. It surely had a beginning, but it is going to have an ending. This very earth in which we live will one day perish, the very elements will melt with fervent heat. We read of the things around us:—

“ They shall perish; but **Thou remainest** . . . they shall be changed; but Thou art the Same, and Thy years shall not fail.”
(Heb. 2: 11, 12).

How precious are the words “ **Thou remainest** ” in all changing circumstances.

The Apostle Peter had a grand idea of the finality of our Lord, when he so powerfully declared to the Sanhedrim, who had so recently played their wicked part in crucifying the Lord of glory:—

“ **There is none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
(Acts 4: 12).

In these sadly degenerate days we hear of modernistically inclined missionaries doing the devil’s work, telling the natives of heathen lands, that they come out to make Buddhists better Buddhists; Mohammedans better Mohammedans; Confucians better Confucians; that there is good in all religions. Peter’s announcement **sweeps** all this wicked nonsense out of the way. In the matter of salvation our Lord is the only Saviour, and we cannot build a superstructure of Christianity on a foundation of heathen and devilish religions.

Our Lord stated the exclusivism of Christianity very definitely:—

“ I AM the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” (John 14: 6).

Outside of Christ there is no way back to God; outside of Him there is no truth to illuminate our path and guide us aright on a journey, whose terminus is either heaven or hell, a very vital matter; no life suitable for God, save that which emanates from Him alone.

Only in the realm of grace are we glad to see all mediatorship in the hands of One, whom we can supremely trust. In the world the monopolist generally speaking has a questionable name, as one who corners some necessity of life, and puts a prohibitive price on that, which no one can procure, but from him alone, and amasses thereby a fortune at the expense of the many. How vastly different is our Lord. Using the symbolic language of the Old Testament, here is His invitation:—

“ He that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (Isa. 55: 1).

In this market the multi-millionaire is as powerless to buy, and the poorest mendicant with perfectly empty pockets is welcome to receive, as a pure and gracious gift from God, all the blessings of the Gospel of the grace of God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

* * * *

THE SECOND MAN

This title referring to our Lord is only mentioned once in the whole of the Scriptures. We read:—

“ The first man is of the earth, earthy; the Second Man is the Lord from heaven.” (1 Cor. 15: 47).

Here we have in sharp contrast the difference between the first man and the Second Man. The first man is of the earth, earthy, he does not rise above his origin, nay more, there would have been no need for a Second Man, if the first had not failed to maintain the position in which a Creator-God had placed him. And so the contrast is still further emphasised. We read:—

“ As is the earthy; such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” (1 Cor. 15: 48).

The origin of the first man was earthy; the origin of the Second Man is heavenly. We see, too, how these stand for two headships.

Romans 5: 12-21 is the portion of Scripture which brings out the contrast between the two headships. By one man sin entered the world, and death passed upon all men, for all men have sinned. The judgment came by one to condemnation, that is through Adam; the free gift is of many offences unto justification, that is the atoning death of our Lord lifted for faith the sinner from the headship of Adam to the Headship of Christ, so we read:—

“ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5: 17).

What a happy displacement this is, to be relieved righteously through

the death of our Lord Jesus Christ from sin and its consequence, and to find ourselves under the Headship of our Lord, which speaks of eternal and blessed association with Him, so that we can say:—

“As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (I Cor. 15: 49).

How careful is Scripture to tell us the Second Man is the Lord **from heaven**. Even our Lord when here on earth could say:—

“No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is **in heaven**.” (John 3: 13).

Our Lord was a true Man. His manhood stood alone by itself, perfectly unique. He never was a member of Adam's fallen race. That is the meaning of the virgin birth. Our Lord had no human father. He

was begotten of the Holy Spirit of God. As to the manhood He was pleased to take, He was the Lord **from heaven**. The angel Gabriel addressing the virgin Mary said to her:—

“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).

What a happy displacement from utter ruin under the first man, to the blessedness of association with the Second Man, our blessed risen Lord in glory! Well may we sing,

“Called from above, and heavenly men by birth
(Who once were but the citizens of earth),
As pilgrims here, we seek a heavenly home,
Our portion, in the ages yet to come.”

“THE FORM OF A SERVANT”

IN Philippians 2 we read of Him, whose being was such that He subsisted “in the form of God.” A moment came, however, when emptying Himself, He “took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.” His equality with God is stated in the passage, but were it not, it could be safely inferred from the very fact of His taking the servant's place.

It has been very justly stated thus by another: “Had He not been equal with God, He could not have done this; because every creature, every one less than God is **already** a servant to his Creator. One Jew might be a **voluntary** servant to another Jew — a servant with a bored ear (Exod. 21) — but no creature could be a **voluntary** servant to God, inasmuch as all creatures are already **bound** servants to Him by reason of the relationship of Creator and creature.”

This one Scripture alone therefore shows how baseless and erroneous is the old Arian heresy that Christ is merely the first and greatest of all God's **creatures**; and the modern revival of this heresy under the name of “Jehovah's Witnesses.”

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS

F. B. HOLE

(CHAPTERS 33: 12—39: 43).

WE are now permitted to hear the terms of this "face to face" speaking between Moses and the Lord, and we can at once perceive that the Lord did deal with him as with a friend. As we read verses 12-23, we may well have our hearts stirred: especially so as we remember how much closer is the relationship of children and sons into which we are brought. In result, the friendship into which we may enter, as given by our Lord in John 15: 13-16, is of an even more intimate character.

Moses is emboldened not only to intercede for the people but also to request for himself a more definite knowledge of what he might expect in the way of the Divine leadership, and in the understanding of the way that was decreed. In verse 14 we have the answer to the first part of his request.

Jehovah promised that His presence should go with him, and in that fact fear was to be allayed and rest was to be found. The next verses show how fully Moses realized that to have the presence of God with them was the all-essential thing, without which they could not go forward, nor could their special place as the people called out from amongst the nations be maintained. Their subsequent history fully bore this out. As they departed from the Lord, so they lost their separated place, and the departure of the glory from the midst of the city, recorded in Ezekiel, was the commencement of the long epoch during which they

have been dispersed among the nations. Yet even so they have never lost their identity, and ultimately, restored by mercy, Jehovah will be in their midst, so that the name of the Jerusalem in the coming age will be, Jehovah-shammah, "the Lord is there" (Ezek. 48: 35).

The first request, then, of Moses was, "Shew me now Thy way," and this was granted, as we read in Psalm 103: 7, "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." The people saw the wonderful things He did, but Moses was permitted to know the end God was pursuing in the doing of them. But when Moses made his second request, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory," he met with a refusal. He was permitted to see the "back parts" of the Lord but not His "face," for no man could see that and live. Moses was only to see God when He had passed by, as it were, and thus discern Him in the way He had taken.

How great is the contrast when we come to the New Testament. We open John's Gospel and we read, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." We pass on to the Epistles to read of, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). The Christian today is given to know something of the "glory," as well as of the "acts" and the "way." It is delightful to know that though Moses could not then see the glory,

he did see it in the face of Jesus, when he was with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. And then he knew right well what it would cost the Saviour to make that glory available for him and for us all, for he spoke of His decease.

For the time being Moses had to be content to know the goodness and the name of the Lord, and in connection with that His grace and His mercy were displayed. Here we have the statement which Paul quotes in Romans 9: 15, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;" and by this is declared the sovereignty of God. The point is that Israel had lost everything on the basis of strict law, and yet God elected to show mercy and continue with them. Israel had therefore no ground for objecting to God choosing to show mercy to Gentiles in these Gospel days. From the days of the golden calf they owed their own existence to the mercy of God.

Though this was so, they were still left under the law which had been given, and hence, as we open chapter 34, we find that Moses was to hew two tables of stone like the first and again come up with them to the top of the mount, that God might write the words on them as He had done before. As on the first occasion so again, no man was permitted to come near, and even flocks and herds were to be kept from the mount. The holiness of God was emphasized once more, but this time in harmonious connection with His mercy.

If we meditate quietly for a little upon verses 6 and 7, we shall be repaid. Here are brought together features of the Divine character

which we now know quite well, but to Moses they might have seemed to be in many respects at variance one with the other. He might have desired to ask, If He is abundant in truth as well as goodness, how can He be gracious to a people such as we have proved ourselves to be? Or again, How can He rightly forgive iniquity and transgressions, if He will by no means clear the guilty, and even visit the sins of the fathers on the children? Centuries later the Psalmist, writing as a prophet, anticipated the happy millennial day, when it shall be said that, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psa. 85: 10). But even so, there was no full display of "grace and truth" until they came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17), and were harmonized by His death and resurrection.

