

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

THIRD ANNUAL VOLUME

====Edited by====

J. T. MAWSON and H. D. R. JAMESON

“Thy Word is Truth”

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Scripture Truth.

Make me to understand the way of thy precepts : so shall I talk of thy wondrous works (Ps. 119. 27).

GOD has an absolute title to be supreme in the lives of His creatures, and He expresses His authority immediately by His Word. Therein we are instructed as to the rule and measure of our responsibility, and as to the grace in Christ, and the power in the Spirit by which alone we can fulfil every relationship in which He has placed us.

Our object is to turn the attention more completely to the Word of God, so that we may have a fuller understanding of His will. Nothing can take the place of the Scripture ; those who are instructed in its truths may be able to help us by the ministry of them in their varied character, but this ministry will put us more immediately into touch with God by His Word, or it is no help at all.

All true ministry brings us into closer acquaintance with what God says to us.

Our first and all-ruling relationship is with God by the Word. It has precedence of all others, and claims absolute and immediate subjection. "WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD rather than men," is the absolute claim of God, who has revealed Himself fully and reveals Himself immediately to us by the Word.

If the issue of *Scripture Truth* during the coming year produces results of this kind ; if our eyes are more widely opened to behold wondrous things in His law ; and we prove through grace that His commandments are not grievous, our end will be gained.

The Love of Christ.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

THE LOVE OF CHRIST! Who can set it forth? It is a love that passeth knowledge, and yet we are to know it. Yesterday it was expressed on the cross, to-day it is expressed in glory. Told out in death, it abides in life continuous and unchanging.

Behold its devotedness in what He *gave* as well as in what He *gave up*.

Rich in glory, angel and archangel esteeming it an honour to do His bidding, co-equal with the Father, supreme and glorious, He willingly, voluntarily, left all His wealth behind and came a homeless stranger into the world of His own creation, became poor in order to enrich us. Nor did His love stop there. The most valued

and precious thing to a man is his life ; all that he has he will part with to retain it. But Jesus *gave up His life* ! The Son of God *loved* and gave *Himself* ! Here is love indeed ! Pen fails to describe it, tongue to utter it, mind to conceive it, yet how blessedly true and real it is.

Pause—say to yourself—the SON OF GOD loved *me*. Me ! A worthless being like me. Ah ! here is the wonder of it : there was not a single thing in me to draw out His love, and yet He has loved me with a love so devoted that He emptied Himself to enrich me, and died to possess me.

It was this love that so won and captivated Paul's heart, so completely

enthralled him, that, bowed in adoration at His feet, he lived by the faith of the Son of God; his whole soul was bound by the chains of love to a living Saviour, but he never forgot that the living One *died* for him. He speaks as though there were not another sinner in the world, so absorbed was he with this precious fact.

This personal intimacy we greatly need to cultivate. Let us lay our heads on the bosom of Jesus and say, "I am the disciple whom Jesus loves." This is not presumption; it is true humility. Peter thought of *his love to Christ*, John rested in *Christ's love to him*. Our love is not worth speaking of. If we love Him at all, it is because *He first loved us*.

If you would have your soul enthralled, bowed in adoration at the feet of the Son of God, and overwhelmed with the greatness of this love, turn your thoughts to Calvary, gaze upon that holy Sufferer on the central cross, contemplate the utter desolation of that blessed One as He cried out of the thick darkness, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" Linger there, whilst in spirit you travel back to Gethsemane, where the dread *anticipation* of Golgotha caused that bloody sweat of soul agony. Now return to the place of a skull, where the most solemn transaction in time or eternity took place. There God—the thrice holy God—abandoned His Son, when He, the sinless One, having voluntarily taken our guilt, bore the full weight of the judgment due to it.

Linger there till your whole soul is absorbed, overpowered with the immensity of the fact that the SON OF GOD *loved and gave HIMSELF for me*.

Like a spring tide the love of Christ rose to its full height at the cross, but the height to which it rose will never ebb, it is a tidal wave as full to-day as ever. It is eternal and unchanging; the cross expressed His love in its fulness, and His love abides, for having loved His own which were in the

world, He loves with an unchanging love to the end.

We may change, forget Him, turn away, fail to respond to His affection, so that He may be compelled to reproach us with having left our *first* love, but He never leaves His first love, *that* knows no change, no variation; it is the one affection which is unalterable. It may suffer—and suffer long—but it will be kind; it may have to rebuke its object, but it earnestly remembers him still. It craves the early freshness of reciprocal love and recalls the kindness of youth when in the first blush of salvation we gave Him the full strength of our newborn affection, for in Him there is no variableness; His love is unaffected by our neglect, though deeply feeling that neglect.

The one sure and certain thing upon which our souls can confidently rest is that Jesus Christ is the *same* yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same eternal Lover of our souls, who died for us yesterday on the cross, and lives for us to-day in glory. To what shall we compare His love? It is a sun which is always shining, an ocean ever full, a fountain ever springing. Let us bask in its sunshine, delight in its ocean fulness, drink of its living water. It is a mighty river, bearing on its broad bosom our tiny vessels to our eternal home; it is a mine of wealth, richly rewarding the one who seeks its treasures.

Nor is it only in death we learn His love. Jesus who died is alive again. He sits enthroned in glory, seraphim and cherubim, angels and archangel, bowing in homage at His feet. They reverence Him, the Man Christ Jesus, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. They own Him Jehovah's equal, glorified again with the Father, as before all worlds, and to Him they rightfully accord divine honours.

Have those glories so absorbed Him that He forgets "His own" passing

through the sorrows of the world? Ask the disciple who once leaned on His bosom, but is now the companion of transgressors in the rock-girt and wave-tossed isle of Patmos. Is he disconsolate, overwhelmed, unhappy? No! Why? He is solaced by the love of Christ; he can say, "That love has made me a priest to His God and Father, and my glad heart says, 'To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!'" (Rev. 1. 6). I am still the disciple whom *Jesus loves*, persecution has not separated me from *His* love."

Ask Paul and Silas as they lie stock-bound and with lacerated backs in the inner prison at Philippi, "Does Christ still love you?" They will answer, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through *Him that loved us.*" That love enables them to make the prison ring again with His praises.

Perhaps some backslider says, "I have forfeited His love because of unfaithfulness on my part." Ask Peter if his defection changed Christ's affection. He will answer "No. My failure made me wretched, miserable, unhappy; but He very graciously washed my feet, probed me to the bottom, then restored to me the joy I had lost, and, wonder of wonders! when I could not trust myself, He entrusted me with the dearest objects of His heart, the lambs and sheep of His flock. Was ever love like His!"

Nor is this love alone one of pity and compassion to us individually.

Travel back again to Golgotha, behold that holy Sufferer. Why does He die? Why does He not by an act of power deliver Himself? Listen! Christ *loved* the church and gave *Himself* for it. That redeemed company, whom He has set His love upon, He gave up His life to possess; and you—fellow believer—are part of that church for which He died; one of those for whom He poured out His life's blood.

Why?

Because you are indispensable to His happiness, He has set His heart

upon you, and has counted no cost too dear to purchase you.

You are to Him the rose of Sharon; you are part of the pearl of great price for which He sold all that He had. Herein is expressed His love for His bride. Contemplate it, dwell upon it; He loves you with the ardent affection of a bridegroom as well as with the pitying love of a Saviour.

A David, a John Baptist, will be as much indebted to the redeeming work of Christ as a Christian; but never forget that you are loved with a love to which they were strangers. Their part will be to rejoice as friends at the marriage of the Lamb; yours to be the happy bride, the eternal object of a love set forth by the marriage tie. For the church Christ slept the deep sleep of death like Adam, and toiled like Jacob in his twice seven years (lovely picture of Christ's past and present service). He purchased and redeemed her like Boaz, lifted her out of her distance and degradation like the Ethiopian wife of Moses, and will soon seat her on His throne to share His Gentile supremacy and universal monarchy, like the brides of Solomon and Joseph.

She will share the throne of His glory during the millennial day of display, and, better still, will engage His affections during ages unending.

Behold the church descending when the eternal day has commenced, adorned as a bride for her husband, as fully loved as when He cleansed and sanctified her, presented her without spot or blemish, all glorious at first. Loved to the end without an end. What Rebekah was to Isaac the church is to Christ; she will be His comfort and joy, the loved one given Him of the Father for His own satisfaction, His eternal delight in the paradise of God.

No wonder Paul stopped in the middle of the heights and depths of the revelations of the epistle to Ephesus, amazed at the greatness of that wonderful love, and with bowed

knees desired that the saints of God might *know* the love of Christ which *passeth knowledge*.

Let us join in that prayer, for which of us can say I have measured the immeasurable, I have plumb-lined the bottom of that ocean? Rather let us say, "Grant that we may know, day by day, more of that love which will be our eternal delight and unending joy."

This is a love which stoops in priestly grace and timely help to the necessities of our wilderness journey, and in restoring grace if we have departed from the right path; for Jesus

ever lives to make intercession for us and save us through everything—to the very end.

This is a love which has set us nearer to the Father's heart, given us a more intimate place in the Son's affections than the brightest angel.

This is a love which brought the Son of the Highest into the place of the lowest, that vacated a throne for a cross, travelled from the heights of glory to the depths of Calvary—for you—for me. Was there ever love like this?

"The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20).

"Able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

This hath He done, and shall we not adore Him?

This shall He do, and can we still despair?

Come, let us quickly fling ourselves before Him,

Cast at His feet the burden of our care.

Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,

Glad and regretful, confident and calm,

Then through all life and what is after living,

Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.

Yea, thro' life, thro' death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning

He shall suffice us, for He hath sufficed;

Christ is the end, for Christ is the beginning,

Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ (*F. W. H. Myers*).

Those who serve the Lord might learn a valuable lesson from a certain Highland shepherd. His sheep generally took the best prizes at the shows, and when asked to account for this he said, "I look weel to the lambs." It is good to do this, for if we are to rejoice at the sight of sturdy Christians able to withstand, and, having done all, to stand, the lambs must be fed and cherished. But to do this aright we must have the spirit and tenderness of heart of Him who feeds His flock like a shepherd, who gathers the lambs with His arm, and carries them in His bosom (Isa. 40. 11).

Reserves are the canker of Christian sincerity. A partial obedience will never satisfy a child of God. The exclusion of any word of God from its supreme regard in the heart is the brand of hypocrisy. Even Herod could do many things, yet one evil way cherished, and therefore unforsaken, was sufficient to show the sovereign power of sin undisturbed within. Saul slew all the Amalekites but one; and that single exception in the path of obedience marked the unsoundness of his profession, cost him his throne, and brought him under the awful displeasure of God.

Abundant Life.

(F. B. HOLE).

THE Lord Jesus came that we might have abundant life (John 10. 10). This is more than mere existence. We use the word "life" in two ways in ordinary conversation. You go, for instance, to visit a friend who is, you hear, far from well. In the hall a nurse in uniform meets you, and you are shocked to hear he is hanging between life and death. Just for a moment you are allowed to stand in the darkened room. There is the unconscious form of your friend. A medical man stands by the bedside feeling his pulse. "Doctor," you anxiously inquire, "is there life?" "Yes." "Is there any hope?" "Not much, but while there is life there is hope, you know."

Now let me stand by your side and, pointing to that scene, ask, "Is that LIFE?" What will you say? The word

bears another sense now. If you went to the Royal Academy to see a picture by a foremost artist entitled "Life," what would you expect to see? An invalid reclining upon a couch? No. You would expect to see portrayed youth, vitality, vigour, enjoyment. A ruddy boy in the full glow of health bounding gleefully along the golden summer sands would be nearer the mark. You would say "That is LIFE!"

"I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (R.V.). Such is our portion. Not invalid life. Not existence merely. Thank God we have spiritual existence, but we have more. Spiritual vitality, spiritual vigour, spiritual enjoyment—these things are ours in the risen Shepherd who once in His goodness laid down His life for the sheep.

The Obedience of the Son of God.

THE Son of God, according to the eternal counsel, came into the world to be obedient unto the will of God, even unto death. "*Lo, I come to do Thy will.*" His obedience was characterized throughout by such continuity, liberty, and inward delight that we are apt to forget that aspect of His life on which the Apostle dwells when he says, "*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered*" (Heb. 5. 8).

The Lord Jesus was always doing the things which pleased the Father. There was no break or hesitation, no pause or retrogression in His path; it was the path of the just Man, which is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And as it was continuous, so it seemed without an effort, flowing forth abundantly and spontaneously out of the full

well-spring of His heart. He was refreshed and not exhausted by doing the will of the Father that sent Him.

And yet Jesus learned obedience, as He Himself said, "*I came . . . not to do Mine own will.*" He who is LORD, infinite in power and glory, was made flesh; and with a sinless human will, amid the toil and temptation incident to humanity, He continually submitted Himself to God His Father. Real and great were His difficulties, temptations, and sorrows; and from the prayers and complaints ascribed to Messiah in the psalms and the prophets we can understand somewhat of the burden which weighed on His loving and sensitive heart. In constant dependence He leaned on the Father, and drew from Him light and strength; His was the path of faith; He lived not merely *before*, but *by* the Father (A. Saphir).

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 1.

Questions and Comments from our readers are invited in connection with these Studies.

THE intention is to compare, as far as space will permit, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; to show that these records where they seem to be contradictory are in reality not so, but in perfect harmony with that character in which our Lord Jesus is presented in each. There is no discord in the divinely given volume, and every separate part is in full accord with the whole, though each is complete in itself, bearing its own distinctive character, which must not be broken in upon as is the case when the mistake is made of attempting to mechanically "harmonize" the records.

The Gospel of John stands alone; in it

our Lord is presented to us in His personal glory: the Word become flesh, to reveal God to men in all the fulness of His nature and character. This Gospel must form the subject-matter of future studies—if God will; it is not our purpose to take it up now, though reference may often be made to it.

May the Holy Ghost, whose blessed mission it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us, open our eyes to see at least some of the unveiled excellence of the Son of God, and impress our souls anew with the unerring wisdom and perfection revealed in the written Word.

The Genealogies—Matthew and Luke.

MATTHEW presents the Lord as Son of David and of Abraham: the MESSIAH OF ISRAEL. His Gospel may be called the Gospel of the kingdom, but the King is not merely Son of David and Son of Abraham, but JESUS—Jehovah the Saviour: EMMANUEL—God with us (chap. 1. 21, 23).

MARK presents the Lord as the Servant of God: the great and perfect SERVANT-PROPHET; but "Jesus Christ" is "the Son of God" (chap. 1. 1).

LUKE presents the Lord as the SON OF MAN revealing the delivering grace of God amongst men; but of this Man it was said, "He shall be great, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest," and "that *Holy Thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the SON OF GOD" (chap. 1. 32, 35).

In this threefold character He was presented to Israel for their acceptance, and in each character was rejected by them. They had no excuse for this, for His words and works, as recorded in each Gospel, were the fulfilment of the Scriptures which had before borne witness to the fact that He would appear to them in each of these ways.

JOHN is entirely different; there the Lord is viewed as rejected from the start

(chap. 1. 11), and there is then unfolded in that Gospel that which had not been the subject of prophecy.

The Writers.

Israel was no longer under its own king, and that Matthew should have been a tax-gatherer (Matt. 9. 9), actually an official under the alien rule, but evidences the divine wisdom which selects him to write the Gospel of the *King*.

Mark, the failing servant (Acts 13. 13; 15. 38), is selected to write the Gospel which presents the *perfect Servant*. How grace shines in this!

Luke was a Gentile (Col. 4. 11, 14). How fitting then that he should write the Gospel in which Christ is pre-eminently presented in the perfection of His manhood,¹ and so as the vessel of grace for all. (EDS.)

Matthew has the first place rightly, for it was of first importance that the One in whom all the promises of God centred should be presented to the nation as the fulfilment of them in His own person, and prepared to establish all those promises at once if received by the nation. Far wider purposes of blessing would result from His rejection; but first

God's faithfulness must be verified, and the nation left without excuse for their treatment of their Messiah. (J.A.T.)

The Genealogy in Matthew (ch. 1).

The genealogy here is that of Jesus as the legal son of Joseph ; but the change of wording in verse 16 must be noted, "*the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ,*" as compared with "*Jacob begat,*" etc. Thus Joseph is excluded as the actual father. But if Jesus had not been Joseph's son, according to Jewish law, Joseph would have barred His succession to the throne. Yet if *actually* his son, He could not have been the virgin's son, or Emmanuel—God with us—according to that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet (Isa. 7. 14) ; nor could He have been the Son of God. But how He was *legally*, yet not *actually*, Joseph's son is unfolded to us according to the wisdom of God in verses 18-25.

Joseph was the representative of the royal line of the house of Judah at the time of the birth of Jesus—a poor man, a carpenter by trade. That his lineage given here was distinct from the natural line of father to son will be seen by comparing it with that which is also given us as Joseph's in Luke. The line of descent from David through Solomon came to an end by the sentence of God on the childless Jehoiakim (Jer. 22. 18-30 ; 36. 30), who is therefore omitted in verse 11 (Josiah begat Eliakim whose name was changed by Necho to Jehoiakim : he begat Jechoniah, called also Jehoiachin and Coniah, in whom the line was cut off). Jechoniah was not then literally the father of Salathiel. Matthew gives the *succession*, not the strict birth. The heir to David's throne must now be sought in the line of another of David's sons, as we see by turning to Luke 3. 23, where we learn that Salathiel's actual father was Neri, who was the descendant of Nathan (ver. 31), son of David (see 1 Chron. 3. 5). This was according to the principle laid down in Numbers 27. 11.

We may note the leading place the genealogy has here as opening the Gospel : for, coming in the way of promise, the descent of the Lord Jesus from Abraham as the root of promise is the foundation of the position in which He is presented to us. Hence the

line begins with Abraham ; but in verse 2 David is put before Abraham, because it is only by the establishment of royalty in David that the promises to Abraham will be fully accomplished.

(J.A.T.)

The Messiah was of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal family of that tribe. His claim to royalty could not be questioned, for the simple reason that the archives proved the fact. He had lineal title to the throne ; and although so lowly—meek and lowly in heart—He was indeed the King. "What I have written I have written," was Pilate's answer to those who wished his sentence to be altered. That sentence will stand for ever. (J.W.S.)

The Lord is introduced as Son of David and Son of Abraham because Abraham was the depositary of the promises, and because it is in connection with the coming and reign of the king that we find the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. It is very characteristic of Matthew that the accomplishment of promise and prophecy is repeatedly noticed. (H.P.B.)

Names omitted from the Genealogy.

The genealogy is divided into three parts, marking the three great divisions in the history of the people : from Abraham to David ; from David to the captivity ; and from the captivity to Christ. In the second division three kings are omitted (Ahaziah, Joram, and Amaziah), the immediate descendants of the wicked Athaliah. This was according to the principle of God's government made known in the law : "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Exod. 20. 5). Their names are blotted out, thus stamping the impress of God's holy government upon the lineage of the Messiah. (J.A.T.)

The Women of the Genealogy.

If God's holy character is displayed in the names excluded, there is a far more striking witness to His grace in the names which are introduced ; grace which knows no limit as to the objects of it, even in that which might be supposed to be so distinctly Jewish. There are four women, and only four mentioned, from

whom the Son of David was descended according to the flesh. None of these names could be enshrined there on any other principle than that of grace: *Thamar, Rahab, Ruth the Moabitess, and She of Urias*. What an intimation that *Emmanuel* could not be confined in the outgoings of His heart to the reputable in Israel, or even to those who were of Israel! (J.A.T.)

Prominent upon the very opening of the Gospel is displayed the sovereignty of divine grace which, while admitting the privilege of the Jew, yet steps outside that privileged people to find objects of blessing. Nor is this confined to the genealogy: it runs through the book; see chapter 8. 10-12; 12. 48-50; 15. 21-28. It arrests the attention in the four women whose names are here introduced. The first three named especially set forth in their histories this point; for in the sovereign ways of God the Gentiles, despised of the Jew, are introduced into the royal tribe of Judah to find a place in the ancestry of the Messiah. What a lesson is here for any who, being much privileged, are inclined to fall into the snare so solemnly rebuked in chapter 3. 9 of the Gospel, "think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (see also Jer. 7. 3, 4). (C.E.H.W.)

Men of this world boast in their illustrious lineage, but the Lord Jesus derived no honour from these ancestors. In coming in connection with such a line He acted in astonishing grace. If truly estimated, such a line would bring disgrace rather than glory, for it depended for its very existence on the corrupt Thamar, the Gentiles Rahab and Ruth, and on the sin that made her that had been the wife of Urias the wife of David. By this line the Lord of glory came. It was enough to take every boast out of the mouth of the proud Jew. (H.P.B.)

The connection of these women with the genealogy gives a full and blessed declaration of the story of grace and salvation; each in its order adding what the former left out, until the whole is told.

THAMAR'S history is told to us with the accustomed plainness of the Word in that dark chapter of human depravity, Gen. 38. It was her very *sin* that brought her into this connection with the Lord of life and glory. And is it not our *sin* that has brought any of us into connection with Him? Did He not come to "save sinners?"

In this is God's love made manifest, for He "commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8). Apart from our *sins* we should not have known Him, and could have had no connection with Him in this blessed character.

RAHAB was a Canaanite, a sinner amongst a cursed race; she had no claim upon God's favour, either because of her nationality or conduct: the curse justly rested upon her because of both. Yet we read, "By *faith* the harlot Rahab perished not" (Heb. 11. 31). Faith brought her amongst God's people, and eventually into the royal genealogy. Here we have the second step in the way of grace, for faith looks away from self, and, with nothing of goodness to plead, lays hold upon the mercy of God; it is "to him that worketh not, but *believeth*" (Rom. 4. 5).

RUTH was a Moabitess, and against her there stood an express statute of the law, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever" (Deut. 23. 3). Thus, though most estimable in herself, she lay under the interdict of the law. But not only Ruth, but all on the ground of law are excluded; if she or any other is to be brought in it must be without law. For "what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. . . . But now the righteousness of God *without the law* is manifested" (Rom. 3. 19, 21). "Therefore it is of *faith*, that it might be of *grace*" (Rom. 4. 16).

"HER THAT HAD BEEN THE WIFE OF URIAS" brings out the depths of which the flesh is capable: its incorrigible character. Her name is linked with David's terrible crime; David, child of God, Israel's sweet psalmist! Surely we are taught here that no flesh shall glory in the presence of the Lord our God. If David

could not, we cannot. But we are also taught that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" for from this David and this Bathsheba, whom sin had united together, a child springs whose name stands next in the line of the ancestry of the Lord, and who receives, as if to confirm this, a special name, "Jedidiah," beloved of the Lord.

Sin, faith, the righteousness of God without the law, and the "much more abounding grace of God," grace which will not be baffled; this is the story which these names repeat, a story God is never weary of telling, however slow men may be to hear. (Adapted from F.W.G.)

The lines of promise and of kings were a means to an end, and that end was CHRIST. They were a means only, so far as His necessary links in the flesh were concerned, viz. His manhood and His royal descent. If men shine at all, or are blest at all, it must be through and by Him. Abraham, the fountain of promise derived from Christ, and found all his hopes in JEHOVAH-JIREH. If Christ were the offspring of David as to the flesh, He was David's ROOT first of all. "I am the Root and Offspring of David." CHRIST was ever before the mind of God. He gave power and virtue to every type; He was the fulness of every shadow, the *raison d'être* of every personage who was linked with Him in promise, or type, or prophecy. He is the Sum and Sun and Centre of all God's purposes and ways. Everything else was contingent on Him. Without Him we should never have had a Bible, without Him we should never have heard of Abraham, or Joseph, or David, or Solomon, for their lives would never have been delineated save as types of Him. (A.J.P.)

No Genealogy in Mark.

Neither the Lord's genealogy nor His birth are given by Mark; they would be out of place there, for He is presented in that Gospel as the Servant of God, and love needs no title to serve. All it looks for is opportunity.

But if Mark's Gospel is the Gospel of the Servant, He is introduced to us as the "Son of God." There is a great connection between sonship and service. It

is illustrated in the case of Israel, "Let My son go, that he may serve Me" (Exod. 4. 23). (H.P.B.)

The Genealogy in Luke (ch. 3. 21-23).

Here is proved that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed a Man. His genealogy is therefore traced up to Adam, from whom all humanity has sprung. *He was the only Man that ever needed a genealogy to prove that He was indeed a Man!* He was born by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost, by the "power of the Highest." Son of God, Son of the Highest, surely it might be doubted (as indeed it has been doubted) whether He was really man. To supply proof of this His genealogy from Adam is given. (H.P.B.)

In Luke the genealogy is not introduced until chapter 3, when it immediately follows the Father's address to Him. It would seem from this that the Holy Ghost would lead us to contemplate, as far as may rightly be done, the mystery of His person. He was man, truly man; the genealogy proves this; but He was absolutely free from the taint of sin which ran through Adam's race, or the Father could not have spoken to Him in such perfect love and infinite complacency. He was man, yet such an One must be more than man. (C.E.H.W.)

In Luke the blessed Lord is before us in all the lowly characteristic grace of the Son of man. He is everywhere seen as the dependent man, in all the infinite grace that brought Him down to be a Saviour. The very term Saviour first occurs in Luke, as also that for salvation (though the verb "to save" occurs in all); the word for "grace," too, is first found in ch. 2. 40; nor do Matthew and Mark use any word into the composition of which *charis*, "grace," enters.

No royal lineage ushers Him in as in Matthew. His genealogy is prefaced by the Holy Ghost descending upon Him, not as though the anointing of a king, not as official but personal. More in character as the sealed One of the heart of God, His taking possession of an object in which He delighted. "Thou art My beloved Son: in Thee I am well pleased."

The genealogy reads backwards, as it has been noticed, because it is in no sense

title derived from man, but blessing flowing back to man. He is traced back to Adam, viewed as born of the human race, and so of man in nature, though not according to the natural way, "the seed of the woman," indeed. The genealogy has been long believed to be that of Mary as suited in every way to the introduction of the Gospel and to the way the Lord is presented in it. In any case it gives us the natural descent of the Lord. But that it is Mary's is proved by a testimony of Jewish hate, which Dr. Lightfoot quotes: "There is a discourse of a certain person who in his sleep 'saw Mary the daughter of Heli, amongst the shades,'" with other horrible details, giving the sentence partly in Aramean and partly Hebrew. Godet, too, writes, "It is remarkable that in the Talmud, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is called the daughter of Heli." In all probability Mary and Joseph were first cousins. Matthan's son was Jacob, who begat Joseph, in Matthew 1. 15. In Luke the son of Matthat (manifestly the same name) was Heli, "of whom Joseph" ("son" is not in the original throughout the list). Thus it would be, from Matthat up, the genealogy of both Mary and Joseph. (J.A.T.)

The genealogy in this Gospel consists of seventy-seven generations—a very significant number, for seven is well known to stand for perfection in Scripture. Six hundred and sixty-six will be the number of the Beast (Rev. 13. 18), the highest pretension on the part of man to perfection, according to his own proud thoughts. But there is a great gulf fixed between that and perfection, the absolute perfection of the Lord's humanity.

Obedience in love to the Word is a proof of our friendship with the Lord. If I obey I am a friend of the Lord, and my heart is tender towards Him; but His heart is ever more tender towards me than mine is towards Him. His heart is more pained by my lack of friendship than I am by my failure. He has far more pleasure in my company than I have in His.

The genealogy of natural ascent through His mother up to Adam indicates His true manhood, an essential doctrine of Christianity, as is also His true Deity, and indicates that He came into the world to take up in His own person the consequences of the fall of the first man. (A.J.P.)

The origin of the great teachers of old is hardly traceable; the tree of the royal family of Great Britain can be followed back a thousand years with tolerable exactitude; but a thousand years beyond that it is lost in antiquity; but here is one which goes back, according to Luke, that most charming of Biblical writers, to Adam, and thence to God.

"Adam was of God;" let this primary fact be carefully noted in these days of evolution and "ascent from the ape." God is the originator of the human race, a fact which disposes of the crude and absurd Darwinian theory. (J.W.S.)

Lord Arthur Hervey well observed: "The New Testament gives us the genealogy of but one Person, that of our Saviour. The priesthood of Aaron having ceased, the possession of Canaan being transferred to the Gentiles, there being now no difference between circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, there is but One whose genealogy it concerns us as Christians to be acquainted with—that of our Lord Jesus Christ." His is everything. (A.J.P.)

The Second Study will deal with the Lord's birth and attendant incidents.

The greatest success is being like Christ and pleasing God, and none can hinder this but ourselves.

If we find our rest where God finds His—even in Christ—we shall not be at the mercy of circumstances, but shall realize the fulfilment of the words, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall garrison your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

Christianity and the World's Religions.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

ONE of the most terribly significant tendencies of the present day is a toleration that will embrace everything but Christianity in its purity. Within its ample folds evil of every kind is sheltered and nursed.

This tolerance will tell the heathen that his religion is not error but truth—half truth, they say, and Christianity can supply the rest—heathen cults to form the foundation, Christianity to build the superstructure.

It is quite the fashion for people to talk nowadays about "comparative religions." By that is meant the Christian religion, the Buddhist, Mahomedan, Confucian religions, etc. They put them side by side and compare them, and they have professed to discover that there is no difference in essence, only in form. But between the comparative religions of the world and Christianity there is no comparison. They are not in the same category. Their difference lies not in shape and size, but in the nature of their texture. Essentially, in their source, scope, and effects, they have nothing in common, save where comparative religion may have borrowed, and even then the borrowed matter can no more be assimilated than water and oil may be mixed. Their borrowed matter lies like sparkling gems upon a dung-heap.

A deceased celebrated London preacher made a very true remark. He was speaking about comparative religions, and added the significant sentence, "*But remember, gentlemen, that Christianity is not one of them.*"

It is the difference between man's handiwork and God's. One is the arrangement at best of *dead* matter. God's power is seen in *life*. "*This is the finger of God.*"

The study of comparative religions may be an interesting literary study, but the claims of Christianity are *vital*, and may not be refused save at the risk of the soul's eternal doom.

* * * * *

And it is just here I would point out a very remarkable contrast between Christianity and the false religions of the world.

Comparative religions agree in making their gods out of men. A late popular writer, Mr Grant Allen, describes the process in one of his books.

The process, outlined by him, roughly speaking is this. In the early days of the world a man would thrust himself into the chieftainship of his tribe by strength of will, force of character, and physical powers. There being no printing and very little writing in those days, on his death the tales of his courage and deeds of daring would form the theme for many a night's entertainment round the camp fires when the day's hunting or fighting was over. As these tales were handed down from father to son they would not lose in the telling. The greater the boastfulness of the story-teller, the more popular he would be. At length the tales would get far beyond the length of human possibility, and in this rough-and-ready way the ancient chieftain was apotheosized.

This writer attempted to prove that Jaheveh, or Jehovah, was simply a tribal deity belonging to the Israelites, and manufactured in the same way as the gods of the heathen.

He finds the Bible stories of the fall and the deluge are more or less common to the sacred writings of the heathen religions but he forgets *they come from the same source*, that is, from the knowledge men possessed of God in the beginning of the world's history and their acquaintance with events of such far reaching consequence and magnitude as the fall and the deluge. Indeed, if the account of these things were *only* in the Bible it would be held as a great proof of the unveracity of the Scriptures, for it would be rightly asked, How is it that these great facts of history are unknown outside the records of a small nation, and in no wise mentioned by the Hindoo or the Chinese with their ancient histories? But it is remarkable how much more fully they are placed on record in the Hebrew writings, "undisguised by the puerilities" and impossibilities that accompany the scanty records of heathen peoples. But there is one *vital* difference between Christianity

and heathen religions the writer has not pointed out. That he could have overlooked it I cannot believe, for it is such a manifest, essential difference. The writer is on the horns of a dilemma. If he overlooked the fact, it says exceedingly little for his perception; if he noticed it, and did not give the full weight of evidence to it, it says less for his honesty.

The difference is this. In the religions described by this book, man becomes God in heathen belief. In Christianity alone do we have the sublime conception and the glorious fact of God becoming Man for the purpose, as Man, of making atonement for His creatures' sin, and in ascending to heaven, when once His work was done, and remaining Man for ever, though never less than God, from all eternity to all eternity. God and Man—one Person—first in the world His hands had made, and then in heaven.

*"Jesus, the Lord, the Crucified
In glory still the same."*

* * * * *

Where did this sublime and unique conception come from? The ideas of the heathen in the main are a mixture of folly and demonology. Why should one Book alone present such a thought as we have been considering; where did a race, isolated, proud, narrow, obtain this thought which has delighted the wisest of men in all ages? The writers of the Book had not the great privileges of the present-day "higher critics." They had not a tithe of their academical advantages. There is only one answer that can adequately satisfy the demands of the case: "*Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" At one bound we are clear out of the dark valley of unbelief, reeking with the pernicious miasma of infidel and reckless minds, and have emerged into the clear, bright, warm sunshine of the mountain-top of everlasting truth and love.

Who was Isaiah, and where did he get his knowledge when seven centuries before Christ was born he prophesied that a virgin should be with child? No mere guesser with an uninspired pen would throw away his reputation on such a statement, impossible to all but faith. And whoever heard of a *child* with such names given him as Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Father of

Eternity (N.T.), the Prince of Peace? Surely this can be no product of human intellect or imagination. A man's mind cannot soar beyond itself. If God had not made the stars, no one could have conceived the idea of them. How much more in the realm of truth!

And when we come to the actual record of God becoming Man, the chosen penman is a fisherman from the banks of an obscure lake in a despised and downtrodden land. One of a band of "ignorant and unlearned men." Who but the wilfully blind can note the language and thoughts of John's Gospel and deny its heavenly origin, its divine conception, its sublimity, its majesty, and yet its beauty and tenderness.

It brings before us the most affecting of all presentations, that of "*God manifest in the flesh.*" Not the glory rising to God as the result of a perfect Man glorifying God on this earth, as in Luke's Gospel, but the very glory of God, veiled as to its *outward* manifestation, yet none the less there in all its fulness, the glory of the Invisible, *descending* to earth to make God known in all His wondrous character of love, the very essence of His being, for "*God is love.*"

And meditating on this wondrous fact, to be apprehended by us, if not comprehended, for what creature can comprehend, that is, *fully* grasp, the infinite glory of such a fact, we are put upon the right lines in our soul. Once the vision of this has passed before our souls in power we must refuse to descend to the low level of the world, even on its highest and most alluring side, and be delivered perforce from anti-Christian influences. As the melted wax *receives* the impression of the royal seal, so it *retains* the impression. In like manner, if we *receive* the mighty impress of this royal fact, we shall *retain* the impression by being like Christ in holy separateness from the world, ready to stoop, ready to yield, ready to serve, however humbly, where yielding and stooping and serving will be moral greatness, and not the yielding up of principles of the truth.

Of course, *only* God could stoop and become Man. We are men. We shall never be anything else. But the moral effect of the great fact we have been considering will be to fashion us after the mind of Christ (Phil. 2. 3-8).

Hebron.

(H. D. R. JAMESON).

Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt (Num. 13. 22).

A BALD statement of an historical fact which has long ceased to be of the slightest importance or interest to any present-day reader. Such is the verdict of the natural mind on such a passage as that which heads this paper. Nevertheless, to faith the words are resplendent with heavenly significance.

No scripture is of any private interpretation; that is to say, such is the marvellous unity of the structure of Holy Writ that no one part is independent of another—written by many writers at long intervals of time, yet all were moved by one Spirit, God Himself being the Author, and hence the numerous parts form but one wondrous whole in which every detail is full of the very deepest meaning. To discern the significance and reason of the statement above referred to finding permanent place in the divinely inspired record, let us trace the connections in which the Spirit makes mention of these places in other parts of the Word.

Lot, being given the choice by Abram, lifted up his eyes on the well-watered plains of Jordan, and choosing him that which was "like the land of Egypt," pitched his tent towards Sodom. It was in that hour that God unfolded to Abram of His purposes of blessing in wonderful fulness—purposes as to all the land northward, southward, eastward, and westward, and also as to the countless host of his offspring—and immediately it is added, "Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord" (Gen. 13. 18).

In that hill country some twenty-two miles south-east of Jerusalem dwelt Abram then, in the bliss of communion with God, whose secret purposes of blessing were there made known to him; whilst Lot, righteous though he

were, became more and more entangled with the world in the low-lying plain about Sodom. It was in Hebron too that God's purpose as to Isaac was disclosed to Abram (chap. 18. 1).

Very distinctly do we find then, at the outset, the unfolding of the divine purposes of blessing connected with the mention of this place (I say advisedly purposes of *blessing*, for although God revealed to Abram the necessity of His wrath falling on the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, yet verse sixteen of the chapter makes clear that this took place, not exactly in Hebron, but rather on the journey thence towards Sodom). Along with the unfolding of the purpose of God there is also very distinctly in Hebron the thought of its being a place of *communion*. The very meaning of the word Hebron is "friendship," which is the more significant as Abraham alone of all the sons of men is spoken of as the friend of God. In Hebron dwelt Isaac and Jacob also, the heirs with him of the same promise (Gen. 35. 27).

Joseph, as the beloved son of his father going out to seek the welfare of his wayward brethren (Gen. 37.), is a well-known and oft-delighted-in type of Christ, the well-beloved Son of the Father coming to seek the eternal well-being of those who were His brethren after the flesh: and as not one of even the merely historical details of Scripture is without its own significance had we but eyes to see it, so here it is of deep interest to note that it was "out of the vale of Hebron" that Jacob sent his son Joseph on this mission. Very beautifully does this bring before us how from the secret chamber of the eternal communion of the Father and the Son Christ proceeded and came to earth to do the

will of God and carry into effect all the divine purposes of blessing.

Hebron comes next prominently before us in connection with Israel's entrance into Canaan. That land was in the purpose of God for them. A multitude set out to reach it, but only a few were in the faith of God's intention, and this was proved by the sequel. Their spies went through the land, and, terminating their search in Hebron, brought from the valley of Eshcol the great bunch of grapes which proclaimed to all the fatness and goodness of the land. But Hebron was not to be lightly laid hold of, for there dwelt the sons of Anak; and in face of these difficulties (which were but to test faith), and losing sight of the fact that God had said He would bring the nation in, the mass gave up in unbelief.

But *Caleb*, who was of the spies, never forgot Hebron. It lived in his memory throughout forty years of wanderings in the desert whilst those that believed not perished. He laid hold of the fact that God had said He would bring them in, and whether the sons of Anak were there or not mattered little, for beyond a shadow of doubt the purpose of God must, and would be, fully carried out; and in the faith of this he was sustained in undiminished vigour and strength whilst mighty men of war perished on every hand. At the end, then, of forty and five years, when he had lived to see the fulfilment of all that was spoken in the bringing of the nation into the land, he could say, "Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me *this mountain*, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. And Joshua blessed him, and

gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh *Hebron* for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." And notice too how distinctly Hebron is regarded as the climax, for at once it is added, "and the land had rest from war" (Josh. 14. 10-15).

Passing on some 350 years, we come to the time of the kingdom. Israel desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, by the space of forty years, but at the expiration of that full period of probation he had but proved the utter unfitness of the one whom the people approved. God then removed him in favour of David, the son of Jesse, of whom He could say that he was "a man after Mine own heart, who shall fulfil all My will." Called thus to the throne, David inquired of the Lord to which of the cities of Judah he should go, and received the reply in two words, "Unto *Hebron*" (2 Sam. 2. 1).

There were many in Israel who were slow to recognize David as the man of God's purpose, but after various exercises and years of discipline the *whole* nation was at last brought into line with the will of God, and then we read, "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to *Hebron*, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king" (1 Chron. 12. 38). And if the reader will turn to the account of what took place in Hebron on that occasion he cannot but be struck with the blessing which this acclamation of David brought to all in question. Three days were they there with him, eating and drinking, "and there was joy in Israel." There was accord with God's purpose on the part of all, and consequent perfect communion. This was the climax of David's seven years in Hebron. The spiritual significance is not hard to read. We know *who* in the ultimate issue is the MAN of God's

purpose, and look on with expectancy to that day when with gladness He shall be acclaimed and exalted by all the Israel of God.

Seven years reigned David in Hebron; then follow thirty and three years in Jerusalem. The latter period is more public: it brings in David's wider glory as owned of the Gentiles. The former is linked rather with communion and entrance into divine purpose whilst yet undisplayed in full effect. Dispensationally it may be analogous to Daniel's seventieth week, but this I do not pursue.

In immediate contrast with Hebron is placed the city of *Zoan* in Egypt. This city was the centre of government in Lower Egypt in the early period of Israel's history. Egypt is the well-known type of the world. From out of it were Israel delivered. The meaning of *Zoan* is "motion;" and it speaks to us but too plainly of that which marks the world with its perpetual whirl of pleasure and pursuit of gain; peace is not there. The Lord said, "In Me ye shall have peace, but in the world tribulation." True, that was said to saints; but as to the worldling it is written, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57. 20, 21).