As some find difficulty in the latter part of verse 7, it may be well to remark that God is here indicating how He deals with men on earth in His holy government. When it is a question of His judgment for eternity, the dead will be dealt with "according to their works" (Rev. 20: 12, 13), and there is no thought of a child bearing the sin of his father. In speaking to Moses, God was not dealing with the issues of eternity, but with His government of Israel under the law in the light of His mercy that had just been declared. In the working out of God's government in this world, the way in which the iniquity of a father adversely affects his children is a fact too obvious for any of us to overlook. The laws of heredity, which God has ordained, are very real.

As these things were made known to Moses he was deeply affected, as we see in verses 8 and 9. He worshipped in the recognition of God's grace, first toward himself and then toward the people, and once more he sought pardon in the confession of their sin and stiffnecked spirit. It is good for us to see that a sense of grace does not lead to the minimizing of sin. The reverse is indeed the fact. It is in the presence of grace that sin in its gravity is fully declared, as is shown by the Lord's words, recorded in John 15: 24.

In response to this confession and plea of Moses, God declared a fresh covenant, in which He pledged Himself to work wonders, which would manifest His power in the sight of His people, though He did not reveal what the nature of these wonders would be. What we do see in the rest of this chapter is that this fresh covenant was of a subsidiary nature, and did not in any wise cancel or modify the covenant of law which had just been established, since certain enactments of the law are freshly enforced.

We can well understand what is ordered in verses 11-17. The people had just fallen into the great sin of making the molten calf. The idea of this they had evidently brought up with them out of Egypt. God was going to drive out before them the nations of Canaan, that were sodden with forms of idolatry even worse than those of Egypt, hence the most complete separation from those peoples, from their gods, their altars and images, was enjoined. They themselves and all that pertained to their idolatrous worship were to be destroyed. God had entered into covenant with Israel,

hence they were not to make any covenant with those nations.

In verses 18-26, we have certain details of the law recapitulated. It is not easy to discern the connection between the various items specified, but we can see that if they observed them the rights of Jehovah their God would be safeguarded, on the one hand, and on the other, they would be a nation quite distinct in their observances, and thus marked off from other peoples. In verse 24 there is one statement which they had not previously heard. If they obeyed the command that their males should leave their homes to appear before the Lord thrice every year, God guaranteed the safety of their land and homes during their absence. What the wise man states in Proverbs 16: 7, would thus be verified, and if they took God at His word all fear would be removed.

Again Moses was on the mount in the presence of God for forty days and forty nights, miraculously sustained without food or drink. Again the ten commandments were written on tables of stone and committed to the hands of Moses, so that he might bring them down to the people. Verse 29 records how he came down. In his hand he had the tables of stone: in his face there was a reflection of the glory, and, though not mentioned here, we know he also possessed "the patterns of things in the heavens" (Heb. 9: 23), which had been entrusted to him. The commandments made their full demand upon all the people and were plain for all to see. The full significance of the "patterns" was doubtless veiled to them, but we know they set forth God's way of

meeting all the guilt which the law revealed.

Still the glory that shone in the face of Moses was connected with the law's demands, and therefore it bought fear to Aaron and the children of Israel. The significance of this episode is expounded to us in 2 Corinthians 3: 6-18. The glory in the face of Moses was connected with a ministration of death and of condemnation, and hence he had to place a veil on his face, when in the presence of the people, though before the Lord he did not need it. In contrast to this, we know the glory of God — and not merely a reflection of it — in the face of Jesus Christ, and no veil is needed, for that glory speaks to us of life and liberty and not of condemnation and death.

The glory in the face of Moses was not something inherent in himself; indeed he was unconscious of it at first. Moreover presently it faded — it was "done away" (2 Cor. 3: 11). Here again we see the contrast, for the glory in the face of Jesus abides for ever. And further, it has a transforming effect on those who by faith behold it, whereas the glory in the face of Moses only produced fear.

Moses faithfully conveyed the Divine commands to the people, as we are told in the opening verses of chapter 35, and particularly he impressed upon them the rest that was to be observed on the sabbath day. Not even a fire was to be kindled in all their homes. Being the sign of the covenant, there was to be a strict observance of it.

The rest of this chapter is taken

up with the recital of all the materials that were commanded of God for the construction of the tabernacle and all its furniture; then from verse 20 to 29 we are told how very willingly the people responded to the orders they received. It is emphasized that every man and every woman had a part in the offering, and that what they gave or did was a willing service.

Then from verse 30 to the end of the chapter, we get the two men whom God had chosen pointed out to the people, with the plain intimation that the skill they now possessed to carry out the intricate work involved, was not their own but given to them of God.

In both these things we may find encouragement for ourselves. For the work of God today the same two things are needed — first the willing heart, and then the skill. Both are the gift of God, and in our day the skill expresses itself in the prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers, of whom we read in Ephesians 4: 11. These gifts are given, not for the construction of a tabernacle, but "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." God's work still has the character of building up; for to "edify" is to build.

We now have four chapters (36-39), which are occupied with the record of how the Divine instructions were carried out under the hand of Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were the workmen specially commissioned. As the substance of these chapters has already been before us we shall content ourselves with just picking out details here and there.

First, let us notice verse 5 of chapter 36. When God moves in the hearts of men He can produce a response worthy of Himself. The people brought as their offering not merely what was wanted, but "much more than enough." We see something similar, and indeed even surpassing it, in 2 Corinthians 8: 1-5. The Macedonian saints were "in a great trial of affliction;" that is to say, passing through wilderness experiences, and yet they gave "to their power," and even "beyond their power," exceeding the hopes of the Apostle, for they, "first gave their own selves to the Lord." It is not surprising that a response produced by the grace of God goes beyond that produced under the law, fine though it might be.

If these chapters be compared with the earlier chapters, small added details may be discovered; such as the fact that both the cherubim were of one piece with the mercy seat, illustrating the fact that where the blood of sacrifice is, there the demands of righteousness and of mercy are satisfied together.

Further, the order in which the various articles are mentioned is not as before. Then it was according to spiritual significance, now just in the order in which we should consider them, working from within to without.

Then in the latter part of chapter 38, the sum of the tabernacle is given by the hand of Ithamar the priest, and the weights of gold and silver used is specified. As to this our reactions may well be two-fold. First to wonder that so much was available seeing the wilderness surroundings of the people; but second, that what was used was as nothing compared with the immense stores that were laid up by David for the temple which Solomon was able to build. Yet all the time it was true that, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7: 48).

In chapter 39 we have details of the making of the priestly garments for Aaron and his sons; and then at the end of that chapter we learn how everything that had been made was presented before Moses for his inspection. All had to pass his eye, for he had received most stringent instructions on the mount that all must be made exactly according to the pattern entrusted to him. Moses saw that it was so, and blessed the people.

Should we today be any less careful to observe all the instructions afforded in the New Testament as to our behaviour, whether individually or as in the assembly of God? To ask this question is surely sufficient. The answer is obvious.

HE that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 31). Man glories in anything that will bring honour to himself — anything that distinguishes him from his neighbours. . . . **Vanity** is seen more in some, wishing for the good opinion of others; **pride** more in others, having a good opinion of themselves. . . . Whatever you are decking yourself out with — it may even be with a knowledge of Scripture — it is glorying in the flesh.

THE DIVINE RESTRAINER

A. J. POLLOCK.

IT is little realised what a powerful restraint on evil and lawlessness the Holy Spirit of God is exercising today in this world on behalf of God's dear people, and the carrying out of His own plans. We read, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth [**restraineth**] will let [**restrain**], until he be taken out of the way. And THEN shall that Wicked [**Antichrist**] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2: 7, 8).

The word, **let**, as used in this Scripture, only occurs once in the New Testament in its archaic and obsolete meaning, that is **to hinder**. In the time of King James I, when our Authorised Version of the Bible was produced, this was the familiar meaning of the word, which today in our ordinary speech means the exact opposite. The Greek word in the New Testament for **let**, meaning to hinder, is **katechō**; whereas the word for **let**, meaning to allow, is **aphiēmi**, a different word altogether.

This Scripture is deeply interesting and important as informing us that Antichrist will not appear till **after** the Church of God has been raptured to glory at the second coming of our Lord. The ceasing of the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit on evil is thus linked up in point of time with the removal of the saints of God at the time of our Lord's second coming.

Seeing Christians wait for the near return of their Lord "in a moment,

in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15: 52), it is not surprising that we find evident signs of the loosening of evil in this world. Among these signs of the last days **nothing is more formidable and threatening than Communism**. The writer is old enough to remember when Communism was unheard of. The early Victorian days were spacious, peaceful and pleasant. No particular threatening cloud was on the horizon. No civilised nation would have dreamed of declaring war on another power without giving its ambassador every facility for leaving the country peacefully before a single shot should be fired.

How alarmingly different things are today, when the sickening dread on every hand is of a confessedly Communistic power suddenly, without a moment's warning, launching atomic warfare, capable of wiping out such capital cities as London and New York in a single hour and winning the war in a single day.

How very thankful we Christians should be, that the Holy Spirit of God is restraining evil at this very hour. We may well pay fresh heed to the exhortation, that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 2: 1-3). It is to be noticed that this exhortation occurs in an epistle, which gives warning as to "the latter times."

All this goes along with the con-

dition of Christendom today. The wonderful days of Pentecost are long past. For over nineteen centuries the gospel of the grace of God has been proclaimed. God's longsuffering mercy has been slighted and despised. Yet we must ever remember that God will have the last word. "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). While it is most blessedly true that God is a God of infinite love and mercy, it is likewise true that God is a God of inflexible righteousness and unbending justice. A reckoning day must come!

What is the programme of Communism? It is to do away with belief in God, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in the Scriptures, and the complete disallowance of Christianity in any shape or form. Where can such a negation of all that is of God and of truth and of righteousness emanate from, but from the bottomless pit. The movement is marked by the wildest fanaticism, untruthfulness, deceitfulness, the utter disregard of common morality, and pitiless cruel persecution meted out to any who dare to dispute its progress. It is ungodly, unholy, unclean.

Promising liberty such as has never been known in all the history of the world, it is marked by the most abject fear and intolerable bondage. Even the totalitarian ruler of this régime is obliged to surround himself with a huge bodyguard, whose vigilance must not be relaxed day and night for a single moment. If he goes a railway journey, hundreds of soldiers must guard every yard of the line over which he must

pass. It is said that the very food that comes from his kitchens is rigorously inspected to guard against its being poisoned. The whole thing sounds like living in a gigantic madhouse.

Recently the civilised world has been shocked by the diabolical treatment meted out to a man of great character and ability, of sound mental and physical powers. They have passed him through unspeakable tortures, till he has been reduced to a helpless pitiable wreck of humanity, with memory, will and manhood completely gone. The inhumanity of man to man is almost incredible, were it not that there are a multitude of authenticated cases to prove the terrible truth.

Even in this favoured land, it is reported from various places that preachers of the gospel of the grace of God in the open-air have been interrupted by Communists with the remark, "Wait till we're in power, and you will be the first to be put against the wall."

As we observe the trend of things today, it is only fitting that we Christians should realise the times in which we live. It will help us to appreciate how near the coming of our beloved Lord may be, and help us to use earnestly the interval that is left to us, to spread the gospel of the grace of God, man's only hope, indoors and out-of-doors, in season and out of season, by word of mouth, or by the gospel tract and booklet.

How comforting it is for the Christian to read the cheering words of Scripture, that "greater is He [The Holy Spirit of God] that is

in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (1 John 4: 4). The power of the Spirit of God is **infinite**; that of Satan is but **finite**, however great, however numerous, however highly organised his followers may be, for

he is king "of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 9: 11). Our trust and faith is in God. We gladly re-echo Abraham's grand words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18: 25).

HEBREWS: A BRIEF SKETCH

J. HOUSTON.

THE Hebrews, to whom this Epistle was addressed, were Christians. The writer calls them, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," and he exhorts them to go forward in faith, in answer to their calling. This forward movement would, of course, imply their "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," and going "on unto perfection" (chap. 6: 1). Perfection is a **key-word**, indicating the end, to which they were called. There was a danger of them remaining at the beginning, at the mere rudiments; of continuing in a state of infancy instead of developing into full growth. The writer had to say to them: "for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that we teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat" (chap. 5: 12-14).

Their stunted growth was due to their reluctance to relinquish Judaism in its emptiness, and embrace Christianity in its fulness. They were thus falling short of their calling. They had a zeal for the law; adhered to the temple at Jerusalem; were occupied with carnal ordinances, which brought nothing to perfection. "The law made nothing perfect" (chap. 7: 19). There were

thousands of Jews in Jerusalem who believed; and they were all "zealous of the law" (Acts 21: 20). The apostles themselves found it difficult to break with Judaism. We see them go into the temple to pray (Acts 3: 1). In the inaugural stage of the Church at Jerusalem there was no clearly defined line between the old dispensation and the new, due to the overlapping period.

If this is not intelligently grasped it will be difficult, if not impossible, to understand aright the epistles of Peter, who was the apostle of the circumcision; that of James; and this one of our author. Peter wrote to the dispersed **Jews**; James to the **twelve tribes**, scattered abroad; our author, to the **Hebrews**. In the mind of these writers, there is no thought of the **Gentiles** in the Church. Peter merely refers to them as being distinct from the Jews (1 Peter 2: 12). Needless to say, true Church position and privilege, as now known under Paul's teaching, are not contemplated in these epistles. The Church at Jerusalem was in its infancy, swaddled in Jewish clothing, and connected with what was earthly, as the Jews themselves decidedly were. It had not answered to its heavenly calling; nor assumed its heavenly dress. Paul, the minister of the Church,

and revealer of the mystery, had not yet come to give the truth of its union to Christ in heaven, as His body, which, of course, severs it from earth.

Our author insists on the Hebrews taking the pilgrim path as Abraham and others had done (chap. 11). For this move he gives powerful reasons. Here on earth they had no continuing city, but sought one to come. The things of earth were ready to be shaken, as Haggai had prophesied, referring to the judgment of God; and in this convulsion would be removed, so that the things that cannot be shaken might remain (chap. 12: 26-29; also Haggai 2: 21, 22). The temple at Jerusalem was on the point of being destroyed, as the Lord had foretold His disciples (Matt. 24: 1, 2). The "good things to come," of which the law was but a shadow, were all secured in Christ, who was risen from the dead and seated in heaven. There He had supplanted the ordinances which were imposed by the law; and He was the substance of all that had been foreshadowed by the entire legal system. The most powerful reason of all was that Christ had been rejected on earth, and suffered death "without the gate," the place of reproach; it fell to them, as His followers, to go forth unto Him, "without the camp," bearing His reproach.

But it required more than good reasons to draw the Hebrews into the pilgrim path. It was necessary to give them an object for the heart, to woo and win them in that citadel of their affection. All true spiritual movement of a progressive nature has its origin in that centre. In order to do this, the writer gives them the

most beautiful presentation of the glories of Christ, their Messiah.

In chapter 1, we see His glory as Son of God, in whom God has spoken with finality. He had spoken in time past to the fathers by the prophets, but in the end of that dispensation He has spoken in the person of the Son, who is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." Since everything is revealed in Him, there is now no more to be said. Finality has been reached; for God has been fully and perfectly revealed in Christ. Needless to say, His word bears all its divine authority, there being no escape for those who refuse or neglect it (chap. 2: 2).

Then follows in chapter 2, His glory as Son of Man, who brings in the long-expected "world to come." The Jews centred their hope on that golden age. It was an age of untold bliss, under their Messiah; an ordered scene of government, in which God would be glorified and man supremely blessed. The Jews longed for it, and "spake often one to another of it" (Malachi 3: 16). The writer refers to this when he says, "the world to come, whereof we speak" (chap. 2: 5). As Man, Christ takes up everything in the universe on the ground of redemption; He tastes death for everything, and thus fulfils the counsel of God. While He is the Creator of all as God, it is on the ground of redemption He takes everything up as Man. This was prophesied in Psalm 8.

In chapter 3 we see His glory as "Son over His own house." Moses was but a **servant**; Christ was **Son**. "The servant abideth not in the

house for ever; but the Son abideth ever" (John 8: 35). Here again we have finality in Christ, the Son. It must be so; He is God. The house was built. "Every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God." The writer never loses sight of His deity, God's Son, withal the Messiah. What a revelation that the despised Messiah was God!

From the end of chapter 4 to the end of chapter 8, we see His glory as High Priest, who is passed through the heavens, and "is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true *tabernacle*, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (chap 8: 12). Much is said about His priesthood, and

the perfection of His redemptive work, which also reaches finality, there being "no more offering for sin" (chap. 10: 18). He has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The Hebrews were to draw nigh to God within the veil through Him.

The Epistle is full of the "better" things; thus it must be, since all is in Christ. He is greater than the angels; than His "fellows," the Jewish remnant; than Moses; than Aaron; and all that had been before Him. He gives finality to everything; therefore cannot be succeeded or superseded. Well might the Hebrews draw nigh to God through Him within the veil, even though it meant their going forth unto Him, "without the camp."

THE DEATH OF JESUS

G. S. HEPBURN.

THE writer remembers having read that "many a British soldier has died as brave a death as Jesus," and again that, "to witness Keir Hardie labouring on the floor of the House of Commons for the good of the masses was to witness the crucifixion," and today from pulpit, platform and press, Jesus is being presented — not only with regard to His life, but also with regard to His death — as an example to be followed, and nothing more. And His cause suffers more at the hands of such would-be friends, than at those of His bitterest enemies.