Zoan is mentioned seven times in Scripture, and each mention but serves to emphasize the striking way in which it defines the world's system. To refer here just to one: in Isaiah 19. 11 we read, "Surely the princes of Zoan are fools." Who can fail to see how strikingly parallel is this statement with the anti-typical language of the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 2. 6-8, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes

of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory?"

Hebron thus being linked, as we have clearly seen, with the secret and immutable purposes of God disclosed for faith's communion, and Zoan as clearly typifying the great world system whose inevitable end is the fire of divine wrath (Ezek. 30. 14), how blessedly significant do the words become, "Now Hebron was built seven years BEFORE Zoan in Egypt," for the purposes and counsels of God for blessing originated long before man's world had being.

In Ephesians 1. there is a marvellous unfolding of divine purpose, and it is to be noticed that these heavenly communications were made to saints whose spiritual state did not call for censure and correction, as, for instance, with the Corinthians and Galatians; for when our state is bad the Spirit of God must of necessity occupy us with ourselves to bring about self-judgment and restoration. How much do we know of that which Hebron signifies, the enjoyed communion of God's eternal counsels for the glory of Christ? The Spirit must be free from the necessity of dealing with us about our state if He is to do that in which is His delight, as shown in the words of the Son of God, "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16.).

All God's purposes of blessing take precedence of that which is of man. Thus even as to the millennial kingdom into which as blessing on earth the believing nations will enter in a future day, it is written that that kingdom was prepared for them "from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25. 34), from a time at which not even one of the ephemeral kingdoms of men had come into being. But our portion is of a higher order still, for our blessings are according as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath chosen us in Him (not from but) before the foundation of the world, and con-

sequently being outside of all that belongs to earth and to time they are spiritual blessings in the *heavenlies* in Christ.

Many and wonderful are the things which are said to be *according* to His purpose: thus, our place in Christ blessed with all spiritual blessings in the *heavenlies* (ver. 3); holy and without blame before Him in love (ver. 4); sonship (ver. 5); the inheritance and what is connected with it (ver. 11); the display of the all-varied wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenly places by the church (3. 10); but the purpose itself centres in *Christ*. The mystery of God's will made known to us (ver. 9) for the communion of faith (and this is, to us, Hebron) is the absolutely universal glory of Christ, the heading up for the administration of the fulness of times of all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens and on earth.

And if we think again of the inner circle, that which more nearly concerns ourselves, namely our con-

formity, according to the purpose of God, to the image of His Son, it is expressly declared to be "so that HE should be first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29, N.T.). What a scene of blessing and joy—all with Him and like Him in the Father's presence, yet Himself ever pre-eminent in that circle of highest privilege and blessedness as in every other. Thus even when it is kingdom joy which is in view it is written that He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Heb. 1. 9).

We have been called "according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. 1. 9).

May it be with us then as it was with Caleb who was sustained through all the wilderness journey in freshness and vigour in the faith of God's unfailing purposes. Let us in our day "be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2. 1); for, to use again the significant language of the allegory, "Hebron was built seven years BEFORE Zoan in Egypt."

On Preaching.

WE are to preach the gospel, not preach *about* it. No description of the latest Dreadnought, however correct, will drive away an advancing foe—you must clear your decks for action and open fire. So do not be content with describing conviction of sin; but labour in the power of the Holy Ghost to produce conviction at once. Do not satisfy yourself by picturing the peace which follows upon believing; but preach the truth that men are to believe, so that they may actually obtain the peace you describe.

Set yourself to labour with men even to an agony. *Show them their sin*, set it out before them; if they do not see it, be ready to weep because of their blindness. *Set Christ before them*; tell them that you have none other to

preach, but that He is sufficient, for one look to Him will save them; that He is the most blessed sight that their eyes could behold: that you are witness of that, for when you looked to Him His wounds were your healing and His death your life. Speak in such wise that if they turn away unmoved and unblessed the fault will be in them and not in you.

It is essential that you should know for an absolute certainty the things that you preach, and not only so, but that you should feel them; the sentiment of the little girl who on hearing a story asked, "Is it real or is it preaching?" is a very common one: it rests with you whether your preaching shall be treated in this way or not.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS)

Foreword.

THE last words of a departed friend have an interest all their own. The closing ministry of the Lord is recorded in John's writings. Jesus had come and gone, and had sent the Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles had proclaimed the great and glorious gospel that inaugurated the Christian period, the church had been set up in its first freshness and vigour, the mighty truths connected with the kingdom of God had been preached and received, and all had started fair with every prospect of success. But, already in the very lifetime of the apostles, swiftly and effectively, as before in the Garden of Eden, apparently before the evening of the first Sabbath just proclaimed had closed in, failure deep, dire, and irremediable was stamped upon it all, and the despairing question of old might with increased pertinence be asked again, "Who will show us any good?" (Ps 4 6). All that God had promised had apparently come to naught, all He had wrought appeared to have failed, all the hopes begotten in the hearts of His people had miscarried, and there seemed no finality in which the soul could rest. As the two disciples wended their sorrowful way to Emmaus, the burden of their disconsolate spirits was voiced in these pathetic words, "We had hoped that He was the One who should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24 21). But they were nearer the solution of their perplexities than they thought, by the presence of a risen Christ, soon to be carried up, in their sight and out of it, into heavenly glory, His resurrection and ascension to be answered by the baptism of fire and the Holy Spirit that was to make them superior to all their difficulties and endue them with power to spread the tidings of His grace and glory among the nations, thereby separating a people for His name, and building together the church, as the vessel of His testimony, that through it might be made known to principalities and powers in the heavenly places the all-various wisdom of God

High hopes and glorious these! Committed as it all was, in the diversity

of suitable gifts through the Spirit, for the administration of this grace, to qualified ministers under the direction of the Lord, for the working out into effect therein of the will of God. But, alas! too soon these hopes were doomed to disappointment. The church, in responsibility on earth, has utterly failed, little as men perceive it, the gospel has been perverted, and Christianity, as the testimony of God set forth therein has been corrupted in its nature and constitution, and the very life of man, which, through the operation of the Spirit, is dependent on the word of the gospel, both for existence and support (1 Pet 1 23-5, Luke 4 4), is imperilled by the failure of the appointed channels through which the grace of God was to reach him.

It is not meant that the gospel in itself, or the church in so far as it is the fruit of Christ's work has failed—but it has failed in the use of it in the hands of man, who is responsible to use it aright and has not done so.

Eternal Life.

What then? What remains in the presence of such a situation? Is all for ever lost? Has God no ulterior resource than what He has committed into the hands of frail and feeble man? and must all that He has promised and the high hopes His word has begotten in the souls of His people, turn out a deception and a mirage, all the more distressful as they fail on the very confines of expectant realization?

Here comes in the ministry of John, instinct with life, 'the eternal life,' as it holds up to view the Person of Jesus, the eternal and incarnate Son of God, a truly divine Person come in flesh—the great Mystery of mysteries. Jesus, in the full truth of the divine in the actuality of the human, God and man alike in the truth of both (John 1 1-30), the Ancient of Days, the "I am," stooping down into the ranks of time, born a Babe in Bethlehem, yet never less than what He is in Himself, "the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father," come

here to do His will and show the light of the glory of that upper world (John 8 23) with the fulness of everything suitable to the place He occupied as the Father's delight therein (Prov 8 22-31), yet here in the absolute self emptiness that could say or do nothing of His own initiative (John 8 28, 14 10), but, absolute as He is in everything, so absolute in dependence, that God, even the Father, should be everything in all He said and in all He did. And as God must be finally 'all in all' (1 Cor 15 28), so He is that already and absolutely in Jesus Glorious, blessed, holy Lord, Son of God the Father' Here is One that cannot fail. All else may fail and vanish with the ebbing tide of time, but here is the changeless One, "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever," absolute in the abiding nature of His own being, apart from the flux of time, the Eternal Son incarnate, come to make known and to make good the life of that upper world "with the Father" in the life He lived below. Here there can be no deficiency, no failure. It is complete and indefectible. It is life, the eternal life" itself

That God is Himself eternal was nothing new. It was the faith of His people from all time. 'From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God' (Ps 90 2). That is true of Him in the absoluteness and unapproachable invisibility of His own being. But He was not yet manifested after this sort. Creation could not declare Him. The heavens and the earth, all of them, are the works of His hands. They shall perish, wax old as a garment, and be changed (Ps 102 26). The temporal cannot declare the eternal. Then where must He be sought for? where can He be seen? 'Eternal' cannot be predicated of anything where death is stamped on all

Death and decay on all are seen,
The things that are not, once have been,
And now are passed away
Eternal life no more with death
Can breathe, as by a common breath,
Than night consort with day

This is the subject of John's ministry. Jesus, the eternal life, the Alpha and the Omega the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Creation celebrates the praise of Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai, seated on the throne, as "He

who was and is, and is to come" (Rev 4 8), *ie* in connection with the government of the universe in the course of time but Jesus speaks of Himself as

He who IS (apart from time), and who was and who is to come" (Rev 1 4) gathering up as it were all time in Himself, the abiding One, *outside* the sphere of all that changes with the change of time. Creation celebrates Him as the changeless One *through* all these changes.

He it is who, as "in the beginning Himself the Word," has the final word in the revelation of God both in respect of bringing to light the love of God the Father, and in establishing beyond the reach of failure in feeble man, and all the opposition of the enemy, the security of all that is held by the Son, and made good in the believer by the Spirit

And herein is the difference between the ministry of Paul and that of John. Paul is the minister of the gospel and of the church. Both have been committed into the hands of man, and both have failed with him. The gospel was already hopelessly 'perverted' (Gal 1 7) in the Apostle's lifetime, the church never stood in her proper heavenly calling, as set forth in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the recovery of Corinth was incomplete (cf 2 Cor 1 14, 12 20, 21), in 2 Timothy 1 15 he says that "all in Asia have turned away from me," and he warns the elders at Miletus that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in not sparing the flock, while from among their own selves, *at Ephesus*, men would arise speaking perverted things, and create party strife amongst them (Acts 20 29, 30), so that one is prepared for the sorrowful burden of his spirit which he pours out to Timothy, as he forecasts the darkened future right on to the "last and difficult days" that were to come (2 Tim 3)

On the other hand, John is the minister of the Person of Jesus, and of "eternal life" as come in Him, and as He abides in the incorruptible stability of His own being, the idea of failure is not even contemplated. "They went out from us," he says of some, "but they were not of us, not any of them" (1 John 2 19). All such were antichrists, but, "He is the true God and eternal life," and His sheep are safe in His hands, as in the hands of the Father (John 10)

Divisions of the Epistles.

The epistle may be divided broadly as follows, viz —

- 1 Chapter 1-2 2 general principles connected with the eternal life brought to light by the Son of God, Jesus Christ
- 2 Chapter 2 3-28, experimental proofs of its possession, and its practical development in the growth of those who possess it
- 3 Chapter 2 29-3 24, characteristics of that life in righteousness, and,
- 4 Chapter 4, in love
- 5 Chapter 5, the testimony of God, as to how it is to be had, always in the Son come by the way of death, and now glorified

The object of the gospel is stated in John 20 31, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in His name" The object of the epistle is 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God' (1 John 5 13) That is, the gospel is the objective presentation of Jesus as the Son of God, and of eternal life in Him, the epistle is the subjective knowledge (*ειδησις*) of the possession of it by the Spirit In John 14 6, Jesus says, 'I am the truth,' in 1 John 5 6 we are told the Spirit is the truth," *i.e.* the whole truth in itself, and as an "unction" He "guides into all the truth" (John 16 13), and that not merely objectively, but as 'a new commandment,' seeing that it is true in Him and in you" So that as all this blessedness is set forth in Jesus, we are not kept apart from it, merely to behold it in another, by the impassable gulf of human incapacity so as not to know the things that are freely given us of God, but by the unction we have from "the Holy One" we are brought into the conscious knowledge of those things that have come to us in the coming of Jesus—of eternal life in Him It is not that we turn to the work of the Spirit in us, in order to assure ourselves that we have those things, we turn to Him in whom they are, but the work of the Spirit in us is the way whereby we have to say to Him in whom we have "found" eternal

life 'And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son'

Accordingly the writings of John are a sort of covering word to the rest of Scripture, and while independent of all it corroborates and establishes all, even as God Himself is through all, but before and after all What is in Him IS, what is of Him is secured by that fact Therefore, in John's writings things are put according to their nature, whether 'of God' or 'not of God,' and this must be remembered when we come to many abstract or characteristic statements, which would otherwise be unintelligible Historical facts are mentioned, not so much for what they indicate in themselves, as indicative of the nature whence they spring, stamping all that issues from it on to the end "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still" 'Whosoever is born of God doth not practise sin, and he cannot sin because he is born of God' "He that practises sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning" Keeping this in view, these otherwise difficult passages become clear and simple Things which, according to our English language and translation, are rendered in time tenses, do not refer to time, though the action takes place in time, but to what is of the nature of the thing out of time, characteristic and not historical, *e.g.* 'The Lamb of God that taketh away [the taker away of] the sin of the world,' "The Son of man who is in heaven," "He that believeth on the Son" the believer *οι*, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." it has this character This does not enfeeble the fact, which is temporal, rather it enhances its force, by the introduction of what is abiding in its nature Other scriptures bring before us the phenomena of life, the government, the dealings, the ways of God with men, Paul brings before us the mystery of His will, John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," is occupied not with things relative one to another, or to God, but with God Himself and Jesus Christ, His Son, whom He has sent Hence, as one has said, "the Gospel of John is the full-length portrait of the Son of God" The epistle is the reproduction of this picture by the Spirit in the soul of the believer.

Food for the Soul.

(H. P. BARKER).

THE officer in charge of the royal pew in the Chapel Royal, Windsor, in the time of King George III, has left it on record that His Majesty used frequently to comment on the sermon as he passed out of the pew.

When pleased with the sermon the King would say, in a happy and cheerful voice, "That will do; *that will feed souls.*"

But when the sermon was cold and lifeless, and barren of gospel teaching, he would say as he retired, shaking his head sorrowfully, "That won't do; *that won't feed souls.*"

His Majesty's criterion as to the value of a sermon was a very just one. And ministry of all kinds, whether oral or written, may well be judged by the same standard: Does it feed souls or not?

There is a great deal said and written nowadays that is very true, and perhaps very necessary, but which has little value as food for souls. There is much that throws light on the historical and geographical references which are found in the Bible, or that concerns the textual criticism of the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. All this we recognize as of great importance, just as the work of digging coal and making iron pots and pans is necessary if food is to be prepared for consumption. But coal-mining and iron-manufacturing have in themselves no *feeding* value, nor is there in such things as I have

mentioned that which directly feeds the soul.

We have to get beyond the externals, to dig down beneath the surface of Scripture, if our souls are to find nourishment. And the farther we go in this direction the greater the treasure that we shall find, and the more we shall discover that *Christ* is the great theme and subject-matter of the inspired pages, and that in Him alone is true spiritual food found.

In the gallery of royal jewels at Dresden there is a silver egg. At first sight it appears to be a piece of solid silver. But a spring, when slightly touched, opens the egg and reveals a golden chicken. This, however, is not all. A skilfully concealed spring in the chicken may be found, which, when pressed, discloses a crown studded with gems. But a still further discovery remains, for the gem-studded crown may be opened by means of a secret spring, and when opened a magnificent diamond ring meets one's astonished gaze.

Even so is it with the Bible. One discovery of the value of its contents leads to another, and the further we proceed the more we learn of the glories and excellences of the One of whom it everywhere speaks. And our discoveries, by the help of the Holy Spirit, are not mere gems or glittering gold. They are *food for the soul.*

None of God's children are born dumb: for "behold he prayeth," and "straightway he preached Christ . . . that He is the Son of God" were the first and certain proofs that Saul of Tarsus—the pattern Christian—had become a child of God (Acts 9.); and we may test the vigour of our spiritual life by the way we exercise ourselves in these two forms of speech.

A certain missionary recently returned from Africa was asked how many of the natives in his district had been brought to the knowledge of Christ as Saviour. He replied, "Fifty." "And how many of these are preachers?" "Fifty," was again his answer. So it should be. It is ours to tell and to show how great things the Lord hath done for us.

God our Saviour.—No. 1.

(JAMES BOYD)

1 Timothy 2. 1-7, 3. 15; 2 Timothy 4. 1, 2.

The Day of Manifestation.

TO the solemn fact that all men must have to do with God abundant testimony is borne by the gospel. We read in Romans 14., "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." And not only the overt acts, which men might be able to take account of, but the hidden motives, from which the actions spring, must all be brought to light, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4. 13).

From this day of manifestation there is no escape for any one. It is but very little we know about one another. We pass by, with very little notice, the humble cottage of the peasant, and admire at a respectful distance the palace of the prince, but the horrors or the happiness enclosed within seldom manifest themselves before our eyes. It is so with the individual; no other human being knows all that a man knows about himself: "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy" (Prov. 14. 10). We are all very careful to put the best side out, the rottenness within being jealously guarded from the vulgar gaze. But in that day "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12. 2-3). In that day every man will appear just as he is, neither in his best nor in his worst, but in his true nature and character, without addition or subtraction, which

might be used to decorate or to degrade.

Now, however blessed a prospect this may be for those who have tasted of the grace of God, it is a most appalling outlook for the sinner in his sins. Death may be dreaded—is dreaded—more than tongue can tell; and well it may be, with its cold, pallid, pulseless, breathless, motionless form, around which gather stricken, bruised, broken, bleeding hearts, pouring out uncontrollable and wordless grief in gasps and sobs, which threaten the destruction of the frail, earthly tabernacle, but which elicit no response from the mysterious region into which the beloved object has been so ruthlessly hurried. It may be called, "*a bend in the road,*" "*the debt of nature,*" "*a leap in the dark,*" or anything else which the infidel heart of man may invent, but it is at once the most cruel, unnatural, loathsome, and awe-inspiring thing that a living man has to face; and yet the believer can say, "*To die is gain*" (Phil. 1. 21).

But to the unhappy mortal who begins to feel the presence of the ghastly destroyer drawing near, by far the greater part of his dread comes from the apprehension of something which, crouching in the shadows of the impenetrable future, makes its grim reality felt by every conscience not yet rendered insensible by neglect, ill-usage, or the narcotics of hell, and that *something* is the dread of having to render account to God. The sting of death is sin; and however terrible death may appear in itself, this makes it ten times more terrible.

But in what an unhappy condition must the relations of the creature with his Creator be, seeing he is appalled at the

prospect of having to meet Him. Everything must be woefully out of joint when such is the case. One would not naturally expect such a state of things to exist. Nor would it exist were man not alienated in heart and mind from his Creator. But the truth is he is a sinner against the God who made him, and his only anxiety is to get as *far* away from Him as ever he can and to keep away from Him as *long* as he can; and the thought of having to do with Him is a constant terror to the mind. It is conscience that makes cowards of us all; and it will continue to make cowards of us until it has been purged by the blood of Jesus.

That man, as far as he has been able, has excluded God from the earth is easy to see. He has those who love Him here, no doubt; but they are few in number, and of little importance in the world; therefore of them I do not speak. His Son has been rejected by the Jew, slain by the Gentile, and at present is of little account among those who profess His name. To speak of Him where men congregate together requires a considerable amount of moral courage, not possessed by every one who would gladly see Him honoured, and to have Jesus referred to in polite society is more than will be tolerated. The one who does so will find himself considered a nuisance, and people will avoid him as they would a plague.

I am not forgetting that some are regular attenders at what they call a place of worship, though even this outward semblance of the acknowledgment of God is being abandoned by the many, and what with a heathenish ritual on the one hand and politics on the other, there is very little room in some places for the Father and the Son; nor have I overlooked the fact that certain parliaments of the world are opened with the invocation of the blessing of God, though by many of the legislators this is submitted to with very ill grace; nor has it escaped my mind that in case of war His intervention may be solicited by the combatants

on both sides, each anxious for His intervention on their behalf, for the destruction of those in the opposite camp, though of course all confidence of success is placed in the skill of the commander, the courage of the men, and the destructive power of the engines of warfare employed in the field; no, I am keeping all these things distinctly in view when I say that God, as a living, blessed reality, to be brought into all the details of life, the Saviour, Guide, and Strength of His weak, erring creature—One who is necessary to our very existence, without whom, and apart from whose direction, it were, on account of the dangers of the way, madness to move; whose will is to be done in everything, and who is now, and shall be for ever, the chief joy of our hearts—is neither known, sought after, nor desired by the great majority of those who are within the circle of the Christian profession. Of course, outside of that He is not known at all.

No worshipper of a false god is ashamed of his leader or fetish. A Mohammedan, Buddhist, sun-worshipper, devil-worshipper, man-worshipper, beast-worshipper, reptile-worshipper—all are faithful to their respective creeds, and unblushingly proclaim their allegiance to that which they hold sacred. But with the living and true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the majority of Christian professors neither can, nor will, have anything to do if they can avoid it. Nothing searches the heart and brings to light the secret rebellion within like the revelation of the true God. The antagonism of the human heart to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ can be explained in no other way than that the revelation of this blessed Being in the person of His Son brings to the soul the sense of responsibility and of failure in connection with that responsibility. "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

What has He done to render Himself so obnoxious to His creature? He gives to all life, breath, rain, and fruit-

ful seasons, and fills men's hearts with food and gladness. Heaven and earth unite in rendering testimony to His beneficence. His love is infinite, His patience marvellous, His grace past telling. And yet the language of the human heart has been ever since the Fall, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" (Job. 21. 14, 15). What is the meaning of all this antagonism to a God of such unspeakable goodness? Why should there be a ban upon the name of Jesus, so that the timid amongst His people blush to the roots of the hair when in the presence of the men of the world they are compelled to bear a little feeble testimony to Him? And why may we speak about every other man, either dead or alive, without being branded rude or offensive, but not of Jesus? Why should not the Father and the Son be the great theme amongst men on the highway, in the drawing-room, and in public places of resort? Why should we see the novel and not the New Testament lay in the lap of the railway traveller? Why should it take less courage to scale a rampart bristling with cannon than to speak amongst strangers of Jesus and the love of God? Such questions are easily asked, but they may not be so easily answered. The answer furnished by Scripture is that man is a sinner, under the power of darkness, having his ideas of God conveyed to his mind by the father of lies. He is suspicious of his Creator, dreads having to do with Him, because he is a rebel against His authority, a transgressor at heart, loving to have his own way, and distrustful of God in His overtures of grace.

And yet the day is fast coming in which he shall have to give account of the deeds done in the body, which must be rendered to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Woe be to those who have to stand before that throne on the ground of creature

responsibility. What a day of anguish it will be for all who have failed to avail themselves of the shelter provided for those exposed by their sins to that judgment. In view of that day the Apostle says: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5. 11). It had no terrors for him, nor has it for any of the children of God, for all such have availed themselves of the way of escape held out to all in the gospel. "We have boldness for the day of judgment" (1 John 4. 17). But for those who stand there in their sins it will be a day of blank despair.

Now whether it be as Saviour or as Judge that God deals with men, it is by Christ He does so. At the present moment He has assumed the character of Saviour, but there is a day coming in which He will sit as Judge upon the throne, and that is the day in which "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to God." There can be no escape for any one. As to the judgment of the living, those who know not God and who obey not the gospel shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1.). As to the judgment of the dead, we have that in Revelation 20. 11-15: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the

lake of fire." Whether the judgment be that of the living or that of the dead, there does not seem any escape from the second death for those who come into it.

And is this not just what one should expect? Surely there must be something wrong where an innocent man is arraigned before the judge, and there must surely also be something sadly at fault where a guilty man escapes the punishment due to his offence. It is true that in the courts of the world men are often brought before the judges and placed upon their trial, and the jury may bring in a verdict establishing the guiltlessness of the accused, the Crown having failed to prove the reverse. But this is not so with men at the bar of God. No one is brought there to see whether he be guilty or not, but as guilty and proven guilty, to have determined by his works the degree of punishment which must be inflicted (Luke 12. 47, 48). Had man remained in innocence there would have been neither dying day nor judgment day for him, but having rebelled against God he has compelled his Creator to assume toward him the character of Judge, for the righteous Governor of the universe must deal with iniquity wherever it is found, and mete out to it the judgment which it demands.

The Psalmist pleads with the Lord not to enter into judgment with His servant, "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143. 2). Therefore the only hope of the Psalmist was that he might not be brought to stand before the bar of God to be judged. Was this a vain petition? Is it possible to have such a prayer answered? Have we not seen that we must all give account to God? It is not a vain petition by any means, and were it not possible to have it fulfilled no man could be saved. To be compelled to give account to God is not the same thing as to be brought

into judgment. All must be manifested before the judgment seat, but that does not mean that all thus manifested must have their portion in wrath or favour determined by the deeds done in the body. Salvation is not of works. The believer is already justified and partaker of the life of the risen Christ; and when the judgment comes he will be in the likeness of the Judge and glorified along with Him (Phil. 3. 21; 1 Cor. 15. 43). And not only that, but it is expressly stated by the Judge Himself that the believer does not come into judgment: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment [R.V.], but is passed from death unto life" (John 5. 24).

It is necessary for the joy and comfort of our eternal relations with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us that He should go over our history with us, that we may get light as to all His ways with us, and that we should see a little of our own crookedness and of His grace and patience with us; also that we should receive rewards for our little service to Him in the day of His rejection, though all that service was, after all, but the fruit of His Spirit working in us that which was well pleasing in His sight. This will be rather the judgment of our works than the judgment of our persons. But the judgment of the wicked is not the judgment of their works, but *the judgment of themselves by their works*. To be judged by our works would be to be lost for ever. If man were not a sinner he would not have to come into judgment, but being a sinner there is no hope for him if he does. In that day there will be no miscarriage of justice, for every man will receive according as his work shall be. How the sinner, who by his works has rendered himself liable to that judgment, can escape coming into it the gospel alone can inform us.

(To be continued.)

A Great Revival.—No. 1.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

“A Free Heart” and “An Upright Heart.”

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29.).

WE read in Romans 15. 4 that “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” I am therefore the more free to turn to this Old Testament story of a great revival.

Hezekiah comes before us as a lovely example of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Luke 12. 31). From the very day that he mounted the throne his heart was engrossed in the things of the Lord. He was true to his name, which means “Strength of the Lord.”

“He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them” (ver. 3). “Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify” (ver. 17). Clearly he had not been many hours on the throne before the edict went out that produced such beautiful results. The condition of God’s people at this time was deplorable: the temple doors were shut, the lamps put out, neither incense nor burnt-offerings were offered to God, and the priests and Levites were starving. A worse state of affairs it were impossible to conceive. But God began to put things right by putting Hezekiah right first; and He did not begin with his head, or his hands, but his heart. If the heart be not right, all is wrong. God’s work always begins inside: it is striking how often the *heart* is referred to in the history of Hezekiah. He was a man who was not occupied with the work, but with the Lord, and therefore the work he did was most beautiful.

The secret was this: “And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered” (chap. 31. 21). We are told that “after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; and he prospered” (2 Kings 18. 5-7).

The books of Kings and Chronicles are by no means a repetition one of another. In the two books of Kings the history is given of both the kings of Israel and Judah, and their reigns concisely recorded, whereas in the books of Chronicles the history of the kings of Judah is given more fully, because they were connected with the temple and the house of the Lord; and the Holy Spirit records, with great detail, all that marked them in the question of devotedness to the Lord. On the one hand, some of these kings did “right in the sight of the Lord” (a very common phrase in these books), and, on the other hand, were those who “did evil.” Their conduct was almost always connected in some way or other with the house of the Lord, for the temple which Solomon built was the centre for every godly Jew.

You may not have noticed, but it is worth your while, in reading these books, to observe that the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah all brought out the mind of the Lord during the times of this king, Hezekiah: but not in his reign only, but also in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, kings of

Judah (Isa. I. 1 ; Hosea I. 1 ; Micah I. 1).

It is an interesting and instructive study to compare the way these prophecies were received by the three kings I have mentioned, and the effect for prosperity or the reverse on each. On Hezekiah the prophetic word of the Lord, which dealt with the people's moral departure from Himself, and warned of judgment if they did not repent, made a very deep impression : so much so that in Jeremiah's day, after the lapse of a century, the memory of it was still fresh, and we find the elders of the land speaking of how Hezekiah did "*fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them*" (Jer. 26. 19). That evil, we learn from the preceding verses, was judgment, of which the nation was warned through the prophet Micah, and the testimony of the elders proves conclusively that the prophecy produced deep exercise of heart in Hezekiah.

What was it that led to Hezekiah's revival? He had heard the word of the Lord. The word of God had entered into his soul and led him to self-judgment, repentance, and prayer, and then set him in movement towards that which was eventually effected. In plain language, the prophetic warning of God had fallen into a heart that was tender, exercised, and desirous to learn the mind of the Lord and to do the will of the Lord. Now I believe if we are to prosper, this is the great secret.

Now if you will trace the history at your leisure, you will find that spiritual decline in Judah was continuous from the days of Uzziah to the days of Ahaz. Jotham "*did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. . . . Howbeit, the high places were not removed*" (2 Kings 15. 34, 35). He was not himself an idolater, but he did not oppose it ; he did not see the importance of clearing away that which was offensive to

God ; and the high places, a dishonour to Jehovah and a snare to the people, were allowed to remain.

But the climax of the departure was reached by Ahaz. "*He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him : and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers*" (2 Chron. 28. 23-25).

This was the condition of the land : the temple doors shut, the lamps put out, and the vessels of the house of God cut in pieces and given to foreign kings. And at that moment Hezekiah mounted the throne. In 2 Kings 18. 4 there is given a beautiful summary of the actions of his reign : "*He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made : for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it : and he called it Nehushtan*" (i.e. a piece of brass : all that it was).

We further read of Hezekiah that "he trusted in the Lord God of Israel." Here is the secret of his devoted pathway, which is thus commended : "So that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord" (vers. 5, 6). That is a beautiful word ; may God print it in our heart and mind. "He clave to the Lord." It is the secret of peace within and power without. Notice its place in the Acts. Barnabas went to Antioch, "and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11. 23). It was

this that Hezekiah did: "*He clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses*" (ver. 6). Here, again, is a wonderful principle. He kept His commandments, His word. The word of God ruled in his soul. And now see the consequence: "And the Lord was with him." Do I want to have the Lord with me? I must cleave to Him. "*And he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not*" (ver. 7).

And now let us glance at the twentieth chapter of 2 Chronicles. The first thing we find is that "*he, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them*" (ver. 3). Hezekiah's first act as king was to throw open the doors of the house of the Lord, those doors so long closed. And others were immediately affected by this one fervent, earnest, real, living man. "And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street" (ver. 4). We are little aware of how we can influence others. If I am cold and half-hearted, I shall chill you, and vice-versa. That shows the importance of being warm. Yes, right with God, and warm and fervent in divine things. "*And [he] said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites; sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place*" (ver. 5). What does not suit God must go. Ah! the Lord help us to carry forth the filthiness. Who are to do this? Christians, you and me. "But," you say, "filthiness is a strong word." It is. But it is the word used in 2 Corinthians 7. 1.

The call has gone out: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters

saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6. 17-18). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7. 1). The very thing that was done in the house of the Lord in Hezekiah's day we are to do in ours. But here is the difference. We do not do it for our neighbour. I have to do it myself, so have you. I must be practically what Hezekiah made the house of the Lord. He cleared it of all that did not suit God.

The house of God to-day is made up of all God's dear people. This is its collective aspect. But, further, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and I think the "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" is the holy continuous habit in our souls of judging and repudiating what we find and feel will not suit God. That is where revival begins among God's people.

But pass on. There follows honest confession of sin and backsliding. "*For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place, unto the God of Israel*" (vers. 6, 7). Are there any in this condition morally to-day? Yes, this is the condition of the backslider. People sometimes say to me, "Why do you talk so much about backsliders?" Because I am continually meeting them, and if there is a man under the sun to be pitied it is a backslider. No light, no power, no testimony, and crying, perhaps, over his weakness, and bemoaning his state, instead of being happy in the Lord's love. Open the doors of your heart, poor backslider, and have the lamps relit. The Holy Ghost waits and

would gladly re-enlighten your soul, and keep it very bright too.

Hezekiah said : "*Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes*" (ver. 8). But he is not discouraged. He said : "*Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us*" (ver. 10). He began with his own heart, not his head. A lot of people are intelligent, but uncommonly cold. Such can discourse wonderfully about the truths of Scripture, but what one longs for is the fervent, hearty, breathing love to the Lord, to His people, and to all the varied interests of Christ. Note these words : "*It is in mine heart.*" That was right. The affections were in play. Of what use to the Lord are my brains or my hands if He has not my heart? He says : "*My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways*" (Prov. 23. 26). Hezekiah's heart was right ; may ours be also.

Then he said : "*My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that ye should minister unto Him, and burn incense*" (ver. 11). How beautifully he exhorts these Levites, as he reminds them of their privileges. And, beloved fellow Christian, nearness to the Lord is the privilege of every one of us. Not merely the old or intelligent ; every Christian is so chosen. Each child of God is in that sense a Levite, for service, as well as a priest now. In service you are a Levite. In priesthood you form part of a company worshipping God together.

Well, what is the effect of this fervent exhortation? A certain few come to the front (see vers. 12, 13, 14). "*And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord*" (ver. 15). It is beautiful to see how the

movement spreads. "*And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron*" (ver. 16).

The priests appear on the scene now. Why did not Hezekiah call the priests before the Levites? We learn the reason in verse 34. "*For the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.*" The Lord records this here for a purpose, for the priests had a higher function than the Levites. You may sometimes find a person with a good deal less spiritual light more upright in heart than those who plume themselves on possessing great knowledge.

The re-establishment of the work of God on a right and proper basis is given in vers. 17-19, and is very instructive. All that was evil was taken away, and that which was proper was brought back. Now observe what followed. "*Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the Lord. And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for a sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah: and he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord*" (vers. 20, 21). There was a sense of the sin that marked the whole kingdom, and it was acknowledged. If there is to be a real revival before the Lord comes, must there not be a sense of what the sin of the whole professing church has been? It is an immense thing when, in our confession to God, we can identify ourselves with all saints, and take in the whole Christian circle. You find this thought presented here as "*they brought forth the he-goats for the sin-offering before the king and the congregation ; and they laid their hands upon them*" (ver. 23). There you have identification. "*And the priests killed them, and they made reconcilia-*

tion with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement *for all Israel*; for the king commanded that the burnt-offering and the sin offering should be made *for all Israel*" (ver. 24). That was for the whole kingdom. How right-hearted and large-hearted was Hezekiah. He felt the blood that could meet Judah's sin could meet Israel's too. That is a great point. And we too must in confession, as well as in appreciation of Christ's atoning sacrifice, get the sense in our souls of the unity of the church of God.

Now pass on. The atonement was made, and then "*he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets*" (v. 25). This verse suggests the thought that there was great attention paid to Scripture. You will always find that in every divine revival of God's people there is a turning to God's Word. It is clear that it was that which at first so moved Hezekiah's own soul. And now you observe, as the movement spreads, that it was not what they wished, or liked, or thought proper, but it was at "*the commandment of the Lord.*" "*And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar. And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel*" (v. 27). Now the sin-offering is that which meets our guilt; while the burnt-offering is the presenting to God of all that Christ is in the fragrance of His wondrous devotedness to God and His glory, even unto death.

Now observe. "*When the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also.*" God never forgets the value of Christ's wonderful life and death. It is ever before God. The song of the Lord begins when we get a true sense in our souls of the abiding fragrance of Christ Godward. "*And all the congregation worshipped, and*

the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded" (v. 28). Not a few singers now, but every heart was touched with a sense of the goodness of the Lord. "*And all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished*" (v. 28). It will never be finished, thank God, for us, for all that Christ has offered abides before God for ever.

"*Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings; and as many as were of A FREE HEART, burnt-offerings*" (ver. 31). Now their devotion begins. It was not merely a commanded sin-offering and a burnt-offering, but they had an opportunity of being devoted and seized it. What is a free heart? It indicates a heart that does not think of itself. A "*free heart*" is a heart controlled by Christ, full of Christ, and devoted to Christ. That is, Christ is everything. "*A free heart*" will show itself, not by what it says, but by what it does.

The Levites were more upright in heart than the priests (ver. 35); they had a more perfect judgment as to the failure and sin, and of what was due to God in consequence. A beautiful picture of real fellowship and communion, and the sense of what the grace of God was, is given us here. "*So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly*" (vers. 35, 36).

And should not we long for something similar to-day? Should we be content with the existing state of things? No, let us look to God, and count upon Him, and seek to help each other. How wide was the influence of that young king, though but twenty-five! The Lord give us to have a true heart, a free heart, and an upright heart, a heart that is set on the interests of Christ, and Christ alone.

(To be continued.)

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITORS).

The World.

J.F. asks us to give the meaning of these verses :

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2. 15-17).

We are not to love the world as a whole, nor to set our affections on the things *in* it. This is not the world looked at simply as the people in it, for towards them our love is to be active. "God so loved the world that He gave": and, under the impulse of that same love, we are to seek if by any means we might save some. But here it is not that: it is the world looked at as the great system of which Satan is the god and prince, built up for the satisfaction of man apart from God. In it is that which gratifies the *flesh*, the merely animal passions; that which is pleasing to the *eyes*, the more æsthetic tastes; and that upon which man can *pride himself*, which pre-eminently brings in the mind, the intellect without God. The very gifts of a beneficent Creator, when taken up for enjoyment *without God*, partake morally of the character of the world, and become (so taken) of the things "in the world."

The love of God is that which reaches us in our lost estate as sinners: the love of the *Father*, on the other hand, is the love enjoyed in known relationship to Himself: it belongs to a circle of pure and holy communion morally outside of, and utterly apart from, the corruption that is all around. No one, therefore, could have the love of the Father in him, be consciously enjoying that love, and at the same time be loving the world which is in utter opposition to all that is of the Father.

Moreover, the Apostle would have these "young men" remember, too, that the world and its lust was a thing of time, passing away, whilst he who did the will of God abode for eternity.

Justification.

H.H.H. inquires :

"What is it to be justified?"

Justification is more than forgiveness. A justified person is one against whom no charge can be sustained. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

It cannot be illustrated from human affairs. We may illustrate forgiveness of a guilty person, but we cannot illustrate the justification of a guilty person. It is the triumph of grace that sin is so completely removed, and the believer is seen as so completely identified with Christ in resurrection, that he is as clear of guilt as though he never had sinned at all. God Himself is spoken of as justified (Rom. 3.). No charge can be sustained against Him who is righteous in all His ways, and what is so wonderful in the gospel is that those whom God justifies were in themselves "the ungodly."

Your other question on the "Righteousness of God" will, we hope, be fully answered in "correspondence" on this subject which we hope to publish shortly.

The Elder Son.

J.R.J. writes as follows:—

"Can you make it clear whose 'son' it is that was 'ever with me, and all that I have is thine'?" (Luke 15. 31).

The elder son in this parable clearly represents the self-righteous person who considers that he never has gone astray. He is looked at here just as are the ninety and nine sheep higher up in the chapter whom the Lord interprets to mean the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. Not that they actually need no repentance, but that is the place they take. So, too, with the elder son: the Lord speaks of the place he himself takes, although, as to fact, *all* have gone astray.

As a class the elder son represents the Pharisees whom the Lord was addressing in this chapter in reply to their murmurs that He received sinners. This aspect of the Fatherhood of God is in keeping with Luke's Gospel, in which the genealogy of Christ is traced right back through Adam to God Himself

as Source All men are thus in view. As to the Fatherhood of God in this point of view, see further our reply to R.G.S. in our last September issue

The goods given to each son are those with which men have from the outset been endowed here, as health, time, faculties, etc. These are squandered in self-gratification by the openly profane, though guarded carefully by the religious Pharisee. It is to be noticed, however, that that which is bestowed on the returning prodigal is something new and altogether different—the best robe, the shoes, the ring, and the fatted calf: all these things speak of Christ, and the blessings of a new order—they are not amongst the things divided at the outset.

Sanctification.

J.P.D. writes asking us to explain what is meant in Scripture by sanctification. His inquiry has special reference to teaching which he mentions as to "sanctification" being obtained by some Christians as a "second blessing"

The meaning of the word to sanctify is to set apart for holy purposes. The perfectly holy One, our Lord Jesus Christ, was "sanctified" by the Father (John 10. 36), when He set Him apart for His mission into this world. That illustrates the meaning of the word in its simplicity. But when it comes to be applied to us, as it is by grace, it is complicated by the question of *sin*, and has distinct aspects which we must not confound.

(1) By the will of God "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." By that one offering we are for ever "sanctified"—set apart for God. It is here something done *for* us, outside of ourselves altogether, at the cross of Calvary. The statement is absolute: "We *are* sanctified" And that it may be clear how perfectly the whole sin question has been eternally settled it is added (ver. 14), "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"

(2) But there is also a work *in* us, and this is referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2 13: we are chosen to "salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This is not a

"second blessing:" it is the very first thing, a question of salvation. We are said to have been "sanctified by faith" (Acts 26 18), that is to say that the effect of the truth we have believed has been such as to separate us from the world, and set us apart for holy purposes—in a word, to serve the living and true God—but behind this belief of the truth there lay the work of the Spirit. Both the foregoing aspects are brought together in 1 Corinthians 6. 11.

(3) As to our everyday life as believers: "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but in sanctification (1 Thess. 4, 7, NT). This again is not a "second blessing:" it is the divine requirement of purity based on the fact that we *are* sanctified, we are called *in* sanctification. This is God's will for us (ver 3)

(4) But there is to be growth in the apprehension of that to which we are set apart. We are to *follow* holiness (*hagiasmos*, the same word as sanctification) without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12 14). This is holiness in its absoluteness, its essential nature—it is a deeper thought than righteousness even, complete contrast though that be to *sin*. Reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto *sin*, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord, we are to yield our members servants to righteousness *unto* holiness (Rom. 6. 11, 19), that is to say that the fruit of such a course of righteousness is the deeper thing, "*holiness*" (ver. 21).

"No Sin."

Another reader writes inquiring if John 1. 8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," can rightly be quoted as a proof that Christians "cannot live without committing *sin*"?

Certainly not. It is not there a question either of committing or of not committing sin: it is a question of saying we *have* no sin. One who is so blind to the presence of the flesh in him as to say that he *has* no sin is self-deceived, and evidently the truth is not *in him*, for it is the presence of the truth in us which shows up the presence of sin. But the acknowledgment that sin is in us in no way necessitates the practice of sin, nor is it any bar to communion, for in the light, where most sensitive to the fact that

sin is in us, we have the knowledge that the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from every sin (ver. 7). The unfolding of eternal life in this chapter, and of the communion that belongs to it, is for the express purpose that we "sin not" (ch. 2. 1); for in the enjoyment of these things the heart is satisfied and preserved from travelling outside what is of God.

I Corinthians 3. 16, 17.

H.G. inquires as to the meaning of—

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

The defiling or corrupting (as the word should be) is very different from building "wood, hay, and stubble" (ver. 12); in this latter case, the builder suffers loss, his bad work is burned up, while he himself is saved; but the corrupter of the temple of God is himself destroyed, the judgment of God comes upon him to the uttermost.

There were actual corrupters of the temple of God at Corinth, they were Satan's ministers, and their deliberate purpose was to corrupt the saints from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11. 3). The Apostle speaks of them as "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness, *"Whose end shall be according to their works"* (vers. 13-15). The words "defile" and "destroy" in the passage under con-

sideration are precisely the same in the Greek: as their work so their end.

You may ask: Is it possible to corrupt the temple of God now? It is. Those who, under the guise of servants of Christ, set themselves to turn the saints of God from the truth, and to overthrow their faith, are in this solemn position.

The work of the law written in the hearts of the Gentiles.

A reader asks the meaning of Rom. 2. 15.

These verses (13-15) are a parenthesis, and occur in the midst of the declaration that God will judge all alike, both Jew and Gentile. But the Gentiles might complain that the law was not given to them; yet they are without excuse, for they show that *the work of the law* is written in their hearts. It is important to see that it is the work of the law, not the law itself that is written there. The work of the law is to search out and condemn iniquity; and this the Gentiles did, for if one of their fellows stole, or committed murder, they meted out judgment to him. They had their standard of justice as between man and man, a standard fixed on a God-given intuition as to what was right and what was wrong; their conscience bearing witness to the right, and their thoughts excusing or accusing themselves between themselves.

It is this that keeps alive in the souls of men the sense that they must give an account to God; for how can they escape God's judgment, who themselves practise judgment between man and man, and yet are themselves sinners? "But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth."

Our true liberty is to belong to God. All that is for oneself is stolen from the rights of Him who has bought us for His own. All that a slave was or gained was the property of his master; he was not the owner of himself. Thus it is with the Christian.

Whatever the mind is most fixed upon, and is ever turning to, gives its

impress to the mind; if my feelings and thoughts are fixed on Christ, I get the impress of Christ.

"Behold, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

"We wait for Thee, O Son of God!
And long for Thine appearing;
'A little while' Thou'lt come, O Lord,
Thy waiting people cheering."

On Reading the Scriptures.

THE Word of God, when received, must be searching, for it is light ; and we are all naturally in the dark as to what suits God.

If we accept the Word of God we must walk by it, and as we walk by it we have the virtue of the light itself ; it is an armour to us.

If, having seen the light, you refuse to walk according to it, you will have a bad conscience, and you will either have a grievous fall or become very unhappy. You must yield yourself to the claims of God's Word, and as you do you will be like a tree, which first bears leaves, then blossoms, and then fruit. It is enriched by its own products. The Word of God feeds the life, but if there is not yielding to its claims, there will not be energy of life, and there will be no leaves, no blossom, no fruit.

Be subject to the Word of God. Seek to be a practical exponent of it as you receive it, and you will find that it not only searches you, but that when it

has its place in your heart it greatly enriches you with its own virtues.

The reading of Scripture as a whole, as the revelation of God, will give you a grasp of Him as He is, and this will call forth the worship of your heart in His presence. There is no fear of your getting too full of Scripture ; for where there is faithfulness, God will place you in circumstances where you will learn *practically* the truth of Himself which *verbally* He has committed to you, so that it becomes *your verbatim* saying of Him from your own experience.

The study and apprehension of God's ways as a whole impart a breadth and strength to the mind. You may cheer your spirit with detached portions of His Word, but you do not acquire that breadth and volume, in the power of which you can reduce everything into its place before God, unless you in some degree possess the comprehensive view which the apprehension of Him in a *variety* of ways and places imparts. (J.B.S.)

The Nature and Character of God.

(H. P. BARKER).

LET no one spell God with two o's. I do not mean that God is not good. He is *perfectly* good. What I mean is that "God" and "good" are not interchangeable terms. God is good, infinitely and eternally good, but good is not God.

Some have imagined God to resemble a hard and severe task-master ; they have formed a conception of Him as a stern and awful Being, easily moved to wrath, and ever ready to visit the offender with condign punishment. Such a conception of God is utterly false, and not many are to be found now-a-days who entertain it. It is

contrary, not only to the truth, but to "the spirit of the age."

Quite as remote from the truth, however, is the twentieth-century conception of God. The modern theologian speaks as if "God is love" were almost equivalent to "Love is God." He makes the mistake of spelling God with two o's, and having his own idea of what is *good*, describes a god of his own imagination, a god who is not utterly intolerant of evil, and who can easily be persuaded to acquit the wicked, even if he ever had any intention of punishing them.

And all this is set forth in such

high-flown language that the unwary are made to imagine that the true character of God has only just been discovered, and that the credit of the discovery belongs to the learned gentlemen who expound the theories of the Higher Criticism. It all seems so wise, so profound, so wonderful.

But things are not always what they seem.

There is at Delhi, in India, an iron pillar, a very ancient column, which was believed by the Hindus to have its roots in the centre of the earth. Anyhow, it extended to a prodigious depth beneath the surface of the earth : there could be no doubt as to that.

When the English came to Delhi, however, they began digging around this famous pillar, and found that its foundation was only twenty inches below the surface !

In like manner there are theories and doctrines to-day regarded by their adherents as superlatively profound, but which in reality are extremely superficial ; some of them, indeed, having *no foundation at all*.

Amongst such empty speculations is the modern notion of the goodness of God. I say "the *modern* notion ;" because the *truth* as to His infinite goodness is not in the least inconsistent with the revelation of Him which we have in the Scriptures. "God is good," but having said this we have by no means said all that can be said as to the nature of God. And a great deal that passes for "good" in this superficial age, when tested by the infallible test, the truth of God, is found to be the very opposite of good.

But people do not care to be reminded of this. It pleases them to talk of God's goodness and love as if these terms meant mere leniency and indifference to sin. The tremendous truth that *God is light* has no attraction for their shallow souls.

large pile of text-cards for hanging on walls. A customer remarked upon the quantity of them.

"Yes," said the bookseller ; "we had an equal number of 'God is love' and 'God is light' printed. The 'God is love' cards have sold readily enough, but the 'God is light' cards are practically unsaleable. People won't have them."

And here is told a tale, a tale of the enmity of "the carnal mind" against God (Rom. 8. 7). There may be no enmity against the imaginary god of modern theological sentiment. But the carnal mind, the unrenewed mind of fallen man, is full of inveterate enmity against the God of the Scriptures : the God of truth and of light, as well as of goodness and love.

I may be told that the Bible speaks again and again of the "goodness" of God. I quite admit it, but it is "goodness" that is not inconsistent with severity. "Behold now the goodness *and severity* of God" (Rom. 11. 22).

I may be reminded that God is love, that it is His very nature. I delight in the truth of this, but the Epistle that contains the statement assures us *first* that God is light.

Some one may call attention to the fact that God commends His love to sinners, and has loved the world well enough to give His Son to be its Saviour. Thank God all this is gloriously true. But before we read of God's love to the world and to sinners, we are told of something else that He loves. Men may ignore it and trample it under foot, but God loves it and will in no case suffer Himself to act without it : "The righteous Lord *loveth righteousness*" (Ps. 11. 7).

Turn to the majestic psalm with which the prophecy of Nahum opens. Let us remember as we read these ancient pages that "in old times . . . holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter

A bookseller had upon his counter a

I. 21). The time had not come for the *full* revelation of God in the person of His Son, but the partial revelation of the character and ways of God given by the prophets was in no wise inconsistent with the fuller light that shone in Christ.

Nahum opens his prophecy with the statement: "*God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth.*" How does that fit in with the much-vaunted theology of to-day?

Is it not rather taught now that God is *not* jealous; that He does not much care whom or what men worship as long as they are sincere; that He is a kind and indulgent Father to all; and that there is no such thing as divine "vengeance" or just retribution for sin?

Further, we read, "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and *will not at all acquit the wicked.*" Does modern theology make room in its creed for this saying of eternal truth? Does it not rather affirm that God will be lenient to the wicked, and attribute their wickedness to such causes as "heredity," "environment," and "defective development" rather than to the depravity of their own evil hearts?

But with all this we are reminded that God is good. "The Lord is good [ver. 7], a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. BUT—" In speaking of God's abounding goodness Scripture does not omit the "BUT."

"*But* with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof [*i.e.* of the world], and darkness shall pursue His enemies."

Love goes hand in hand with light; there is no incongruity between perfect goodness and stern retribution.

Modern theology would have us believe that the two things are incongruous, that, in a word, good is God, and that good must of necessity be indulgent, and that the very term ex-

cludes all idea of severity and judgment.

The Greeks and Romans conceived of their imaginary deities as having natures akin to their own. No less is the god of many an up-to-date theologian the creation of his own mind. Such a god is as remote from the God of the Bible as the east is from the west.

The God who has revealed Himself to us in the pages of inspiration will under no circumstances make light of sin. Men may "make light" of His gracious invitations (Matt. 22. 5), but God will not treat their refusal of His mercy as a light matter. It is true that in ancient days, before the advent of Christ, He forbore to judge, though judgment was deserved. "The times of this ignorance God winked at" (Acts 17. 30). But men can no longer plead ignorance; the full light has shone out in Christ; God has revealed Himself, and His command to all men, everywhere, *now*, is to repent.

The God of the Scriptures is One who "is not mocked" (Gal. 5. 7). That is, He cannot be deceived, or taken in, or in any way diverted from the course of absolute justice. Whatever a man sows he must reap.

But if "God is not mocked," the day will come when God will Himself mock! (Prov. 1. 24-26). Let me quote the passage: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; *I will mock when your fear cometh.*"

Is the God who speaks after this fashion the god of the Higher Criticism, of the "New Theology," or of the preacher who boasts of being "abreast of the age?" Is not such language as this utterly foreign to *their* manner of speech?

"God is light." But men have ever preferred the darkness.

Among other monstrosities exhibited in Roman Catholic churches on the Continent of Europe is a small phial, of peculiar shape, to be seen in a certain cathedral.

The sacristan takes it from a cupboard, dusty and covered with cobwebs, and assures you that it is a precious relic.

“What is it?” you ask.

“We have here,” he replies, “and they come from all parts of the world to worship at this cathedral because we have it—*some of the very darkness that was spread over the land of Egypt!*”

How true it is that darkness has a tremendous attraction for fallen man. But why? There is a moral reason. It is written: “Men loved darkness rather than light, *because their deeds were evil*” (John 3. 19).

So a God who is “light” cannot be tolerated. He must be dethroned and ridiculed as the crude product of an ignorant age. A god must be put in His place who shall be a benevolent, indulgent being, never insisting upon the demands of righteousness being complied with, never visiting sin with judgment, never doing anything contrary to the present-day notion of “goodness.”

But God is light, however much men may wish that He were not. And light exposes. No wonder men do not love it.

And it is with this God that we have to do. “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14. 12). God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. 2. 16).

But light *discloses*, as well as *exposes*. In the “marvellous light” of the gospel, there is not only a searching exposure of the depraved heart of man, there is also a blessed disclosure of all that is in the heart of God. And that same light shows us that the love and infinite goodness of God are in the most perfect accord with His

unsullied holiness and inflexible righteousness.

If light could not possibly pass over our sins, love could and did provide a spotless Victim of infinite worth to suffer in our stead. Nor is that love content with delivering us from the penalties that were our just due. That love has given us who believe to the Son, to be conformed by-and-by to His own image (Rom. 8. 29), and to be sharers with Him of His glorious inheritance. Eternal ages will unfold the depth and meaning of that love which set itself upon us even “while we were yet sinners,” and which has linked us up with Christ, as His companions, His brethren. The love that has its spring in the Father’s heart, and which has found such wonderful expression in Christ, will be our dwelling-place for ever. There God Himself will find His joy in a scene perfectly suited to His mind, secure from all invasion by sin and death. There He will rest in eternal delight, and there *we* shall be the happy objects of His love, sharing with the Son of His love the bliss of that holy and divine affection.

It is all too great for words. How far it surpasses the current notion of “goodness!” When men speak of “good,” how little do they understand the superlative character of the “good” that the love of God has purposed for its objects, or even of the present “good” in view of which God makes all things work together for those that love Him, and who are “the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8. 28).

When ultimately the purpose of God reaches its full accomplishment, “good” will have triumphed, But it will not be merely the triumph of *good*; it will be the triumph of *God*. The age-long conflict has not been merely between two abstract principles, good and evil, but between God and the devil. The devices of Satan, so varied, so cunningly framed, and often so successful, will be finally frustrated, not merely by “good,” but by the infinitely holy and mighty, the good and wise *GOD*.

Notes of Bible Readings.—No. 1.

(H. J. VINE).

The Peace of God and the God of Peace (Philippians 4.).

IT is said that the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace," etc. (Gal. 5. 22); and this comes out in Philippians in a way found in no other part of the Scriptures. God would have this fruit to abound amongst believers to-day. You cannot find it in the world. The world is made up of lust and pride: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" but in contrast to all that, we have love, joy, and peace in abundance, all as the outcome of the knowledge of the blessed God.

It is possible for believers to get into the condition mentioned in the Galatian epistle, that is, biting and devouring one another in ill-temper, the outcome of legality, instead of serving one another in liberty and love.

In this chapter we have God made known in a very blessed way. He is spoken of in the 9th verse as the "God of peace." In the 7th verse you have the "peace of God,"—then again in the 19th verse we read of "God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

It is a great thing for our hearts to be established in the knowledge of God Himself. Look at the living expression of that coming out in the Apostle here. He could speak of his Philippian brethren as "his dearly beloved and longed for," and then if you take this epistle as a whole it is full of joy from beginning to end.

Question. *Should that be our normal state?*

It is what should characterize us always, not at special times only. "Rejoice in the Lord *alway*: and again I say, Rejoice" (ver. 4).

He also speaks of these saints as his "crown." He says a similar thing to the Thessalonians: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye

are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2. 19, 20).

The Apostle begins with joy in chapter 1. Look at the 4th verse—there is joy in prayer; 18th verse—rejoicing in the preaching of the glad tidings; 25th verse—"joy of faith"; 26th verse—"more abundant rejoicing." The whole epistle rings with joy; and you will notice it is written to *all* the saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi.

"Love" is the first mentioned part of "the fruit of the Spirit" (notice it is *fruit*, not *fruits*. Gal. 5. 22); "joy" is the second. The Apostle now goes on to the third part—"peace." As we are established in the knowledge of God, we learn to be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known to God, and so we get *His peace* in the place of all *our cares*, which we leave with Him.

Question. *Is this "peace of God" the same as "My peace I leave with you"?*

That is another distinct thought. "My peace" is the Lord's own peace, which He had when He walked here according to the will of God, in the midst of trial and opposition. He had a peculiar peace of His own in the midst of it all, which nothing could disturb. That peace the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples when He was leaving them in His place down here.

Question. *I suppose this has nothing to do with salvation from the judgment that our sins deserved?*

No, this is said to those who have had that question settled. In the 5th of Romans you get another aspect of peace spoken of, namely, "peace with God" as to the question of guilt. Here (in Phil. 4.) it is God's own peace in connection with circumstances. The question of sins is in view in the 5th of Romans: the question of circumstances is in view in the 4th of Philippians. As a poor sinner

believing on God who delivered the Lord Jesus Christ for my offences, and raised Him again for my justification, I come into peace with God through faith, because of the work that was done outside of me altogether, and by Another. I had nothing whatever to do to obtain that peace *with* God. But in the 4th of Philippians, it depends greatly upon my attitude as a believer towards God if I am to be a possessor of His peace.

Not only are you to take everything to God in prayer, but before you leave your knees you are to thank God you have such an One as Himself to leave all with, and in the place of your cares is given to you His peace to keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.

Question. *Is not "garrison" a better word than "keep"?*

Yes. It is the word that is used for "the guard" or "the garrison." There are two things that need to be garrisoned. Not the heart only, the seat of the affections; that does need to be kept, for out of the heart are the issues of life; but the mind also, and Satan is particularly bent on upsetting saints in their thoughts, in order to lead them astray with erroneous doctrines.

The "peace of God" is ours consequent on prayer and thanksgiving, but lower down in the chapter you get the company of the "God of peace," and that depends upon practice—"Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO." Put them into practice! *Prayer*, and the "peace of God;" *Practice*, and the "God of peace."

Question. *Does the Apostle put himself there as an example to the saints?*

Yes. Paul, as it were, said, "You have seen me practise certain things: you carry them out in the same way." He said to Timothy, "Thou hast known my doctrine and manner of life." He lived CHRIST, and thus showed to them the way Christians should live, so that they might have the company of the "God of peace," which is a step beyond the "peace of God" keeping the heart and mind.

In the 8th verse the Apostle speaks of things that are true, noble, just, pure, amiable, of good report, virtuous, and

praiseworthy; on these things they were to think. It is a great mistake to occupy one another with evil. God would have us "simple concerning that which is evil, and wise concerning that which is good." The energies of the believer should be on this line. One of the final exhortations of the Holy Spirit to believers is, "Follow that which is good." When Diotrephes was casting the best saints out of "the assembly," then is it said, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good" (3 John). If we were constantly thinking of all these blessed things that we see shining so perfectly in the Lord, evil would not get hold of our minds so easily, and we should have more power to deal with it when necessary according to God's will.

But the power that is at our disposal depends upon our practice. As we practise these things that we learn and receive (heard and seen in Paul as he followed Christ), the God of peace will be with us. The saint of God thus walking through this world of sin and strife has the God of peace with him! Another once said, "For a Christian the secret of peace within and power without is to be always and only occupied with good."

Question. *Is it not important to notice, while insisting on practice as the condition for enjoying the company of the "God of peace," that there is no question in this of a sinner getting forgiveness or salvation?*

It is rather the working out of your own salvation. Those who do these things are already forgiven and justified; they have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. One expects a certain sort of practice from the royal family, that one would not expect from a humbler family, because of the fact that they *are* the royal family by birth. So we are the children of God, and as being such there is a practice that is pleasing to God; and where this is the company of the God of peace is enjoyed.

A man might claim to be in the right ecclesiastical position, and be an utter stranger to the company of the God of peace. A mere ecclesiastic is usually a man of strife. If we have the right Person walking with us, we shall not get astray as to the right position, but we shall seek to "follow peace with all and holiness."

The Apostle now speaks of the way that the saints had thought of his temporal need. We read in verse 10, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again: wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." And he goes on to speak about the help these poor Philippians had given him right away down to verse 18. Then in the 19th verse he says, "But my God shall supply all *your need* according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" The help which came from them had been quite a cheer to Paul. He is not writing this because he desired gifts, for he then had abundance, but it was a sweet savour to God, and so he speaks. If we only grasped rightly our privileges in giving for the work of the Lord that which goes up as a sweet savour to God, how happily and freely we should do what we could! "God *LOVETH* a cheerful giver"

Let us notice that these Philippian saints were poor, though rich in faith; thus in 2 Corinthians 8: 1-2 the Apostle writes of them, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their *deep poverty* abounded unto the riches of their liberality" They joyfully gathered all that they could that they might help on the work liberally and worthily of God.

Question *Did not the Apostle refuse to take anything from the Corinthians for himself?*

Yes, but he took for others

Question *On what principle would you act to-day?*

A Jew gave a tenth of all he had. The principle of the New Testament is different though not behind the Old. On the first day of the week "put by," according as the Lord has prospered you (1 Cor. 16: 2), and whether it be a penny, or a pound, or a thousand, it is a sweet savour to God when rightly given. With such sacrifices He is well pleased. There should be the deliberate "putting by" at home, as giving to God, and then it is ready for use when needed.

The great thing is to go on with God as He is made known to us. An experimental knowledge of God is a great matter and keeps us free from mere

legality. Many have a knowledge of doctrine, a knowledge of "theology," and can give expositions of Scripture, but have no experimental knowledge of God at all. The true believer gives because he has learned through grace the giving of God.

Question *Paul speaks of learning to be content. Would you say that satisfaction and contentment are one and the same?*

Satisfaction is beyond contentment. Contentment here has to do with present circumstances, but satisfaction is known in communion with God as to that which abides when temporal things are left behind for ever. "Godliness with contentment is great gain;" but believers can also say, "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"—to be satisfied is to be more than a conqueror, and that is ours through the eternal Lover of our souls who died for us and rose again, and who shall Himself "see of the travail of His soul" and be *satisfied*.

The Apostle says much about the way the saints had cared for him in *his need*—they had been cheerfully showing practical Christianity, the liberal outcome of hearts which knew and loved God. He says, as it were, You have met *my need* according to God, "my God" (he individualizes it) shall fully meet *your need*. He says in 2 Corinthians 9: 8, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work" God is able to make plenty flow into your pockets, so that you may have all sufficiency in all things to help on His work. He does not say He *will* do it, to the Corinthians, but "He is able" to do it. The Apostle was seeking to turn their thoughts to God and the knowledge of Himself as to giving, so that they might get the good of God's ability to send them abundance for His service. Notice, too, chapter 8: 9, in the same connection. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" What grace *for such an One* to so do! Look at chapter 9: 15 "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" What grace to so give! He gave nothing short of the very best that heaven contained! He gave His Son!

Not only will He "supply" all your need, but it reads "fully supply"—not a bit of lack. And in accordance with "His riches in glory in Christ Jesus!" The call of the gospel is "according to" God's purpose, so likewise we are "saved according to His purpose" (2 Tim. 1. 9); and so here too the need of saints is met according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Question. *I thought "the riches" were like the supplies in the storehouses of Egypt, and "by Christ Jesus" the channel of supply. Is it not so?*

"By" is misleading. It is "in Christ Jesus." When the whole of Egypt was lying in need during those seven years of famine, where had Pharaoh all his riches, his wealth, so that he might meet all that need consistently with his throne, his majesty, and glory? In Joseph—not in the storehouses of corn, but in Joseph with all his wisdom and his ability, in the Zaphnath-paaneah. All Pharaoh's riches lay in the wisdom and wealth of administrative ability of that young man Joseph. Now, where are all God's riches to-day? Not in Israel, not in the nations, not in the church, or in the gifts, but *in Christ Jesus*; and God acts accordingly in thus meeting our need—"according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Look at the administrative wisdom which obtains all in Egypt, both properties and persons, for Pharaoh whilst the need of the people is met fully. He gets their money, then when that is done, he gets their cattle, then their lands, and so on, until eventually he even gets themselves, so

that all was Pharaoh's from end to end of Egypt, save the priests' lands.

God works on the same principle to-day after the counsel of His own will, and He will continue to work in the same blessed way for our good and His own glory until everything is brought into accordance with the perfect will and mind of God, to whom, as Paul adds, now joining the Philippians with him in verse 20, "be glory for ever to the ages of ages. Amen."

How beautifully, in closing, the Apostle takes into his heart every saint in Christ Jesus in Philippi. He does not say, "Salute all the saints," and in that way give a general salutation, but singles each one out: "every saint" in that place had to be saluted with the letter he sent them. What a binding together this would effect!

To act in view of "all saints," yea, in view of "every saint," is a great thing. We cannot walk with every saint in his ways. That is another matter. But in prayer and love we are, as far as possible, practically to carry out the "taking in" of every saint in Christ Jesus.

Lastly Paul writes, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you *all*." Nothing short of "all" is in the heart of a servant who is walking with God. A gift is given by the ascended Head in view of all, whether the "evangelist," or the "pastor and teacher;" and if a servant of the Lord is labouring for a party, or sect, or school of opinion, he is not really walking with God. I do not say he is never used for blessing. It becomes us to-day to keep every saint before us in all we say and do, for God remembers each one.

A Worthy and Inexhaustible Subject.

ONE of William Carey's last visitors was Alexander Duff, the Scotch missionary, who talked with the dying man about his life and labours in India. On leaving the room he was recalled to Carey's bedside, who whispered to him, "Mr. Duff, you have been talking about Doctor Carey, Doctor Carey; when I am gone say nothing about Doctor Carey—speak about Doctor Carey's Saviour."

On one occasion D. L. Moody took for the subject of his address "Christ as the Saviour." At the close of the service he said to a Scotch friend, "I didn't finish my subject to-night." "But you did not expect to finish that subject, did you?" replied his companion. "Ah, man, it will take all eternity to finish that subject."

King of Kings.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

“**K**ING of kings” and “Lord of lords”—
 O how rich these glorious words!
 Titles high and boundless fame
 Now enhance the Saviour’s name.

Him who once was crowned with thorn,
 Crowns of glory now adorn;
 Jesus sits upon the throne,
 Hosts His triumph gladly own!

Sweet it is to see Him there,
 Centre of the glory fair,
 Sweet our highest praise to bring,
 Bow before the heavenly King!

Now within the Father’s house,
 There we know Him and rejoice;
 Glad that He, e’en now, should share
 All the Father’s glory there.

Soon will He appear again,
 Then His saints with Him shall reign.
 Echo far the glorious words,
 “King of kings” and “Lord of lords.”

A Great Revival.—No. 2.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

The Passover and “A Prepared Heart.”

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30.).

THE events of chapter 29 had taken place very rapidly, and they show what a blessed revival may occur among God’s people if there be only *one* man with a heart set to please the Lord. We learn here what is the mighty and far-reaching effect of personality, the effect that *you* may have upon everybody round about you. You may say Hezekiah was a king, but it was not his kingly power that gave him his mighty influence. It was his state of heart.

His heart was right with God, and he was in thorough subjection to the Word of God. He had taken to heart

the message that God sent to him by the prophets, and that cast him back upon the Scriptures, and from them he found what was the wish of the Lord for His people. He discovered that it was God’s desire that they should be constantly reminded of the great deliverance from Egypt’s bondage that He had wrought for them. The passover was instituted as a yearly feast to commemorate this intervention of the Lord on their behalf.

The Time for the Passover.

But here a difficulty faced him. That feast by divine appointment had to be kept on the fourteenth day of the first

month. But this was impossible for Hezekiah, for the house of the Lord was in a state of uncleanness, and the priests and people were alike unready. "*They could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem*" (ver. 3).

A less diligent student of the law than Hezekiah might have said, "We have lost our chance and must wait another year ere we can please the Lord in this matter ;" but he had read the Word carefully, and discovered that God had made a provision in His grace for those who were unable to keep the passover at the appointed season. This provision was for the celebration of the feast on the fourteenth day of the second month (Num. 9. 6-14).

Thus at the outset he found that the grace of God's heart could meet the people in their weakness, and so shall we find it whenever we prepare our hearts to seek the Lord.

The Place for the Passover.

God also appointed the place for the keeping of the passover. It was to be kept "*at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place His name in*" (Deut. 16. 6). This place was Jerusalem, where the temple stood, and to that *one* place as *one* people they had to gather in the name of the Lord.

Jeroboam had turned Israel from God's appointment. He made Israel to sin by setting up other altars and places for worship. His act was independency and gross rebellion against the Word of God. Hezekiah kept God's centre before him, and also the *whole of Israel* as connected with that centre.

He had all Israel in his heart ; there was the divine sense in his soul that God's people were one. And so he sent out the proclamation "*throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that*

they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem ; for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written" (ver. 5). Had he been a sectary, a narrow-minded man, he would have said, "We are the people, and we have got the temple ; and as for these naughty ten tribes, let them alone, they have all gone wrong, but we are right." But no such thought filled Hezekiah's heart. He had a profoundly deep sense that the people of God were one. Hence his action here.

There is an important lesson for us in this. Caiaphas prophesied "that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also He should *gather together in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John II. 51, 52). And throughout the New Testament the thought of this oneness is found. It is so easy to forget this and become occupied with a narrow circle, to settle down in sectarian indifference to others, and so practically deny the truth of God as to the oneness of His saints. Moreover, the saints of God are all united by the Holy Ghost to one blessed Head, and God is gathering them to one centre, which is Christ. His name is upon them, and it is this that makes them one. The oneness in Christianity is far more complete than in Israel : there it was twelve tribes one nation ; *now it is many members but one body.*

Hezekiah took care that the sin offering should be for *all* Israel, and now he sends out the invitation to the passover to *all* Israel ; he had a very large heart. Let us cultivate that. Now see the effect of that letter on Israel ; they were connected with the rebellious altars at Dan and Bethel, but Hezekiah determined to bring them face to face with the truth, that they might be delivered from what they were in. This is the way to help souls ; it is not sufficient to say this is wrong and that is wrong, but bring out the truth. "The truth shall make you free."

We do not read that they destroyed a single altar, as this great congregation came up from Dan and Beersheba. No, they were not in a moral state to do it; but they were sufficiently interested to come up to Jerusalem. Then they set aside what was wrong in Jerusalem before they partook of the passover (ver. 17), and then, in the next chapter, you find that on their way back they broke the images in pieces, cut down the groves, and threw down the high places everywhere. There was a mighty awakening of the truth in the mind of God's people then. The moment they were obedient to God, and kept the passover according to divine order, they had had fourteen days of fellowship and gladness, and it transformed their lives. It will be ever so, the light dispels the darkness, and it is in the power of the truth that evil is destroyed.

Mark well the terms of Hezekiah's letter. "Ye children of Israel, *turn again* unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and *He will return* to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria" (ver. 6). Observe how that principle goes all through Scripture. You return to the Lord, and He will return to you. God

never lends His presence to disobedience. He must have obedience and subjection. Subjection to God's Word is a principle of the finest and last importance for the soul's blessing and happiness. Progress is always connected with obedience. I cannot press that too deeply. Obey the Lord. Obey His Word. Do not talk to me about legality, and beware of licence. Obedience to the Lord is the right thing. Happiness lies in obedience. Never has any child of God traversed or transgressed a single bit of God's Word but he has brought some sorrowful effect upon himself which he would have escaped if he had obeyed the Word. God cannot help and bless the backslider in his disobedience. But God graciously calls you, poor backsliding heart, to return to Himself, to the fact that He has loved you and that Christ has died for you. What blessed you in the beginning? His love. What cleansed you? His blood. What made your heart dance for joy? His grace. Has He altered? Ah no, He is ever the same.

"And sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, Eternal Lover,
Towards me as e'er Thou'rt bright."

(To be continued.)

God our Saviour.—No. 2.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Mediator.

1 Timothy 2. 1-7, 3. 15; 2 Timothy 4. 1, 2.

SINCE the beginning of the world there never has been such a day as the present, nor indeed shall there ever be such a dispensation again. It is spoken of as "*the accepted time*" and "*the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. 6. 2). It is the day in which God presents Himself to men as the Saviour of the lost. It is the day in which His gracious interposition on our behalf is testified of to the whole world. The

day in which He declares that His desire is that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. In grace and love He has interposed on behalf of all men universally. Such a day of privilege for man never was before and never shall be again.

This salvation is infinitely greater than that which was accorded to Israel, when by the hand of Moses He brought

them out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage, purposing to bring them into the land of promise, in order that they might serve Him as a free people. That salvation was but temporal, and the great mass of those saved out of the hand of the task-master Pharaoh never reached the purpose of God for them. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness on account of their transgressions. And even the generation which was eventually brought into the land were driven out again for their idolatrous practices, and to-day their descendants are scattered over the whole earth under the government of God, on account of their rejection of the Messiah. But the salvation which is brought to light to-day, and which is preached in the gospel of the grace of God, is said to be "*in Christ*" (2 Tim. 2. 10), and "*eternal*" (Heb. 5. 9). It is not an outward, earthly deliverance from a carnal bondage, but it is the emancipation of the soul from the fear of death, and from the devil, the world, the flesh, and every spiritual foe that held the soul in captivity away from God. It is a salvation which is not yet revealed, but which shall come to light at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when all those who have by faith received it will come with Him in the clouds of heaven.

This salvation does not in itself alter the earthly circumstances of those who partake of it. It comes to a poor slave groaning under the lash of a cruel and tyrannical task-master, but from that bondage the gospel does not propose to release him. It raises with him the question of a far more cruel slavery under which he is held, and which, unlike the bondage in which his earthly master holds him, and from which death will eventually release him, has consequences which reach into eternity. Therefore it is of infinitely more importance than any mere temporal deliverance. It involves new relationships with God, and is the settlement of every question which

could be raised between the soul and Him with whom we have to do.

Eternal glory is also bound up with it (2 Tim. 2. 10). Those who enjoy it rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5. 2). This is their destiny. They give thanks to the Father, who has made them meet to be partakers of the portion of the saints in light; who has delivered them from the authority of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love: in whom they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1.). They are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, who will change this body of humiliation, and fashion it like His body of glory (Phil. 3. 21). And as regards this glorious hope they will not be disappointed, for "*whom He justified, them He also glorified*" (Rom. 8. 30).

As Israel, delivered from the Egyptians, had the land of Palestine before them, to which God led them through the desert, so believers, delivered from death and the devil as the oppressor of his helpless slaves, have heaven and the glory of God before them, and to this goal they hasten in their journey through the world. And as God fought for Israel, while they held their peace, so has He fought for us, annulling death and him who had the power of it, thus setting us at liberty to move forward on our heavenly journey to the inheritance that is ours where Christ has gone. But, as I have observed, their salvation was all outward and temporal, and had to do with flesh and blood; whereas ours is all inward and spiritual, and has to do with spiritual powers. Then He intervened on behalf of one nation only; now He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Then, again, as to the past dispensation, it was a dispensation of *law*. At Sinai God took up the character of Lawgiver, though previous to that it had been all grace; but at Sinai He proposed to the people the covenant of

works ; that they should inherit the land on the ground of the fulfilment of their obligations. Into this covenant the people, in the pride of their vain and foolish hearts, rashly entered, and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Exod. 19. 8). The madness and folly of attempting to inherit any blessing on the ground of their obedience should have been apparent to them long before they reached Mount Sinai, for their whole journey from the time they left Rameses had been marked by murmuring, complaining, and rebellion against God. Had they had less confidence in themselves they would have pleaded with God to go on with them to the end as He had begun, that was, in pure grace ; and had they done so, who will say that He would not have listened to them ?

But we have not to do with what might have been, but with what was, and with what is. They put themselves under law, and to them the consequences were terrible. Their work was portioned out to them by Him who knew exactly what the obligations of man to his Creator were. The demand was in no sense exorbitant. It was just what man must be if he were to be allowed to live upon the earth as the creature of God. And it was of life upon earth it spoke, not of getting to heaven. "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them" (Lev. 18. 5). Neither did the law speak of *faith*. The dispensation was one of works, not of faith ; as Paul says, "The law is not of faith : but, The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3. 12). Thus man's attention was directed to himself and to his works, and to the blessing or curse which resulted from his obedience or transgression. The law did not occupy men with God ; He was hidden in the thick darkness.

But the gospel takes the thoughts of men away from themselves to God, who in Christ is in the light ; that is, perfectly revealed. It is no

longer a question of what man is in goodness for God, but of what God is in grace and love for man. Were there no more in the heart of God for man than there is in the heart of man for God, our case would indeed be woeful. It took four thousand years of probation to bring fully to light the incorrigible hostility of the human heart to God. Had there been no need for this to be done the blessed God might have sent His Son as soon as man fell, and before He was driven out from Eden. Four thousand years may seem a long time to take in demonstrating the utterly lost condition of the creature ; but God is patient, and what He does He does perfectly, so that the need to go over the ground again can never occur. As to man, in his littleness and impatience, his "time is always ready" (John 7. 6) ; but until things are ripe for His intervention, God can wait, if need be, for thousands of years. Therefore, before He took the recovery of man completely into His own hand, He waited until it was perfectly proven that there was no power for recovery in man. Then He takes the salvation of the lost into His own hand, and assumes the character of a world-wide Saviour. He would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And to carry out the desires of His heart He has approached us in the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. All fleshly distinctions disappear in the presence of this Saviour-God. It is not Jew and Gentile, the former nigh and the latter afar off ; but it is one God, one Mediator, and men—God, men, and the Mediator between. The salvation of God is for the whole world. It is no longer a Lawgiver with a fiery law dealing with one chosen nation and leaving the rest of the world afar off in darkness ; but it is a Saviour-God going out to men universally in the love and grace of His heart.

The desires of this Saviour-God could have had no fulfilment apart from this Mediator. To reach us in grace this Mediator was necessary, and

He was also necessary for us if we were to have to do with God in grace. To destroy the human race as rebel sinners angelic means were all that was necessary to have employed ; but to bring us to Himself in peace and blessing a Mediator was indispensable. Job felt the necessity of such an One, when he cried out in his bitterness of soul, " For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both " (Job 9. 32, 33).

Men may feel such a daysman as this to be a necessity, but where such an One could be found is far beyond his comprehension. One who could lay one hand upon God and the other upon sinful man would be beyond the possibility of the creature to find. He must be One who on God's side shall stand on equality with Him, and who on man's side must have come down to his level. He must be nothing less than God to me, for I am to find God in Him, and yet He must be One to whom I can speak as I would to a fellow-mortal. His terror must not make me afraid, neither must His hand be heavy upon me (Job 33. 7). The fact is, this Mediator must be both God and man in one Person. No less a person will do for either God or the sinner.

And such an One is found in the Man Christ Jesus. God speaks of Him as " the Man that is My fellow " (Zech. 13. 7). This divine Person, the eternal Son, has become Man, in order that He might be Mediator between God and men. In Him the invisible God has come to light in His nature, that man might know that *God is love*. In Him I see God manifest, and the darkness is dispelled from heart and mind. His very name tells me the manner in which God has drawn near to us. *Jesus* brings before us *Jehovah the Saviour*. At His feet I sit down to bask in the full blaze of the perfect revelation of God. I see Him down here in the midst of a world away from God and under the power of the devil.

When He speaks it is God I hear, and when He acts it is God I see. He says, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord " (Luke 4. 18, 19). Thus all His words and works are attributed to God who sent Him. In looking upon Him I see Him of whom man has naturally such hard thoughts, the One who is in his judgment a hard master and indifferent to the miseries of His creature, and I get to know how terribly He has been misunderstood, belied, and *calumniated*, and how His poor devil-deceived creature has suffered through the darkness and error in which he is by nature, and my heart is drawn out to Him by the irresistible attraction of His heavenly grace, so that I become a worshipper at His feet.

And this Mediator has given Himself a ransom for all. Had the desire of God for the salvation of lost sinners extended no farther than one nation, then the Mediator had only given Himself a ransom for that nation ; but inasmuch as the desire of God is for the salvation of all, the ransom of the Mediator has been made to cover the whole human race. The ransom of the Mediator has opened a way of salvation for every soul of man. God has been met with regard to sin, and has been glorified in every one of His attributes, as He has also been in His nature, and in virtue of this He can send a message of grace to every creature.

The object of the gospel is to open the eyes of all to this great fact, in order that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26. 18). Where the need of salvation is awakened in the soul of the sinner, and a little of the grace of

God, as the gospel presents it, is apprehended, the steps of the wanderer are turned in true repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Until something of the grace of God is apprehended in the soul there will be no turning to Him.

But God, having found a ransom in the death of His Son, is able to send, in righteousness, a free forgiveness to every child of Adam, and this forgiveness finds him in his sins, and in the ruin and degradation into which sin has brought all mankind. It makes no demand upon him for anything. It does not ask him to make any alteration in himself with the object of fitting himself for God. Forgiveness comes to the outcast, the rebel, the thoughtless, the godless, the devil-deceived enemy of God, and it comes to him as he is and where he is, and it is a forgiveness that comes to him accompanied with the love of God.