The statements referred to above are, to say the least, grossly misleading, and those who make such statements know nothing of the true

nature of the death of Jesus as recorded in Holy Scripture, and I invite the reader to come with me in spirit to visit the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and, as we do so, may we realize that we are treading on holy ground.

Of the evangelists, John alone speaks of a garden; to the others Gethsemane was but a place — and such a place! We read that, when Jesus came to it, He began to be very heavy (deeply depressed, New Trans.), and that to His disciples He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and further, that He fell on His face and prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt," and

that, "being in an agony He prayed more earnestly," and that, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Matt. 26: 36-39; Luke 22: 44). Yet still further, we read that in the days of His flesh He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save Him from death" (Heb. 5: 7). Jesus wept over Jerusalem, tears of pity, and He wept with the bereaved sisters at Bethany, tears of sympathy, but here the tears were on His own account, in anticipation of the sufferings that lay before Him.

Surely in the light of these details, it is out of place to speak of "bravery." But why, may we ask, all this depression of spirit, exceeding sorrow, earnest prayer, agony, bloody sweat, strong crying and tears on the part of One who had enjoined His disciples not to fear those who kill the body and afterward have no more that they can do? The explanation is simple. The cause was the knowledge of what He was about to suffer, not at the hands of men, but at the hands of a righteous, holy and sin-hating God. So the truth is that Jesus died as no one else ever did or can die. But let us now draw near to Calvary.

For six hours Jesus suffered on the cross, and what He endured during the first three hours at the hands of men is graphically described. They inflicted every possible cruelty and heaped every conceivable indignity upon Him. Yet His only reaction to it all was to turn His heart and eyes to Heaven and pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Such grace might well break the hardest heart. Doubtless it was this that changed the erst-

while hardened criminal and blasphemer by His side into a humble suppliant for mercy. Then the curtain falls, darkness envelops the scene, and man is shut out save that he heard from out of the darkness that never-to-be-forgotten cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Of the nature of the sufferings endured during those three hours we know nothing. To physical suffering, to shame and reproach we are not entirely strangers, though even in these Jesus suffered pre-eminently because of who and what He was and ever is. But how can we, sinful creatures, know what it meant for the holy, sinless One to be made sin, to take our sins upon Him, and suffer at the hand of Almighty God the punishment that we deserved? (See 2 Cor. 5: 21; 1 Peter 3: 18). Or how can we know what it meant for the One who had always done the will of God and ever been His delight to be forsaken by Him?

None but a divine person could suffer thus, but Jesus is very God as well as very Man, and in His death God has been perfectly glorified, and man's condition of guilt, bondage and enmity against God perfectly met for all who put their trust in Him.

Resurrection followed, but that is not the subject of this paper.

That Jesus died a martyr's death goes without saying, and that He enjoined His disciples to follow Him in this is also true. But let us consider the death of the martyrs for a moment. It has often been remarked and rightly so, that Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died very like

his Master; but it is equally true that there was the greatest possible contrast between the two. When delivering his marvellous address before the Council all present beheld the face of Stephen "as it had been the face of an angel" — mighty contrast to Jesus in Gethsemane — and during the stoning to death that followed Stephen looked up into Heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus at the right hand of God, and he was mightily supported as were all the noble army of martyrs that followed. To Jesus, heaven was closed, and God responded not to His prayer; and I would like to ask, where Stephen, or any of the martyrs that followed, would have been had they

been forsaken by God?

In closing I repeat that Jesus died as no one else ever did or can die.

*"Alone He bare the cross,
Alone its grief sustained;
His was the shame and loss,
And He the victory gained;
The mighty work was all His own,
Tho' we shall share His glorious
throne.*

*On earth the song begins;
In heaven more sweet and loud —
"To Him that cleansed our sins
By His atoning blood;
To Him," we sing in joyful strain,
"Be honour, power, and praise,
Amen."*

ACCEPTANCE AND ACCEPTABILITY

YOU are accepted as perfectly the first moment you believe, as you are when you have been fifty years a Christian; you may enjoy it more then, but you cannot either improve it or increase it . . . People confound their **acceptability** with their **acceptance**. You should never have a question as to your acceptance, but you cannot be too anxious about your acceptability . . . But no amount of anxiety would ever make you one bit more accepted than you are. A rose tree **is** a rose tree, though it may never bear a rose; a poor thing truly, but still a rose tree; but it is not an acceptable one.

"Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony that he pleased God;" there was an acceptable man. Therefore Scripture says: "We labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be agreeable to Him" — not "accepted" as it is in our translation. This is acceptability.

J.B.S.

THE tendency with man, if he has any sense of the failure of the Church, is to begin again; to try and set up a sort of pattern of what the Church originally was. It has been said that if we are a testimony to anything it is to the ruin of the Church; but people do not quite like that. . . . No greater mistake can be made, if the Church is in ruins, than to attempt to set up anything; but if you have apprehended the ruin, you can stand apart from what is contrary to the Lord and be guided by the light which was from the beginning without making any pretension to ecclesiastical order.

BIBLE STUDY—EXODUS AND LEVITICUS

F. B. HOLE.

(EXODUS 40: 1—LEVITICUS 2: 16).

THE closing chapter of Exodus falls into three sections. First, verses 1-15, which give the instructions, delivered to Moses by the Lord, as to the erection of the tabernacle and its contents and the installing of the priests. Second, verses 16-33, the record of the careful obedience of Moses, so that everything was carried out in accordance with the Divine instructions.

Verse 33 ends with the words, "So Moses finished the work." This carries our minds on to Hebrews 3: 5, where we are reminded that "Moses verily was faithful in all His [God's] house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after." The whole tabernacle system was a testimony in type and picture of the realities which have been established in Christ and in His sacrificial work; hence the faithfulness of Moses in carrying out everything according to God's word, while the work was in progress, and then finishing the work without any omissions, was of prime importance.

But we must again remind our readers that we now have the great realities, which were typified, fully revealed in the New Testament, and they control our understanding of the types. We must not fall into the mistake of attempting to conform New Testament realities to Old Testament shadows. If this be attempted we easily travel out of the realm of Divine truth into the

region of human imagination.

The third section, verses 34-38, records how the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, when all was finished, and what the results of that filling were. The first result of that filling was that man was wholly excluded. Even the faithful Moses was unable to enter where the glory of Jehovah abode. Let us contrast this scene with what the Apostle Paul could record as to himself in 2 Corinthians 12: 1-5. In that passage he speaks of himself as, "a man in Christ." A more true servant of God than Moses never lived, yet his service was carried out some fifteen centuries before Christ appeared, and accomplished the work which made it possible for anyone to be spoken of as a man in Christ. What we see, as we close the book of Exodus, is that no man of Adam's race, even the finest specimen thereof, has any standing in the presence of the glory of God. That great verse, Romans 3: 23, is illustrated here.

But we also see that, though man cannot stand before the glory, he may yet have from it all the guidance that he needs. Israel was in the trackless wilderness, and left to themselves they would have aimlessly wandered about. As it was, their wanderings were controlled. They moved or rested as the cloud of glory indicated, and so all was ordered for their instruction and discipline.

We now commence the book of Leviticus, and we must connect chapter 1: 1, with Exodus 40: 35. The Lord had been speaking to Moses from Sinai; but He spoke "out of the tabernacle" directly His glory had taken possession of it. Thus He manifested His presence. We see a parallel to this in Acts 2. When God formed His spiritual house, by the disciples in Jerusalem being "buildd together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 22), the first manifestation of His presence was by His Spirit speaking so powerfully through Peter, of what had been accomplished by the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ, that three thousand were converted. In our chapter God speaks only of the sacrifices, which presented in type that which in due season Christ was to accomplish.

The whole of the first chapter is occupied with instructions as to what was to take place if any man desired to offer to the Lord a burnt offering. Of all the offerings this stands first, inasmuch as it typifies the sacrifice of Christ from the most exalted standpoint; namely, its value and excellence in the sight of God. It was not compulsory as the sin offering. The word "offering" in verse 2 is a translation of the "Corban," to which the Lord referred in Mark 7: 11 — a voluntary offering, which might be omitted, or used on the other hand as a hypocritical reason for avoiding one's duty to aged parents.

With the possible exception of Genesis 4: 7, where "sin" may stand for "sin-offering," it is noticeable that the offerings that are men-

tioned up to the time of the giving of the law are burnt offerings. This agrees with what we read in Romans 5: 13. From the moment of the fall sin was in the world, "but sin is not imputed when there is no law." God did not ignore the fact of sin, but He did not put it to man's account in the definite way in which He did when the law was given. Hence the sin offering did not come into prominence before the law was given.