It is not to *believers* it comes, but to *unbelievers*. No one can be a believer until he hears the report; for faith comes by report and report by the Word of God. Before one can be a believer there must be something to believe. This is true in natural things as well as in spiritual. Therefore the gospel comes to men in their natural unbelieving state, and it speaks to them of a Saviour-God and of forgiveness through Christ. The Apostle enters into the Jewish synagogue and preaches to them the intervention of God on behalf of man in the person of His Son; and having set Him in death and resurrection before them, he says, "Be it known to you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." This was declared to them just as they were, as we say, *in the rough*. It was just the message to open the eyes of men to the grace of God, to cause them to turn to Him. And the same Apostle tells King Agrippa that he "shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the

Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26. 20). There was not only the declaration of the grace of God to men, but they were exhorted to avail themselves of it. There was also the terror of the Lord to be taken into account, and knowing this the Apostle says, "We persuade men" (2 Cor. 5. 11). He also warns his hearers of the consequence of refusing such infinite grace. He says, "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13. 40, 41). Thus was forgiveness of sins declared, repentance enjoined, the terror of the Lord brought into view, and the awful consequences of despising the message set before their souls.

Forgiveness of sins is, as I have said, declared to men in their natural sinful condition; it is for all, and declared to all, without exception; but the Apostle by the Spirit has also a word for the one who believes: "By Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13. 38-41). He has forgiveness of sins for *all*, but *the believer is justified*. His sins are forgiven. He is justified from all things; and being justified by faith he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also he has access by faith into the grace in which he stands and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. He can set forward now toward the heavenly inheritance, with the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. But not only would God have all men to be saved, He would also have them "*come to the knowledge of the truth.*" The truth is set before us in Jesus. In Him I learn all that can be known of God. The whole truth as to God is set before us in Him, and in Him I learn the whole truth about man. In Him I learn the spirit and bearing which become man in relationship with

his Creator, and also with his neighbour. Unquestioning, whole-hearted obedience characterized Him from His entrance into the world until His death on the cross. He was here for the will of God; and whatever was the pleasure of Him whose Servant He had become, this He submitted to, irrespective of how that will affected Him.

In Him risen and glorified I also learn what man is in the thought of God, and to what God is bringing His people. The truth as to man's relationship with God is set before us in Him, and in no other relationship can man

be with God. The better I know Him, the better I know the thoughts of God about His own, "for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29). When risen from the dead He sent the message to His disciples: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20. 17).

What a glorious message it is. May the reader be a partaker of it. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Keep yourselves in the Love of God.

(ARTHUR CUTTING).

IN order to rebuke the extravagant pride and luxury in which the people of his time lived, Diogenes, the Cynic, lived in a tub. On one occasion Alexander the Great paid a visit to him, and standing at the mouth of his strange residence, which was turned towards the sun, offered to do anything for him that he might ask. "There is one thing you can do," answered Diogenes: "remove yourself from the entrance of my tub; you are shutting out from me the light and warmth of the sun."

We may learn a lesson—a useful and spiritual lesson—from the Cynic's answer, for as Alexander stood between him and the sunlight, offering great and costly gifts, so the world would stand before us with its promises and pleasures; when it does so may we have grace to say, "Stand aside, you are shutting out from my heart the warm and genial rays of the sunshine of divine love."

It is evident that the favours of the world and the Father's love cannot be enjoyed at the same time, for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2. 15). Is that love more to us than the world, as the sunshine was more to Diogenes

than all the gifts of the world's conqueror?

But a very little of the world can shut out from our hearts the light and joy of divine love. A threepenny-piece held before the eye is sufficient to exclude from the sight a whole landscape, and a little bit of allowed worldliness will be sufficient to mar for months and perhaps years our full enjoyment of the Father's love.

John Bunyan said, "It did not take the devil long to show all he had. He took the Lord Jesus to the top of an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time"—but all in vain! None of these things were allowed to stand between the heart of the Lord and the love of His Father. "I dare say," said Bunyan, "that the devil would need only to take us to our own doorstep to show us enough to bring us under the power of the world and its god."

Fellow-believers, let us keep ourselves in the love of God, and jealously and promptly dismiss anything that would be calculated to get between our hearts and the bright sunlight of the Father's love; and ever remember that "friendship with the world is enmity with God."

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 1. 1-4.

1. *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*
2. *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*
3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*
4. *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

“**T**HAT which was from [the] beginning.” The beginning of anything is the point farther back than which in respect of it the mind cannot go. In Scripture, as elsewhere, the expression is in frequent use. In numberless instances we are all trying to get back to the beginnings of things. The importance of it is this, that the true and essential nature of the thing is to be found in the beginning of it; and what it is there it is always to the end. Circumstances may affect the phenomena connected with it, but the thing itself remains essentially the same. “That which was from [the] beginning” is, therefore, the last word that can be said in respect of anything in analysing and tracing it to its source, and in determining what is its essential and abiding nature, its fixed qualities—the truth of it. It is in the scientific world the object of ceaseless research, never attained but in part. It is in the spiritual world still further removed from definition. In divine things the challenge, “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” (Job 11. 7) was never taken up; and Agar’s question was never answered, “What is His name, and what is His Son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Prov. 30. 4); *i.e.* what is His origin, and what is His end? The problem had still to wait for solution. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1. 18).

“From [the] beginning.” Several times we meet with this expression in the New Testament. Let us examine a few of them.

Matthew 19. 4, 8. We have here the first word as regards the nature of the marriage bond; and it gives its character to the institution to the end.

Luke 1. 2. Luke had his information

from those who were eyewitnesses. “From [the] beginning” of the events he was about to relate; than which no more authentic human testimony could be found; and such a preamble suits well the gospel of the humanity of the blessed Lord.

John 6. 46. He knew from [the] beginning who should betray Him. It was no afterthought; no fresh discovery; no change in the disposition of the one who did it.

John 8. 44, and so with the devil, who was the prime author of the deed. He was a murderer and a liar “from [the] beginning.” He was never otherwise. Were he clothed as an “angel of light,” and his ministers as “ministers of righteousness,” that was his beginning, and that was his unchanging and unchangeable character to the end. It is what he *is*. He was in the truth, but “he abode not in the truth (the perfect: what has been and continues, note *in loco* N.T.), because there is no truth in him.” Further back than this in his history you cannot get. It is the full and complete revelation concerning him; and his conduct throughout is akin to it (1 John 3. 8).

John 15. 27. What Luke says of the sources of his information in the gospel, the Lord says now of the testimony of the apostles: “Ye also shall bear witness, *because* ye have been with me from [the] beginning.” It is an expression on which John dwells frequently and emphatically. Eleven times in the first and second epistles he uses it. It is, in some form or other, what gives character to his writings; and failing to apprehend its force, the special character of his ministry would in great part be lost. That which sets forth in its essential, its abiding nature, that which is fixed and unchangeable, would become a mere

historical fact, isolated in itself, and to be treated as a merely temporal thing, and the great, abiding, eternal, divine truth connected with it would be overlooked. Christ Himself would become a merely historical personage, and "eternal life" would be reduced to an aggregation of Christian phenomena enacted here in time.

"That which was from [the] beginning" gives us the first word about it in itself; the last word about it in revelation. Nothing more can be added to it now that it is known. It precludes the strainings of the mind, that in its mystic searchings would mount higher than the Source; it precludes the idea of development that would better the eternal truth.

It is to be noted that the expression is without the article, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, "from beginning." If it were "from the beginning" it would imply that that was a point already known. Without the article, by a nicety in the original, which cannot be rendered in English, the term is left intentionally indefinite. The gospel begins with what was "in [the] beginning." The epistle begins with "what was from [the] beginning." The one is correlative with the other; the gospel taking precedence in revelation as to the person of "Jesus Christ the Son of God," by whom eternal life has come into the world, objectively set forth in Him; the epistle following on consequentially, as to the nature of that life, subjectively realized in the believer by the Spirit, as it subsists in the Son, true in all its properties in the believer, as it is true in Him (1 John 2. 8).

By and by it will be seen in its own sphere; it is now seen in its own nature; for we are now the children of God, though what we shall be has not yet been made manifest (1 John 3. 2); but meanwhile, "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17).

In Proverbs 8. 22-31 the two expressions, "In the beginning" and "From the beginning," are brought together in an interesting manner. "Jehovah possessed me 'in the beginning' [or, as beginning] of His way, before His works of old." Here is Wisdom, uncreated, co-existent with Jehovah Himself. "In the beginning He was." This corresponds to John 1. 1.

Then, Wisdom is set up (or "anointed" for the accomplishment of her work) at her birth "from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Then, she is present with Jehovah in the creation of the universe, putting her stamp on all that was done, affording Him daily delights as He contemplates it all, and pronounces it "very good;" while she on her part too rejoices in the task; and then, without being diverted by the follies of mankind from the supreme picture of unmixed delight, dwelling only on the beauty of her handiwork, she rejoices in the parts of the earth now inhabited by her own children, and her delights are with the sons of men. This, as setting an ineffaceable stamp on Wisdom's work, corresponds to 1 John 1. 1; and it is not impossible that, as the same Spirit that indited the Book of Proverbs spoke again through the Apostle John, so the Old Testament Scripture supplied the text for the New.

In this way the great and vital truths of Christianity are set forth and safeguarded from the encroachments of error. Already in the Apostle's time errors of various kinds, indigenous to the mind of man, generally classed under the title of "Gnosticism," but all starting from the false "gnosis" of Genesis 3. 5, had burst into the church, threatening to carry all before them. Legality and mysticism took the place of grace and truth; philosophy took the place of Christ; the wanderings of man's mind in the dark took the place of the light of revelation; the professed pursuit of greater holiness gave way to unbounded corruption; and the bursting of the dykes, letting loose the unbridled passions of the flesh and of the mind, would have "swept the decks" of every vestige of vital Christianity, had not God raised up a standard against the enemy, and established the eternal and ineffaceable truth, clear of every institution given over to the possibility of failure in the responsibility of man, and safeguarded against every attack, in the person of the eternal Son of God, come in flesh, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the great proposition in the ministry of the Apostle John. We see him, not, in the energy of the Apostle Paul, traversing the world in the spread of the gospel, planting churches in the various cities

whither he went; we see him, not, like Peter, busy amongst the sheepcotes, or opening the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles; we see him not anointed with the energy of travel or of deed; but we see him leaning on the bosom of Jesus, learning the divine depths of his Master's mind, the profound but simple language of the Father's heart, the world-wide, all-embracing interest of the love of God, and the deep depths and unutterable fullness of eternal life. Here was the school in which "the disciple whom Jesus loved" graduated; here were the themes that enlarged his plastic mind; here was the focus of the light that would chase away the darkness of this world; and if Peter's confession was the Rock on which the church was to be built, John, in his place, reposes on the "Rock of Ages," against which the storms of time will vainly beat, until at length He says, "Peace, be still. And there is a great calm."

Verse 2.

With John it must be either that or nothing—Christ or antichrist. He knows no half-measures. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." It is not for him to parley with the frailties of man. Man's actual state he can deal with, either in sin or in weakness; but it must be according to the full truth of God, made known in the person and work of Christ; and the standard he sets up is not the work of grace, however excellent, working in the soul its unfinished work, but eternal life, in the full truth of it, in the Son. Faith with him is connected, not so much with the condition of the soul, or the principle on which the just man lives, as with the object on which it reposes. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" emphasizes the object of the faith rather than the exercise of it: and if the latter is not left out of the picture, still the former occupies the foreground.

Here is the granite portal that opens to our mortal vision the eternal; the "fons et origo" of all true and abiding relationships as existing ever between the Father and the Son; the Father as Himself the Source of all; the Son as the correlative, eternal, and necessary expression of the Father's love—love infinite, divine, eternal in a moving

scene of life and relationships made known to us now in the person of Jesus—the cover, as it were, removed from the casket to reveal the life of heaven; the veil from the sanctuary of the holiest; the hopes of man, falsely raised by the forbidden fruit, now more than satisfied by a revelation surpassing all creature thought, come down as light to guide our feet in the path of life eternal.

This is at once the death-blow to all the pretensions of the mind, that would develop by some philosophy of its own something other than what we have, something better than the best; or, that would make up for some deficiency therein. The truth takes account of all such follies, whatever form they may assume, and displaces them without even once naming them. There is no gain in fighting with darkness; when the light shines it disappears.

Verse 3.

"That which we have heard, seen with our eyes, contemplated, and our hands have handled of the Word of life." Such is the clear, definite, lapidary style in which he sets forth this greatest, mightiest fact, the eternal life which was with the Father, come down in human bodily form. It is no mystic theory of advanced philosophic thought, nor is it the sentimental influence of a higher life, but the actual, palpable, tangible fact thus come within the apprehension of our natural, physical faculties.

The innermost deepest mystery of spiritual life in the upper and invisible world, as it is with the Father, is here laid bare and exposed to view in protracted detail, and subjected to the analysis of actual fact in the very life of man below, and in all the circumstances in which he moves therein.

O wonder of wonders! O mystery of love!

"The Word of life." Jesus is "the Word"; "the Word of God" (Rev. 19), *i.e.* He is the expression, the outcome in speech of what was there before, but not expressed.

Logos—(a) the Word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed; (b) the inward thought itself, so that it comprehends both ratio and oratio (Liddell and Scott).

In the beginning He was the Word;

where, save that He was with God ; how, to whom, and for what end, we know not, nor here can ever know. But in due time He became flesh ; and in Him, in human language, God has spoken to us (Heb. 1. 1).

But He is " the Word of life ; " and thus and thus alone is life expressed. " In Him was life, and the life was the

light of men." The life of fallen man is death ; " dying thou shalt die ; " and even the grace of God working faith in him and repentance does not deliver him from that state ; death is still upon him ; from Eden onwards. Life could not be expressed where death reigned. But here we have " the Word of life ; " the full, intelligent, and intelligible expression of what life is.

My soul would fain Thy praises sing,
And to Thy feet my homage bring,
My Saviour and my God :
For since the day Thou calledst me,
And by Thy grace my soul set free,
Thou'st done me nought but good.

Good, undeserved, I've got from Thee ;
Good, only good, by night and day ;
Goodness with mercy mixed.
And while temptations fierce abound,
And snares beset me all around,
Thy grace my heart has fixed.

Why should I not Thy praises sing ?
Why should I not my homage bring,
And bless Thy holy name ?
Help me, my Saviour, all my days
To live to Thy continual praise,
And spread abroad Thy fame.

The Cross has settled all for me,
The Cross of Christ on Calvary ;
The Cross of God's own Son.
There the vain world with all its pride
And I to it, were crucified ;
And there my heart was won.

And since that day I've only known
How goodness doth Thy mercy crown,
And all my footsteps tend.
And the good work Thou hast begun
Thou'lt perfect till my race is run,
And grace in glory end.

The Spirit of Christianity.

(J. T. MAWSON).

Power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1. 7).

THERE are three spheres of life in which the children of God are called to move, and in which is to be manifested the greatness of the spirit of Christianity. They are : the individual life ; life in relation to the church of God ; and the life of testimony before the world. " Power, love, and wise discretion " (N.T.) are needed in all these spheres, but they have each a special bearing upon one or other of them. In the individual life *wise discretion* is of paramount importance ; in the believer's relations with other members of Christ *love* is absolutely essential ; and in testimony before the world nothing but the spirit of *power* will avail.

Power stands first in our scripture

because the subject in hand is " the testimony of the Lord " in the world ; but this will be greatly enfeebled if love and wise discretion are not in evidence ; the three go together, they are the outstanding features of the spirit of Christianity.

The Individual Life = Wise Discretion.

It is remarkable how little the spirit of wise discretion, or the sound mind, is developed amongst Christians ; the mass do not seem to have had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil ; they are unskilful in the word of righteousness, and when they ought to have been teachers, they need that one teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God (Heb.

5. 12-14). Instead of being rooted in the faith they are blown about by every wind of doctrine; teachings that are "new" and that offer an easier path for nature have a great charm for them, and they are soon moved away from the hope of the gospel. The consequence is that the soul does not prosper; how can it when it is fed upon the fruit of poisonous vines, upon words that eat as a canker, upon profane and vain babblings? Thus, withered, dwarfed, and stunted, without inward joy or manifest fruit, they remain in the condition of spiritual babe-hood. It is this condition in the church which has made the advance of corrupting heresies and new religions so easy during the last ten years.

A man of sound sense knows what is good for him; he will not throw himself into an illness by partaking of injurious dishes; and if this wise discernment is demanded by the physical constitution, of how much greater importance it must be in the spiritual, for as the body is more than the raiment that clothes it, so is the spirit more than the body.

But how shall we learn to discriminate between good and evil, and embrace the truth and reject the lie, so that we may rejoice in full and vigorous spiritual life? The answer is: *Only by the Holy Ghost*. Of Him the Lord Jesus said: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16. 13, 14). And there is evidently no excuse for the Christian who is ensnared by false teaching, for we read: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (1 John 2. 20, 21).

We are also taught that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the

Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14). It is evident, then, that the discerning faculty is developed by the Holy Ghost within us; but since this is so, and since it is also evident that all who have believed the gospel have received, and are sealed by the Holy Ghost, why is it that spiritual discernment in the things which are vital to us is so feeble?

The Holy Spirit has wonderful things to unfold—the things of Christ; but the children of God are often dull of hearing, their thoughts are engrossed with the earth and the world, and He, grieved because they will not listen, is compelled to retire from His blessed ministration to their souls to let them prove the barrenness of everything else. *Behind all soul-poverty and absence of growth lies the sad fact that the Holy Spirit of God is a grieved Spirit.*

The Life of Fellowship in the Church of God = Love.

We have to sorrow over the fact that the church of God has been rent and torn by faction and division, and that the endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is very feeble. It seems easier to build up a party than to edify the body of Christ; and more congenial to make proselytes to some special persuasion than work for the perfecting of the saints. This proves our lack of the spirit of love, and behind this lack there lies our failure in soul-growth. When children suffer from malnutrition or injudicious feeding they become petulant and cross; and this was exactly the condition which the Apostle had to deplore at Corinth. The saints there were in the state of sour and quarrelsome childhood, evidenced by the envying, strife, and divisions among them (1 Cor. 3.).

But love produces an opposite condition to this, and is one of the great features of Christianity; without the spirit of it fellowship is impossible. It.

is the first of the rich cluster of graces, called the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 20). It is the divine nature, and most wonderfully broad and strong. It embraces in its breadth "all the saints" (Eph. 1. 15); and it is invulnerable in its strength, for it "beareth all things" (1 Cor. 13. 7). It builds up and binds together, and the unity of the Spirit can only be maintained as Christians, with lowliness and meekness, *forbear one another in love*. But this love is not natural affection which is self-centred and absorbing, but divine love which is self-sacrificing and radiating. This love can only be developed and exercised in the power of the Holy Ghost, and the reason so little of it is seen in its breadth and strength is because *the Holy Spirit is a grieved Spirit*.

The Testimony of the Lord = Power.

The testimony of the Lord was never popular in the world; certain kinds of preaching may be, for we often hear of popular preachers; but the testimony of the Lord, the preaching of Christ, who was rejected by the world, but is risen from the dead and accepted in heaven, always carries reproach with it—the *reproach of Christ*. Paul was a great preacher, the greatest that ever bore the flaming gospel-torch through a benighted world, but he was not popular; he was despised, buffeted, and reviled; he was defamed, made as the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things (1 Cor. 4. 10-13). Yet he was not ashamed. He boldly proclaimed that He whom the princes of the world crucified was the Lord of glory. He made his boast in the cross, in which was concentrated all shame and dishonour. He maintained before the world that every thought and purpose of God and every blessing for men were centred in the despised and rejected Christ. He identified himself so completely with the Lord and His testimony that it was the only reason why he lived, he had no other thought, though it made him an object of hatred and scorn. In this he rejoiced, and

wrapped the shame of Christ about him as a royal garment, it was his chiefest boast.

That the testimony of the Lord should provoke the hostility of the world is not surprising, for it humbles the pride of men; it is independent of their wealth, learning, and influence; it leaves no room for their vaunting ambitions, and exposes their world in its true character—a system false, foundationless, godless and condemned. Moreover, it crowns the sacred brow of Jesus with immortal glory—God's blessed answer to the contumely and derision heaped upon Him by the world.

Timothy was liable to be ashamed of this testimony of the Lord, and it needs a sterner courage than lies in nature to take it up. The disciples were not one whit less courageous than their fellow-countrymen, and they vowed to act valiantly for their Lord when the test came; but they all fled in that hour of darkness when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter (Luke 23.). They were sample men, and in them it was demonstrated that a new spirit was needed on the part of those who were to witness for Him, a spirit, not of cowardice, but of power. Hence we can understand the Lord's command to them: "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

This power lies in the Holy Ghost given at Pentecost, in the Holy Ghost who dwells in and with the saints of God. Then why, since this is so, is there so little power in testimony? Why is there the spirit of fear instead of power, and compromise with the world and evil instead of unflinching devotion to the Lord? The reason is not far to seek: *the Spirit of God is a grieved Spirit*.

If we are conscious that the spirit of power and love and wise discretion is feeble within us, and that we have miserably failed in these three spheres of Christian activity, what and where is the remedy? Some would turn us back to Pentecost and put us in the position

of the disciples waiting and praying for the power of the Holy Ghost. But this will not do. We must not, we cannot, ignore the solemn fact that He came from Christ, bringing "power, love, and a sound mind" to the church, so that it might stand as a devoted witness to Christ. We cannot ignore the fact that the Holy Ghost has been slighted, that His divine presence has been largely forgotten, that fleshly wisdom, worldly schemes and much human organization have usurped the place of the one untiring and all-wise Servant of Christ's glory on earth.

Nor can we be indifferent to the fact that the church has loved ease and popularity in the world rather than the reproach of Christ; it has forgotten that its portion is on the behalf of Christ to suffer for His sake; it has left its first love; it has been corrupted and defiled; and instead of bearing the shame of Christ upon its brow as the brightest crown the world could give, it bears the shame of a faithless and dishonoured lover.

The Spirit of God is grieved because of this slight cast upon Christ, and the way of blessing and power is to put ourselves right with regard to that which has grieved Him.

To be right with the Lord above and with the Holy Ghost within there must

be confession and repentance. "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent" was the Lord's word to the church; it is the voice of the Spirit in the Scriptures still; and if the church will not hear, "he that hath an ear" may. This is the way of recovery, a way that every saint of God may tread, for it is open to all, and is the only way that becomes us.

But to lie on our faces deploring defeat, as did Joshua, is useless (Josh. 7. 10-13). There must be activity on our part, activity in the judgment of ourselves, as to how far we have had our part in that which has grieved the Spirit; there must also be holy separation from it. "*Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*"

Space fails us to speak of the path of devotion to Christ, a path that can only be trodden by those who have received the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind, that entails certain persecution on those who tread it (3. 12), but leads to glory at last (2. 12). It is helpful, however, to trace it through Paul's second letter to Timothy, and to mark therein the stability of the things of God and the triumph of the good soldier of Jesus Christ. We earnestly commend it to the prayerful study of our readers.

Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance (Ps. 32. 7).

One song of songs the sweetest,
Once learnt thou still repeatest,
And singest, Christian, o'er and o'er—
Earth cannot learn its measure,
This song of heavenly treasure,
Of grace abounding evermore!

Of one great LOVE it telleth,
Which every grief expelleth
Like mist before the morning sun;
Farewell to all thy sorrow,
Thy cares about to-morrow,
When thou canst sing this sweetest song.

Jericho.

(H. D. R. JAMESON).

I will sing of mercy and judgment (Ps. 101. 1).

AS Hebron is continuously linked with the thought of faith laying hold of the purpose of God, so is Jericho linked typically in Scripture with man's defiant opposition to that will—opposition which brings upon him the sure judgment of God.

The place first comes before us in connection with Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan. It was the first city which opposed itself to God's revealed will to give the land of Canaan to Israel. It was given up by divine decree to uttermost judgment—everything in it had to go, and a *curse* was pronounced on him who should venture to rebuild that city.

But alongside of the exhibition of judgment there is ever the display of the mercy of God, and this is strikingly seen in the mercy extended to Rahab in the very hour in which Jericho was given up to destruction.

In the days of Ahab the son of Omri, who did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him, Jericho was rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite, and upon him fell the sure judgment of God as prophesied by Joshua (Joshua 6. 26). He laid the foundation in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub (I Kings 16. 34). It was thenceforth marked as the city of the curse.

The city next comes before us in 2 Kings 2., and there is exhibited mercy in the very scene of the curse. The men of the city say of Jericho that "the situation of this city is pleasant"—indeed, the very name Jericho means "sweet smell," which speaks of man's pleasure in doing his *own* will—and yet they must add "but the water is naught, and the ground barren." Then did the Lord work in mercy by the hand of Elisha, and said, "I have healed these waters:

there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land."

Pass on now to Mark 10. Here we read (ver. 46) of Jesus coming nigh unto Jericho, and of the necessitous case of a certain blind man who sat there by the wayside begging. Hearing that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," he cries, saying, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And then once again was the scene of the curse made the theatre for the display of the mercy of God.

But up to this time mercy was shown anticipatively. If it were to have sure and abiding foundation the *judgment* must be borne, the curse endured, and this took place at the cross alone. Typically that was presented in the fact that in His approach to Jericho (Mark 10. 46) our Lord came from "the farther side of Jordan" (ver. 1); but the type may be traced in greater detail in 2 Kings 2., which presents Elijah's last journey and Elisha's entrance on his ministry. Elisha's ministry, pre-eminently marked by grace, immediately follows that of Elijah and typically speaks of how now the river of God's grace is "flowing o'er the barren scene where Jesus died."

Tracing now the path to this outflow of grace, the journey begins at Gilgal, then comes Bethel, then Jericho, and then Jordan, then the chariot of fire and the ascent into heaven, and then, recrossing Jordan, comes Jericho again.

This is not hard to interpret of our blessed Lord. *Gilgal* is the place of utter separation to God. There in the day of circumcision was rolled away the reproach of Egypt (Josh. 5. 9). For our Lord there was no point *in* His pathway which corresponds with this; for Him it was at the very beginning—He could say, "I was cast upon Thee from the womb."

Bethel means "house of God," God's dwelling-place, and this is true

of all the wondrous life of our Lord Jesus Christ. "God was *in Christ* reconciling the world unto Himself." He "went about doing good, and healing all that were possessed of the devil; for *God was with Him.*"

But Jericho comes next, the place of the curse, and here we look not at His perfect life in the communion and sunshine of the immediate presence of God, but there rises before us that scene without parallel in the annals of eternity, when, in the place of the curse, "made sin" for us, Christ was the *Forsaken One*. From out of the thick darkness which no eye can penetrate, from uttermost distance which no mind can measure or conceive, we hear the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Our Lord was in the place of the curse.

But there is more, there is that of which Jordan speaks—death, death itself. Into those deep waters did Jesus go when, having exhausted the judgment that was due to sin, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. The Lord of life lay in death; no creature mind can compass or comprehend the far-reaching meaning of that momentous fact or fathom its depths.

Then follows the answer on the part of God. Emerging on the other side, the chariot of fire, the horses of fire, and the ascension into heaven typically pointed on to the ascension of our Lord, to the hour when, crowned with glory and honour, the everlasting doors were bidden to open that the Lord of Glory might enter in, "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

Then, taking up again in a new way that which lies on this side of Jordan, Jericho comes once more into view, still the place of the curse, where yet the water is naught and the ground barren, but now to become, at the hand of the One whom Elisha typifies, the theatre for the display of the infinite mercy of God.

As we contemplate all that in Scripture is linked with that city—in actual historic fact, in typical prediction, and in glorious fulfilment, surely we can say with the Psalmist, "I will *sing* of mercy and of judgment," and we can praise our God, who is rich in mercy, in an acceptable time, the day of grace, when "mercy glories over judgment" (James 2. 13, N.T.).

The Person of Christ.

Around the person of Christ the Bible gathers all the wealth of its divine revelation and all the strength of its incomparable illustrations. At the feet of this wondrous Person it throws the tribute of its types, figures, symbols, open statement, majestic phrase, sublime prophecy, pure mathematics, inexorable logic, and triumphant exaltation of precise and perfect doctrine.

According to this Holy Bible, our Lord Jesus Christ, as to His personality, is from old, from everlasting, the outgoing and forth-putting of the unseen God. He was in the beginning with God. He was God. He was the Word of God. He was God the Word, the

utterance and the alone expression of the infinite silence; the Word by which creation was spoken into place, the heavens above and the earth beneath. By Him, and through Him, all things were made; so that without Him not one thing was made that was made. He is before all things. By Him all things consist, and have consisted from the beginning: the atom of sand that lies upon the shore, the rocks that are held together crystal by crystal, the drops that form the sea, the air we breathe, the universe in all its forms. He is the consistency, the holding together of all things. Without Him nothing would be that is, and nothing has been that ever was (*I. M. Haldeman*).

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 2.

The Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and Attendant Incidents (*Matt. 1. and 2. and Luke 1. and 2.*)

The Condition of the People.

NOTHING can be of deeper interest than the way LUKE discloses to us, in the opening of the Gospel, just such a remnant of God's ancient people as Malachi prophesied of. People who were governed by the fear of the Lord, in the midst of the moral apostasy of that privileged part of the nation which had returned to Canaan, under Ezra and Nehemiah. Their heart allegiance to the Lord formed a bond between them, as they spoke often to each other of Him and thought upon His name.

Such were Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, who come before us in the piety that had been the fruit of grace in them. They were prepared vessels to fill their varied part, Mary above all, in the introduction of the Lord Jesus into the world as Son of Man, in a revelation of grace that was to shine out beyond the narrow limits of Israel. Note too how God had been true to His covenanted word in Haggai, "My Spirit remaineth among you" (2. 5). Zacharias and Elizabeth are filled with the Holy Ghost, as John was to be from his mother's womb, and the Holy Ghost was upon Simeon. (J.A.T.)

But only a small and 'poor remnant of the people were ready to receive their Messiah. The sad truth that must be told of the mass of the people is, "He came to His own, and His own received Him not."

They were well content with the Roman yoke and Edomitish king, and were troubled at the news of the Messiah's birth. Herod, in order to rid himself of a rival to the throne, might slay all the young children in Bethlehem if he so pleased; it drew forth no protest from them—they wanted not Emmanuel, for their hearts were far from God, though they drew near to Him with their lips. (J.T.M.)

MATTHEW tells of the work of Satan in Herod and the leaders in Jerusalem, who knew the Scriptures, but not their sanctifying power, but, if he records this

of the Jews, he also brings Gentiles from the East to do honour to the King.

LUKE tells of the work of God's Spirit in a remnant, prepared to receive their Messiah in faith, and of the shepherds in the hill country of Judæa, of Simeon and Anna, and them who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

We can rejoice to think that there were some near enough to heaven to hear its praises, to respond to its good tidings, and to make known what had been told them concerning the Child. (C.E.H.W.)

The Announcement of the Birth of the Lord.

MATTHEW records the angel's revelation to Joseph, whom he addressed as "son of David." Joseph was the legal heir to the throne of Israel, and the announcement made to him is in keeping with the presentation of the Lord in this Gospel. It is significant of the state into which the nation had fallen that the representative of the royal house should be an obscure workman living in the despised city of Nazareth.

The wise men from the East were attracted to the place where the young Child lay by the star in the heavens. They were drawn by this star from their distant home, but were probably deflected for the time being from the right course by the natural thought that the great King would be born in the chief city of His realm. Their going to Jerusalem, however, disclosed the condition of the people; the leaders had an intimate knowledge of the words of Scripture, but Him of whom the Scriptures spoke they did not want.

The fact of the birth of the Lord being made known to the Gentile Magi by the star in the heavens, in contrast to the revelation to those of Israel through the medium of angels, is interesting, showing the difference in the dealings of God with those who were not in covenant relation with Him, and those who were.

Angelic communication had marked the direct dealings of God with His people

Israel from the first, but to the Gentiles He had given a testimony as to Himself in creation "His eternal power and Godhead" are clearly seen in the works of His hand (Rom 1 20), and these works were used on this occasion for the guidance of those who, from among the Gentiles, "sought for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life" to the only One in whom these things could be found. They were led by the works in creation to the God of them, Him they recognized in the lowly Child in the house of Joseph, and bowed in worship before Him, offering their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and so gave an earnest of the fulfilment of the prophecy: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him" (Ps 72 10-11) {

LUKE records the visit of Gabriel to Mary, a lowly virgin, at Nazareth in circumstances of greatest poverty, but rich in faith. Joseph is introduced in the story, but only incidentally. This also is in perfect keeping with the Gospel, wherein is set forth that surpassing grace that has come down to the very meanest in the eyes of men. Mary might be poor, and Nazareth despised, but these will God take up for the accomplishment of His purposes, and in them shall be demonstrated in the supreme act of His grace that, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor 1 27-29) (J T M)

Mary's natural difficulties were set aside by the calm pronouncement of Gabriel, "With God nothing shall be impossible," and, on believing that, she peacefully replied, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word," and then, how "blessed was she that believed!" She was the honoured vessel for the introduction into manhood of the Lord. He was that "holy Thing" born of her, and who should, as thus born in time, "be called the Son of God"

How absolutely necessary, in the

entire economy of faith, it is for us also to believe that "with God nothing shall be impossible"—nothing! His power is infinite, and no physical law is beyond that power. Nature is clearly subservient to the will of its Maker

Let our minds therefore be set at rest, too, as we believe in God's omnipotence

MATTHEW presents Joseph to us as a man of high moral character. He was "a just man," and, moreover, of a kindly disposition. But an insuperable difficulty stood in his way. He formed a becoming plan for its removal, but this was rendered unnecessary by the direct interposition of the Lord. An angel appeared to him in a dream, and gave him an explanation, whereby he was more than satisfied. His misgivings departed (and if his, so should ours), and "he took unto him his wife" (J W S)

It is notable that in Matthew, when it is necessary to bring in Joseph, not only because he was David's heir, but also because Mary was his espoused wife, great care is taken to guard the truth as to the birth of Christ

From the commencement of the chapter we read, "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob," etc., but the language is changed in verse 16, when we read, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ"

The eight short verses which follow need no comment

In chapter 2 Joseph received two divine communications, in each of them the Lord is spoken of as "the young Child," and on both occasions Mary is called "His mother," but not once is Joseph addressed here as His father. The Lord is marked out, however, as the Son of God in verse 15, "Out of Egypt have I called MY SON." (J T M.)

The Birth of the Lord.

A casual census of the Roman Empire called Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem—the city of David—for enrolment

A mere accident, we might say, but it was one of those mysterious accidents which form a link in the chain of the hidden purpose of God

"And so it was, that, while they were there . . . she brought forth her first-

born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2. 6, 7).

How artless the story! How marvellous the truth! Never was gilded cradle so dignified as was this manger! Oh! for a spirit of reverent adoration as we draw aside the curtain and gaze upon the infant form which lay in that cradle! The exercise is most profitable. This was the first step in the path of condescension from the "form of God" to the "death of the cross," and exceeding fair it is. (J.W.S.)

The prophetic ministry, silent for nearly four hundred years, is awakened afresh in connection with His birth, and the joy of heaven must tell itself out to earth, as its hosts testify that in the Babe of Bethlehem, the glory of God in the highest, with the blessing of man and his earth, are alike secured. And the faithful shepherds, who believed the good news from heaven, beheld the sign, "THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER"—sign of God's grace and man's indifference. (C.E.H.W.)

This is the sign that God would give to His people, promised centuries before by the prophet's mouth—and what a sign! Infinite grace stooping to deepest poverty, the Creator poorer than the meanest of all His creatures, that He might bless all. Yet in that *lowest* place He was the Son of the *Highest*; and as He lay in that environment of poverty the multitude of the heavenly host could praise God and say, "Glory to God in the highest."

But this sign was one that should be spoken against (ver. 34). Blinded by their pride, the people saw no beauty in Him. His meekness and lowliness of heart did not conform with their thoughts of greatness and glory, and so "He was despised and rejected of men." (J.T.M.)

The instruction given by the Holy Ghost to Mary is divided into two parts: first, that which the Child to be born should be; secondly, the manner of His conception, and the glory which should be its result. It is not here the Word which was God made flesh, but that which was born of Mary, and the way in which it should take place. We know well that it is the same precious and

divine Saviour of whom John speaks; but here He is presented to us under another aspect, which is of infinite interest to us; and we must consider Him as the Holy Ghost presents Him, as born of the Virgin in this world of tears.

It was a child really conceived in Mary's womb, brought forth by her at the time which God had appointed for human nature. This is a fact which has an importance that can neither be measured nor exaggerated. He was really and truly man, born of a woman as we are—not as to the source or manner of His conception, but as to the reality of His existence as man.

Mary asked, with holy confidence, since God thus favoured her, how this should be accomplished, since it must be done outside the order of nature. In the purpose of God this question gave occasion (by the answer it received) for the revelation of the miraculous conception.

The Holy Ghost should come upon her—should act in power upon this earthen vessel, without its own will or the will of any man. God is the source of the life of the Child promised to Mary, as born into this world. The power of the Highest should overshadow her, and therefore that which *should be born of her* should be called the Son of God. Holy in His birth, conceived by the intervention of the power of God acting upon her.

It is not here the doctrine of the eternal relationship of the Son with the Father, but here it is that which was born by virtue of the miraculous conception, which on that ground is called the Son of God. (Synopsis, J.N.D.)

In Matthew, at the Lord's birth, He is disclosed as "God with us;" the Gospel ends in the same way, "I am with you always"—it is a "*with*" of *condescension*. Mark speaks of our being with Him—it is a "*with*" of *association*, that in His blessed company the servant of God (who in Mark is told to take heed *what* he hears) may learn what true service is. In Luke it is Jesus where we are—come to those who are "afar off" (peculiar to Luke), to have them *with Him* in paradise—it is a "*with*" of *nearness*. In John it is to be *where He is*, "with me where I am"—it is a "*with*" of *affection*. (W.R.S.)

LUKE'S Gospel being meant specially for Gentile readers, while plainly showing

the operation of divine grace in a remnant of the chosen people, does not give any quotations from the Old Testament, except as to the offering for Mary (2. 23). There is also a reference to Malachi 4. in chapter 1. 17, but no direct citation.

MATTHEW, on the other hand, was written for the Jew, and almost every incident recorded is stated to be a fulfilment of prophecy. Matthew records the visit of the Gentile Magi and their worship of Christ, and the unbelief of the people, of which Luke says nothing. Luke tells of the simple faith and gladness of Jewish shepherds. This, if rightly understood, would lead the Jews to confession and self-judgment, and teach the Gentile to respect those who had the place of outward nearness and privilege (Rom. 11. 20, 21). How little this result has been effected—history is witness to our shame! (C.E.H.W.)

In the Gospel of John the Spirit reveals as nowhere else the Deity of Jesus, yet there the verity of His manhood is carefully maintained in His own words, "Ye seek to kill Me, a MAN who hath spoken the truth to you, which I have heard from God" (8. 40). On the other hand, in the Synoptic Gospel, in which the manhood of the Lord is more prominent, His true Deity is plainly established.

This is seen in the first of that chain

of events recorded by LUKE: the angelic visit to Zacharias in the temple, announcing the birth of John, the forerunner. He was to go before Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the spirit and power of Elijah (1. 17), to make ready for Him a people. In accordance with this communication is the inspired utterance of *Zacharias: he addresses the infant John* as the prophet of the Highest, adding, "Thou shalt go before the face of Jehovah, to prepare His ways" (1. 76). There is no article before the word for Lord in this verse, indicating it to be a proper name, and to stand for Jehovah of the Old Testament. This is a point of the greatest interest and importance, for it shows that when the Son humbled Himself and became Man, His personal glory is guarded and maintained by the inspired writers.

MARK also introduces the Servant-Prophet as Son of God and Jehovah, God of Israel. Thus the inscrutability of His Person is declared, who is very God and very Man in one indivisible Person. Definitions and explanations are alike uncalled for where our privilege is to worship, as did the wise men from the East. (C.E.H.W.)

The next Study will deal with the ministry of John the Baptist and the baptism of the Lord.

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITORS).

Letters of Commendation.

G.I.P. inquires:

"Is it necessary to have a letter of commendation before participating in a sacramental service with another community of people?"

Letters of commendation were used in the days of the Apostle Paul, and they evidently have the sanction of the Holy Ghost, for the postscript to the inspired epistle to the church in Rome was for the commendation of Phebe to the church there (chap. 16. 1, 2). In 2 Corinthians 3. 1, the Apostle speaks of some who needed such epistles; *he* did not, but that was because he was well known to them, having been the minister of Christ to them.

Acts 18. 27 may also be quoted, for there we have the record of an epistle written, not by an apostle, but by the

brethren, exhorting others to receive a servant of the Lord. It is evident then that letters of commendation are necessary, and of God.