In verse 3 we have according to the A.V. the words, "he shall offer it of his own voluntary will," but in Darby's New Translation this is rendered, "present it for his acceptance," and with this the R.V. agrees. So the thought evidently was that the offerer was to stand before God in all the acceptance of the unblemished offering that he brought. Hence the putting of his hand on the head of the offering, of which the next verse speaks, signified that he identified himself with his offering. This, we believe, furnishes us with the root meaning, which is attached to the laying on of hands right through Scripture. It signifies, **identification**.

Reading through the chapter, we see at once that the instructions given divide into three parts, according to the offering brought, whether from the herd or the flock or from the fowls. We note that there are slight differences in minor details between the three, but the main outline is the same. The blood of each was to be sprinkled on the altar, and in each case neither the priests nor the offerer had any part reserved for them: all was for the Lord.

Yet certain things that are speci-

fied remind us that these types are only shadows and cannot portray the full excellence of that which they typify. For instance, the inward parts and the legs of the victims had to be washed with water before they were offered by fire to the Lord, just as the priests had to wash hands and feet every time they entered the tabernacle. So the crop of the fowl with its "feathers," or "refuse," had to be cast among the ashes. The fact is that the sin of man had brought defilement into the whole creation, and there is nothing perfect. But, with these precautions taken, the burnt offerings were a fitting type of the sacrifice made when Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9: 14), thus giving "Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5: 2).

Three times in our chapter do we get the words, "a sweet savour unto the Lord." The special feature of the burnt offering was thus clearly indicated. It set forth the sacrifice of Christ in its own intrinsic excellence, as appreciated by God Himself. If His sacrifice had not effected anything for man, yet tested as He was by the fire of judgment, everything about Him would have gone up as a sweet odour to God. But as a matter of fact though the benefit the believer gets from it is secondary, yet it does come in; for identified, as we are, with His sacrifice, we stand in all its acceptability, accepted before God. The passages we quoted above from Hebrews 9 and Ephesians 5 make this abundantly clear.

The three classes of burnt offerings are mentioned on a descending

scale. The rich man might bring his bullock, the man of medium substance his sheep, the poor man his young pigeon. Yet each of the three was a burnt offering, and in each case the offerer was accepted before God. What we see typified in these variations is not a greater or lesser **acceptance** but a greater or lesser **apprehension** on the part of the offerer. To put it in another way: every believer stands accepted before God in the perfection and fragrance of the sacrifice of Christ, which never varies and is the same for all. What does vary is the measure in which we appreciate the value of His work. Consequently when we "offer the sacrifice of praise to God . . . the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 14: 15), the character of our praise varies. If we bring together in our thoughts Leviticus 1 and what we have in 1 John 2: 13-27, we may say that the "father" may bring his bullock, the "young man" his sheep, and the "babe" his young pigeon.

Before leaving chapter 1, glance again at the closing words of verses 9, 13, 17. As we see in verse 4, atonement was connected with the burnt offering, but it was not the prominent thought, but rather the excellence of the offering in the Divine estimation. It was a **sweet savour** to Him.

In chapter 2 details are given as to the "meat" or "meal" offering. In the Hebrew a different word is used for this, but still a word which indicates a gift, for this too was a voluntary offering and not compulsory. The basic offering here was fine flour, though it might be

offered in a variety of ways: either fresh and untreated, or baked in an oven or a pan, or cooked in a frying pan. But in each case both oil and frankincense were to be associated with it.

Now nothing is softer and more even and less gritty than fine flour, and hence it is a most fitting type of the smooth and flawless perfection of the life on earth of "the Man Christ Jesus." Moreover the oil here, as elsewhere, is typical of the Holy Spirit of God, in whose power the Lord Jesus went forth in His unparalleled path of service, as we see in Luke 3: 22; 4: 1, 14.

The oil was to be used in different ways. In the first case, verse 2, a handful of both flour and oil was to be taken by the priest and burned as a memorial on the altar. In the other cases, verses 4-9, the cakes were to be "mingled" with oil and then "anointed" with oil. Here again we may see typified what is made abundantly clear in the Gospel of Luke, particularly in the first chapter. When our blessed Lord stooped to become Man, His birth was the result of an action by the Holy Spirit, so that His Manhood, though true Manhood, was yet unique Manhood, "mingled" with the Holy Spirit. Later, as we have seen, He was "anointed" with the Holy Spirit and with power.

In this chapter the word "atonement" does not occur. That is because no blood was shed in the meat offering which typified His perfect life. It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

There was thus a certain variety in the way in which the meat offer-

ing was constituted, but in each case, while only a part of that which was presented was burnt as a memorial and as a sweet savour to the Lord, **all the frankincense** had to be burnt with the memorial. This emphasizes again that the prime thought in the meat offering, as with the burnt offering, is that of the pleasure and delight of God Himself in the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, when tested in the fire. He is the only One in whom was found no flaw but rather every perfection in the energy of the Holy Spirit, everything about Him an odour of a sweet smell.

But though in this type God had all the frankincense there was a remainder of the flour and oil, or of the mingled and anointed cakes, which was to be the portion of Aaron and his sons. They were to have as a part of their food that which had been offered to God for His pleasure. In this we may see an indication of our privilege as those who have been "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (1 Pet. 2: 5), for verse 7 proceeds to say, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious," or, more literally, "is the preciousness." Christ is precious to God in infinite measure, but His preciousness is also for us.

The believer today then, as a priest, is permitted to have as the food of his soul all that excellence which has been displayed in Christ, and as he thus feeds he has the wherewithal to offer up those spiritual sacrifices of praise which are acceptable to God. But let us note those twice repeated words (verses 3 and 10) that it is "a thing most

holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire." When Christ is before us, let us never forget the holiness of the theme, but treat it with that reverence and reserve, which springs from self-judgment, that is becoming.

In verses 11 and 13 we have further stringent regulations. From all meat offerings all leaven and honey were to be excluded, and in them salt was always to be found. All through Scripture consistently, leaven is a type of evil in its permeating power. It was wholly absent in the perfect life of our Lord, and it could never be offered to God. Honey is regarded as the sweetest thing among natural products, as is indicated in Judges 14: 18. It too, was not to be offered to God. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the very embodiment of grace. But the grace of God is not natural sweetness, which is akin to human amiability, since truth as well as grace has reached us in Him. The truth that came by Jesus Christ connects itself with the salt that always was to be a part of the sacrifices offered to God.

The Lord's instruction to His disciples, and to us, was, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9: 50). Then we have the Apostle Paul writing, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4: 6), and again, "Speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4: 15). These Scriptures make plain what "salt" is, when it is applied to us. Healthy regard for truth preserves from that compromising attitude, which is so sweet if only human amiability be in question. In us, all this is only found in measure. In Christ, all was

perfection.

Between verse 11, which prohibits both the leaven and the honey, and verse 13, which insists on the salt being present, comes verse 12, which mentions the first fruits. These, though offered to the Lord, were not to be burnt on the altar as a sweet savour. No reason for this is mentioned here, but the reference is to the "new meat offering," of which we read in chapter 23: 16, 17, when we discover that these firstfruits consisted of two loaves, which were baked **with leaven**. They were only to be waved before the Lord and not burnt. They were not typical of Christ but rather of the church, as we shall see when we come to that chapter. Only the offerings that were typical of Christ could be burnt upon the altar as a sweet savour unto the Lord.

In the three verses that close the chapter a meat offering consisting of corn in the ear or beaten out of the ear is contemplated. The firstfruits of the harvest might be presented thus, not having passed through the mill under man's hand. The memorial of it might be burnt by the priest upon the altar with oil and all the frankincense. This would be acceptable to God. In chapter 23: 10, 11, the sheaf of firstfruits was only to be waved before the Lord, but, as we shall see, that typified Christ in resurrection. Here we are still occupied with Christ in His life of perfect obedience which culminated in His death. We see Him rather as the perfect "corn of wheat" which fell into the ground and died, and out of whose death springs life for others, as the Lord Himself indicated in John 12: 24.

ADOPTION

G. S. HEPBURN.

IN the Scriptures of truth we read that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to **redeem** them that were under the law, that we might receive the **adoption** of sons" (Gal. 4: 45), or as the New Translation reads, "**sonship**," giving adoption as a footnote, and explaining that adoption is receiving the position of sonship as a free gift.

Now, sonship in all its blessedness involves our being completely conformed to the image of God's Son in heavenly glory, spirit, soul and body, as we see in Romans 8: 29.

Of course we have the position of sons now, and not only so, but we have the spirit that belongs to it, something that is perhaps impossible in natural adoption, so we read, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father." But before we could be adopted and receive the position of sons, **redemption** was an absolute necessity, and that by the precious blood of God's Son as we see in Galatians 4.

Becoming children of God we partake of His life and nature, whereas sonship is by adoption. It may be well to state here, that on our side the position, whether of children as set forth in John's writings, or as sons in Paul's, is received in answer to **faith** (John 1: 12; Gal. 3: 26).