But these letters in apostolic days were a very remarkable evidence of the oneness of the church; they were not to admit the bearer of them to "*another community of people,*" with whom he had no previous link, but to assure those to whom he went that he was one of themselves, a fellow-member of the one body of Christ; they were sent from brethren in one town to the church in another. They were not given merely as a passport to the Lord's Supper, which we presume is meant by "*sacramental service,*" but as commending them to the fellowship of the church; this would, of course, include participation in the Supper, but it

was much more, it would be in everything that pertained to the things of the Lord amongst them; a very important thing to see.

He further asks:

"Is it not upon a person's own responsibility that he eats and drinks the Supper, and ought not a person to be accepted on his own word?"

Every one who eats and drinks is personally and directly responsible to the Lord in so doing; 1 Corinthians 11. 27, 28, 29 makes that clear. But those with whom he eats and drinks have also a responsibility in the matter as 1 Corinthians 5. 4, 5, 11, 12, 13 declares; 2 Timothy 2. 22 also has a bearing upon the responsibility of each as to those with whom he walks.

We do not think that Scripture warrants a man being received simply upon his own word; if this were so, letters of commendation would be needless. In Acts 9. 26, Saul of Tarsus essayed to join himself to the disciples; they, however, were not prepared to accept his word alone, but Barnabas, one known to them, commended him to them, and all their doubts were removed.

Christian Greeting.

"Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."
(1 Cor. 16. 20).

C.E.G.: The "holy kiss" was the expression of the fervent love of the brethren one towards another; the hearty handshake of the more reserved Anglo-Saxon here takes its place, and should be just as true an expression of our love in the Spirit. The kiss was the customary mode of greeting in Eastern lands, the handshake is the mode in these lands; the importance does not lie in the mode of the greeting, but in the feeling behind it—it should be holy and fervent.

Abstaining from Blood.

W.O. inquires:

"In what sense are we to abstain from blood?" (Acts 15. 20, 29).

The command to abstain from blood was before, and outside the law of Moses; it was given to Noah, when first flesh was given to man for his food (Gen. 9. 4). In the giving of flesh in this way God would no doubt teach us that life in a fallen world is dependent upon death; but the blood is the life of the animal, and belongs to God alone. We believe that it is just

as incumbent upon us to-day, as it was upon Noah and the early Gentile believers, to abstain from the partaking of blood.

Sinful Flesh and Fallen Nature.

H.M. inquires:

"Whether there is any difference between sinful flesh and fallen nature, and whether the Lord Jesus took either when He came to earth?"

"Sinful flesh" is a Biblical term; fallen nature is not. Men are fallen, and their natural state as fallen is sinful flesh.

Did the Lord come in this fallen condition? CERTAINLY NOT. He would have needed a Saviour Himself if He had. In Him was no sin (1 John 3. 5). He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5. 21). He did no sin (1 Peter 2. 22). He was "that holy Thing" begotten by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin (Luke 1. 35). His human nature was perfect and un-fallen, and the fact that He stood invulnerable before all the assaults of Satan is one proof of this; another proof is that at the beginning and close of His public ministry the Father could declare from heaven His delight in Him; and still another, that He was able to take our place under the righteous judgment of God and exhaust it all, and rise again from the dead the third day.

The Lord Jesus was unquestionably Man. He derived true humanity from His virgin mother; He was the woman's Seed. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2. 14). But, even so, His body was prepared for Him by God, and in it He carried out all the will of God (Heb. 10. 5-7). He was not of the order of Adam, for "the first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is out of heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 47, N.T.).

But as the brazen serpent in the wilderness was made in the likeness of the serpents that had bitten the Israelites, so God's Son was made *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and upon the cross, in His own person, sin in the flesh was utterly condemned (Rom. 8. 3). He who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5. 21); and by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10. 14).

Yet, though His nature was holy, and not fallen nature as is ours, He

passed through all the vicissitudes, trials, and temptations incident to a life of faithfulness to God on earth, for "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4. 16).

These trials and testings He felt more keenly, because of the holy sensitiveness of His nature, than ever we can whose sensibilities are dulled by sin.

This is a subject to be approached only in the greatest reverence, but we must ever maintain the truth as to the holy and perfect humanity of our Lord, even as we also maintain His true Deity.

Jude 22, 23.

A.W.F. inquires as to the meaning of this passage:—

"And of some have compassion, making a difference:

"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

There is some difficulty as to the exact rendering of this passage.

One thing, however, is emphasized by it, namely, the Christian must not think of himself alone. We must think of ourselves, and save ourselves from the corruption of which Jude speaks—corruption which abounds at this present time, for we have reached "the last time" (ver. 18). This can only be done by carrying out the exhortation of verses 20, 21:—

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

But while doing this we must think of others, and these seem to be divided into two classes. Perhaps the first class are those who have not been *fully* ensnared by the prevalent corruption of the truth, but are parleying with it; they are waverers between the truth and the corruption. Toward such our compassion must flow out; they must be treated with pity.

Others are not being attracted by the flame merely, they have fallen into the fire. We must not leave them there, but save them, snatch them out of it; but this can only be done as we stand in wholesome fear of the corruption that has overwhelmed them, and as we show that to us it is a hateful thing.

The next verse is important. One alone is able to keep us from falling; our safety lies in dependence upon Him.

Glory.

J.B.L. writes us with regard to expressions such as "Jesus, who didst lay Thy glory by." He points out in a letter, with most of which we go very heartily, that in our Lord's lifetime here His moral glory was to faith displayed at every step. His disciples could say, "We beheld His glory, a glory of an only begotten with a Father" (John 1. 14, N.T.). In the miracle at Cana in Galilee "He manifested forth His glory." From scriptures like these J.B.L. concludes that the glory was not "laid aside," but only *veiled* when our Lord was here.

We feel it behoves us with the deepest reverence to seek to maintain the truth of the person of the Son of God. Personally, He ever was here all that He was in the ages past. He who was the Word "with God" in the beginning, "became flesh" in time. The same glorious Person in altered circumstances, but as to what He was in Himself, unaltered, unchangeably the same—the I AM (John 8.), the self-existent One, who is, and was, and is to come (Rev. 1. 8). As to His essential glory then, the glory of His Person, veiled though that was in incarnation, He was never less in time than He was in eternity. Having verily become Man, He yet always was "God over all, blessed for evermore." Then, as to His moral glory, *that*, as our correspondent points out, shone at every step; never more so than *at the cross, where "the Son of Man was glorified, and God was glorified in Him."*

But when all this is said, there is yet a very real sense in which the Son laid aside His glory in coming into the world. There was a glory of association along with the Father in absolute Deity and in the circumstances of glory which are proper to Deity, and this for the time was necessarily laid aside in His incarnation and sojourn here as the Servant of the Divine pleasure. But when, speaking anticipatively, the work was finished which the Father had given Him to do (John 17. 4), He prays the Father to glorify His Son. In verse 1 of the chapter it is with the purpose in view that the Son might glorify the Father in the giving of eternal life; but in verse 5 it is without any object in view, but as that

which was due to Himself as the Second Person in the Godhead: "And now glorify Me, Thou Father, *along with Thyself*, with the glory *which I had along with Thee* before the world was" (N.T.). Here we cannot attempt to define; we may but adore in the presence of holy mystery beyond creature comprehension.

True, the Father ever was with Him (John 16. 32), but yet in another distinct sense He had, in coming into the world, "come out *from* (para) the Father" (John 16. 27, 28). The time was come when again He should leave the world and go to the Father; and in that hour would He re-enter upon (not as resuming as His own act, but as receiving from the Father) that which for the time had been laid aside, that which was His before the world was, which belonged to His own essential relation to the Father in the glory of Deity and His presence *along with the Father* in that glory.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13. 31, 32).

A.V.B. This parable is one of a series unfolding the various features of the kingdom of heaven. Three of these parables, of which the mustard seed is one, give us the character which the kingdom assumes during the absence of the King, *i.e.* during this present period; and they were spoken to the multitude (ver. 2), which denotes their public character; while the last three were spoken to the disciples in the house, after the multitude had been sent away (ver. 36). This is worthy of note, and helpful in the understanding of these parables. In the tares we have the introduction of the children of the wicked one into that which can be rightly called the field of the householder, *i.e.* the Lord (ver. 27). It is the work of the enemy, mixing up false professors with the real, as is so manifest to-day. The result of this admixture is, that that which at the beginning was insignificant and despised and nothing in the eyes of men has become a great world power. It is this that the profession of the name

Sailors show their best skill, and the real ability of their ships, by using the winds that blow against them. And lives can learn to go forward by the forces which would pull them backward, or upward by the forces which would draw them down. . . . When the way

of Christ has become in the world, comparable in its worldly grandeur and power to the mighty powers of ancient times: the Assyrian (Ezek. 31.) and the Babylonian kingdom (Dan. 4.). But these great trees became the subjects of God's judgment, as will also the tree of our parable; for it has utterly lost the character of the One who sowed the seed, who was despised and rejected of men.

Has every Believer Received the Holy Ghost? If so, How and When?

J.T. Every one who has believed in Christ has been sealed by the Holy Ghost; but here we must be careful to add that it is Christ as proclaimed in "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1. 13). This gospel which Paul preached declares that "*Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that *He rose again the third day* according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4).

There is "another gospel" preached which is no gospel at all, for it leaves out these two essential facts, and proclaims a Christ of the imagination who is not the Christ of God. Those who have received this false gospel are not sealed by the Holy Ghost, for He only dwells where "*the word of truth*" has been accepted.

We might quote 1 Corinthians 6. 19; Galatians 3. 2; Ephesians 1. 13, as proving that all true believers have received the Holy Spirit. Galatians 3. 2 answers the question as to *how* the Holy Ghost is received, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith, *i.e.* faith in the gospel preached to them.

Ephesians 1. 13 answers the question as to *when* the Holy Ghost is received. And in the case of the company gathered in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10.), the "how?" and "when?" are both answered in one incident. They heard the gospel with the hearing of faith, and the Holy Ghost came upon them all.

(We regret that through lack of space other answers must be held over until next month.)

is easy there is more danger of loitering than when it is hard. It is the providence and wisdom of God that send many obstacles. Many wise men have proved their strength, like Samson of old, by carrying off the gates that were locked against them (*H. Trumbull*).

Scripture Notes.

“Your heavenly Father knoweth. . . . Take . . . no thought for the morrow” (Matt. 6. 32-34).

TAKE short views as to your earthly circumstances. One step at a time is the secret of a successful climb; and there is not one with strength enough to bear to-day's duties with the worries and interests of to-morrow piled on top of them.

“We look . . . at the things which are . . . eternal” (2 Cor. 4. 18).

“Looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12. 2).

Lift up the eye to the things that are above the sun, to Him who sits enthroned above all circumstances in the glory of God; there is your goal, that is your destiny. And the power that dwells in the risen Christ is active to bring you there. It is the knowledge of the power and the glory refulgent in that blessed Person, whose love is changeless and eternal, that makes the Christian superior to the forces that beset his onward march, and independent of the attraction of temporal things. (J.T.M.)

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3. 5).

When you trust in the Lord with all your heart, mere difficulties and sorrows, instead of causing distress, become opportunities for your knowing better His unequalled power and care for you. The moment the difficulty occurs the heart turns to its resource, as a bird to its wing.

If you lean on your own understanding, when a strait comes, or when any claim is made on you, you begin to think how you can extricate yourself from it, and you are like one pumping at an empty well for water with which you want immediately to extinguish a fire, and after all your toil you never succeed.

When you trust in the Lord want is

your passport to Him, your draft on His heart, which is a bank of treasure of every kind, whereat you are enriched and satisfied whenever you apply, until, from habit, you are never happy or at home anywhere else. You are restful and never without resource.

If, on the other hand, you lean on your own understanding, you will be anxious and devising, watching the effect of your sayings and doings as a chemist watches the result of his various combinations, and yet, with all your toil, you are never able to produce the thing required. In the one case you can cheerfully answer every claim because it causes you to apply where unbounded wealth is placed at your disposal; in the other you are made to feel, the oftener you try, how inadequate and insufficient is anything of your own devising to allay or repair the moral disturbances ever occurring, where man is at a distance from God, and at variance with his fellows.

(J.B.S.)

“The Lord God . . . liveth, before whom I stand” (1 Kings 17. 1).

What that . . . meant to Elijah was just this: that the Lord God was no dead force, no unknown cause of things; that the Lord God was alive, and that a man was to have dealings with Him; that a man's life was not his own personal and irresponsible experiment, but a work to be done in front of God; and that a man must reckon in all his thoughts, in all his ways, with a God who is alive, must go out and do his work in the world in the consciousness of his relationship and his subjection to a great and a living personal God who would stand by him in the fire, would uphold him before kings, and carry him through to the end of each of his appointed tasks. If there is one thing that we need to get clearly fixed in our own lives it is the question of our attitude towards this infinite, unseen, and LIVING God. (R.E.S.)

Trading for an Absent Lord.

(J. T. MAWSON).

“Occupy till I come.”

An Address on the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19. 10-27).

AN educated Hindoo visited a missionary in India, and said to him, “We have found you Christians out. You are not as good as your Book.” As I read that story it arrested me, and I asked myself the question, “If the Hindoo came to that conclusion after watching the life of a devoted missionary, what would he say if he could see us in the homelands?”

If he had the opportunity of comparing our lives with the Book we read and profess to prize, would he not have to lay a double emphasis upon the blunt charge? Undoubtedly he would.

The Book speaks of “joy unspeakable and full of glory :” how much of that do Christians know? It assures us that we may be more than conquerors through Him that loved us ; but is this the life that we are living? In it we find the Christian life described as one of devoted, joyful, self-sacrificing service. Are our lives this? Alas! we have to confess that there is a sad disparity between the Book and the lives we live.

I venture to suggest that one reason for this, perhaps the chiefest, is that we have but feebly realized that we are the servants of an absent Lord ; the privileges and the responsibilities of this position have not fully laid hold of our souls, and in consequence we live too much to ourselves, which means a joyless and barren existence.

We are not our own ; we have been sought in marvellous love, and purchased at a great price ; we have been lifted by divine grace out of death into life, and that with a high purpose in view, part of which purpose is that we might live unto Him, our absent Lord,

who died and rose again for us ; but until we come under the domination of this fact our lives will remain common-place and ineffective, they will not be as good as the Book.

No True Service without Salvation.

This responsibility of which I speak is disclosed for us in the parable of the pounds, and it should be observed that it was while they heard “these things” (ver. 11) that the Lord propounded the parable to the people. “These things” are found in the tenth verse. “*The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost.*” It is as on this gracious mission that the Lord is revealed to us in the Gospel of Luke. The first words recorded in that Gospel, as having fallen from His blessed lips, are “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” That business was to seek and save the lost. This becomes most evident to us as we read through the Gospel, and we find in it that the contempt and hatred of the leaders of the Jews was manifested because of this one thing. In chapter 5. they complain that He ate and drank with publicans and sinners ; in chapter 7. they deride Him as being a friend of publicans and sinners ; in chapter 15. they murmur because “this man receiveth sinners ;” and in chapter 19. they again murmur because “He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” But He heeded not the derision of the Pharisees, for He loved the lost and sinful with a great love, and in order to fulfil His mission towards them the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, and most beautiful were His feet upon the mountains as He brought good tidings and published peace to these guilt-burdened souls. But if He came to seek and save the

lost, it was that He might send them out when found and saved to do business for Him during His absence, even as He did His Father's business when here.

This is the life's business of every saved person; it cannot be rightly undertaken apart from the knowledge of Christ as Saviour, for without this we were still captives, needing deliverance, and so not free to serve Him; moreover, the one motive for service, His love to us, were also lacking if He were not known as Saviour. It is when we think of what He has done to save us, and of the strength of the love that moved Him to do it, that we are constrained, by this same love, to live unto Him.

Let us rightly consider this matter: He came to seek and save us; for this He gave Himself; yea, suffered the unspeakable anguish of Calvary, and passed into the darkness of death, in order to accomplish this purpose of immortal love. The only right answer that we can give to Him for this, is to yield ourselves to Him as His bond-servants for ever. He knew that when we rightly understood His love to us we should desire to do this; that it would be a positive luxury to us to serve Him: to do business for Him while He is away, and until He comes again; and knowing this He has given to each of us a "pound."

"But His Citizens hated Him."

But our service is in the world that hates Him. Let us not attempt to disguise or reason away this sad fact; the citizens of it said, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" and that decision has never been reversed. We must face this in order to gauge our position with regard to the world. *It hates the One who loves us*; and we are called to do business for Him in it. If it hates Him, and we are true to Him, it will hate us too, and in it, as His representatives, trading for Him, we shall be confronted by opposition, and have to endure tribulation. Time will not permit us to turn to the

many passages of unchanging truth to prove this, so one must suffice: "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. . . . He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. . . . They hated Me without a cause*" (John 15. 18-25).

It is useless to plead that the world has improved since then: it may have become more adept at veneration of the surface of things, and have made more stringent laws for the more effectual restraint of the fierce passions of men for the common peace, for it loves its own (John 15. 19); but it is still the world that hated and rejected Christ; and if we have not experienced its hatred and contempt it is because we have not been faithful to Him.

The world heaped shame and contempt upon our Lord, it had no crown for His sacred brow save one of thorns, and in its estimation He had merited a malefactor's cross; may we never be guilty of the treason of seeking ease and honour where He was rejected and despised.

"He called His ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds."

Two things thus far are clear, namely, the Son of Man came to save us, that we might serve Him; and the place of our service is in the world where He is hated. It is important now to see that He has also committed to us the wherewithal for our service. He has given to each of His servants a pound with which to trade. It is not here a question of talents as in Matthew 25., where one received more than another, but one pound to each servant.

You may be very small in your own eyes, and scarcely able to claim the place of a servant at all, but to you has the pound been given, as well as to

those who appear great and gifted, and you are responsible to be active with it even as they are. I suggest that the pound represents the way in which God is presented to us in the Gospel of Luke, as glorious in His grace. The knowledge of this is given to us; it has shone into our hearts from the face of Jesus Christ. *"For 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. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"* (2 Cor. 4. 6, 7).

What a golden pound is this! What a precious treasure to bear about with us—the knowledge of God! Christian, consider it well. As you rise in the morning you can say, "I know God. He has been revealed to me in the glory of His grace, by the Lord Jesus Christ. I go out, carrying this priceless treasure in my heart, into the world that does not know Him, to put it into circulation for the glory of Christ—not to keep it hidden within my own consciousness, but to let it shine forth, to pass it on to others, that they may be enriched as I have been, and that this treasure may increase in the earth."

We may tell men that we know a God whose compassion is without limit; that never a cry to Him for pity has been or shall be refused so long as this day of grace shall last. We may tell them that the heart of God is moved because of their distress, and that His mercy leaps forth to meet them in their misery. We may tell them this, for we ourselves have proved the truth of it: we are living witnesses to the incomparable grace of our God.

Would not such a thought if constantly present with us add a dignity to our lives? Would it not make us feel that here was something to live for? Would it not make us diligent to hold forth the word of life, and to shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2. 15, 16)?

This is our matchless privilege, but it is also our responsibility; our Lord has the right to command us, and it is that we might attend to His business that He has saved us. We cannot, we must not, ignore this. I knew a Christian man who said he did not want to learn much truth, because light increased responsibility, and he had enough already. But we cannot treat the matter in that way, for our responsibility abides, and the day is coming when our Lord will call us to account as to how much we have gained by trading with this pound.

Evidently, then, this is the chief business of our lives. We are not here, in the first place, to be mechanics, shopkeepers, or professional men, to guide the house or rear the children, much less to live lives of selfish ease; but to trade for our absent Lord. Our very lives are His, as well as the pound that He has delivered to us. We may be able to put the pound out to the best rate of interest as we follow our business, and guide the home, rubbing shoulders with men in the affairs of this life. But this will only be as, in these things, we serve the Lord Christ. It may be, on the other hand, that He would have some of us to carry the pound with us, in diligent labour for Him, into the streets and lanes of the city; or into the highways and hedges where the fallen and lost stray and sin and hide; or it may be His will that others should go far afield to heathen lands: in these things He must direct and command, it is ours to obey, to serve, and to trade.

"Occupy till I come."

I have heard of some who claimed to have retired from the ministry; but here is a ministry from which none have the right to retire, even if they had the wish; for to each of His servants—to you and me and all others—He has said, "Occupy till I come." These are solemn words for our consideration, and especially so when we remember how much of the past time has been wasted in selfish pursuits,

how much of it is lost time ; but they are also words that should act as a powerful tonic for our souls for the future, for they tell us that our Lord is coming again, and of what He expects from us meanwhile. Yes, He is coming again ; we shall see Him whom, having not seen, we love ; and what will that mean to us ?

“ If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus’ love
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above ;
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings :

What will it be to see Him ?

What will the sunshine of His glory prove ?
What the unmingled fullness of His love ?
What hallelujahs will His presence raise ?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise ! ”

The Day of Reckoning.

When He comes His servants will be called unto Him, to whom He had given the money, that He may know how much every man has gained by trading ; and as we think of this side of His coming serious and solemn thoughts possess us, for we must feel how poorly we have used our opportunities.

Yet there is here encouragement for us, for we find that one servant had gained ten pounds by his trading, and why should we not be like him ? Ten seems to stand in the Scriptures for the measure of the Lord’s demands from men (see Ten Commandments), and we may conclude that there is grace with our Lord for us to enable us to render a full return to Him in that which He has committed to us ; if there is any failure, it is on our side. But everything, be it much or little, will be rightly appraised by Him, and nothing shall lose its reward that has been done for Him.

A Servant who knew not the Lord.

But one servant hid his pound in a napkin ; it was an encumbrance to him, something, perhaps, of which he was ashamed—for the gospel of God is folly in the eyes of the wise ones of the earth—so he put it out of sight, his own as well as that of his fellows, and if he did any business at all he did it

with his own base coin, and for his own enrichment.

He was servant by profession, and in name only ; he did not know the Master, his own confession proves this, though he imagined that he did know Him when he said, “ I knew that Thou wert an austere Man.”

Is the Lord an austere Man, a hard Master, reaping where He has never sown, and demanding where He has never given ? Who amongst all of us who know Him will give Him such a character ? Nay, we have other things to say of Him ; we have proved Him to be exactly the reverse of this. We can bear testimony to the fact that the tenderest heart in the universe beats in the bosom of our Lord Jesus. We have seen no frowns on His brow, neither have we heard hard words from His lips. Our service has been poor and faulty, often we have thought more of ourselves in it than we did of the Master whom we serve. But this has not changed Him ; His tender pity has not failed, and our very blunders have become the opportunities for manifestation of a grace that is as constant as it is free. Knowing Him as we do, we must conclude that the man who spoke as the servant spoke knew Him not. He was a “ wicked servant,” who had not appreciated the pound entrusted to him, nor loved the Master who gave it.

There are such to-day. We do well to test ourselves. Do we know the Lord ? If we do, we love Him. Do we appreciate the pound entrusted to us ? If we do, we are trading with it.

But time is short. Let us fling ourselves in full and unreserved surrender at the feet of Christ ; let us there confess the failure of the past, and seek grace and power to fill up the future for Himself alone. His giving is always greater than our asking ; and as we receive from Him, we can trade for Him, and the world will not be stumbled by the grave inconsistencies that often lie between us and our Book.

The Captive Freed.

(INGLIS FLEMING).

Romans 7.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

“*AT whatever scripture we begin we are sure to end at Romans 7.*”

Such was the saying of a servant of Christ who had had a long experience in meetings for the study of the Scriptures. He had found that the need of souls, who were in the condition described in that chapter—and they were very numerous—would sooner or later manifest itself. And how to find deliverance from that condition of bondage would be the final question, no matter what part in the sacred writings they might read.

The reason of this is soon told. The experience portrayed in that chapter is one of the most common amongst the people of God, the wide world over. Multitudes of those who believe on and love the Lord Jesus are struggling and striving to improve “the flesh,” *i.e.* the old evil nature within them. Earnestly they endeavour to do that which they feel they ought to do, and to free themselves from that which seems to compel them to do evil. But all is without avail. They are plunged into ever-deepening spiritual distress, and if it were not for the grace of God, which keeps them in the consciousness of *His* goodness, the knowledge of *their* badness would lead them to despair.

An illustration may enable me to present the subject clearly for any who may be in this condition of soul.

I was passing one evening along a busy thoroughfare in the north of London when I noticed a crowd of people gathered at a street corner. I crossed the road and joined the throng. In the centre of the assemblage was a powerful man bound hand and foot with a thick rope. His muscles

were tense and swollen with straining and struggling to free himself. As I stood looking at the athlete he made one further supreme but useless effort to release himself, and then desisted altogether. He was utterly exhausted with the struggle, and said piteously, “I am done. Will some one please set me free?” At once a man stepped from the midst of the crowd, and, easily untying the knots which had defied all the wearied man’s exertions, delivered him from his bondage. The latter thanked his helper, picked up some coins which had been thrown for him, and went his way in liberty. I then learned that he gained a living by displaying his ability to disentangle himself from any rope that any of the spectators might bind him with. On the occasion on which I was present he had been roped by a sailor, or some other expert in knots, and had been so well secured that all his distressing labour had been unavailing to release him.

Now note three things about the man I saw, and let me apply them to the case of the individual who is in the state spoken of in Romans 7. 7–23.

(1) He was bound.

(2) He sought to free himself from his bondage, but was totally unsuccessful.

(3) He looked outside himself for deliverance, was at once delivered, and then gave thanks to his deliverer.

Now let me apply the illustration.

(1) The man whose struggles are described in Romans 7. is bound and seeks liberty. He has awakened, as it were, from sleep, and finds himself a captive. He seeks to do the will of God, in whose law he delights (ver. 22), but discovers that he is unable to do

it (ver. 23). He learns that for some reason or another he cannot fulfil what he desires to accomplish. "The flesh," the evil principle within him, controls him. At once he sets about to endeavour to gain his liberty from the thralldom of this power that holds him prisoner. He makes vows and resolutions. He promises himself that he will soon secure victory over sin. He purposes with all the force of his will that he will be a true, faithful, devoted disciple of Christ.

(2) To his dismay he learns that all these things are in vain. "The flesh" in him is too strong, and defeats him again and again. The more he struggles the worse his condition seems, and the tighter the bonds which encompass him appear to become. He learns more and more of the evil character of his nature as a child of fallen Adam. The law of God, which he knows to be "holy, and just, and good" (ver. 12), does not help him. He sees that it is a beautiful and perfectly straight rule. But it shows how crooked he is, and it cannot make him straight. Moreover, it occupies him with himself, and by its opposition to sin stirs up the sin that is *within him*, making it increasingly manifest. He learns that he has been living in a fool's paradise. He had thought all was well with him because the surface of his life was fair, but now that the hidden depths of his heart, stirred up by the law, are showing themselves he finds out that he is totally corrupt (vers. 9-13). In his distress he cries, "I AM CARNAL, SOLD UNDER SIN" (ver. 14).

Before—it may be many years before—he had said, "I have *done wrong*," for he had seen that some sins stained the pages of his life's story. Now he says, "I *am wrong*." He has had to learn the far harder lesson that "in him," that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing (ver. 18), and that he cannot improve it, try as he will. He is thus not only a captive, but a *helpless* captive. He can by no means get free. He has, however, during his exercise, made the discovery that he is, in his new nature,

distinct from the evil that is in him. The new "I" is on the side of God, and good, and holiness. Thus he ever commends the law as right and ever condemns himself as wrong. Hating the evil, he has, as we have seen, writhed and wriggled in his bonds, but it has been in vain. He has come to the end of all his resources, and is wretched, hopeless, helpless. What can relieve him?

(3) Hitherto he has looked *within* (the pronouns "I" twenty-seven times, "me" thirteen times, "my" four times, have fallen from his lips during the trying experience he has passed through). Now at long last he seeks deliverance from outside himself. Thus a new cry bursts from his anguished heart, "*O wretched man that I am! WHO shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (ver. 24).

Can any one set him free? Yes, *One* can.

God in His wonderful grace has provided all that the sinner needs. He has given His own Son to meet every difficulty which had arisen. Not only has the Lord Jesus died for our sins, He has been "made . . . sin" for us (2 Cor. 5. 21). When upon the cross what the sinner *was* as well as what the sinner *had done* was taken up in judgment and settled to God's entire satisfaction and eternal glory. So we read: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [or *by a sacrifice for sin*], condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (chap. 8. 3, 4). The Lord Jesus, Himself spotless and perfect, was, when on the cross, a sin-offering. In Him there "sin in the flesh," our sin—all that we were—was condemned and brought to an end in judgment before God. Christ has died—died unto sin, the sin which He was made for us, and now He lives again. We who believe are entitled to reckon His death our death,

and ourselves "alive to God" in Him (6. 9-12). The Holy Ghost is given to us in order that we may bring forth fruit to God. He is the Christian's power for walk, service, and testimony. Thus the Apostle, writing to the Galatians, says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5. 16).

So, looking out from himself, the soul that was distressed is given to see God's way of deliverance, and cries with delight, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (7. 25).

No longer is he trying to improve the flesh. He knows it is unimprovably evil, and he has no confidence in it at

all. He is in Christ where there is no condemnation, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set him free from the law of sin and death" (8. 2).

Yes, God delivers him, through His Son. The evil principle which troubled him is still within (7. 25); but the Holy Spirit now leads the believer, and he is neither under the law nor under the power of sin (8. 9-14). He is in Christ, his heart is engaged with Him, and he joys in God His deliverer. His delight is to do His will, and the Holy Spirit enables him to do it. And thus he bears fruit for His praise (6. 22).

A Remarkable Discovery.

A DISCOVERY of vast importance for biblical history is (says the *Daily Telegraph*) announced in the *Berliner Tageblatt* by the Orientalist, Doctor Yahuda. It appears that Professor Reisner, who has been carrying out excavations for an American society on the site of the Israelitish capital in Samaria, has unearthed a hundred clay tables, covered with inscriptions, which are believed to form a portion of the archives of King Ahab.

These inscriptions, which, merely in their quantity, constitute the most remarkable archæological find that has been made in Palestine, are not cut into the tables, but are written in old

Hebraic characters with the intensely black ink found on the Egyptian papyri of between one and two thousand years before Christ. One of them is a letter to Ahab from the King of Assyria, who, Dr. Yahuda believes, was either Assurbanipal or his son, Salmanesser II.

Another of the tables contains a detailed inventory of the furniture of the royal palace, but further particulars of the find have not yet become known here. Nevertheless, it is evidently destined to provide convincing confirmation of certain phases of Old Testament history which some modern critics have been in the habit of treating as altogether mythical.

Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years
of time.

"How many anvils have you had,"
said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers
so?"

"Just one," said he; and then, with
twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you
know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's
Word
For ages sceptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows
was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers
gone.

Notes of Bible Readings.—No. 2.

(H. J. VINE).

Redemption.

Romans 3. 21-24.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

IN the first two chapters of Romans it is proved that all are under sin. Whether Jew or Gentile, taught or untaught, Scripture student or illiterate, there is no difference. Therefore if we are to be brought to God and blessed at all, redemption is necessary. When Israel was in Egypt, all were in cruel bondage under the power of Pharaoh, and it was necessary if they were to serve God that they should be redeemed out of Egypt and be brought to God.

We have all sinned and so needed God's forgiveness. We must be forgiven before we can be right with God, but on account of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, God can now forgive and justify freely all those who believe on Jesus, and He can do it righteously. He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Neither law nor prophets could help us in this matter—they could not redeem us. The law only condemned us and showed where we were, for it says in the nineteenth verse, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

Question. *Was the law ever intended to justify men?*

No. It could never do that. God had in view the showing up of the awful guilt of man, but the Israelites put themselves under the law, and therefore they got under the curse. We must not forget that the law is holy, just, and good, and will eventually be for the blessing of man, because in the coming age it will be written in their hearts and minds so that affectionately and intelligently all will know the Lord and serve Him. The law

showed God's standard, which man failed to come up to. Nevertheless God will fulfil the promise of blessing which He made over four hundred years before He gave the law. That promise was unconditionally made to Abraham.

Question. *Of what use is the law now?*

The law shows up the crookedness of man, that "sin might appear exceeding sinful." It has often been illustrated by the plumb-line which is put against a crooked wall. It shows up its crookedness, but does not rectify it. So the law shows up the crookedness and sinfulness of man, but does not put right what is wrong. Those, however, who see their sinfulness and own it to God, seeking His mercy, are justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Question. *Would you say that God demanded perfect righteousness and man could not supply it?*

If God proved that the sample nation Israel was guilty and under judgment, then the whole world must be under judgment. If you pick out the best apple in a whole barrel, and prove it to be corrupt, then the whole barrel is corrupt. God took up Israel as a sample nation. He gave them the law, and it proved their corrupt condition; then the whole world is corrupt, for "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one" (ver. 10).

Question. *Why are the prophets mentioned as well as the law?*

Because like the law they also pointed on to the righteousness of God. God tested man in every way for about four thousand years; He then sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He accomplished

redemption at the cross, and now God can bless fully and freely through the redemption that is in Him. After our utter unrighteousness has been demonstrated, God's righteousness is manifested "without law." Man had no righteousness to fit him for God's presence, and when that had been demonstrated fully God manifested a divine righteousness "towards all," but the only people who get that divine righteousness are repentant sinners who come to Christ, for it is only "upon all those who believe." The elder son never got the best robe. It was the poor sinner who had been away in the far country, and had repented and returned to the father, who got the best robe. So it is the one who comes as a poor sinful creature and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ whom God forgives once and for all. This never needs to be repeated; for the righteousness of God is now his, which is far better than any righteousness of his own, even if he had any. Would you not rather have the righteousness of God than any righteousness of man?

Question. *Has the law no place with the Christian at all?*

Well, he is not under it (see chap. 6. 14, 15), but we must not think that because we are "not under law," and because we are justified freely and have the Holy Spirit, therefore we can ignore it as to our walk, for, if we walk "according to the Spirit," Romans 8. 4 tells us, we shall fulfil "the righteous requirement of the law." Love is its fullness.

But we are reading Romans 3., and do not let us lose sight of the fact that God can bless fully and freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Notice verses 23 and 24. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely" (gratuitously, without a cause) "by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

It is said of the Lord, that they hated Him "without a cause." God justifies the believer "without a cause." What wonderful grace!

Question. *Does it mean that when we could not work out our own righteousness Christ worked out a righteousness for us?*

The Scripture nowhere says that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, but that He Himself is our righteousness. You have it in another place that Christ . . . is made unto us "righteousness," so our justification is not because of a righteousness that the Lord Jesus wrought in His life, which was entirely His own, but that He Himself is our righteousness. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). You could not find a better righteousness. Better have Christ as your righteousness than ten thousand righteousnesses of your own.

Question. *Does not the prophet say, "The Lord our righteousness," "Jehovah Tsidkenu?"*

Yes. Now let us note that redemption has the thought of releasing persons or property righteously by *price* or by *power*. If you take Israel in Egypt, they were redeemed in both ways, that is, by the blood of the lamb, also by the power of God (see Deut. 9. 26-29). Then there is the question of the inheritance of which we read in Ephesians. The Spirit is "the earnest of our inheritance." We are told that the possession is acquired. Christ paid the price on the cross. We learn redemption in its parts, but its completeness is "in Christ Jesus," that is Romans 3. 24.

Question. *Could the whole of His life put together redeem us?*

No. His life could only condemn us. The more perfect that life shone out here, the greater the condemnation because of its contrast to every other man's life. In no other way could redemption be secured for us than by the blood of the only One who was sinless and holy. He is now raised from the dead and in all the sunshine of the favour of God. We "were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."

Look at creation. It speaks of God's power and divinity. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork. But when we come to redemption and view its glories, the soul becomes filled with praise and adoration. Mark—it is "in Christ Jesus." The price is His precious blood. He took upon Himself that nature to which,

in us, sin was attached, *though not in Him*. In Him was no sin. His blood was poured forth for our redemption. It says in another place, "The redemption of the soul is precious."

Question. *In what way are we redeemed by power?*

We first get hold of the fact that the price of redemption is paid once, and never to be repeated. Then we wait for God to redeem us by His power, as we have it in verse 23 of the eighth chapter, "awaiting . . . the redemption of the body." To illustrate: Here is a prisoner in a foreign country. How is that man to be released? The country to which he belongs must interfere on his behalf, and a price is paid for his release, and in a few days he is seen walking about, a free man. He is redeemed by price. But then he is still in a foreign land. A few months after you find him at home in his own country. Now he is redeemed in a fuller sense, not only by price but by power—he has been brought by his government's warship from the foreign country to his own. The blood of Christ has paid the price once and for all, and has liberated us, but the next thing we look for is to be redeemed by power when our Lord Jesus Christ comes "with a shout"—to bring us with Himself in all the glory of redemption, with and like Him for ever. Thus we wait for the second part of redemption. We have redemption by blood—that is past and settled. In Christ "we have redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1. 7). We are waiting, however, for this second part of redemption, which will presently change our bodies of humiliation and fashion them like His own body of glory (Phil. 3. 21) according to the working of His power.

Some are getting astray to-day on the question of the body, and are trying to prove that our bodies are already redeemed, therefore they want us to go in for divine healing, and claim the powers now that belong to the age to come, whereas though we might have the healthiest body yet we are still subject to pain and sin is still within us. When, however, our bodies are redeemed,

"Our pain shall then be over,
We'll sin and sigh no more."

Praise be to God!

Question. *What about the inheritance?*

Turn to the first chapter of Ephesians again, verse 14: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

This is the redemption of property. The property is already acquired. The Lord, in view of the treasure, bought the field, and what we are waiting for is the moment when the whole thing will be taken up by redemption power. We are a heavenly people, and we are to shine in *heavenly* glory, but through grace the *world* also belongs to the saints, though truly our blessings are heavenly and not earthly. Look at 1 Corinthians 3. 21, 22: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; . . . the *world*, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; *all* are yours."

Nothing will separate you more from the world than the fact that all is yours as belonging to Christ, who is now rejected by men. You look for a heavenly country, rightly, but this little earth is part of the inheritance. God will presently take it up in redemption power. All things in the heavens and upon the earth are to be headed up in Christ, in whom we have obtained an inheritance.

All know the story of Ruth and Naomi. Ruth was a Moabitess who had no claim to the blessing, but she came with Naomi to the land of Judah. There was one person in that land in whom she might have hope. The mighty man of wealth—Boaz. All her hope was in Boaz, and he undertook to do a kinsman's part. Remember redemption involves carrying things out judicially and according to certain rights. There was one before Boaz, but he refused to do a kinsman's part, so Boaz undertook to do it. Now for us there was none other than the true Boaz, the Lord Jesus, come of the line of Boaz and Ruth according to the flesh. He undertook the whole question of redemption—price and power, persons and property. For Ruth, the result was, not only did Boaz become her redeemer, but he became her bridegroom, and the fields in which she gleaned became hers too. She got the inheritance. Our true Boaz, our Kinsman, Redeemer, and Bridegroom, will share with us His wide fields, His glorious inheritance. The saints are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."

Correspondence.

To the Editors of *Scripture Truth*.

DEAR SIRS,—May I point out, with reference to your correspondent A.W.F.'s inquiry as to Jude 22 and 23 (February issue, p. 63), that the great majority of scholars prefer the reading which gives the participle of verse 22 in the accusative instead of the nominative case? This would indicate that the word translated "making a difference" applies to those to whom *compassion is to be shown*, rather than to those who are exhorted to show it.

It is the same word which is used in verse 9 of the same epistle and is there translated "contending." This is probably its force also in verse 22. Reading it thus, we have three classes, instead of two, referred to.

Mr. W. Kelly translates the passage accordingly:

"And some convict, when contending; but others save, snatching out of [the] fire; and others pity with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Dr. Weymouth's free translation (not by any means to be relied on as authoritative, but sometimes giving happy renderings) reads as follows:

"Some, when they argue with you, you must endeavour to convince; others you must try to save, as brands plucked from the flames; and on others look with pity mingled with fear, while you hate every trace of their sin."

I should not write to call attention to this were it not that the matter is of practical importance. Read in the way given above, the passage exhorts us to three distinct lines of treatment according to the condition of those with whom we have to deal.

(1) There are those whose *minds* are astray, and who are full of argument and contention. These we must seek to "convict," not only demonstrating their error, but bringing the truth to bear on their consciences.

(2) There are those whose snare is not so much a mental one, as one that pertains to the *heart*. Led captive by their passions, they become an easy prey to the influences of the world, that great system which is about to come under the fire of God's righteous judgment. Our attitude to such is not to convince or convict, but to *save*. The gospel is the effective means of doing this; it is God's power unto salvation; with it we may effect the rescue of those who are perishing.

(3) There are those utterly given up to evil, "sons of Belial." Nothing seems to avail in their case; they are beyond our reach. We can only look upon them with pity, mingled with awe, hating every particle of that evil thing which shows itself in them so unrestrainedly.—Yours faithfully,
H. P. BARKER.

NOTE.—The most correct translation of this passage is a matter of some uncertainty; but we gladly give the above interesting notes on an alternative reading which has considerable support.—[EDITORS.]

God our Saviour.—No. 3.

(JAMES BOVD).

The House of God.

NOW while it is true that the blessed risen Lord committed the preaching of this gospel to the servants whom He had fitted for the purpose, it is also true that only in His power was the testimony to be maintained in the world. He tells His followers that it was necessary that He should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name; but He commands them to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high (Luke 24. 46, 49), and this power He speaks of as "*the promise of His Father*," the "*Holy Spirit*" (Acts 1. 8). It is in the power of this Holy Spirit that the testimony of God is maintained on earth.

There is no power in the natural man for anything but evil; neither is there any power for good in the man born of the Spirit, unless he is also indwelt by the Spirit. The new nature has not in itself the power to fulfil its virtuous desires. Its aspirations are all right, but how to carry out into result the good that is inwardly appreciated the one born of God is at a loss to discover. The good he would, he does not; but the evil that he would not, that he does (Rom. 7.). The power of the new life is the Spirit of God; and where He is, the soul is free from the law of sin and death; and in walking after the Spirit he is able to fulfil the righteous requirement of the law (Rom. 8. 4). He is not only born again, and as born again filled

with desires to please God, but a power has come into him, and taken possession of him in a way that enables him to fulfil the right desires of his renewed mind.

It is so as to the service of God. The flesh can contribute nothing. Its activities are valueless in the things of God. Whatever is done for God in the world must be done in His power. This Paul seems to have had to learn after he had been caught up into the third heaven. The Lord allowed Satan to send a messenger, which Paul speaks of as a thorn for the flesh, to buffet him. It was really the care of the Lord for His servant that allowed Satan thus to trouble him. The natural pride of the flesh would, on account of the revelations given to him, have puffed him up, and thus rendered him unserviceable to Christ; but this thorn was something which seems to have crippled him in his preaching (2 Cor. 10. 10), and made him contemptible in the eyes of those who looked at things from a human standpoint. Three times he goes to the Lord about this thorn, but the answer of the Lord to him leaves no doubt on his mind that, in sending this messenger to buffet him, Satan had overreached himself, and had made Paul a more valuable servant than ever; for all that is done for Christ on earth must be done in His power, and His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. 12. 9).

Therefore the Holy Spirit is here to carry on the work of the Lord. He takes up those gifted by the risen and glorified Christ for the service He has committed to them; but it is *He* who takes them up, and it is *He* who uses them. The vessel is fitted for the gift put into it, but the vessel is also filled with the power of God; and so we can well understand the Lord telling His servants to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. They had received their commission, and their work was set before them, but they were not to attempt to set about it in their own

might. The body is the vessel of the Spirit, and He will use the *members* of the body; but that which the man is morally has come under the judgment of the cross, and He will not use that. If He refuses the flesh a place in His favour, so that a man has to be born again if he is to be in relationship with God, we may be very certain He will not use the flesh in His service.

But the Spirit of God being here in connection with the testimony of God, it is necessary He should have a house wherein to dwell. And it is important to see that God has a dwelling-place on earth. That He is omnipresent we know, and that in Him we live and move and have our being we read in His Word, but man from the beginning was taught to look to the heavens as the dwelling-place of God, and only on the ground of redemption did He take a dwelling-place on earth. As soon as Israel was delivered from the hand of the enemy and led forth as a people whom He had redeemed to Himself, He says, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 25. 8): He dwells with men on the ground of redemption. Moses set up a tabernacle for Him in the wilderness; and afterwards, when in the land, Solomon built Him a house. But as that whole dispensation stood or fell on the ground of the fulfilment by man of his obligations, it very soon came to nothing, and their house was left to them desolate (Matt. 23. 38).

Now, on the ground of the redemption accomplished by Christ, we have the saints builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2. 22). By the ministry of Christ upon earth this house was builded, and when He was glorified the Holy Spirit came down to take up His abode in it; and from that day until the present a divine Person has been dwelling here below. The First Epistle to Timothy was written to the end that the servants of God on earth should know how people ought to behave themselves in that house.

The first and most important thing referred to is, that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks" were to "be made for all men." Why was this? Because "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The One who dwells there imparts His nature and character to those who compose the house. He has assumed the character of a Saviour-God on behalf of all men, and to this wondrous and blessed fact those who compose the house bear witness. Supplication is to be made for all men, for the grace of God goes out to all in the gospel, and the house is the pillar and base of the truth, in relation to this attitude of God toward a world in revolt against Him.

It is important to see this, for there

are many and great truths which are not unfolded in this epistle, such as our eternal relations with God—children, sons, the Spirit of sonship, the Father's name, eternal life, and our relations with Christ as His brethren, His body, His bride. It is the light which shone out in Christ down here in the surrounding gloom that is to be maintained now that He has gone on high, in the power of the Holy Spirit through this marvellous structure which is spoken of as the assembly of the living God. I may say that there is added to that which came to light in Christ in the days of His flesh the fact of His death, resurrection, and exaltation to the right hand of God; but the house of God takes the place of Christ, as the witness of the grace and love of God to the world.

(To be continued.)

Suffering for Christ.

The converted Mohammedan priest, Johannes Aweteranian, relates the following as his experience: "After I learned through the gospel to know my true Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, nationality, honours, life, ancestry lost all the value which, up to that time, they had had for me. The truth alone became my aim and goal. When I first confessed Christ, and the Mohammedan priests came together in my village to confute my testimony, one of them struck me in the face with all his strength. At that moment my heart

said: 'There is a proof that Jesus has accepted you, for He has accounted you worthy to suffer shame for His name.' Before my inner eyes there rose up plainly written the letters of Acts 5. 41, and this gave me such a rapture of joy as I had never known or experienced in any way up to that time. I said: 'If a blow can make me partake of such heavenly delights, how great would be the bliss of dying for the Lord Jesus.' From that time death lost all significance for me. My only wish was to preach the gospel to the Mohammedans."

"She took . . . an ark of bulrushes, . . . and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink" (Exod. 2. 3).

The mother of Moses laid the ark in the flags by the river's brink. Ay, but before doing so, she laid it on the heart of God. . . . We are often surprised at the outward calmness of men who are called upon to do unpleasant and most trying deeds; but could we have seen them in secret, we should have known the moral preparation

which they underwent before coming out to be seen by men. Be right in the sanctuary, if you would be right in the market-place. Be steadfast in prayer, if you would be calm in affliction. Start your race from the throne of God itself, if you would run well, and win the prize.—*Parker.*

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 1. 2-4.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto

you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Verse 2.

“AND the life has been manifested.” The aorist is used as setting it forth, not in regard of the time in which it was so done, but as to the fact that the event has taken place, once and for all, with the consequences of it, in the incarnation and life of Jesus. Every word and the form of it is pregnant with meaning. Naturally it must be so, when the Spirit undertakes to delineate the greatest fact it is possible for human speech to relate ; for, “incontrovertibly, the mystery of piety is great ; God was manifested in flesh” (same word in 1 John 1. 2, 1 Tim. 3. 16). Therefore it is with chastened spirit and unshod feet we must tread these courts, for they are the veritable “holy of holies.”

And mark how full and clear and emphatic is the statement that “the life” in its entirety, in its fullness, in what it is in itself, in all of it, “has been manifested.” Not life as we know it, and speak of it, in the limitation of creature condition ; but life in itself, “the life,” such as it is in its own proper estate, “the life, even the eternal life, having this character that it was with the Father,” in its own out-of-the-world order of being and relationship with Him before all worlds, moving there in its own proper sphere, and in the fullness of what life is in Him—this life, and in this character, “has been manifested to us, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report it unto you.” Into the minutiae of these details he thus fully enters, in view of the importance of this vital and eternal truth, to establish it, and thereby to countervail the efforts of the enemy, who would endeavour by every means in his power to annul it. Twice over in this verse he says, “It has been manifested.” Take note of it, for it is the key of the situation, and every effort will be

used to make it disappear, that something else may be substituted in its stead. “The life has been manifested.” But what is “life,” of which we speak so much ?

“There is a mystery couched under that little word which all the research of philosophers has not been able to solve. Science, with the experience of ages, with all the appliances of art, and with all the persevering ingenuity of skill that could be brought to bear upon it, has ardently laboured to lift the veil ; but philosophy, and science, and art stand abashed before the problem, and confess it a mystery still. The phenomena, the properties of life are readily observable. . . . But one can proceed no further, and as the end of all our researches we are compelled to recognize the great First Cause and say, ‘In Him we live and move and have our being.’”—P. H. Gosse, F.R.S.

And so life itself remains undefined and undefinable.

Of the many attempts that have been made to define what “life” is, perhaps it is most nearly described as “the capacity of enjoyment.” Add to this the word “eternal,” and you are at once removed into a sphere outside of what is temporal ; and, although John 17. 3 is not a definition of “eternal life,” yet it connects it unmistakably with that whole system of grace and glory bound up with the full knowledge of God the Father and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Moreover, seeing that it has this character, that “it was with the Father,” it could not be of the order of this world ; and, since it is “eternal,” it is not subject to the flux of time. “Eternal life,” then, might be said to be for us an “out-of-the-world” order of being and relationship with God the Father, according to His own nature and the revelation of His

grace in Jesus Christ, now made known to us in the gospel.

It may be well here to consider for a little what is the meaning and use of the word "eternal"; first, its ordinary and linguistic meaning, and then, its scriptural usage.

According to Plato, *aiōn*, or eternity, is what is properly eternal, as we commonly use the term, in contrast with what is an imitation of it in the ages of time. He puts in careful opposition the two expressions, "eternity" and "ages," and *aiōn* and *aiōnios* for him mean the former, in contrast with the latter.

According to Aristotle, *aiōn* is the completeness of the existence of a thing, so that, according to its natural existence, there is nothing outside or beyond it. It embraces the whole being of the thing. He derives *aiōn* from *aiōn* *ēnai*, to be for ever, so that its definite and proper meaning is "eternal," in contrast with what is of time, having neither beginning nor ending.

Philo was a learned Jew of Alexandria, contemporary with the apostles, and, as using the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament, his testimony as to the use of the word is of great value. According to him, its proper force is "unchangeable; with no was, nor will be, but only what subsists."

So much for what we might call the classical and philosophical meaning of the word. Now for its use in Scripture.

2 Corinthians 4. 18 is decisive of its positive and specific meaning. "The things that are seen are temporal," *i. e.* they are for a time, and are put in express contrast with those things which are not for a time, be it an age or ages, but are eternal; "but the things which are not seen are eternal." And so the Apostle goes on to say that he was looking for a house not made with hands, "eternal" in the heavens (2 Cor. 5. 1).

Mark 3. 29 "has never forgiveness," not in this age, nor in the age to

come (Matt. 12. 32). There was a present age and an age to come, well known to the Jews, the *olem hazeh* and the *olem havo*, and an increased measure of forgiveness was looked for in the Messiah's age. This sin could not be forgiven in either, not at all.

eis tōn aiōnōn never means "to the age;" nor does *aiōnios* mean "age-long" in any one single case in all Scripture. Metaphorically, it may be used in reference to a limited period, as for a gift, a promise, or the like, where there is no withdrawal of the gift or promise, and the effect cannot last longer than that to which it applies; but the gift has no limit (it is, as Aristotle says, *ἀπειρα*, infinity without end), though the existence of that to which it applies may have. It is not lent, but given for ever, though the gift, or the person to whom it is given, may cease to exist; but the gift is for ever, without repentance, without recall. So, among many other scriptures, we have Romans 16. 26—the eternal God; Hebrews 9. 14—the eternal Spirit; 1 John 5. 20—Christ the true God and eternal life; 1 John 1. 2—eternal life with the Father.

(For the above *in extenso*, vide J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings*, Vol. XXXI, p. 188, etc.)

Verse 3.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." Note again the repeated emphasis he lays on the physical fact connected with the manifestation of eternal life in "Jesus Christ come in flesh" (chap. 4. 1-3). Already other spirits were at work undermining "the doctrine of the Christ," and setting up pretensions to advancement in the higher life through the development of man's spiritual attainment, which would be destructive at once both of the nature of eternal life and of the glory of the person of the Son of God. The promise of the serpent to Adam was, "Ye shall be as gods," and this false thought of promotion has never left his mind. In all the errors of gnosticism this original deception plays a constant part. Christ

is the promised channel of blessing to man, as He has also secured the glory of God; and His coming is declared after this most distinct and palpable manner, so as to disarm by the truth the insidious working of error.

“We declare unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us.” In chapter 2. 1 the Apostle says, “These things write I unto you.” He is thus the inspired spokesman for others who are joined with him in the declarations of this epistle. Who the “we” are may be gathered from a comparison with John 21. 24, where we find the Apostle signaled, and at the same time associated with others. These were, no doubt, disciples from amongst the Jews, to whom the glory of Jesus was revealed; “we beheld His glory” (John 1. 14); and they in due course were to be the mediatorial channels of blessing to the world. This seems to be implied in the part assigned to Philip (John 1. 43-51), and in his relation to the Greeks, who “would see Jesus” (John 12. 20-32). And another of his name, Philip the Evangelist, becomes the channel of gospel blessing, ever widening, to Samaria, and Ethiopia, and the “kingdoms of the earth,” to whom “the God of Israel sends out the mighty voice” of His testimony (cf. Ps. 68. 31-35; Acts 8.); for it ever remains true that “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4. 22), whose special privilege it is “to go forth for His name’s sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles” for the gospel which they carry freely to them (3 John 7). Long enough have they failed to accomplish their appointed mission to the world (Isa. 65. 5). But in due course we see them, in the days to come, themselves blessed, made the apostles of blessing to others, according to the words of the prophet: “I will send those that escape of them [the saved from among them] unto the nations . . . and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles” (Isa. 66. 19). Here, then, we have an earnest of that company who, having been brought to the knowledge of eternal life in the Son of God, are bringing others also, the wide world over, into the joy of the same fellowship in which they themselves have been blessed (cf. Eph. 1. 12-14; James 1. 18). And, if we go further back, we see that this again agrees with the promise made to Abraham, “in thee and in thy seed shall all

the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12. 3; 22. 18). From the Jew to-day, as will be effectually fulfilled in the Jew by and by, it has pleased God to send forth light into the world. Jesus Christ Himself, according to the flesh, was a Jew; while at the same time His genealogy contains the Gentile names of Rahab and Ruth, as also it mounts higher than Abraham, as though it was purposed thereby to show that in this respect, as otherwise, He was qualified, not only to confirm the promises to the fathers, but to fulfil the purpose of God in blessing to the wide world also (cf. Rom. 4. 11; 15. 8-12). “He is the propitiation,” the Apostle says, “for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (chap. 2. 2).

“And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” Than this there is nothing higher conceivable. The highest thought in heaven is “the Father and the Son;” the highest fellowship imaginable is fellowship with them. Here revelation is fulfilled; thought is arrested; finality is reached; hope is more than satisfied. God the Father, in the glory of His grace, supreme, eternal, comes forth in the spontaneity of surpassing love in His Son Jesus Christ, sent into this world as the Apostle of eternal life (John 12. 46-50). Than this we can proceed no further. Here we must stay, and meditate, and inquire how we may learn a little of that which is infinite, eternal.

And note here the suitability of the place given to the apostles as the mediators of this communication. In the highest sense Jesus is the one Mediator between God and men. But in another sense the administration of this mediatorial system passes down from rank to rank. Man is not an isolated and independent being capable of entertaining his own relationships with God. The Gentile centurion recognized this fact, and was highly commended for doing so, when he sent for the elders of the Jews to mediate between him and Jesus (Luke 7. 1-9); and another Gentile centurion was taught a similar lesson in Acts 10. These are samples of the Gentile position as such. This does not mean that we should worship the messenger, as Cornelius ignorantly worshipped Peter; but it

does show the folly of any attempt to approach God save by the way of His revealed appointment. We, to-day, have not heard nor seen Christ in physical life, nor could we divine what was involved in His coming, but it has all been declared to us, on qualified testimony, by those who saw it at the time, and knew it, that through them we might have the same fellowship as they had. Had it been left open for any to find his own way into this fellowship, none could have found it then or since, and this fellowship would have remained unknown. As it is, despite the guidance proffered by the apostles, the great mass have missed the way, and failed to find the blessing here set forth, and false ideas of fellowship are proposed instead. "Eternal life" has lost its value for them, and fellowship with the Father and the Son is not otherwise available—fellowship, *ie* the community of interests in the thoughts and feelings of a common life and nature, and in the relationship of children with a Father. As the Father loves the Son (John 3 35, 5 20), and the Son loves the Father (John 14 31), and their thoughts and interests are one (John 10 30), such "truly is our fellowship," says the Apostle, and such is the fellowship we are called to share with them. The affections, the sentiments, the interests of the Father and the Son—this is the blessedness that is declared to us, this is the fellowship that is ours, through grace—ours, in the true nature of it, in this present world, where it has been fully manifested in Jesus, while we wait for the full blessedness of it in its own proper sphere, in heaven above. And this is the "fulness of joy" We cannot have more. We shall have it in another sphere—a sphere proper to it, and to which it properly belongs, but the thing itself will be the same, for "the life has been manifested," the life that was with the Father, the life we have in the Son

In Ephesians 5 1-2 Paul says, "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us," and (ver 8), "Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" Here we have the standard of Christian conduct placed on the highest conceivable level and exemplified in the conduct toward us of God and of Christ, In

1 John 1. 3 we have the character of the fellowship with the Father and the Son, in which divine grace has set us, transcending in its excellency all the feeble thoughts of man. It is the *ultima thule* of blessing. Beyond it, above it, outside of it nothing is. "Herein is the love of God towards us perfected" We know nothing but what is revealed: we know nothing of what may yet be revealed: there may be, possibly are (2 Cor 12 1-4) revelations that will transcend all that has been revealed, but at present the mind, even under the expansive power of the Spirit, can conceive of nothing to surpass what has been revealed—what Paul says (Eph 3 19) "surpasses knowledge," and John affirms repeatedly has reached finality (1 John 2 5, 4 12, 17, 18). And how puny beside all this is philosophy, "science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6 20, Col 2. 8) It argues proudly on phenomena, on which it has made truly giant strides, but of the cause of them it knows nothing, and refuses to own its ignorance. On the *causa causata* it discourses sententiously, but the *causa causans*, the great first cause, it ignores. "Prove all things" it cunningly asserts, thinking thereby to make sure of its ground, forgetting that it cannot "prove" God. But here the Apostle declares to little children, for their understanding and profit, the very highest and deepest of divine truths. Oh, that we had grace to receive them as "little children," and live in them as our very life.

Note, too, that when the divine nature is in question "God" is used: "God is light," "God is love" When the subject is grace, then "the Father" is used: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" Therefore responsibility is connected with "God," not with "the Father," for "God" is judge (Rom 14 12), and lordship is connected with authority: "He is Lord of all" This will enable us to understand 1 Corinthians 1 9: "God is faithful, who hath called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" This epistle (1 Cor) is ecclesiastical and connected with the order of the house of God and with the kingdom (15 20-28 *et al*) The subject of John's epistles is eternal life and fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

“Nevertheless David took the Stronghold of Zion.”

Psalm 132.

1 Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions :
 2 How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob ;
 3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed ;
 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,
 5 Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.
 6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah ; we found it in the fields of the wood.
 7 We will go into his tabernacles : we will worship at his footstool
 8 Arise, O Lord, into thy rest ; thou, and the ark of thy strength.
 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness ; and let thy saints shout for joy.
 10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.

11 The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David ; he will not turn from it ; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.

13 For the Lord hath chosen Zion ; he hath desired it for his habitation.

14 This is my rest for ever : here will I dwell ; for I have desired it.

15 I will abundantly bless her provision : I will satisfy her poor with bread.

16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation : and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

17 There will I make the horn of David to bud : I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

18 His enemies will I clothe with shame : but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

JERICHO was the first city to fall before the house of Israel advancing to take possession of the land of Canaan according to God's purpose for them ; *Zion* was the last to fall—it was the last stronghold of the last of the nations mentioned by Jehovah in the promise given to Abraham (Gen. 15. 21).

Jericho, as we have seen, is linked in Scripture with that which is really the first step towards the fulfilment of divine purpose, namely the display of mercy in the very scene of the curse : mercy righteously bestowed in that the curse in all its meaning has fallen on Another. *Zion* is linked, as we shall see, with the *crown* of that purpose : God's *own* rest and dwelling-place. Prominent in connection with it will be found the thought of God having been glorified in His nature and in all His attributes. It is founded on that aspect of the death of Christ in which not merely did the curse fall on Another, by whom was borne the judgment which was due to sin, not merely was that restored by our Lord which He “took not away,” but there was vastly more beyond, for in that hour God was “GLORIFIED in Him” (John 13. 31).

Psalm 132. follows on David's taking of the stronghold of *Zion*. *Historically* it speaks of all the afflictions which came upon him in his devotedness to this thought that an abiding resting-place should be found for the ark, a dwelling-place which should be God's for evermore. It traces the report which he had heard in early years at Ephratah, where, as we may gather from 1 Samuel 17., he was born ; his finding of the ark at Kirjath-jearim ; and the final bringing in of it to *Zion* after he had achieved the apparently impossible, stormed the hitherto impregnable citadel, and secured, as the ark's sure and abiding resting-place, *ZION*—the “castle” or “stronghold.”

Typically it presents Christ as the One in whom is attained the fulfilment of divine purpose in its highest reach and widest scope.

David is well known as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is significant of our slowness to enter into the fullness of what was accomplished in the death of Christ, that Christians usually dwell almost exclusively on David's overcoming Goliath as typical of the mighty victory our Lord Jesus Christ gained on *our* behalf at Calvary,

and but seldom rise to the higher and deeper thought of what was gained for God at the cross, what was typified, in a word, in that scripture, "Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion" (2 Sam. 5. 7). That this further thought was in view even in the slaying of Goliath is seen in the fact that David "took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to *Jerusalem*" (1 Sam. 17. 54).

Now in the psalm before us there are stages traced towards the point at which God's rest is reached, and He announces that there He will dwell for evermore. There is first, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah;" and next, "We found it in the fields of the wood." Ephratah is Bethlehem (Gen. 35. 19); whilst the "fields of the wood" is evidently Kirjath-jearim—"city of woods"), where David found the ark (1 Chron. 13. 6). Bearing in mind what has been shown in a previous paper, viz. the intimate connection that exists in Scripture between *Hebron* and the purpose of God, it is interesting to notice that both these cities are expressly distinguished by the Spirit of God as springing, in their repopulated condition, from the sons of Caleb, to whom Hebron pertained (1 Chron. 2. 19, 50, 51); for these cities are marked out as typical links in the fulfilment of the purpose of God, links which we shall see plainly presented in this psalm.

Looking, then, briefly first at the truth connected with Ephratah, we must notice that its first occurrence in Scripture is as the place near which Rachel died and Benjamin was born. In the hour of her departure his mother named him Benoni, "son of my sorrow," but his father called him Benjamin, "son of my right hand." Benjamin is very clearly typical of Christ in that special aspect in which as a warrior (Gen. 49. 27) He shall be displayed for the deliverance of His people in the day of their distress: the time of Jacob's trouble shall be succeeded by the appearance of the

Man of God's right hand. Thus at the outset we have Ephratah, or Bethlehem, identified with God's abiding thought for that place. Of it did Micah say, "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." In that city was born David, striking type of the Lord Jesus Christ, in just the character in which he is presented in Micah, namely as the Shepherd-Ruler. He was the eighth son of Jesse, the Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah; and as eighth (a new start after the perfect cycle *seven*) was typical of God's new beginning.

In the fullness of time, then, was Christ actually born in Bethlehem, and in the words with which His birth was announced, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in man,*" we see the fulfilment of the words, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah"—the first hint of how the glory was to be brought in, how there should be glory to God in the highest, as well as peace, rest, and good pleasure, where till now all had been marred by sin, was in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ: it comes to view there for the first time. In Him personally God ever could rest, but He had come to take up the question of God's rest in its widest aspect. Sin had entered the creation of God, His sabbath rest (Gen. 2. 3) had been broken in upon, and from that hour there was nothing in creation in which God could rest or find His pleasure. Of this did our Lord speak when He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5. 17). There could be no rest either for the Father or the Son in a scene desolated by sin and death. In the birth, then, of great David's greater Son the rest of God came for the first time distinctly into view—the One in whom He should be GLORIFIED.

But in the birth of Christ this was not *accomplished*: that was but the

first stage towards the fulfilment of divine purpose. The next is presented in Kirjath-jearim: "Lo, we *found it* in the fields of the wood." It has long been noticed that as a rule the truth connected with the use of any word or type in Scripture will be found germinant in that which is stated where it is first mentioned. Looking, then, at the first mention of Kirjath-jearim, we find it brought before us in Joshua 9. as one of the four cities the inhabitants of which craftily deceived Joshua and the men of Israel by pretending that they were what they were not, namely, strangers from a far country. Then the children of Israel swore unto them by the Lord God of Israel, and that oath, the oath by God, was unalterable, though the people desired to alter it. What is marked, then, on the city at the outset is, on the one hand, deception, on the other the unalterable oath. Now it is just these two things which mark the second stage towards the fulfilment of divine purpose. In the deceitful kiss of Judas and the betrayal, with the cross issuing as the result on man's side, we have what answers to the deception of the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim. The unalterable oath of God, on the other hand, comes in connection with resurrection. God's oath first comes before us in Scripture in exactly that connection: in Genesis 22., after Isaac, type of Christ, had been in a figure received again from the dead (Heb. 11. 19), God *swore* unto Abraham that in his seed, that is, in Christ, should all the nations of the earth be blessed, for the oath denotes the unchangeableness of divine purpose (Heb. 6. 17), and the stability of that purpose is evidenced in the resurrection of Christ. In Kirjath-jearim, then, we have typically outlined the second step towards the fulfilment of purpose: in the death and resurrection of Christ was the sure basis laid.

But there was not only this, not simply the betrayal by man, and the cross and the grave viewed as that which man awarded Him; there was a

deeper aspect far, an aspect of mighty conflict typically presented in that which forms the background and setting of this psalm, namely, the taking of the stronghold of Zion. At the cross Christ entered into that combat which is, and ever must be, without a parallel, a conflict waged not simply with *our* foes and for *our* deliverance, but for the GLORY OF GOD. It was man's hour *and* the power of darkness: there were arrayed all the hostile forces of evil against the One who, at whatever cost to Himself, was set there to glorify God and to bring in His rest: and there was the victory gained, not simply for us, but for the glory of God. Principalities and powers were spoiled and triumphed over, the last citadel of the enemy was taken, and God was glorified in His nature and in all His attributes: in love, in holiness, in righteousness, in truth, in justice, in immutability, in wisdom, in power, in majesty. But of the "afflictions" which were Christ's in the accomplishment of that work what creature tongue can speak! "Lord, remember David and all his afflictions!" Those infinite sorrows, those afflictions passing beyond all human comprehension will never fade from the mind of God, or from the memory of those in communion with Him.

But what is the answer to all this? What is God's estimate of ZION? It is given in the words, "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." God's eternal rest is found in CHRIST on the basis of the work He has done. Zion is henceforth viewed as God's dwelling-place and as the divine centre of blessing. But there God does not dwell alone, Zion is not only *His* dwelling-place: in grace His people are brought into it; and so the psalm goes on: "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy."

The highest order of blessing is reached in a measure of apprehension of the fullness of all that *God* has found in Christ, the infinite glory brought to Him through that finished work and His rest in Him; for it is into God's own rest that we are called (Heb. 4. 1, 9-11). And as to our present apprehension of it as secured in Christ, we are said to have already "come to Mount Zion," established in rich and royal grace in contrast to the fiery mount of lawgiving Sinai (Heb. 12. 22); we have come in faith to God's glorious centre of blessing, not merely as regards ourselves, but *His* rest in Christ, and the consequences of it as regards every family in blessing—Israel and the nations being particularly in view in the Psalms.

What marks God's centre too is the supreme exaltation of Christ—"There will I make the horn of David to bud" (ver. 17), or, as in Psalm 2., "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion."

This issues in the outflow of bless-

ing to all around, for when "a King shall reign in righteousness," then "a MAN shall be . . . as rivers of water" (Isa. 32. 1, 2). From the heavenly city, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall there flow forth a pure river of water of life (Rev. 22. 1).

Psalm 133. sets forth the unity which results from the apprehension of all this, and its precious fragrance Godward—there does Jehovah command the blessing, even life for evermore—the dew on Zion. Then Psalm 134., the triumphant close of the fifteen Songs of Degrees, gives the uprising of praise in the sanctuary, blessing the Lord, and finally the blessing out of Zion pronounced from the Lord that made heaven and earth. From this divine centre upward and outward as well as within all is blessing. Crowned with a crown of pure gold, He is made "blessings for ever" (Ps. 21.).

May God enable us to enter into more of the fullness of all that He has found in Christ, the true ZION, His eternal rest and dwelling-place.

Appropriation.

(JAMES BOYD).

"THE SON OF GOD"—the living
Father's gift,
Creator of the world and things su-
pernal,
Sent here in grace the sons of men to lift
And place them in the light of love
eternal.
Loved ever mortal after such a fashion?
Dwelt in the creature ever such com-
passion?

"WHO LOVED ME"—*me*—debased, de-
ceived, defiled;
Hateful to Him as sin to all that's holy,
And by the subtle serpent baned, be-
guiled,
A scorner of the One so meek and lowly.
And yet on me He set His love immortal,
When lost I lay at death's horrific portal.

"AND GAVE HIMSELF"—not silver, no,
nor gold,

Nor wealth of worlds, nor costly things
created.

Himself! What grace! That on Him
might be rolled

The sins which His heart's blood has
expiated.

This gift, this love, my soul shall ever
treasure:

Love gave the gift; the gift the love doth
measure.

"FOR ME"—the wide world welcome is
to claim

An interest in the sacrifice He offered;
But, as for me, He bore the sin and
shame

For me: and for my trespasses He
suffered.

I claim Him mine, tho' hell that claim re-
sisted,

As tho' no sinner but myself existed.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 3.

The Ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3. ; Mark 1. 1-8 ; Luke 3. 1-18).

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God (Isa. 40. 3).

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me (Mal. 3. 1).

His Birth and Lowliness.

THE birth of John, though supernatural, was not miraculous ; that of Isaac was similar ; and but for the special interpositioning of God's powers neither could have occurred. "Thou shalt call his name John," said the heavenly messenger, adding that he should be great in the sight of the Lord, that he should turn many to righteousness, and—observe—that, as predicted by Malachi, he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias. Herein lay his distinctive greatness.

No wonder that his birth caused much interest amongst all his kinsfolk. "What manner of child," they asked, "should this be?" "And the hand of the Lord was with him" (Luke 1. 66).

He was the last in the line of the prophets, and had the distinguished honour of introducing, at his baptism, the Lord Himself, the beloved Son of God, to public life and ministry.

He cherished a very high appreciation of the Lord, and a correspondingly low one of himself.

He said, as we read in Matthew 3. 11, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear;" or, as in Luke 3. 16, "Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose;" or, as in Mark 1. 7, "the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." What a thorough self-effacing appreciation of his Master! and what rare humility! (J.W.S.)

Nor should we overlook the very beautiful testimony rendered to the Lord in John 3. 27-30: "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the

friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." The way in which the great Forerunner was content to see himself effaced and his Master exalted is a lesson for His servants to which we do well to take heed. (C.E.H.W.)

His Greatness.

The greatness of John the Baptist is seldom realized: none of the great ones of Old Testament times excelled him, so the Lord Himself testified. He stands out among the prophets as being "filled with the Holy Spirit" from his earliest years. MATTHEW, so occupied with God's "young Child" (nine times in chap. 2. is He thus designated), does not distract attention by any reference to the birth of John. LUKE, however, enters into this in great detail. He was to be the "prophet of the Highest" in contrast with Him who was the "Son of the Highest." Note in this connection that if we are morally like Christ, manifesting His life, we shall be called the "sons [N.T.] of the Highest" (Luke 6. 35). This millennial expression "Most High" is peculiar to Luke's Gospel, which sets forth the character of the "Son of Man;" and in reading this Gospel we should watch for those instances where the Lord's names are applied to believers.

LUKE records Gabriel's words concerning John the Baptist: "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord" (chap. 1. 15). The words "in the sight of the Lord" were left out when he spoke of JESUS, "He shall be great" (chap. 1. 32). He was Jehovah. (W.R.S.)

John had the high honour of being the only servant of God (with the one exception of the blessed Lord) of whose ministry there was direct and specific prophecy in the Old Testament. This is

not because of any *inherent* greatness in John, but because of his proximity to Christ as His forerunner and herald. His ministry was unique. It belonged neither to Judaism nor Christianity in the strict sense of the word. This is proved by the text, "All the prophets and the law prophesied *unto* John," and by the fact that he was the forerunner of Christ, and that it was Christ Himself who inaugurated Christianity. If his proximity and service to Christ made him the greatest born of women, the least in that kingdom is greater than he, so glorious is it to be connected with the King, as belonging to His kingdom. (A. J. P.)

The Place of his Ministry.

An entirely new departure in God's ways with men begins with the ministry of John. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16 16, Matt 11 13). It is this that constituted the greatness of this last of the prophets. His service was the preparation for the introduction of a new epoch in which God, speaking in His Son, was about to fully reveal Himself.

But "the voice" preparing the way of the Lord was heard *in the wilderness* at a period in which the condition of things in the land was all contrary to divine order. It was because of this contrary condition that the preaching of John was in the outside place. Time is reckoned by LUKE, the writer to the Gentile, according to the rule of Daniel's "fourth beast, dreadful, terrible, and strong exceedingly"—the Roman Empire (Luke 3 1, Dan 7 7). The land itself was parcelled out, not according to the tribes of Israel, but amongst Idumean and Roman petty rulers. The high priesthood, the ordered means of intercourse between the people and their God, was in the hands of *two* individuals destined to play a sinister part in the succeeding history (Luke 3 12). The proper function of the priesthood had been declared: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts" (Mal 2 7). The contrast between this and the characters of Annas and Caiaphas is too manifest to need comment.

It would not have been suitable that God should make His voice heard *in the midst* of such a state of things. His approach to man must be from an outside place, and so in perfect harmony with the holiness of the divine nature. There could be no mingling on God's part either with the Cæsars or their subordinates. The prophet's clothing, food, and place of ministry all proclaim an apartness from man and his order. (C. E. H. W.)

The Character of his Ministry.

In John's testimony there are characteristic differences in the Synoptic Gospels.

MATTHEW records how all Jerusalem was moved by the coming of Gentiles to inquire after Israel's King, and Herod's effort to destroy Him, also His coming out of Egypt to begin again in His own person, as it were, Israel's history before God. Following on this, John preaches repentance on the ground that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, suited to the dispensational character of the Gospel. In Luke, as in Mark, it is for the remission of sins.

In MARK Malachi's words, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me," are quoted as "My messenger before *Thy* face, which shall prepare *Thy* way before *Thee*." This involves that it was no other than Jehovah Himself who had come. It may be noted also that when the Lord Jesus refers to the same passage in bearing witness to His devoted servant, even at a moment when his faith seemed to have passed under a cloud, He quotes it in the same way (Matt. 11. 10). John never applies it to himself.

LUKE connects the testimony with the moral preparation for the way of the Lord, which Isaiah had foretold as the object of John's mission, adding, as suited to the character of the Gospel, from a later passage in the prophet (chap 52. 10), "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." And it is not only the sight of Pharisees and Sadducees, as in Matthew, that drew out the scathing denunciation of a "serpent's brood," but the multitude are involved in it. Repentance must be proved by fruits meet for it.

In Luke alone, where everything bespeaks the great moral purpose of the Gospel, what accorded with the revelation of God come in grace in man among

men, we get the specific tests that John applied to the different classes that came before him, in principle so solemn for us all. The question, "What shall we do then?" is common and easy enough: the sincerity of it is brought to the proof by a direction that strikes at the habitual self-indulgence, the particular form in which the will of the flesh works in each—the people generally, publicans, and soldiers.

His exhortation being over, we have an instance of how LUKE often displaces the historic order to bring out the moral connections, which is a deeper kind of order. He at once carries us on to the close of John's testimony in his faithful reproof of Herod's licentious life, though how he came to be in kings' courts we know not: "Herod added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison" (3. 18-20); and that before the baptisms of the people and that of the Lord Himself by John are recorded. (J.A.T.)

In MARK John's testimony is confined to the greatness of Jesus, and in this testimony he doubly emphasizes his own nothingness before his Lord: he was not worthy "to stoop down" and unloose His shoe. It is fitting that this should be so in the Gospel in which the Son of God is presented as the Servant. In His presence every other servant, no matter how high in honour, must be silent, save to witness to His glory; yea, to do this is the highest honour that they could bear. (J.T.M.)

LUKE quotes more fully than either Matthew or Mark from Isaiah, giving his prophecy a world-wide application, and appeals not only to the multitude (at once enclosing more than the Pharisees and Sadducees, singled out by Matthew), but branches out in his address to the publicans, a hated class, reminding the Jews of the humiliation of their nation under a foreign yoke, and to the soldiers, who were still more hated. It is befitting that the writer appealing to Gentiles and whose subject is the grace of God should show how John's ministry embraced such, how it reached to the most degraded and despised. (A.J.P.)

There is a depth of moral teaching in LUKE which is in contrast with the more dispensational character of Matthew, and

is illustrated by the way the various classes of hearers are dealt with in chapter 3. Each class finds itself exposed in its ruling passion. MATTHEW omits this, and dwells more on the coming judgment of the nation—His threshing-floor—which will be thoroughly purged, the wheat preserved, the chaff consumed with the unquenchable fire (Matt. 3. 12; Luke 3. 17). This verse is quite in character with the purpose of Matthew, the conviction and conversion of the Jew, and is also given in Luke to teach the Gentiles the solemn termination of the history of man in responsibility.

MARK cites Malachi 3. in addition to Isaiah 40., and it is interesting to note, in passing, that he gives no other quotation from the Old Testament in the whole of his Gospel (chap. 15. 28 is doubtless interpolated, being copied in from Luke by some scribe). This absence of quotation in reference to the Lord is a feature of the second Gospel, and harmonizes with the omission of any genealogy (see January number of this magazine, p. 9).

Here we may notice the great difference between the Synoptic and John's Gospels: in the latter Jesus is introduced by the Baptist as the Lamb of God, and the results of His work are viewed as reaching to the new heavens and new earth (chap. 1. 29). The reason of this is that while in all the first three Gospels the Messiah is presented to the Jew according to his responsibility, in John's Gospel the Jews are regarded as rejected from the outset, for "He came to His own, and His own received Him not," and the Spirit is consequently free to develop the fuller purposes of God founded on the sacrificial death of the Saviour. (C.E.H.W.)

MATTHEW gives John's preaching as the call to the nation to repent, which many did, "confessing their sins;" nothing is said about "remission" till the Lord Himself mentions it as flowing from the blood—His blood—of the new covenant (Matt. 26. 28). Is not the account of this confession, in Matthew, a wonderful instance of accepting the word and acting on it—leaving the results in God's hands, taking, in the simple faith of a child, one step at a time, assured that God will not belie His own character in dealing with those who, though with no pretence of

any fitness save to be "cut down and cast into the fire," have taken their true place before Him ?

LUKE, on the other hand, brings in "remission of sins," for, as has been well said elsewhere, he gives concrete illustrations of the *doctrine* of the Epistle to the Romans (a useful subject of search in this Gospel). But he quotes more of Isaiah to show that the *state of the heart* must be dealt with and every mountain brought low. Consistently with this, as often, he brings in the *effect of the word* in the heart—all of which is left out in the corresponding part of Matthew, and they say three times, "What shall we do ?" Compare Acts—by the same writer: "What shall we *do* ?" (2 37), "What wilt Thou have me *to do* ?" (9 6), "What must *I do* to be saved ?" (16 30) (W R S)

The ministry of John is moral and preparatory to the ministry of Jesus, calling people to repentance and to the practice of righteousness, that they might "see the salvation of God" and escape from the coming wrath (*cf* chap 1 67, etc., chap 3 3, etc.). It is more national in Matthew, it is "all flesh" in Luke.

Those who received his testimony justified God in His ways, those who refused it rejected the counsel of God as to themselves (Luke 7 29, 30). The ministry of John was of paramount importance, then, as prefatory to the great moral questions dealing with the state of man, and the salvation of God for all men, and a similar ministry is of like importance to-day, though often ignored or forgotten in the desire to adapt the terms of the gospel to the need of man without due regard to the righteousness and the glory of God. (E.C)

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire.