Then we read that, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . has chosen us in Him before the world's foundation, that we should

be holy and blameless before Him in love; having marked us out beforehand for **adoption** . . . to the praise of the **glory** of His grace" (Eph. 1: 3-6, New Trans.)

While we have the light of all this, and enjoy it in measure now, yet, for the full blessedness of it, we must wait till the Lord comes and takes us to be with Him in His Father's house, and we can truly say, with profound reverence, that God, with all his resources of love and wisdom, could not have bestowed on us anything greater.

And again we are reminded that redemption was a necessity in view of it. So we read, "in whom [Christ] we have **redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the **riches** of His grace" (Eph. 1: 7). The riches of His grace is witnessed in what we have been redeemed **from**: the glory of His grace in what we have been redeemed **for**.

In the Epistle to the Romans adoption is mentioned thrice, once in relation to Israel (9: 4), twice in chapter 8: (15 and 23), in relation to Christians; but here again, while we have the position, and the Spirit of adoption or sonship now, for the full joy and blessedness of it we must await the coming of the Lord as Saviour in relation to our bodies. The fact is that so long as we are in our present bodies we are part of a groaning creation, but when the Lord comes, and not before it, our bodies will come under His redemptive power, and we shall be with Him and like Him and see Him as He is, and that for a glad eternity.

“Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body.” Oh! the blessed prospect that lies at the end of our pilgrimage on earth.

In nature, as a rule, people do not adopt a child out of pity, but rather as an object for their own hearts' affections. Nor is it otherwise with our blessed God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The well-

known parable of Luke 15 illustrates for us the Father's joy.

*“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*

*In Thine own house. There love divine
Fills the bright courts with cloudless
joy;*

*But 'tis the love that made us Thine,
Fills all that house without alloy.”*

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

J. HOUSTON.

THE Old Testament prophets fulfilled an important ministry in God's ways in government with Israel. By them, God spoke to the fathers, as it is written: “God . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb. 1: 1). To them He revealed His secret, as Amos tells us: “He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3: 7). And the Apostle Peter says that they were “holy men of God,” who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1: 21). This brief yet comprehensive witness is sufficient to introduce them as distinguished servants of God, from whom we may learn many lessons.

Their position in Israel in reference to their calling and service was different from that of the priests and kings. These latter filled their office on the principle of succession, as was ordained by the law. There was a priestly family, and a royal family with hereditary right to the priesthood and to the throne respectively. There was no family with title to the prophetic office. God

raised up whom He would, in His sovereignty, to prophesy for Him.

Another point of difference was that by the appointment of the law, the priests and kings were anointed to occupy high office as rulers of the people. By the provision of the law they were maintained. The priests ate of the holy things at the altar. The kings had their royal bounty secured by the tributes that flowed into their treasury. The prophets had no appointment by law to occupy any office in the kingdom; nor did they receive any support from the constituted order of national life which was established for them that were under the law. They took the outside place with God, where they were sustained by Him. From there they bore His word to the rulers and the people as they were sent by Him. They were “the Lord's messengers,” with “the Lord's message” (Haggai 1: 13). They had no fixed place of abode; they took shelter where they could find it. They ate such things as they found at hand; and covered their nakedness with primitive clothing.

Elijah dwelt by a brook from which he drank water to quench his thirst; ate bread and flesh which ravens brought to him to satisfy his hunger; and wore a leathern girdle. How near the prophets came to the example of the Son of Man, who had nowhere to lay His head! Well might it be said: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5: 10).

If these honoured servants were far removed from the society of their fellow-men, and deprived of the comforts and amenities of what is called civilised life, they were near to God in their solitude, and had favour with Him. God was with them in their sufferings; and His word was in them as their comfort and support. He was not ashamed to be called their God; for He took the name of "the Lord God of the holy prophets" (Rev. 22: 6). What distinctive identification He had with them! And how He sealed His approbation of their witness!

What we have to do, in learning from them, is to keep clearly in mind the dispensation of law in which they prophesied. They had not the full revelation of God that we have in this dispensation of grace, which has come to us as the result of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the advent of the Holy Spirit. They had to do with people that were under the law, and they addressed them in their prophecies, in view of that position of legal responsibility. Grace, as we know it, as the ground of our relationship with God, does not enter their ministry. Under the law, "every transgression and disobedience received a first recompense of

reward," with no thought of mercy; for law, as such, shows no mercy. It demands judgment, which is God's "strange work," as it is termed. For this reason their prophecies were often of a denunciatory character, followed by severe punishment for transgression and disobedience, and it could not be otherwise, for it was inflexible law which made the demand.

God in His true nature of love and perfect goodness, was not revealed in the legal dispensation; He was hidden behind a veil which was not rent till Christ died, and opened up the new and living way into the holiest (Heb. 10). When, on certain occasions, He rose **above** the law (not **against** it), and forgave "transgression and disobedience," His action of loving kindness was not always understood by the prophets, especially those who were of the rigorous legal type.

Elijah was of this type, both in his ministry and miracles, which were essentially of a judicial character. He could understand God's judgment against the prophets of Baal, when he himself gave the word that they were to be slain. But he did not understand God's goodness in forbearing with a Jezebel, forgiving an Ahab, and going on with a people who had forsaken His covenant, thrown down His altars, slain His prophets, and were in the act of seeking his own life. This act of kindness on God's part **towards avowed enemies**, thoroughly chafed his spirit, which led to his loss of communion with God, to say nothing of his loss of power. Hence the great change from his boldness on Mount Carmel, where he feared no man, to his weakness under the

juniper tree, whither he had fled from a woman (1 Kings 19).

When God forgave the Ninevites, "it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry" (Jonah 4: 1). He went under a gourd; and, like Elijah, desired that he might die. He was set in his mind for the execution of God's judgment on the Ninevites. They were **Gentiles**; he was a **Jew**, and went to them in the spirit of a **Jew**. He proclaimed the coming judgment of God on Nineveh; withdrew himself into safe distance from the doomed city, and looked for the fulfilment of the word he had delivered in the name of the Lord. He made no intercession for the Ninevites, and **had no thought** of the possibility of their being forgiven and saved from destruction, which in effect was **God's thought** for them. With Jonah it was a question of, "Let the heathen be judged in Thy sight" (Psalm 9: 19).

The heathen treated the Jews cruelly, and justice demanded that they should be judged. But, after all, judgment was God's "strange work"; He delighted in mercy, and was quick to show it. "I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6: 6). We have to learn this, and when we have learned it, we shall obey our Lord's words, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5: 44). We have the supreme example in Christ, who prayed for His enemies when He was on the cross, dying as a martyr to their ill treatment. We have also the example of God in creation, who makes "His sun to

rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

It might be said, we are Christians and not Jews; we are under grace and not under law; we forgive our enemies after God's example (see, Eph. 4: 32). Be it so. Nevertheless, when really put to the test, to show our Christianity in practice, how reactionary and vindictive we can be, and how legally hard we can become in reference to those who treat us badly. Like James and John, the "sons of thunder," we might readily say in our hearts, if not in actual words: "Lord wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them [their enemies], even as Elias did?" This, of course, brought the Lord's rebuke: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9: 54, 55). What need we have to know what manner of spirit we are of!

All the Old Testament prophets were not imprecatory in their attitude to those who had sinned. An Elijah might pray "**against Israel**" (Rom. 11: 2). A Jonah might be hard **against the Gentiles** (the Jews usually were hard against them); but a Moses, on the other hand, prayed earnestly **for Israel**, that they might be forgiven. It was he who said to God, when he interceded for Israel: "Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance" (Exodus 34: 9).

In conclusion, we can learn from the Old Testament prophets, in their zeal for God, in all His righteous judgments; their patience in priva-

tion and suffering; and boldness in faithfulness to God's word, which they fearlessly declared. On the other hand, we can learn from the

intercession of a Moses, the tears of a Jeremiah, the confession of a Daniel, which show **that mercy was remembered in judgment.**

"BY THESE THINGS MEN LIVE"

A. J. POLLOCK.

WHAT was the occasion of this outburst on the part of Hezekiah, one of the few godly kings of Judah? He had been stricken down by an alarming illness, and told by the Prophet Isaiah that he would die and not live (Isa. 38: 1-3). In sore grief he turned his face to the wall, wept before the Lord, and prayed earnestly. God graciously heard his prayer, and granted him recovery, but not before he had learned important lessons. Hence this confession, "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit" (Isa. 38: 16).