In all the four Gospels the baptism with water by John and the baptism of the Spirit by Christ are contrasted. The outpouring of the Spirit had been connected

in the prophets (Isa 44 3, Joshua 2 28) with the establishment of the kingdom, which John proclaimed as drawing nigh. That there was to be a baptism of fire for judgment, as of the Spirit for blessing, is revealed in both Old and New Testaments. We have but to read the three verses—Matthew 3 10, 11, 12—to perceive that the modern idea that the baptism of fire is a more intense form of the blessing connected with the Spirit is quite groundless. In accordance with the first canon for the interpretation of prophetic Scriptures (2 Peter 1 20), it will be readily understood that this judgment of fire cannot be limited to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and its attendant horrors, though doubtless this subversion of the Jewish system was an initiatory fulfilment. There will be an ultimate accomplishment at the end of this age (Matt 13 40-43)

(C E H W)

John baptized with water, he could bring the truth as to their sinfulness and ruin home to the consciences of the people, and bring them in figure into the place of condemnation and death—the end of a career of responsibility that had been marked by failure, constant and complete. But in the midst of the multitudes of Israel there stood the One who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. John might in figure bring them into the place of death, but Jesus alone could give them life, and the power by which that life should be lived according to God, for He, the last Adam, is a life-giving Spirit. He alone could introduce the new era, the kingdom that should never be moved. a kingdom not founded upon the frailty of man, but established in the power of God. But to do this He had to be baptized with a baptism—a baptism of fire and blood. He had to take upon His own holy person the sins that the people confessed upon the banks of Jordan, and bear them away into the land of forgetfulness. Yea, He had to do more, for He is "the Lamb of God, the bearer away of the sin of the world" (John 1 29, N T) (J T M)

Much good work has been hindered by such anxiety to do better as deters one from promptly doing one's best. When we so set our hearts on doing well

that we practically do nothing, we are paralysed not by humility but by pride. God shapes His instruments even while He works with them.

The Nature and Work of the Devil.

(H. P. BARKER).

DON'T spell "devil" without a "d." Many do. The devil, they say, is only a poetic way of speaking of *evil*. Abstract qualities are often personified. Justice, for instance, is represented as a woman, blindfolded, and holding a pair of scales. And in a similar way "evil" is personified as "the devil," a monster of ugliness and vice.

We are asked to believe, therefore, that there is no real, personal being called Satan, or the devil. When a man is tempted to sin, the temptation arises from the evil in his own heart.

But will the gentlemen who would fain persuade us that the devil is a myth kindly allow us to ask them a few questions?

Was not the Lord Jesus tempted? Was not a direct temptation to *sin*, to act in independence of God, presented to Him? From whence did this temptation come? Was there evil in *His* heart from which it could spring? If not, must not the temptation have been presented from outside? If so, by whom?

Certainly the temptation could not have come from God. For He would never tempt a man to sin (James I. 13). Angels were upon the scene and wild beasts (Mark I. 13), but I presume that no one would maintain that the evil suggestions came from either of these.

The Scriptures emphatically declare that the Lord was "tempted of Satan" (Mark I. 13), "tempted of *the devil*" (Matt. 4. 1).

Was the devil that tempted Christ a mere poetic name for the principle of evil? Then *where* was the principle of evil that is so described? If it was in Christ, then I have lost my Saviour. If any evil was in Him, He would need a deliverer Himself, and cannot deliver me.

But He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

"In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5). Then, temptation could only have been presented to Him *from without*, and the tempter must have been a person, great enough and daring enough to attack the Son of God with some expectation of success.

A Masterpiece of Cunning.

Is it not a masterpiece of cunning on the part of Satan to persuade men of his non-existence? A traveller in an Eastern country has to take a long journey. His road lies through a region infested by a band of daring brigands. He is carrying a large amount of treasure with him, and he determines to take precautions for the security of his life and property. He will hire some attendants, and will see that they are properly armed with rifles and revolvers.

But the leader of the brigand band hears of these preparations, and he resolves to secure by craft that which he might fail to obtain by force. He sets his agents to work. They manage to get into conversation with the traveller, and with cunning words persuade him that his fears are groundless.

"The story of those brigands is a mere fable," they say. "It is a tale that only old women and children would believe. There are no brigands in the region through which you are to pass. Have we not been that way ourselves? Do we not know that what we affirm is a fact?"

The traveller is at last persuaded that he has been misled. Surely these gentlemen ought to know. They assure him that there are no brigands. Then he will save the expense of the armed escort, he will dismiss the attendants, and take the journey alone.

He does so; and the consequence is he falls an easy prey to the brigand chief, who has so cleverly succeeded in making him disbelieve in his existence!

The devil too has his agents among men. Often they are polished, educated, amiable individuals. "And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11. 14, 15). These agents have never adopted a cleverer ruse than that by which they persuade men to disbelieve in the personality of their leader. Those who allow themselves to be duped in this manner fall an easy prey to the great devourer of souls.

The History, Personality, and Aims of Satan.

Scripture, if carefully read, throws a flood of light upon the history, personality, and aims of Satan. We know from Daniel 10. that in the angelic world there are "princes," good and bad, that connect themselves in some mysterious way with the nations of earth. Thus "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" is mentioned as withstanding the heavenly messenger that appeared to Daniel. Michael too, "one of the chief princes," is spoken of, and in chapter 12. 1 he is called "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." That is, he was connected in some way that is not easy to understand with the nation of Israel. Now Satan, the great leader of fallen angels (Rev. 12. 7), seems to have connected himself from time to time with the leading cities and nations of the world, and to have led them in the van of the onslaught against God and His truth.

In Pergamos, for instance, the first great attempt was made (alas! only too successfully) to bring about an alliance between the church and the world. That was the special character of Satan's attack at that time, and therefore *he had his seat in that city* (Rev. 2. 13). Who can doubt, also, that at other periods Satan has had his seat at Babylon, and at Rome, and has in a special way been the prince of those cities?

But at one time in the world's history Tyre was the leading city. Her commerce filled the known earth, and her wickedness was appalling. In Ezekiel 27. her destruction is declared, and in the following chapter her king is addressed. The description of this being could apply to no mere man. It is evident that the great personage who was the real ruler of Tyre, and who had led her to her pinnacle of worldly power, was Satan himself. Verses 2 to 10 apparently refer to the actual prince who sat on the Tyrian throne, and who was only a man, though he claimed divine honours. But from verse 12 onward it is evident that a far more august being is described. True, he was but a *creature* (ver. 15), but manifestly he was the greatest of God's creations. In him was the sum of wisdom and beauty. He was in Eden,¹ the garden of God; and upon God's holy mountain he walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Every precious stone was his covering; he was the anointed cherub, set by God Himself in his place of dignity. In his ways he was perfect, until the day that iniquity was found in him. Then his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and he corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness.

This symbolic description gives us some idea of the majesty and splendour of Satan in his unfallen condition. And it is most striking how his *wisdom* is emphasized. He was "full of wisdom." By his awful fall he has not lost this wisdom, but has corrupted it. Therein lies a volume of meaning. In the mar-

¹ "Eden, the garden of God," must not be confounded with the garden of Eden, where Adam was placed. Various explanations of these words have been offered. The most probable is that they refer to the world in its pre-Adamic state, before it had fallen into the chaotic condition of Genesis 1.2. It has been suggested that as Satan seems to have had a special place in connection with the rule of this planet, his fall may have been the occasion of the earth, created perfect, becoming "without form and void," or rather, "waste and empty." But in these matters we shall be wise not to go beyond the bounds of Scripture.

vellous "corrupted wisdom" of this august personage we have the underlying explanation of the sad story of the human race.

In the guise of a serpent, it was Satan (Rev. 20. 2) who approached our first parents in Eden. The essence of his suggestion was this: that God was not perfectly good, that He was withholding an advantage from them, and that if only they would accept his (Satan's) leadership they would gain wisdom, and would at the same time escape the dire consequences of disobedience. But though there is corrupted wisdom in Satan, "there is no *truth* in him" (John 8. 44). He grossly deceived Eve. The consequences of disobedience have *not* been avoided, and the career proposed by Satan and accepted by man under his leadership will finally end in overwhelming disaster.

Neither Omnipotent nor Omniscient.

The devil, with all his marvellous powers, is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. He could not have foreseen how God would intervene in mercy for His poor deluded creatures, and how, in the course of time, He would send His own Son to accomplish redemption on their behalf.

But as the gracious ways and purposes of God have been gradually unfolded, Satan has set himself to thwart them, and fallen man has ever proved to be his ready tool. He heard from the lips of God that the woman's Seed was to bruise his head. Was Abel the woman's seed who should do this? Then he would instigate Cain to murder him.

Finding his mistake, he possibly thought Israel was the chosen seed. So he set himself to destroy Israel. He got Pharaoh to order the male children to be drowned, and the people ground down by hard bondage.

But again he was at fault. At last the promised Seed of the woman

actually appeared. Satan at once prepared to destroy Him. He found a tool in Herod, who commanded all the babes in Bethlehem of a likely age to be killed. Failing in this design, he boldly encountered the Son of God in the desert. He appealed to Him to make an exhibition of His power, to assert His independence of God, and finally to accept Satan's leadership. His reward should be "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." But there was nothing in Christ for the prince of this world (John 14. 30). He stood unscathed amid the hurling of the tempter's fiery darts. He refused to turn aside from the path of lowly dependence upon God; He declined to receive the kingdoms of the world from any hands but God's. Satan was foiled and vanquished.

Far from giving up the fight, however, he put it into the heart of Judas to betray his Master. He moved the leaders of the nation to lay violent hands on Christ. It *seemed* as if Satan, after all, would triumph. It was the hour for which he had worked. It was the opportunity of the power of darkness (Luke 22. 53).

The Son of God on the cross! The promised Seed of the woman crucified, slain, buried in a grave with a big stone rolled against its mouth! This surely was victory!

But a power, against which all the wisdom and might of Satan would be helpless, was about to act—the power of resurrection. God raised up Christ, and set Him at His own right hand, to be ultimately the centre of a redeemed universe, with all things in heaven and on earth headed up in Him (Eph. 1. 10).

This was evidently the place which Satan had aimed at attaining. *He* would be the lord of creation's fair domain. But divine counsels have reserved that place for One who is infinitely greater than Satan was, even in his pristine splendour, and who, as

Man, has proved Himself to be wholly such an One as God can delight in. Right worthy is He of that high seat of honour. Let every Christian heart say "Amen!" "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 12).

But Satan has not relinquished the leadership of the world. He is still its prince (Eph. 2. 2), and in the department of religion he is its *god* (2 Cor. 4. 4). Under his direction the complex and marvellous system generally spoken of as "the world," has been built up. The ramifications of this great system lie all around us, and we are continually witnessing fresh developments. From year to year new inventions, new discoveries, new schemes, new politics, new experiments, new religions, new combinations, new methods afford proof of the wonderful wisdom by means of which the system is engineered.

Further developments will doubtless follow with ever-increasing rapidity, until the climax, long foretold in the Scriptures, is reached. We may gather from the books of Daniel and Revelation that the principal nations of Europe will be organized as a ten-kingdom confederacy, acknowledging as its head an emperor, a great personage called, on the prophetic page, the Beast. But the *power* of this vast confederation will be wielded by another, referred to in Scripture as the Antichrist. He will be the very apotheosis of wickedness, claiming to be God (2 Thess. 2. 4), able to work miracles and to thus secure the allegiance of the nations to the Beast (Rev. 13. 12-14).

The Climax of his Career.

This is the awful climax of the career upon which man launched forth at the instigation of the devil. The Antichrist, the man of sin, will be the direct outcome of the work of Satan (2 Thess. 2. 9).

But the course of this wonderful man will be cut short by the appearing of the Lord Jesus in power and glory. He will overthrow that wicked one with the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. 2. 8). Then, finally, the great trinity of evil—the Devil, the Beast, and the Antichrist (or false prophet)—shall find their eternal doom in the lake of fire, where they will be "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20. 10).

The history of the world cannot be explained except upon the assumption that behind the scenes there has been a controlling influence marked by great and subtle (though corrupted) wisdom. Antagonism to God and to Christ has ever characterized "the spirit of the world," and the way that the human race has been led in its path of development and evolution bears witness to the divinely revealed fact that it has been guided by superhuman skill. This guidance, however, has not come from God, as is generally taken for granted, but from the age-long enemy of God. How little poor deceived man suspects under whose leadership he is pursuing his way!

To deny the personality of Satan is therefore to deprive one of the greatest problems of the day of its only solution. To accept the truth of the existence of this august, but fallen, personage is to possess the key to the understanding of one of the greatest mysteries—the mystery of the temporary success of evil.

Satan has striven hard to make man independent of God. That he has succeeded to such an extent testifies to his consummate power and wisdom. That his devices have not *perfectly* succeeded, and will by and by be utterly brought to nought, is a proof that neither his power nor wisdom is *infinite*, that he is neither almighty nor all-wise. God is infinitely greater. *He* is almighty and all-wise, and we can joyfully add, He is full of love and goodness.

An Appeal.

FELLOW Christians! Is it not high time that we should marshal our ranks round the book of divine revelation and resolve to part company once for all with the railers at holy things? What has this lauded New Theology to offer us? The old attacks of Celsus on Christianity, or the stale heresies of Arius and Pelagius, either refurbished or in their old dress. What gain has she brought us? None whatever,

What would she fain take from us? Our all! Let us write a bill of divorce. Between her and us no communion, no coalescence is possible; no accord, no armistice, no truce. We stand on opposite ground; we reason by divergent axioms; we speak a different tongue; we understand not one the other.

There is a great gulf fixed between us. Whilst we worship the living God, revealing Himself to us in His Word as Jehovah-Jesus, she wor-

ships the goddesses of her choice—Reason and Science.

We are poor in spirit, and can trace within ourselves no fund of wisdom or enlightenment, but expect the "lightening of our darkness" from on high; *we* can do nothing, and leave God His sway, "working in us to will and to do." But "criticism" is wise and needs no heavenly illumination; *she* moves with confident tread towards ever higher goals of fancied knowledge, lighted by the torch of science and the beam of reason; *she* acknowledges no mysteries, but dubs them dreams. Let her take her chosen path, then, and leave us ours, and let a sentence of separation be pronounced between us, both for this world and the next!

Prof. F. BETTEX (translated from the author's German work "*Glaube u Kritik*").

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITORS).

Feet-washing (John 13.).

C.E.G. and C.A.E. There is a great spiritual significance behind the figure of feet-washing, and to take it up literally or even to confine it to a lesson in humility is to lose this.

Peter only saw what was literal, and hence his refusal to put his feet into the Lord's hands. But the Lord's answer, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," makes it very clear that much more than this was involved, for He could not have meant that if the feet of His disciples were not literally cleansed from the dust of the street they would be excluded from any part with Him. Moreover, that His action was symbolical was clearly conveyed in His words to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (ver. 7).

The act must be considered in the light of what follows. He was going away from them to the Father, to that home of hallowed joy. The announcement of

this filled them with dismay, for it meant, in their view, entire separation from Him; but He teaches them that, though He was going away, it was His intention that they should have part with Him in that place into which He was going, even while they still remained on earth. It would be for them a new kind of joy and blessing; hitherto their joy had been mainly confined to their Jewish hopes in Him as the Messiah, they understood nothing outside this. But He was about to introduce them into a vaster and fuller range of blessing, a more abundant life: they were to have part with Him in the Father's presence; their souls were to enter, by the power of the Holy Ghost to be given them, into the joys that are connected with the knowledge of the Father whom He came to reveal; and they were to be associated with Christ as His brethren, to share with Him this blessed relationship which was entirely new to man. This is life eternal and true Christianity.

They had been fitted for this relationship by being made "clean every whit" (ver 10), and this cleansing involved their being no longer of the world (chap 17-14), for the new life and relationship is entirely heavenly. But they were still in the world, though not of it, and contact with its defilement and sin would unfit them for the enjoyment of this blessed communion with Christ outside of it, and hence the necessity of the constant cleansing of the feet, figurative of the removal of the defilement contracted in the world, so that there might be no shade upon their spirits in the presence of the Lord.

To this blessed service the Lord is seen devoting Himself. He prized the company of His own so highly, and desired so greatly that they should consciously have part with Him, that He girded Himself in order to keep their feet clean. And this service is continued for us, for we are "His own," even as they were.

Observe that it is not a question of re-cleansing by blood, or being washed all over again, for Jesus said unto Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

We may do for each other what He did for them, i.e. we may minister the Word to each other, so that a moral and practical separation from the world may be maintained consistent with Christianity. The water is typical of the truth of God given to us in His Word (Ps 119 9, Eph 5 26).

"Overtaken in a fault" (Gal. 6. 1).

C A E We believe that this verse contemplates a Christian who through carelessness of walk has fallen into sin, given way to temptation. He must not in consequence be abandoned by his brethren, but they who are walking in the Spirit (which "ye which are spiritual" means) are to restore him again, and that in the spirit of meekness, considering themselves, lest they also be tempted.

Living Water.

J H inquires whether it is a present experience that is spoken of in John 4 14:

Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Surely so. It is the gift of God, to be

in the one to whom the Son of God gives it as a fountain springing up into everlasting life. There is not here the thought of receiving Christ as our Saviour for the cancelling of our guilt, we must go to other scriptures for that. But what is contemplated is, in effect, a new life in the believer, in the power and energy of the Spirit of God, a life which shall rise up, because of its very nature, to God, who is at once the Source and Object of it, fully revealed to us as Father in and by the Son.

Romans 8 2 speaks of the same thing, only there it is the Spirit of life that releases us from that which held us down, here it is the same power by which we rise up into those blessed things revealed to us by, and set forth for us in Christ.

An interesting type of this is given in Numbers 21. For nearly forty years the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness, thirsting all the time for Egypt and despising the promised land, their hearts had not been detached from Egypt, and so they could not be attached to Canaan. But the serpent of brass was uplifted (see John 3 14) typifying the death of Christ, as the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom 8 3). Then at once they came to the springing well (ver 17), they answered with singing, and never again turned back to Egypt, but went straight forward into their God-given possessions.

This is what is set before us in John 4. And since the Christian's portion, in the knowledge of the Father and the Son, is infinitely better than Israel's in that land flowing with milk and honey, we can readily understand the words of our Lord, "*He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst*."

If the question arises, To whom does the Son of God give this water? we would point out that this wonderful announcement follows John 3, and that there the Lord is presented as the Object for faith (vers 14, 16, 36), and in chapter 7 38 of the same Gospel, faith in Him, and this wonderful gift (though in another aspect of it), are brought together. We have nothing and know nothing of God apart from Christ.

(Other answers held over until next month)

“God that Justifieth.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

Romans 8. 33, 34.

33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

WHAT comfort, what profound peace it brings into the life, what stability it gives to faith, when it is understood that it is God that justifieth; that He is “just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3. 26); that He can take to Himself, in this bright gospel day, the title of “Him that justifieth the ungodly” (4. 5); yea, that this title is His glory, the righteous triumph of His grace in a world where sin abounded.

It brings peace and gives stability because, if God justifies a man, then that man is justified, the case is closed, for none may speak after God: there can be no appeal from His verdict.

According to the law of this land, an action may be tried in the Civil Courts and go against a man; he may appeal from that verdict to the Court of Appeal, it may also decide against him; he may carry his case finally to the House of Lords, the court of last resource, and, if the law Lords give a verdict in his favour every other decision is annulled: if they justify him, it matters not that the lower courts have condemned, for he stands justified now in the final court of appeal.

It is even so with the sinner who believes: he can with triumph say, “Who is he that condemneth?” Satan—the foe—may still accuse, recounting sins which no mortal can number; but, if God has justified the man, he clamours in vain: there is no court in which his charges can be heard, for God has decided the case and there are none higher than God.

But this question of justification, which is dealt with so blessedly and completely in the Roman Epistle, is not a civil action, as of a man versus his

neighbour: it is a criminal one, a case of “Rex v. the prisoner at the bar,” or, to drop the parable, it is a question of God and the ungodly; of God, who must judge the secrets of men by Christ Jesus, and the sinner who has sinned against Him. In this case the sinner has no defence, there are no extenuating circumstances, and it will not avail to plead ignorance. A plea of ignorance could not be admitted even in a worldly court of justice; upon this matter an authority has written, “Ignorance of law excuses no man. Every man must be taken to know the law: to hold the contrary would be to confer a premium on ignorance which would afford a defence to every possible transgression of the law.”

To plead guilty, and then to be silent before God, to see what He will do and say, is the only honest, the only right course for the sinner to pursue. When this is done, then does God surprise us by the magnificence of His ways, for He declares His righteousness in justifying the guilty sinner, in justifying him freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3. 24); and, if it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? There is no answer to the challenge, for every voice that had a claim to be heard has been silenced in the death of Christ; and so we are turned to that death and what follows as the basis upon which all rests.

“It is Christ that died.” Here we are carried down into depths deeper than which nothing can be, and here in these depths was laid the foundation, broad and immovable, upon which every act of God, in grace or judgment, is righteously built. Death was an in-

truder in God's domain ; sin opened the door for it to enter in devastating power ; it lay upon all men as the judgment of God because all had sinned ; it was the evidence, beyond all other, of the utterly lost condition of men ; it was also Satan's power, and by it he hoped to keep men for ever from the heart of the God who loved them. But God has taken it—the enemy, the invader—and has made it, in that hour which appeared to be its crowning victory, to declare all the glory of His love. Goliath, in the fullness of his strength, has been slain with his own sword.

The sinless One, instead of the sinful, submitted Himself to sin's penalty, and thus was eternal justice vindicated, and the righteousness of God established beyond dispute ; so that He can justify whom He elects, and do it in such completeness that none can lay a charge against them.

"Yea rather, that is risen again." We pass on and up, carried, as it were, upon a rising cadence, for this is a psalm of

triumph, it is the music of the gospel of God. The resurrection from the dead is the vindication of Him who died ; it is the seal of God upon the work accomplished in those mighty depths, it is victory, the victory of the divine purposes over all the efforts of the devil to thwart them.

"Who is even at the right hand of God." In the lowest depths, when He died for us, Jesus glorified God about our sins ; in the highest height in resurrection life God has glorified Him, evidence of His satisfaction in all that He has accomplished ; and the glory secured in the depths, and the satisfaction declared in the heights, are the measure of the justification in which the believer stands : it is absolute and eternal ; and he is not only justified, but he stands now where no charge can be advanced ; he is in Christ Jesus, and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8. 1). This is how God acts for the glory of His grace and the blessing of His own.

Papers on the Higher Criticism.

(H. P. BARKER).

I. Higher Criticism and the Mission Field.

ONE of the brightest features of the nineteenth century was the movement amongst Christians for the evangelization of the heathen. Thousands of devoted men and women turned their backs, for Christ's sake, upon comfortable homes and rosy prospects, and went forth as heralds of the gospel into the lands of pagan and Mohammedan darkness.

One of the saddest features of the opening years of the twentieth century is the leavening of this heaven-sent movement by the insidious and corrupting influences of what is generally known as "Higher Criticism." For a man to be a "missionary" nowadays

is no guarantee that he is a loyal believer in the Christ of the Scriptures and in the inspired Word of God.

The critical school, aptly termed by the late Dr. Duff "the conjectural school," has for many a year been busily engaged in promulgating its conclusions, deductions, speculations, inferences, and theories in so-called Christian countries. Many a theological college and seminary for the training of "ministers" has gained unenviable notoriety as a hotbed of these teachings. Hundreds of British, American, and German students have been sent forth to occupy the pulpits of the various denominations, their minds poisoned with the

false philosophy of this modern phase of rationalism.

And now the missionary field is invaded by the same thing. We hear of men going to China, to India, to Africa, and to far-off islands of the southern seas, who are utterly unsound as to the person of Christ, the atonement, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the necessity of the new birth, and other fundamental verities.

That this is no nightmare of the imagination is proved by the Reports of the recent "World Missionary Conference" held in Edinburgh.

A "missionary" in China writes: "We cannot teach the Scriptures as our predecessors did. Chinese students are aware of the modern attitude towards the Scriptures. They are the product of the human mind, and stand in the same category with the Chinese classics. The early narratives are mythical, and Christ is an idealized religious teacher."

A "bishop" in the same country writes: "It would be useless to attempt to keep the Chinese in ignorance of the Higher Criticism. More than this, they ought to be able to avail themselves of its ascertained results, of all that is true in it. For a missionary to teach the Bible just as it was taught a hundred years ago is folly in the light of all that has been learned about the Bible since."

The two words, "ascertained results," used by this writer have become quite a stock phrase with the adherents of the Higher Criticism. We shall see, in subsequent papers, how many of these "ascertained results" have been exploded and discredited by archæological research. But let one or two more extracts from the Reports be noted.

A worker in Japan writes: "The Higher Criticism, in the technical sense of the word, is known to most of the native preachers and to many of the more intelligent laymen, *and they spread it abroad.* [The italics are ours.] The

Higher Critic exists in all his varieties, from the sane, devout, conservative-progressive, to the most radical."

The Reports also notice a book, "Fifty Years of New Japan," written by a native "bishop," Yoichi Honda, in which the following significant sentences occur:

"In 1890 the magazine, 'The Unitarian,' was started, and another, the 'Shinri' (Truth), as an organ for propagating the Higher Criticism. This movement shook the Japanese church to its foundations. . . . Some doubted the doctrine of the Trinity, others objected to that of redemption, and still others jeered at the dogma of the Virgin birth. As a result, faith became colder from that time onwards among Japanese church members."

One of the results of this evil work is noticed in the letter of another missionary in Japan. He says:

"For over ten years (1890-1900) these Higher Critical problems so absorbed the thought of the pastors, and so shook their confidence in the gospel, that little aggressive work was accomplished."

These quotations are given in the quarterly magazine of the Bible League in a paper by the secretary. In another article India is referred to, and we are told that "a few years ago the editor of a Hindu periodical expressed his thanks to a prominent member of the 'critical' school for having done away with the belief inculcated by missionaries, that the Bible was the 'Book of books,' and for having brought it down to the level of an excellent volume of great antiquity, without any special claim to inspiration."

In the "Review of Religions," a Mohammedan paper, the editor writes:

"Thus has the Bible been swept away like a straw before the mighty current of modern criticism. . . . It is not the unmixed Word of God. It is not unerring. Such is the modern Christian faith, and we are glad to see

that even *the Christian missionaries have recognized the truth of these views.*"

I trust I shall not weary the reader with these terribly sad quotations. It is well that we should be aware of the extent of the ravages made by the evil teachings of Higher Criticism. I make one more extract from the *Bible League Quarterly*, this time from a newspaper published in the island of Ceylon. Three years ago this newspaper reviewed a book written by a "missionary" thus :

"So far as we can find, the author has not the faintest notion wherein Christianity differs fundamentally from the various systems of philosophy with which he endeavours to compare it. The Christ he knows is not the Christ of the Bible, but one evolved from mere human speculation; and the Christianity he sets forth is not scriptural Christianity, but a system of salvation without a Saviour."

Think of such a book being written by a *missionary!*

Enough has been said to prove how real and widespread is the evil which we deplore. The question arises, What course of action should be pursued by those who remain loyal to the Scriptures, believing them to be the sure Word of God, and owning the One of whom they testify as their Saviour and Lord? Decisive action is called for, and surely we should seek guidance from the Scriptures that we honour, and pray for grace to obey their teachings.

We are expressly taught in the Second Epistle of John that to have any manner of fellowship with one who brings other doctrine than the doctrine of Christ is to be partaker of his evil deeds. Let us not plead the conventional usages of the day as an excuse for disobeying this clear injunction.

Waiting upon God continually in prayer will abate your unnecessary cares and sweeten your necessary ones.

In order to obey it, the worker on the foreign field might possibly have to dissociate himself from a society with which he has been connected for the greater part of his life. He might have to sacrifice remuneration that he can ill afford to do without. He might have to quit a sphere of labour where he has many precious ties. But the question of questions for each one is, Are we going to place loyal obedience to the Word of God before everything else? Are we, at all costs, intent upon being true servants and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He not worthy of our whole-hearted allegiance?

The question also arises for those who remain at home. Can they obey the teaching of 2 John and yet continue to support by their subscriptions societies which countenance the doctrines of Higher Criticism, or which, at all events, maintain as their agents men who endorse them? Will not a determination to *obey* the commandment of the Lord involve an adjustment of their relations to such societies?

It is not that the secretaries and other officials are in ignorance as to what is going on. Communications have been made upon the subject to such of the societies as are unmistakably involved, and the replies given afford ample evidence of full knowledge on the part of those who are in control. Hence the extreme gravity of the situation.

If we can do nothing else, we can betake ourselves to prayer. And with the help of God we can give His Word a larger place in our hearts, not merely talking about the wonderful truths that it reveals, but allowing them to colour and govern our lives.

In our next paper we shall consider the origin and aims of the Higher Criticism.

There is more happiness in the fact of being in communication with God than in the things He communicates.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 4.

The Baptism and Temptation of the Lord (Matt. 3. 13-17; 4. 1).

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And he a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Ch. 4. 1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

The Baptism.

THE Lord emerged at His baptism from the obscurity of His early life, a life entirely hidden from our eyes save for that one ray of glory that shone through the veil when, at the age of twelve, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" It was given to LUKE alone to record that incident, and it falls in with the character of his Gospel, which, as we have before seen, presents the Lord as the Man of perfect obedience to, and dependence upon God. Every part that went to make up that life, whether childhood, youth, or manhood, was lived according to that rule; and that He had honoured the Father in those *secret* years is evident, for He was by Him rewarded *openly* when from the heavens He was saluted, in the midst of Israel, as the Father's beloved Son. And thus in Him was the great principle of Matthew 6. 6 first demonstrated.

The first words given to MATTHEW to record, and only recorded by him, as having come from those blessed lips, carry us along another line of thought. They were spoken to meet the difficulty which arose in John's mind as he realized the glory of the Person who had come to him for baptism. "Suffer now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Again the perfection of the Word compels our admiration, and we see that a divine, a master hand, has thrown the portrait on the canvas. Emmanuel comes before us here as the King amongst His people, the King who shall reign in righteousness.

But He would first prove His capacity to rule by obeying, He would demon-

strate His own personal righteousness before administrating righteousness for others. This righteousness, which He would fulfil, was the path of God's will for Him in relation to His people, whom He would save from their sins. He is here seen identifying Himself with them, in infinite grace, as they confessed those sins, HIMSELF SINLESS. This path of righteousness was to carry Him onward until, as the scapegoat for Israel, He should bear their iniquities into "a land not inhabited" (Lev. 16. 22), which, indeed, He accomplished when from the depths of the impenetrable gloom of Calvary He cried: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matt. 27. 46). But that path will carry Him still further; it will bring Him to that morning, a morning without clouds, when as the Sun of Righteousness He shall arise with healing in His wings (Mal. 4. 2): "then with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. 11. 4).

The King gives character to His kingdom, and He was marked by inward righteousness, He *loved* righteousness and hated iniquity, and though men betrayed and murdered "the JUST ONE" (Acts 7. 52), yet unto Him, the Son, hath God said: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (Heb. 1. 8). (J.T.M.)

MATTHEW gives us the exercise it caused John that Jesus should come to be baptized of him. "John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" It needed the "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" of the Lord to remove his scruples. The people had come to be baptized of John confessing

their sins; *He* had come fulfilling righteousness; that is, carrying out the will of God.

But what was the will of God that Jesus thus carried out? It was seen in His identifying Himself in this way with the true remnant of Israel, who proved that they were such by taking their first step Godward as sinners; confessing their sins and judging themselves before Him, and renouncing all claim or title to blessing in baptism, which was the symbol of death under God's judgment. They were become "the saints that are in the earth, the excellent," of whom the Lord speaks in Psalm 16. 3, at the very opening of His path of life, saying, "in whom is all My delight." His taking His place with them, in wonderful grace, was the signal for the opening of the heavens unto Him, for they had now found an object on earth to gaze upon; and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and lighted upon Him, while a voice from heaven proclaimed Him to be the beloved Son of the Father, the perfect object of His pleasure.

LUKE preserves the precious characteristic detail of His being baptized and *praying* when the heavens opened to Him—the first of the seven distinct occasions where, as the dependent Man, He is seen in prayer in that Gospel. MARK, as well as Luke, gives the words as more personal to Himself, besides the official recognition of Matthew: "*Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,*" also emphasizing the fact that the Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him. The heavenly dove, as it were, long since grieved away from the earth under God's judgment in Noah's day, had found a resting-place for the sole of its foot in the Man of God's pleasure, whom God the Father sealed.

What a moment had been found for the revelation of the Trinity! A God-head of distinct Persons had always been the God of the Bible. It had been marked in Hebrew by a plural noun with a singular verb, as distinguished from false gods with the ordinary plural verb. But now Father, Son, and Spirit are each seen in their own place and blessed relation with each other, and that on the occasion of the identification of the Lord Jesus Himself with some of the moral

outcasts of the people who had been brought to repentance; for that such was the character of those who had bowed to John's testimony we know from Matthew 21. 31, 32.

It is at this point that the genealogy is introduced in Luke, not as connected with the lovely names of God's grace in a remnant of His ancient people (chaps. 1. 2.), nor as in Matthew with the fulfilment of Jewish promise, but as the representative Man in perfection and according to God's counsels, who, when His path and work as such was accomplished, to take His place as Head of a new race in resurrection. (J.A.T.)

It is of interest, too, to notice that it was at the moment in which the Lord Jesus Christ came up out of the waters of Jordan, with their plain foreshadowing of the cross and the grave, that the Triune God was thus fully declared, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Only in redemption is God fully known; and as to all that He is morally His glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ, now risen out of death's dark waters. In effect, too, it was as having come up out of those waters that He made good to His own the revelation of the Father, gave to them the Holy Ghost, who until then "was not given" (John 7. 39), and became Himself an object of faith (John 14. 1).

(H.D.R.J.)

The Spirit chose the form of the dove—the bird of love and purity—and lighted on Him.

Here we have a signal proof of the essential holiness of His person. No atoning work was needed by Him prior to this anointing; no blood required to fit Him for this oil—"the Spirit of God descended on Him."

Are we not prepared for that which follows as a kind of consequence? "This," declares the voice from heaven, "is My beloved Son"—pointing Him out, not in comparison, but in absolute contrast to all beside, the perfect One—"in whom I have found My delight" (Matt. 3. 17).

In Mark the words are more direct: "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and in Luke still more direct: "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." Thus we

see that words were spoken for His own ear as well as for the ears of others. The acknowledgment was personal as well as public. And thus He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power for the ministry of His life here below. (J W S)

The Temptation.

The Lord was led from the joy of the Father's expressed delight and love into the desert to be tested by Satan (Matt 4 1). In the perfection of His holiness He shrank from this meeting as may be gathered from the words employed in the narrative.

LUKE states that He "was led by the Spirit," MATTHEW reads, "then Jesus was carried up into the wilderness by the Spirit" (N T), MARK employs an even stronger word, "immediately the Spirit drives Him out into the wilderness." Truly "He suffered being tempted," but the terms employed in the passages quoted indicate very clearly the positive necessity that this evil power should be met and overcome, for he who would spoil the goods of the strong man must first bind him (Matt 12 29).

This victory was achieved not by the exercise of divine power—that display is reserved for the establishment of the kingdom (Rev 20 1-3)—but as Man in the place of dependence. All the armour wherein Satan "trusted" was of no avail in this conflict, for the first time in man's history the tempter met a stronger than himself. Other reasons for the necessity of this trial are found in Hebrews 2 18 and 4 15.

It is important to note the way of the Master's overcoming, for in the use of the Word of God against the temptations of the evil one, He becomes an example to us, and by the fact that He has trodden the path before us, priestly succour and sympathy from on high are assured to those who follow in His steps.

It does not come within the scope of Mark's commission to give the details of the temptation, but with Matthew he tells of the ministration of angels, which Luke mentions in the further conflict in Gethsemane (Luke 22 43). These both have regard to the physical weakness of the moment, and are evidence of the reality of the humanity of our Lord.

The temptations are given in Luke in moral order, viz in the order of the character they would have assumed in any other man than the perfect One: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2 16). Our first parents had fallen in their paradise at the first assault of the enemy. How will the Son of God in far different circumstances meet the same test? The reply is not doubtful. At every fresh suggestion of the evil one the Word of God is used. The sword of the Spirit is to foil the attack so that in all the virtue of this great moral victory, Jesus, the Son of God, enters upon the enemy's territory and takes his prey from him.

The practical importance of the order of events as given in Luke is worthy of notice. First, the anointing of the Spirit in 3 22, the fullness of the Spirit in 4 1, the power of the Spirit in 4 14, the last in connection with testimony among men. If God in the fullness of His grace gives to us the place and portion of His beloved Son as Man before Him, surely it is that in the conscious possession by the Spirit, of what is infinitely and eternally good (see Ps 4 6), we should be able to face the tempter, and overcome him by finding every motive for action in the Word and will of God. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all things to God's glory.

The soul thus empowered will refuse any material gain that could be acquired by the sacrifice of divine principle, and finally will be so restful in the knowledge of God that no visible testimony of His power will be required to prove that He is as good as His word. These things we learn from the temptation in this Gospel.

Thus having overcome in secret and counted the cost with God (Luke 14 28), the believer "in the power of the Spirit" will be found in effective testimony before men. "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace" (4 22). Truly "He has marked out the path that we tread." However defectively we follow—

"There is but that one in the waste
Which His footsteps have marked as His
own"

But it is important, before leaving this subject, to notice that in many scriptures temptation is spoken of in a sense clearly distinguished from any thought of an

inward impulse to sin. Thus God Himself, who cannot be tempted by evil, was "tempted" by Israel in the desert, and He did tempt Abraham. Thus used, it signifies trial or testing. Some have not shrunk from saying that temptation could cause no suffering where there is no inward impulse to sin; that it is in the resistance to this desire or impulse that suffering is felt; and consequently that the victory over sin consists in not yielding to the impulse. We may well ask, Was this true of Christ? Was there in Him any such impulse? Far otherwise! With Him as tempted there was suffering indeed, but it lay in the presentation to One perfect in holiness and dependence of the suggestion (from without Himself) to act independently of God. All that perfect purity could feel in respect of sin He surely felt; but away with the vile thought that He experienced any desire to sin! (C.E.H.W.)

The ministry of John, and the temptation, are given in all three Gospels as the introduction of the Lord's ministry, which only began, as we know from Matthew and Mark, when John's closed by his imprisonment.

The temptation is only briefly alluded to by MARK, where the Lord is "driven," not simply led, by the Spirit into the wilderness; but there is added by that writer the touching detail that He was with the wild beasts. How absolute the contrast to the circumstances wherein Adam was tempted and fell! LUKE, as well as Mark, records that He was tempted through the forty days, during which He ate nothing. MATTHEW and LUKE carry us on to the end of that time when He was an hungered (for He never used His Godhead power to relieve Himself from any consequence of the place He had taken as Man). It was this moment of human weakness that the enemy chose as his opportunity to come against Him with the armour wherein he trusted.

There are characteristic differences in the way the temptation is presented. MATTHEW gives the historic order, and the full sequel. Satan first sought to turn Him from the only true place of man—namely, obedience to and dependence upon God. Baffled at both these points by the perfection with which the Lord kept His place in both, he pre-

sented the world to the Lord, offering Him all the kingdoms of it and the glory of them if He would only worship him. Then it is, when the tempter has come out in his full character as claiming divine worship, that the Lord says: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Him only shalt thou serve."

Thus He has been assailed as Son of God, as Messiah, and Son of Man, and overcame by the Word of God abiding in Him—the perfect example for us who have to meet the same enemy of God and of our souls, though now to faith a vanquished one (1 John 2. 14). It is significant, too, in presence of the infidel attack on the Pentateuch, and Deuteronomy in particular, that, when everything was at stake for God's glory in the issue of that conflict, the Lord took His stand on that book alone, as God's instruction for the place He had taken as a Jew in the land of promise.

LUKE, to bring out the deeper moral order of the temptations, alters the place of the last two. There we see the Lord tempted first in that which is natural to man, then in that which is of the world, and lastly in the most subtle of all, that which is spiritual. Only it is to be carefully observed that in giving this difference of order, Luke does not record the dismissal of Satan after his second attack (the Revised or any critical version will show this), for how then would any place have been found for another attack? The words are not given in verse 8, or at all in Luke, the carelessness of transcribers being also chargeable with putting into the Lord's mouth here words not addressed to Satan personally, but to His failing disciple Peter in Matthew 16. 23: "He turned, and said unto *Peter*, Get thee behind Me, Satan."

Luke closes the scene with what prepares us for what was yet before the Lord in Gethsemane to have its special place in this Gospel: "Having ended all the temptation, the devil departed from Him for a season." The ministry of angels has its place, then, in Matthew and Mark. In Luke He returns in the unimpaired power of the Spirit into Galilee, where His ministry was to open, where He taught in the synagogues, being glorified of all.

MATTHEW, with its dispensational bearing, connects His appearing there with the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah 8. 5-9. 1, 2, where it had been announced beforehand that, if the Roman captivity were far more terrible in its consequences than the Assyrian invasion, there would be what made all the difference in the fact of the Messiah's presence among them: "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sit in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." (J.A.T.)

In the record of the temptation in each of our Gospels "the devil" is spoken of. His actual existence is accepted unquestioningly; nor, to those acquainted with history in the Old Testament, would there be any need to prove it.