He had been brought face to face with death, and had realised the frailty and brevity of sinful life, and on the other hand the compassion, tenderness and power of the living God over death. He was brought to realise that which was **really** life. He connected this with what he called "my spirit." The spirit is that part of man that is peculiar to him alone, and not shared by the rest of animate creation. It carries with it at least two things. One is the knowledge that there is a Supreme Being, and therefore we have to answer to His claims. The other is the possession of a discriminating faculty between that which is good, and that which is evil, in which conscience plays its part.

It is true that we learn what is really life from our sorrows rather

than by our joys. So the wise man tells us, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better" (Eccles. 7: 2, 3). There is no shadow of doubt, that when the tried and suffering saint gets to glory, and sees things in heavenly light, he will realise that it was his exercises in times of sorrow and stress, that taught him most precious lessons, proving to him what life **really** is. It was well sung:—

**"And many a rapturous minstrel,
Among those saints of light,
Will say of his sweetest music,
I learned it in the night.**

**And many a rolling anthem
That fills the Father's Home,
Sobbed out its first rehearsal
In the shade of a darkened
room."**

We have many instances of the truth of this in the lives of the saints as depicted in the Scriptures.

Take Abraham, who stands out pre-eminently in Scripture as the great example of faith. God bade him leave his country, his kindred, his father's house, to sojourn as a pilgrim and stranger in a strange country. In the eyes of the world this was a step of pure folly unadul-

terated. Why? The secret of it all was, that this erstwhile idolater was brought into touch with the God of heaven. The God of glory had appeared unto him, and henceforth he was for ever different. His faith looked for a city, "whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11: 10).

Take the case of Jacob. He had mourned deeply over what he believed to be a violent death of his favourite son, Joseph. Thereafter all the old man's love was centred round his son, Benjamin, Joseph's only full brother. Then came the terrible famine, that drove Jacob's sons to the land of Egypt to seek food. Next time they would come to Egypt seeking food, the Lord of Egypt, speaking roughly, demanded that they should bring with them their youngest brother, Benjamin, and so prove they were honest in their tale. When Jacob heard this his grief was intense. In his anguish he bewailed, "Me have ye bereaved of my children. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: **all these things are against me**" (Gen. 42: 36). Little did he think that his great sorrow was soon to be changed to joy greater than his sorrow. All these things were emphatically **not** against him. Instead of losing Simeon and Benjamin, he was about to gain the knowledge that his son Joseph lived, and to experience his loving care for him all the few years left to him in the fertile land of Goshen.

How like Jacob many Christians are today, who see no mercy in God's discipline, and little dream of the plannings of divine love, so that the clouds we so much dread, are, in the words of the poet, big with

mercy, and shall break in blessings on our head.

Take the case of Joseph. He dreamed of his future eminence. He saw his sheaf standing, whilst the other sheaves, representing his brethren, made obeisance to his sheaf. He further dreamed how sun, moon and **eleven** (the number of his brothers) stars made obeisance to him. His jealous brothers, enraged by these dreams of their young brother, made away with him, selling him to passing merchants, who took the lad to Egypt, and sold him as a slave. This did not look like the fulfilment of Joseph's dreams of future greatness. It was indeed a very sorrowful road to the answer of his dreams, **but it was THE road.**

A mere stripling of a shepherd lad, seventeen years old, needed severe discipline to fit him for the brilliant future that lay before him. For thirteen long years he was immured in prison. His feet were hurt with fetters, the iron entered his soul. One day more he awoke to the dreary experience of prison life. Before the sun was set, he was proclaimed to be next to Pharaoh in the land, the Food Controller of a mighty empire. His discipline under the hand of God had fitted him for the fulfilment of his God-given dreams.

Take the case of Moses. For a member of a despised nation of Hebrew slaves, in the providence of God he occupied a most remarkable position. He was adopted as son by the mightiest woman ruler of that time. He was near to the succession to the throne of Egypt. Yet he had to learn bitter lessons.

He had to flee from Egypt in disgrace. This man of transcendent leadership had to learn the slow lesson of patience. For forty years at the backside of the desert he kept sheep, learning to live in obscurity, to perform the daily task. Thus was he fitted for the colossal task of leading the children of Israel across the desert. When he had learned his lesson, no longer fearing the wrath of the king, he carried out the task for which God had commissioned him.

Take the case of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. Even as a very young man he gave promise of taking a prominent position in the Jewish nation. Educated in the university city of Tarsus, sitting in Jerusalem at the feet of the most learned rabbi of all time, Gamaliel, he was the master of two languages — Greek and Hebrew — and a strong personality with a brilliant brain. He had, as we say, **the ball at his feet**. All at once this was flung as loss, as though it were dung, behind him. Stopped in an instant in his wild career of persecuting the saints of God, blinded by the light shining on that Damascus road brighter than the sun, he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts 9: 4). Thus He identified Himself in the glory with the despised Christians on earth. No longer could Saul believe that Jesus was an impostor, and his bones lying dishonoured in a Jewish grave. He

recognised that He was the risen triumphant Saviour, long promised by the prophets all down the ages.

His whole life was changed in a moment. His Master had been crucified. He would be persecuted, now he had thrown in his lot with the Christians. He turned his back upon his brilliant prospects for something infinitely better and more enduring. He knew what it was to be scourged, stoned, beaten with rods, shipwrecked, in perils by sea, by land, in the wilderness, among false brethren, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. It was worth it all, if only he could win Christ. What a triumph! "For to me," he exclaimed, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1: 21). He could say, "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things, which concern mine infirmities" (2 Cor. 11: 30).

May we not learn a lesson from all this, and believe that sorrow, trial, bereavement, disease, even the austerity of the present time, are permitted of the Lord for good. The Christian can take all these things from the Lord, seeking to get true gain from them, even the formation of Christian character, which will be for God's glory, the blessing of those we come in contact with, and for very rich blessing to ourselves. May the Lord graciously grant this for everyone of us. Let us live in the light of eternity. Let us live what is **really** life.

THE love of Christ is perfect. I may love a little, then I shall give a little: I may love much, then I shall give much; but if I love perfectly, I shall keep nothing back. This is the way Christ gives: this is the meaning of the sentence, which is very sweet to me, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you" (John 14: 27). The way Christ gives is to introduce us into all He has Himself as Man.

BIBLE STUDY—LEVITICUS

F. B. HOLB.

(CHAPTERS 3: 1 — 6: 7)

WE now come to the third class of the offerings that were ordained under the law. The burnt offering and the meat offering were very closely connected: the first typifying the sacrificial death and blood-shedding of Christ in the excellence of His sweet savour before God; the second, the equally sweet savour of His perfect life in the energy of the Holy Spirit, tested even unto death. In the peace offering we have another aspect of His sacrifice which is based on the foregoing.

The very title of this offering would show us that it was to be brought by an Israelite whose conscience was in rest and peace before God. There was no compulsion about it; he just desired to bring it. In this respect it was the opposite to the sin or trespass offering, which was to be brought under compulsion by the Israelite, whose conscience was not in peace because of wrongdoing.

Again we notice that the animal offered might be taken from the herd or from the sheep or from the goats, and the animal must be without blemish. But on the other hand more latitude was allowed for a female as well as a male might be brought. This is what we might expect, seeing that it is the response of the would-be worshipper that is before us here.

The laying of the hand upon the head of the victim, the shedding and sprinkling of its blood by the priests is the same as with the burnt offering, but now instead of the whole victim in its parts being burnt on the altar, only the fat from the inward

parts was to be burnt for a sweet savour to the Lord. Since this inward fat would be the sign of an animal of health and vigour, it aptly symbolizes the excellence and energy of that devotion unto death which marked our blessed Lord. This came up as a sweet savour to God as the type indicates.

The fat then of the peace offerings was wholly claimed by God, and the last verse of the chapter states this very clearly. The fat must be burned on the altar, and the blood must be sprinkled on it round about. The people of Israel were to eat neither the one nor the other. The blood was the life of the victim and the fat was its excellence. This strict ordinance testified that man, as a fallen sinner, has forfeited his own life, and has in himself no excellence in which he can stand before God. If he stands at all, it must be on the basis of the perfect life of Another poured out sacrificially before God, and in the excellence of the One who became the Victim.

In this chapter we only learn what was to be done with the blood and the fat, which was God's portion. We have to turn to the law of the peace offering, given to us in chapter 7: 11-34, to learn that in the peace offering not only the priest had his share, but that the offerer himself had his portion. So that communion with God, as to the excellence of the sacrifice of Christ, is a distinguishing feature of this offering. But its details should come before us when we reach chapter 7.

There is in our chapter, however,

one slight intimation of this feature in verses 11 and 16. Twice do we get the expression, "the food of the offering," which was made by fire, and which came up as a sweet savour to God. Now the word here translated "food" is far more frequently translated "bread," but whichever word we adopt as the better translation, we have conveyed to us the thought of food which provides a satisfying portion. And we are permitted to find a portion in that which is the "bread" of God.

As we have before noticed in these types, God begins from His own side of the matter and works down to us. Hence we start with the burnt offering and lastly come to the offerings for sin and trespass. On our side of the matter, we have to begin with the sin offering. Nothing is right, nor can we advance further, until our sins with all their guilt are settled. With the offering for sins Leviticus 4 is occupied.

In verse 2 let us note two things. First, the sin that is contemplated is "against any of the commandments of the Lord." As before remarked, "sin is not imputed [put to account] when there is no law" (Rom. 5: 13). We have now reached the time when the law, with its many commandments in detail, has been given, so that when any of these commandments had been broken, the sin was at once put to account against the transgressor, and this particular offering was instituted to make atonement for the sinner.

But second, the sins that were contemplated when this offering was instituted, were those committed "through ignorance." In this we see the compassion of our God

shining out. He well knew the frailty and ignorance and forgetfulness that characterizes poor, fallen humanity, and this provision was made. Sin committed deliberately in cold-blooded defiance of God is not contemplated here; indeed we read in Hebrews 10: 28, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." Though God is a God of mercy, the law as such has no mercy in it, and therefore the merciful provision of the sin and trespass offerings only came into effect where the root of the sin was ignorance and not wilfulness.

Having read right through this chapter we at once see that the instructions fall naturally into four sections, according to the position held by the person or persons committing the sin. Upon that depended the gravity of the sin in the sight of God. Sin might be committed by (1) the high priest himself; (2) the whole congregation of Israel; (3) a ruler; (4) one of the common people. Hence in each case certain differences come to light, though there are features that appear consistently in each of the four.

Let us first note these consistent features. In each case, when the sin was recognized it had to be confessed before God in a practical way by the bringing of the appropriate sacrifice to be killed before the Lord, and the guilty one had to lay his hand on the head of the victim, thus identifying himself with it. In the case of the whole congregation sinning this had to be done by the elders of the congregation, as representing the mass of the people.

This identification, however, may

be distinguished from that which we saw in the case of the burnt offering, inasmuch as here it meant the identification of the victim with the sinner, so that the guilt of the sin was transferred from the sinner to the victim, which would die in his stead. In the case of the burnt offering it signified the reverse and complementary thought of the offerer being identified with the sweet savour and acceptance of the offering. Both these things unite in the antitype — the propitiatory and substitutionary death of our blessed Lord.

In each case the victim was slain. Death is the wages of sin, and no sentence can be pronounced as an alternative to that. This is acknowledged in our law courts. A prisoner may be sentenced to a fine, with imprisonment as an alternative. But we never hear a judge sentence a man to death, with the alternative of prison or anything else. In all its gravity the death sentence on sin stands alone. This is clearly foreshadowed here. In each case the blood of the victim was sprinkled before the Lord, though not in each case sprinkled in just the same way. The sprinkled blood testified before God that the death sentence was accomplished, and, "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17: 11).

Also in each case certain parts of the inwards and all the fat was to be taken and burnt upon the altar, just as the fat of the peace offerings was burned. Nothing is said as to this burning being for a sweet savour as was the case with the peace offerings. The fat truly spoke of the excellence of the victim, which was a needful thing if there was to be atonement made for sin, but the

point now is the covering of man's sin, rather than the gratification that is brought to God.

Lastly, in each case there was the forgiveness of the sin in virtue of the sacrifice. In the first case, that of the anointed priest, this fact is not mentioned, but evidently he was no exception to the rule. If we would understand the nature of the forgiveness that is mentioned, we must read and consider Romans 3: 25.

In that important verse the word translated "remission" is one that means a "passing over," and it is the only time the word occurs in Scripture. In that verse we find that in Christ and His propitiatory death God has declared His righteousness in passing over the sins of His people in His forbearing mercy during the ages before Christ came. Holy angels, who may well have known what is stated in Hebrews 10: 4, that, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," may have wondered where was the righteous basis for the forgiveness offered in Leviticus 4. It was the death of Christ that declared God's righteousness in this, and vindicated His action. The sacrifices and the forgivenesses of Old Testament times were like promissory notes with a distant due date. The due date came when Christ died, and turned the notes into the pure gold of a divinely accomplished redemption.

Now consider the differences in the four sections. If the anointed priest sinned, then we have the most serious case of all. He was the appointed link between the people and God, and the whole people were involved with himself. So a young

bullock without blemish had to be offered, and its blood had to be sprinkled not only on the altar without, but carried into the sanctuary and sprinkled seven times before the vail and on the horns of the altar of incense. In type, the worship of the people was interrupted in the sin of the man, who presented it before God in the fragrance of the incense. Until the blood was sprinkled there could be no priestly action before the Lord on behalf of the people.

We find just the same features in the second case; that of the sin of the whole congregation. In this case possibly the priest himself was not implicated, but even so he would be left without any people fit to be represented before the Lord, so in effect the result was very much the same. In both these cases, where the sin was of a gravity affecting all, the body of the victim was to be carried without the camp and burnt there.

To this fact Hebrews 13: 11 refers, and the application for us is given in the next verse. The sacrifice of Christ was for others and had in view the whole people, thus fitting in with the type. When He suffered, the days of Israel's wilderness camp were over, and Jerusalem was their city. Well, He suffered without the gate of their religious centre. The place of the Christian now, even if by nature a Jew, is outside that religious system in association with the rejected Christ who died and lives again.

When a ruler or one of the common people sinned, the animals brought for sacrifice were of lesser value. The blood was applied to the altar without, but not carried to the sanctuary within. Correspondingly

the body of the victim was not to be burned without the camp. What was to be done with these bodies we are not told here. When we come to the law of the sin offering we find that it provided very holy food for the priests and their sons.

Details concerning the trespass offerings follow in chapter 5 and the first 7 verses of chapter 6. A trespass might be committed against one's fellow as well as against God and His holy things, and a number of ways are specified in which trespass could take place.

The sacrifices enjoined reveal two things. First, that a trespass against God in His holy things is a more serious matter than a trespass against man, consequently the offerings prescribed in verses 15 and 18, and also in verse 6 of chapter 6 are of a more substantial sort than the others. To touch an unclean thing, or to state something on oath erroneously has not the same gravity before God as to defile holy things or to do violence and deceit to one's neighbour and thus dishonour the name of the Lord.

For these lesser trespasses a lamb or kid, or two young pigeons might be brought; and of these two one might be offered as a burnt offering after the first had been offered as a trespass offering. Again, if so poor that a man could not bring even two pigeons, he might bring so little as the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour and the priest might offer as a trespass offering even that. When fine flour was offered as a meat offering there must be with it both oil and frankincense. Here both these are expressly excluded. The sweet savour element was wanting in that

which had compulsorily to be offered in atonement for the wrongdoing of sinful men.

We read in Hebrews 9: 22, that, "almost all things are by the law purged with blood." Here is a case in point, which made it necessary to put the word, "almost," before the word, "all." In the case before us we see the kindness of God considering the very great poverty of some of His erring people. The priest might eat the residue as though it had been a meat offering, but nevertheless the handful was burned as a sin offering.

Another thing marked these trespass offerings, where the rights of men had been infringed. The trespasser had not only to bring his offering to God but he had to make amends to the one whom he had trespassed against. If the evil had brought loss in the holy things of God, he had to make amends, as we see in verse 16 of chapter 5. And so also if a man had suffered loss, as we see in verse 3 of chapter 6. Reparation had to be made on the same basis in both cases. What had been lost originally had to be repaid and a fifth part added to it. Nothing more just than this can be found. Many a robber would not mind doing a bit of imprisonment if he be allowed to retain the gain he has made. But to lose all he made plus a fifth part beyond takes all the glamour from the wrongdoing.

In the light of this we see how

very exceptional was the statement of Zacchaeus, recorded in Luke 19: 8. He could say, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." This was going far beyond that which the law demanded, and by the man of the world it would have been considered over-scrupulous honesty; so much so that if anyone merited salvation Zacchaeus must have done so. All such thoughts were brushed aside by the Lord, when He said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The most virtuous observance of the law in one of its details does not compensate for the infringement of it in other details. Hence we read, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3: 20). Zacchaeus had to receive salvation as a true "son of Abraham;" that is, as a believer — see, Galatians 3: 7.

We cannot doubt that the principles laid down in verses 2-5, have their application today to any wrongdoing or offence against man on the part of a Christian. Even if done inadvertently, the believer should be most careful to make reparation, as full as may be within his power. The fact that we are not under law, but under grace with its higher standards, should make us most careful not to fall below the standard which the law has set in this matter.

IN one scene Mary chooses the "good part"; in the other she does "a good work." The "good part" is part with Christ: "a good work" is one that has Christ for its motive. "A good work" flows from "the good part" — We must first sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His words if we are to work for Him with a pure motive.