That existence may, with other mysteries, be vainly explained away in our foolish day; but such explanations leave the difficulties unsolved, and only demonstrate more clearly the truthfulness of Scripture. Here, then, we find the devil in dread, personal actuality, daring to tempt the Son of God now in human form.

What eternal issues hung on the result! The "strong man" boldly encountered the "stronger;" and it was necessary that, at the start of the Lord's mission and of His spoliation of the "strong man's goods," His victory should be absolute. That victory was a glorious moral triumph. Our Lord had just been anointed by God, and had received the richest of heaven's salutations. He, as thus anointed, is ready to serve. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. He could go and not only preach the

gospel to the poor, but also deliver the captives of the enemy.

This enemy, then, must first be overcome, and the Lord is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, apart from the haunts of men and to the place of solitude, to encounter the foe.

The conflict, if such it may be called, was unseen by human eye. There were no serried ranks of trembling and anxious spectators, as in the Valley of Elah, and the weapons in this case were not stones from the brook, nor carnal missiles, but only words from the Book used in perfect wisdom, and, as the sword of the Spirit, resistless in force. The dependent Son of Man wielded no other sword than the written Word of God, and it was in His hand divinely effective.

Led or driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, the Lord was there for forty days. It may be difficult to say whether the temptation covered all that period; but clearly, when after fasting all the time He was then hungered, the devil chose that precise moment for his assault.

Adam was surrounded by the opulence of Eden when assailed by the serpent, and, alas! fell under his power; the Lord was in circumstances of outward destitution at that juncture.

The words chosen by the Lord for the defence were all taken from Deuteronomy, that book in which Moses laments continuously the failure of the people, but which supplied the armoury for Him who, in circumstances of similar dependence as theirs, never failed at all. Is it any wonder that this book should have become a special object of Satan's attack to-day? (J.W.S.)

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him (Job 13. 15).

There are times when our faith is called to triumph through a great deliverance, but there are times when it is called to stand firm through a great trial. We cannot make a bargain with God and say, "We will trust Him because He is going to deliver us." We are to trust Him come what may. It is possible the deliverance may not come on this side of life's outlook, but we nail our colours to the mast and

say with the men of Babylon, "Our God . . . is able to deliver us. . . . But if not . . ." Deliverance must come at last, and the crowning day will have the brightest crown for those who for a time seemed to go down in the forlorn hope, but for such faith there never can be a final defeat. Are we standing true although the trial still lasts and the dawn has not yet appeared?—*Selected.*

The Father's Love.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

THE love of the Father is, like the love of Christ, an ocean—fathomless, boundless, changeless, and eternal. In *essence* the love is the same; what is true of Christ's love is true of the Father's. If we would learn the Father's love we must sit at the feet of Jesus; it is in the only-begotten Son, who was eternally in the Father's bosom, that its full and perfect revelation has reached us.

He alone fathomed the depths of the infinite love in the Father's heart and came to this world to make that love known. He was sent into the world by the Father, and spake the Father's words, and did the Father's works, for all things were delivered into His hand by the Father. If any came to the Son when here, it was as drawn and given to Him of the Father; they were the Father's love gift to Him (John 10. 29).

This is equally true now. The Father who loves the Son has given those whom He delights to call "His own" to the Son. What compensation must He find in this love-gift for the toil and sorrow He passed through while declaring God's heart to men! What calm, quiet peace flows into the heart when we take in the Father's love thus; when we see that poor, worthless things like ourselves are picked out of the mud of this world, and cleansed from our sins, and presented to the Son as the Father's gift, the *Giver* imparting all the value to the *gift* (John 17. 6).

The Father's love to the Son is shown in presenting us to Him; the Father's love to us in giving Him for us.

During Christ's earthly pathway He abode alone in the relationship of Son to the Father, whom He revealed and declared; but as risen He takes up a new position as first-born among many brethren.

Christ, before death, was an *only-begotten*; in resurrection He is a *first-begotten*; for others now share with

Him the place of sons before the Father's face. His Father is now their Father.

John invites us to "behold" the "*manner*" of the Father's love to us; the form and way that love has taken in that *we* should be called "children of God." *We* may well wonder and adore when we think of the pit out of which *we* have been digged, of the moral distance from God in which we were, the depths of mercy which have reached us, and the sovereign grace which has made us the subjects of the deepest affections of the Father's heart.

The *manner* of the love is seen in setting us in the children's place, but the *measure* of it is found in that matchless declaration which fell from our Lord's lips, "Thou hast *loved them as Thou hast loved Me*" (John 17. 23).

If we could discover the deep and boundless love which fills the Father's heart for His Son, we should know the nature and extent of His affection for us.

Neither manner nor measure is relegated to the future; this love is ours *now* as fully as then. "Beloved, *now* are *we* the children of God," as much children, as truly loved now, as when displayed as sons in the day of glory. What *we shall be* then is not visible now, but *we* know—if the world does not—that *we* shall see Jesus as He is and be like Him when He appears.

Turn to 1 John, chapter 3., and as you read its opening verses look up into the face of God your Father, and contemplate the *manner of His love* and the *measure of His love*. Consider that He has brought you into His family, imparted to you His nature, has called you His child, and loves you with the deep, unchanging affection of His bosom for His beloved Son; that you are truly His now and to all eternity, one of the home circle, one of those included in those charming words: "*Beloved, now are we the*

children of God." Drink it in until your soul is bowed in adoring worship and you render grateful thanks to God—your Father—for having loved you in this manner. Nor think that this privilege belongs only to advanced saints: babes in Christ are accredited with *knowing the Father* (and this is surely an advance on knowing they are His children); this knowledge is the common privilege of all believers.

Let us inquire how far we have apprehended this relationship to the Father. Are we satisfied with addressing God as "Heavenly" Father, *i.e.* regarding Him merely as One who, from a far distance, graciously provides for our needs as a father meets the needs of his children, or are we *intimately acquainted with Him*? Do we really *know* Him who is our Father?

In Ephesians 1. we travel into another aspect of the Father's love. Here we learn that *our holy association with Christ in this blessed place of relationship to His Father is the fruit and effect of purpose and counsel before all worlds.*

We travel from our side to His; we enter into the Father's joy; we are allowed to bask in the sunshine of the Father's delight *in us*, to learn that the love which gave the Son, and gave us to the Son, and made us sons, and loves us as the Son, finds not only pleasure, but *good pleasure* in having us as sons before His face, holy and blameless in love.

Here we see the Father's affections gratified; we are viewed in all the favour and delight which rests on His Beloved; in Him we minister pleasure to the Father, who has adopted us to Himself for the satisfaction of His heart. We can only compare ourselves, when contemplating this aspect of the Father's love, to a babe on its mother's bosom. What does it know of the satisfaction of the mother's heart? How far does it enter into her delight? It feels the warmth of her caress, but it is the mother who loves.

So here with our God and Father, we stand amazed not only at the manner

and measure, but at the magnitude of the love. What warmth and sunshine for us to bask in, as we think that we have a nearer and more intimate place in the Father's affection than angel or archangel; that we minister to His delight.

Christ is the One and only One who ever was, is, and will be the constant delight of the Father. In Him we are chosen, in Him we are blessed, in Him we are holy and without blame, in Him we are loved with deep and fervent love, in Him sonship is assured and love secured. As thus linked up and associated with Himself, what a holy elevation is ours. What satisfaction the Father finds in the "many sons;" what pleasure in those who are being conducted to glory.

All this is the fruit of the Father's love. A love displayed first of all in sending the Son to make Him known, a love which gave Jesus to possess us, a love which gratifies itself in making us children now, and will display us as sons in glory shortly.

But there is another way the Father loves us. He has not only thought of us for eternity, but thinks of us in time; not only pledged a kingdom, but has undertaken to care for all who will be in that kingdom. How tenderly and graciously we are reminded that every wilderness need is thought of by Him; that our Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him, has counted every hair on our heads, pities us, provides for us, invites us to roll all our care upon Him. Why? Because, He *cares* for us; cares for us with a love which stoops to think of every sorrow, trial, perplexity in which we may find ourselves, and provides a way of escape that we may be able to bear the pressure—a love which neither death nor life, height nor depth, men nor angels can rob us of. We are loved with a love from which we can never be separated, since it is in His Son we are loved: the love of God our Father which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Encouragement.

TIME was when'er the saints I met
 With joy and praise my bosom glowed ;
 But now like Eli sad I sit,
 And tremble for the *ark of God*.

While thus to grief my soul gave way,
 To see the work of God decline,
 Methought I heard my Saviour say,
 "Dismiss thy fears, the *ark* is Mine.

"Though for a time I hide My face,
 Rely upon My love and power ;
 Still wrestle at a throne of grace,
 And wait for a reviving hour.

"Take down thy long-neglected harp,
 I've seen thy tears and heard thy prayer ;
 The winter season has been sharp,
 But spring shall all its wastes repair."

Lord, I obey, my hopes revive.
 Come join with me, ye saints, and sing ;
 Our foes in vain against us strive,
 For God will help and healing bring.

John Newton.

"Peace" and "My Peace."

(J. A. TRENCH).

IN comparing different aspects of peace it is helpful to note that in John 14. 27 the Lord distinguishes between peace left to us and peace given to us. "Peace I leave with you" is peace with God as to every question of sin. He has made it by the blood of His cross, and brought the tidings of it on the evening of the day of His resurrection, when He stood in the midst of His own and greeted them with "Peace be unto you." He showed them too His hands and side as the witness of the work in which it had been accomplished, and commissioned them to go forth with it to others (John 20. 19-21). It was the precious legacy of His death. We have it (Rom. 5. 1) as we believe the testi-

mony of God to the facts of His having been delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. It is *peace of conscience*. He could not speak of it as His. He never needed it: we did, and He made it and left it to us.

But the Lord goes on to speak of a deeper character of peace—"My peace I give unto you." It is the peace in which He ever walked with the Father, the calm unruffled peace which resting in His love and submitting Himself absolutely to all His ways afforded. He characterizes it as His, and has given it absolutely to be ours—not as the world gives indeed, for though it may give largely and generously it

gives away ; but He gives as bringing us into the possession of it with Himself. It is here applied to His peace, but the principle is true of all He gives—as His joy (chap. 15. 11), His glory (17. 22), and the place He has in His Father's love (vers. 23, 26). How surely our hearts would own that the way He gives is the richest thing in what He gives, even that we possess it all in and with Himself. This second peace, then, coming in its own perfect order, is *peace of heart*, of the heart that has found Christ's own resting-place as its own in a Father's love well known. We are entitled to count it ours, and that by His absolute gift, now to live in it practically through all the stress and strain of circumstances. Once again it is formally referred to in the Epistles (Colossians 3. 15) : "Let the peace of *Christ* rule in your hearts" (N.T. and other critical versions), holding its blessed sway in all that is there, "to which ye have been called in one body," and thus in all

our relations with our fellow-Christians.

It only remains, after what has been before us in "Notes of Bible Readings, No. 1," p. 37, to emphasize the strongly conditional character of the peace promised in Philippians 4. But the condition is only that we trust God with what would suggest care to us, putting the care upon Him instead of carrying it as a burden upon our hearts. And now it is not the peace of Christ, who as Man passed through the scene of trial, but the peace of God on the throne where no breath of trial ever came, which He guarantees shall keep our hearts and minds. And if our poor hearts would say that it is utterly incomprehensible, God has anticipated us and tells us that it passeth all understanding. He does not expect us, then, to understand it, but acting upon His word in simple confidence of heart in Him we shall realize the truth of it. May it be ever more and more so with us.

A Great Revival.—No. 3.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30.).

6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever : and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

9 For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land : for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

KING Hezekiah sent out the posts to all Israel and Judah, with an urgent appeal that they should come to Jerusalem to keep the passover, and most touching was the message they carried to the rebellious nation. The basis of it was the grace and mercy of God. Hezekiah was not ignorant of the God whose Word he sought to obey, for he said of Him, "The Lord your

God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him." All hope for the backslider's restoration and for any revival among the people of God must ever lie in what God is. "So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun : but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them"

(ver. 10). There was some power in the testimony, evidently, to produce such a result; but the people judged that it was the height of absurdity to attempt to keep a feast which spoke of the oneness of Israel when that nation was broken and oppressed; and that under the conditions it would be impossible to act in obedience to the word of God. You will find it even so to-day: to attempt to be obedient to the word of God alone will call forth the pity of many. "Paul's Epistles," say they, "and the doings of the early disciples were all well enough for those far-off days, but you cannot take these for your guide to-day. You must at least water down the truth of God, be prepared to compromise, and suit your views to your environment." If we are to stand against the scorn of the scorners we must be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Though many refused the overtures of the king, God did not leave him without comfort, for we read, "Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem" (ver. 11). The person who seeks to walk in the truth will find that God will help him, cheer him, and maintain him. He will also find others to accept it and hold it with him. "Divers humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." This was Hezekiah's reward. God gave to these men who humbled themselves before Him and gathered to obey His word a time of joy and gladness, for "*they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness.*"

The Meaning of the Passover.

We might turn aside from our narrative to see briefly what the passover was and what it teaches us. It was instituted to be a constant reminder to the Israelites of the great deliverance that God had wrought for them when He redeemed them out of the bondage of Egypt. It is called "the offering of the Lord" (Num. 9.). It spoke, in type, to God of Christ in all the perfect

goodness of His heart, giving Himself to death for the glory of God and the deliverance of His people. It is not only what meets *us*: the sprinkled blood was for God's eye; by it the claims of righteousness were met and His people redeemed. There are four striking scriptures in the New Testament that mark out the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the antitype of the passover: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1. 36); "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs. . . . For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken" (John 19. 33 and 36); "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7); and "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1. 18-20). Therefore the passover is a touching figure of the perfection of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A feast for the commemoration of Himself, and of His love in going into death for us, was instituted by our Lord on the night of His betrayal; it is called the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11.), and answers to the passover feast. No Christian can afford to treat this feast of remembrance lightly; spiritual decay must be the result of such conduct, just as the Israelite who made light of the passover came under God's hand and died. This is the feast of which every one who loves the Lord should partake, but in a humbled and self-judged spirit: let a man examine himself and so let him eat (1 Cor. 11. 28).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread.

But they also kept the feast of un-

leavened bread. The leaven spoke of evil ; during that week it was not to be in their houses, and these people had a sense of what they were doing, for they began at once to remove from their midst what was unsuited to God. "*They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron*" (ver. 14). Observe, even in Judah, where things were outwardly right, where the temple and the worship of Jehovah were, there were idolatrous altars. And it is quite possible for people to be right outwardly and correct as to doctrine, and yet to be harbouring idols : "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." The unleavened bread speaks of holy separateness to Christ. Let us keep that feast.

The priests and Levites sanctified themselves and brought burnt-offerings into the house of the Lord. Every Christian is both a priest and a Levite : a priest for worship, a Levite for service. If you are a Christian, you are of the holy priesthood, and your privilege is to go into the sanctuary and there exercise your priestly function in worship Godward. You are also a Levite, to undertake service and testimony to Christ.

The mercy of God, which awoke them to do that which was pleasing to

Him, followed them through the doing of it. This was specially manifested when some of them, through ignorance doubtless, "*did eat the passover otherwise than it was written*" (ver. 18). For these Hezekiah took the place of intercessor and prayed for them, saying, "The good Lord pardon every one that *prepareth his heart* to seek God . . . though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary" (vers. 18-19). That intercession was not in vain, for "*the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*" Let none fear because of weakness or ignorance to approach to God, for we have a mighty Intercessor on high, and if our hearts are prepared we shall ever prove the mercy of the Lord.

So they "kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness : and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord" (ver. 21). Moreover, the Levites taught the people "the good knowledge of God ;" and "there was great joy in Jerusalem : for since the days of Solomon . . . there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people : and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven" (vers. 26-27).

(To be continued.)

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup (Ps. 16. 5).

Many a person has, in this world, a portion which he *cannot* enjoy ; and many a one has a portion which he *does* not enjoy.

With the Lord Jesus, when here on earth, His portion and His joy were one : Jehovah was the measure of both. He *had* nothing beside ; He *wanted* nothing beside. These two things should be found through grace in the Christian also. It is true for all that God is the measure of our por-

tion—we have no other. Oh that it were equally true that He was the measure of our cup—of our enjoyment !

How strange and sorrowful that for us both should not be realized ! How wonderful that we should seek elsewhere what cannot be found, while we leave unexplored the glories of an inheritance which is actually our own ! We covet a wilderness, while we neglect a Paradise.—*Grant.*

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 1. 5-10.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth

7 But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us

Verse 5.

THE epistle may be said properly to begin here. The previous verses are a sort of preamble, an exordium, corresponding to the salutations in the other epistles. Here the Apostle addresses himself directly to his task: "And this is the message which we have heard from Him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all"

ἄγγελος=angel, or messenger, especially with this character, that he represents the sender, with the dignity attaching thereto. Accordingly we find it said of children, as being so represented, "their angels do always behold the face of My Father" (Matt 18 10). So again Peter's angel (Acts 12 15), the angels of the churches (Rev. 2 3), and the angel of the covenant (Mal 3 1, Matt 11 10). In this way the word "apostle," which means "one sent," a "messenger," seems to differ from "angel," as not in itself implying the dignity of representation. We have accordingly the twelve apostles (Luke 6 13) and the messengers or apostles of the churches (2 Cor 8 23), and the Lord is spoken of seventeen times in the Gospel of John as the apostle or "sent one" of the Father. But notwithstanding, the dignity of representation seems connected rather with the word "angel"

The consideration of the following passages will make this plain (Exod 23 20-25): "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way . . . Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in him . . ." and (Exod 32. 34): "Therefore now go, lead the people . . . behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee. . . ." Here the dignity of the

angel is identified with the glory of the Lord Himself, and their responsibility to obey Him was sanctioned with the severest penalties. So again, "the angel of the Lord" appears to Joseph and gives him instructions which he had unhesitatingly and precisely to obey (Matt 1 20-24, 2 13-19). And by the use in this epistle of various derivatives of this word, a special dignity and authority seem to be intentionally attached to it, which it is well to note. We may remark as follows:—

ἀπαγγέλλω=to bring the report, from the one who sends it, so that it is clothed with his authority, to come straight from him to you with it, hence "we report unto you" (1 John 1 2-3)

ἀναγγέλλω=to report back from somewhere, to announce, "we declare unto you" (ver 5)

ἄγγελια=the message itself, the intimation or announcement of the sender's will, carrying with it the authority of the sender (ver. 5) (T R has ἐπαγγελια.)

ἐπαγγέλλω=to proclaim, make a public announcement, a message, or a promise (1 John 2 25).

ἐπαγγελια=a public proclamation, or promise (1 John 2 25)

εὐαγγέλιον, the glad tidings of the gospel, is not found in the Gospel or Epistle of John. The object of the Apostle is not so much to declare the goodness of the message, as its dignity and divine authority. With him the idea of the "evangel" is more historical, as in the two passages (Rev 10 7, 14 6) in which he uses the word. The purport of the epistle is that it is the message of God, with the majesty thereof. In the writings of Luke and of Paul, on the

other hand, the "announcing of the glad tidings" occurs 107 times. Their ministry was the proclamation of the "good news" far and wide, bringing blessing to both Jew and Gentile. John's object is the preservation of it as the unchangeable, eternal truth of God. Each is suitable in its place, and divinely ordered.

"And this is the message, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." This is the portal at which the inquiring soul must halt in prayerful and protracted meditation, as it seeks admission into the temple of truth beyond. The natural mind has no knowledge of God, and the Old Testament did not reveal Him. It revealed His relation to Israel, and His attributes in the ordering of the world, as all will be brought about in the coming kingdom. But God Himself dwelt in thick darkness (Exod. 20. 21; 1 Kings 8. 12); the time to manifest Himself had not yet come; and the expression so beautiful and so full of hope, "For with Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36. 9), is the confession that as yet that light had not come. Creation plainly could not reveal Him; and the Old Testament was but a partial light. But now we know that "God is light, and in Him darkness is not, not any of it." It is of immense importance thus to know God, and to have the soul formed in the truth of what He is: for in the highest sense we are formed by our conceptions of what we worship in the supremest way. But how many there are who seem to have no proper sense of God at all, or whose notions of Him are the mere outcome of their own thoughts!

"God is light." That is what is predicated of Him here, as later on (ch. 4. 8), "God is love." This is what God is essentially in His own being. They affirm what He is in Himself. Light, *i.e.* absolute purity, revealing at once all that is like itself and all that is not so; while also darkness in every particle of it is excluded therefrom; and love, *i.e.*—but this is more difficult to define, if indeed it can be defined at all—the feelings and activity of perfect goodness, radiating from itself, without external motive, as the emanation of its own nature. These are not attributes of God, but what He is essentially, intrinsically in Himself. Attributes are relative, flowing from what He is, as wisdom,

power, and the like: but this is what He is absolutely, Light and Love, in His own essential being and nature.

Perhaps it might be said that light is connected more with the character of God, and love with His nature; always remembering that in His case, character is not the predominance of one quality over another, where all is absolute and perfect. But, as light manifests everything, it is more readily apprehended in its effects: so, we are "light in the Lord"—that is the Christian's character, and we should walk accordingly; but we are not said to be love in any sense; though we should "walk in love, as Christ loved us."

In John 4. 24, as to His substance, if one may so qualify it, in contrast to the material thoughts of the natural mind, it is said "God is Spirit." But while these are all true, and other things equally true might be predicated of Him, God Himself remains infinite, inaccessible, undefinable. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Job 11. 7). He dwells "in light unapproachable; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see" (1 Tim. 6. 16).

In such expressions as "God is light," "God" has the definite article in the original, but there is no article with "light," *i.e.* the propositions are not reciprocal. The statements therefore could not be reversed, and it would not be true to say "light is God," or "love is God." It is evident how serious an error this would be.

This, then, is the great prefatorial statement of the epistle, the monumental basis of what follows; and by it he tests the pretensions of those who make assertions, whether they are according to the truth or not.

Verse 6.

"If we say." This expression occurs three times (vers. 6, 8, 10). The statement is purely hypothetical, referring to no one in particular, yet including all, even the Apostle himself, so that all such pretensions might be tested, by whomsoever made (comp. for a similar case Gal. 1. 8). "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness. . . ." But we have just seen that "God is light," abhorrent of darkness.

Plainly, then, if we make such a statement while walking in darkness "we lie, and are not practising the truth" We lie in word and deed The two propositions are mutually exclusive, they could not be reconciled It is not a question of the quantity of darkness, be it much or little, but that in their very natures, darkness and light are antagonistic, the one to the other, they cannot harmonize To walk in darkness is to walk in the way of the world To walk in the light is to believe in Jesus and follow Him (John 8 12, 12 46)

Much useless discussion has taken place as to whether a Christian could walk in darkness A Christian, a true Christian, could do anything a man of the world could do, unless as kept by the grace of God (*cf* Rom 2 24, 1 Cor 5 1, Mark 14 71) That is not the point at all, nor does it contradict ch 3 9, which refers to the divine nature of the Christian abstractedly, but "if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness," that is the head and front of the lie, in word and in deed. We are in the lie and out of the truth

Verse 7.

But if instead of walking in darkness, "we walk in the light, as He is in the light," then how different everything is: "we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all [or every] sin"

Here we have the three great constituents of Christianity, walking in the light, fellowship with one another, *ie* the family of God as such in common with the company and the character of the fellowship already announced in verse 3, for all have a title to the privileges that are common to all, and then, behind that, to support them in the liberty and security of this position, the great fact of the all-sufficient and abiding virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ His Son shed once and for ever, for the remission of sins, so that by it we are cleansed from all, or every sin, that would, by the very nature of God, prevent our fitness for this place of light, or hinder our communion there This then is the immediate result of "walking in the light as He is in the light" the mutual fellowship of all saints, the common portion of all in the same grace, as all are called, from the Apostle downwards, into the same fellow-

ship, and all secured by the blood of Jesus Christ His Son

' As He is in the light " But who is He? Here again we have another of those interesting and instructive traits in John's writings John has to say to God, even the Father, to what He is absolutely in Himself. but John has also to say to Jesus, "We have heard, seen, handled the Word of life" But for Him "the Word was God" (John 1 1), 'and the Word became flesh" (John 1 14), *ie* while the persons are maintained in their distinctiveness, their moral oneness is complete (John 10 30), and the mind passes from the one to the other without thought This is the mystery of all mysteries, the incarnation, whereby "the inscrutability of His humanity safeguards the inviolability of His deity" Take as an example 1 John 3 1, 2 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" *ie* Jesus 'Beloved, now are we children of God and when He [Jesus] shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" The Father is the antecedent of it all, but Jesus is the One who brings it all about So here "God is light," but He is 'in the light" in Jesus

To walk—to fulfil the activities of life in the various relationships in which we are set Now, if we walk in that light, the circle of fellowship is complete It is our common privilege to enjoy our common portion, and that we should do if we were walking in the light of God as He is revealed in Jesus This is not ecclesiastical fellowship, nor is it dependent on it, makeable and breakable, as it practically is, by the will of man, but all true ecclesiastical fellowship, "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13 14), is dependent upon this And how good it is to know that while the one has become a 'shubboleth," a "nehush-tan," in the hands of man, the other is preserved intact for His people in the hands of God

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all, or every sin," *ie* it has this character, as has been often said, "a certain medicine cures such a malady," that is its virtue, and such, we have already seen, is the common style of John's writings It is not the con-

tinuous present, ever doing it, for then the soul would never have the sense of being cleansed ; it is not a fresh application of the blood for restoration, for the value of the blood is not for those who walk in darkness, but for those who walk in the light ; it is not a past application, efficacious once and for all, so that cleansed for evermore, the soul remains cleansed, whatever its conduct ; it is not, in fact, an application of the blood at all, for " without the *shedding* of blood," not its application, " there is no remission ;" but it is the abiding value of the blood before God, and for the perfecting of the conscience, which has this character, that it cleanses from every sin. Such is its efficacy, its characteristic and abiding efficacy in itself. Such is the resting-place of the soul in faith.

Verse 8.

" If we say that we have not sin " seems better than " no sin." This is the second of those hypothetical statements, all being of the same general form, " whoever he may be that says it." There are some who have argued from the preceding verse, that the continued efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ is such, that it has at length succeeded in washing them clear of all sin, as a dirty cloth, after long and repeated scouring. It is a misinterpretation of the Scripture, as they will eventually find out to their sorrow. Then there are those who believe that by a sufficiently assiduous and constant application of the blood, they can so keep in check the outcrop of sin in them that they can live practically as if they had no sin. A little time will suffice for them also to find out their

mistake. But while meeting all such cases, the Scripture seems to have in view those who are steeped in a still deeper and falser deception, in that they do not believe they are in a sinful state at all. They do not believe in the reality of sin ; and they would bring the lawlessness of man's will, the self-assertion of a corrupt nature into association with the light of God. There is One of whom it could be said, and One only : " In Him is no sin ;" but to rank fallen humanity in the same category with Him, would be self-deception, and instead of having " no sin," there would be " no truth " in them.

Verse 9.

If, on the other hand, we rightly judge ourselves, and confess these outbursts of an evil nature, to which we are all exposed, calling them by their proper name, " sins," He is faithful, according to His promise, and righteous, according to the atoning work of Christ, not only to forgive us our sins, but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Verse 10.

And if again, thirdly, " we say we have not sinned," this is more than self-deception ; it is high-headed wickedness, and directly makes God a liar ; for He says we have sinned, every one of us ; and whatever our philosophic pretensions to greater light, or a higher standard of ethics for man to live by, than that set forth in Scripture, it is really blasphemous nonsense, and His word is not in us. And is not this the trend of present-day advanced teaching, the apotheosis of man, the very spirit of Antichrist, preparing for the apostasy of the last days ?

How much of our lives is not spent in positive evil, but frittered away and lost in countless petty diversions which spoil effectually the positiveness of their testimony for God ! How few can say with the Apostle, " This one thing I do." We are on the road— not at least intentionally off it ; but we stop to chase butterflies among the flowers, and make no serious progress.

How Satan must wonder when he sees us turn away from " the kingdoms

of the world and the glory of them " when realized as his temptation, and yet yield ourselves with scarce a thought to endless trifles. Would we examine our lives carefully in such an interest as this, how should we realize the multitude of needless anxieties, of permitted relaxations, of " innocent " trifles which incessantly divert us from that in which alone there is profit ! How few perhaps would care to face such an examination of the day by day unwritten history of their lives !—*Grant.*

 The House of God (*continued*).

IT is important to keep distinctly before the mind that there are two thoughts connected with the house of God: they are, first, God's dwelling with us, and, second, our dwelling with Him. The latter is more that which is presented to us in the Father's house of John 14. There it is a wonderful and everlasting place of blessing which is set before us, in which we shall enjoy to the full the sweetness of companionship with Christ and sonship in the unclouded light of the Father's face, as holy and blameless before Him in love. The joy of that holy and blissful scene no creature tongue could tell. With that unspeakably blessed place the notion of testimony cannot be connected. It is all for the delight and satisfaction of the heart of the Father and the Son, and for our eternal happiness, rest, and joy.

But with the thought of God dwelling with us is introduced the idea of testimony and responsibility, though what is testified is not the joy of our relationship with God, but what He is in His grace to the world, in the darkness of which we are set to shine for Him. In the lives of those who compose the house the true character of the gospel is to be delineated; and for the truth of that gospel they stand in the midst of this ruthless and God-hating world, like a rock in the midst of a raging sea, and bearing a light which penetrates the surrounding gloom with the bright rays which emanate from every living stone in the building of God, to guide the despairing and storm-tossed mariner to the only haven of refuge. In that testimony every Christian is set by the very fact that he is a Christian. He may be a faithful or an unfaithful witness, but a witness he is, if he has taken the place of a believer in Jesus.

In the Epistle to the Philippians we

have saints in the brightness of "first love," and we see that all their energies are directed to the end that God as a Saviour might be kept before men in the testimony of the gospel. Their fellowship was with the gospel from the first day until the day in which Paul wrote to them; and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel they were all partakers of the grace of the Apostle. To him they had often ministered their carnal things; and the desire of the Apostle for them was, that their manner of life might be in harmony with that gospel which was so dear to their hearts. And what was true of the Philippians is just that which should be true of all who profess His name. It is well to know how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God.

Those who are living stones in that building are in the light of the revelation of God, and this is the secret and strength of their testimony: "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." This is the mystery of all the piety which comes to light in the house of God. And without controversy this mystery is great. It is the revelation of God in the Son down here in flesh and blood. This is what illuminates that glorious structure, a light which is above the brightness of the sun.

This is the great witness to a Saviour-God. Here prayer goes up to God unceasingly for all men, for those who pray are in the mind of God, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Rulers are taken account of, and prayer goes up for them that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, and the power of God is

sought for those who go forth preaching the glad tidings (Acts 4. 24-30). Where rulers set themselves against the testimony of God the attention of the Lord is besought to such, and for those who preach supplication is made, "that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy servant [R.V.] Jesus." When Peter was cast into prison prayer was made for him without ceasing (Acts 12.); and almost in every epistle Paul desires the prayers of the saints, "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified" (2 Thess. 3. 1).

Of course, in speaking thus I have the house of God before me according to its true character, not that which it has come to in the responsibility of those who never learned how to behave themselves in it. False indeed it is as a witness for God in the midst of this darkness, and therefore it shall in the end be rejected by Him (Rev. 3. 16). In the days of the apostles it had already become obnoxious to the judgment of God, and Peter tells us that the time had come when judgment must begin at it. And this is not, as some have thought, mere discipline, which was ever the portion of those beloved of God (Heb. 12. 6), but it is judgment in the sense of the execution of wrath. It has its parallel in Ezekiel 9., where the executors of the judgment of God were to go through the city of Jerusalem and smite, and their orders were to "*begin at My sanctuary.*" If God begins to judge, that which is most privileged, and which lies nearest to Himself, but has been unfaithful, must be the first to feel the brunt of His anger. Surely none of His own will be suffered to perish, but that which professes the name of Christ in this world will as certainly come under His judgment as did the sanctuary in which for centuries He had His abode.

But if that which bears the name of Christ, and which is responsible to

maintain the light of a Saviour-God in this dark world, has so miserably failed, as is manifest to-day, we are not bound to follow in its footsteps. Our eye need not be turned to it for our guidance in our path of testimony. The house is still here, and God by the Spirit still dwells in it, and we have plainly put before us in the Scriptures the conduct becoming such a holy place. There is all the more reason, now that the multitude have gone astray, for the individual to hold up the standard of truth, and to order his walk and ways according to the character of Him who has manifested Himself in the person of His beloved Son as a Saviour of the lost. When the profession goes to the bad the man of God has an opportunity of showing his faithfulness on behalf of His testimony to whom he owes so much.

Were things in the profession of Christianity as they should be, how irresistible that testimony would be. The desire of the heart of Christ for His own was, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17. 21). In such a state of things the Spirit would be ungrieved, and the glorious light of the gospel would shine undimmed.

The house itself is not a preacher, nor does it direct attention to itself, but its privilege is to be so in the enjoyment of the love of God, that all who come into contact with it shall be made to feel that God has an interest in the salvation of their souls; in short, that He would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. The moment it directs attention to itself it has become a false witness, a soul-murdering *ignis fatuus*, like the decoy lamp of a wrecker, which lures the storm-tossed mariner to destruction.

Therefore it is of all importance to have the heart well in the light of the love of God. We have no light in ourselves. Like the moon, which is

entirely dependent on the sun for all the light it can minister to us in the still hours of the night, we are dependent upon the Lord, for it is only in Him that we are light (Eph. 5. 8). Hence in the darkest day depicted by the pen of inspiration we are exhorted to keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21). If our souls are kept continually basking in the warmth and comfort of that radiant light, there is no danger of our not bearing faithful testimony for God in the midst of this gross darkness.

Ephesus was threatened with the removal of her candlestick because she had left her first love (Rev. 2. 4-6). The saints there had allowed the world to come between them and the love of God, and that evil eclipse left their hearts cold and desolate, and they were of little service to God in the way of testimony. And if they did not shine, there was but little reason for keeping the candlestick in the place. It was not there for ornament, but for use, to hold a light for an absent and rejected Christ; and if it did not do that, and it could not do it where the heart was full of the world, there was nothing for it but the removal of it out of the way.

In speaking thus of the house of God there is no thought of a material building. As I have shown, the building is composed of living stones—believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor am I thinking of their service, in the way of prayers, and intercessions, and

giving of thanks for men, as only going on when they are gathered together. We read that men are to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting. The house does not exist any more when the people are gathered together than it does when all are occupied with their daily avocations. Prayers are to go up continually to a Saviour-God; and men are to pray everywhere. There are places where women are to be silent—that is, in the assembly (1 Cor. 14. 34)—but men pray everywhere, and at all times.

In the light of what we have been considering, how foolish and wicked the thought is that the time for gospel testimony is over. When that day comes we shall be glorified with Christ, though even then there shall be a testimony go out through others. But were that day over all testimony would be over, for there is no other testimony to be rendered. And we must keep in mind that in 2 Timothy, where the evil is depicted in its most awful colours, we have the Apostle telling the servant of the Lord to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4.). When the blessed God abandons the character of a Saviour-God it will be time enough for us to speak of the testimony of the gospel as come to an end.

That this day shall come to an end we are well assured, but it is not so yet; therefore the reader may not despair, for still is it true that "him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37).

Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe (Ps. 119. 117).

The possibility of falling is never removed from any one of us. There is not a single sin, however gross, however much our soul shudders at its name, into which any one of us might not and would not fall if, for one moment, our Lord withdrew His supporting hand from us. . . . We stand

by His grace, but "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We praise Him for what we know of His power, but let us constantly beware of getting away from that attitude of mind in which our hearts are saying to Him ceaselessly, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."—*Holden.*

Not Miracles, but Truth.

(F. B. HOLE).

“John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true” (John 10. 41).

THAT was the verdict on John the Baptist's ministry shortly after his death. A large number of people who had been fairly familiar with John and his ministry found themselves powerfully drawn after the One to whom John had pointed, and resorted to Him while He was staying at the very place where John had at first baptized. This evidently awakened reminiscences of John, and as they recalled his life and sayings and then considered the One to whom those sayings had reference, they bore ungrudging witness to the truth of John's testimony. Evidently, then, their verdict was no mere flattery, but based upon well-considered facts. It falls naturally into two parts—the negative and the positive. Both parts are well worth consideration.

“*John did no miracle.*” He was the last of a long line of prophets (Matt. 11. 13), and though last, by no means least. If not *greatest*, he was at all events amongst the greatest, for none were greater than he (Luke 7. 28). Seeing, then, that he stood in the very front rank of prophets, comparable only for spiritual vitality and force with men whose miraculous deeds rang throughout the centuries of Israel's history, and bearing in mind that his lot was cast in the hour of the supremest crisis of all, one might naturally have supposed that of all the prophets he would have been marked by the performance of the most striking wonders. But it was not so. John did *no* miracle.

How astonishing! Are we to suppose that, after all, John was on a low spiritual level? Was the absence of anything sensational a sign of weakness, or was there something that accounted for it? Why was it that John did no miracle?

The answer undoubtedly is: Because his lot was cast at the end of the dis-

persation of law, when miracles were no longer a part of God's testimony.

The supernatural element was strongly in evidence at the inauguration of the law dispensation at Sinai, and also in connection with Israel's entrance into possession of the promised land. Later on, when the great national apostasy was developing and Jehovah set Himself by the prophets to recall His erring people and stem the rising tide of idolatry, there was another great display of miraculous power, particularly in connection with Elijah and Elisha. When, however, the apostasy was so complete that the Babylonian captivity resulted miracles disappeared. God did indeed miraculously preserve the three Hebrew lads in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the den of lions. He still, up to the time of Malachi, about 350 B.C., sent His prophets, and there was of course a miraculous element in the revelations which reached them and the inspired writings that came from their pens, but they themselves did no miracles. The time for such had passed.

There is nothing surprising in this. Is it likely that God would allow that which was a notable symbol of His presence to remain connected with a nation that had rejected Him? If the fleet mutinies it can hardly expect to be permitted still to fly the Royal Standard or the Union Jack!

The miracles performed by the Lord Jesus when on earth, those which marked the Pentecostal era, or even the miracles which happened during the Babylonian captivity, were not inconsistent with this.

The miracles of Christ were unique. They came after long years during which not one is recorded, and they signified the actual presence of Jehovah in the midst of His people. The Sovereign Himself having arrived, in the

midst of His mutinous fleet, the Royal Standard is of course unfurled by His side!

The miracles of Pentecost marked the inauguration of the church period, just as formerly they had signalized the beginning of Israel's national history. The "church" ship was launched and the flags flew fittingly enough. When once launched other and sterner work awaited her than flag-flying. With regard to the miraculous preservation of God's witnesses in Daniel: the dominion had passed from David's line to the Gentiles, and the haughty Gentile monarchs must learn to respect the faithful remnant of God's people, and God intervenes out of the accustomed order on their behalf. But thenceforward amid the increasing defection and gloom amongst those who had professedly gathered to the divine centre—Jerusalem—the godly had to be content to pursue their way without any outward manifestations until John.

John blazed like a meteor across their sky. He observed the most rigid separation from the hollow religious profession of his day. He preached with astonishing fervour and power. He drew the attention of multitudes for a time, but he wrought not *one* sign in attestation of his words. "*John did no miracle.*"

"*But all things that John spake of this Man were true.*" Here we reach the positive side which reveals to us at once the secret of John's greatness. He never swerved from rendering true testimony to the One who is the great subject of all testimony—CHRIST. No wonder that John ranks amongst the greatest prophets that have ever lived!

Let us not suppose that to render true testimony to Christ is an easy or simple thing. It is not. Within the best and greatest of God's servants there has been the flesh with all its inveterate tastes and habits. Hence the dangerous tendency to put self in the foreground and Christ in the background, even when ostensibly witnessing

of Him. John the Baptist was remarkably proof against this, as the first three chapters of John's Gospel prove. As the forerunner he pointed steadily to his Master. As "the voice" he spake only of Christ. To Him he witnessed as the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Bridegroom.

Splendid opportunities were presented to him of exalting himself at his Master's expense (see particularly John 1. 19-27; 3. 26-30). He turned them into striking occasions for exalting his Master. He proclaimed Him as so great that His shoe latchet he was unworthy to unloose (1. 27). He testified to Him so forcibly that he detached his own disciples from himself and attached them to Christ (1. 37). He plainly said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (3. 30), and said it evidently with joy.

A great servant of God was this man, in spite of his non-miraculous ministry. The secret of all was this: "*All things that John spake of this Man were true.*"

Is it not evident that we live in days strikingly analogous to the times of John's ministry? The last days of Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy are upon us. We have reached the Laodicean stage of the church's history as recorded in Revelation 3.—that which corresponds with the Malachi stage in Old Testament history.

A distinct analogy undoubtedly exists between the course pursued by Israel betwixt their start as a nation under Moses and the first coming of Christ, and that of the church between Pentecost and the second coming. For the sake of clearness we may summarize them in separate columns:

ISRAEL

A bright start under Moses, Joshua, and the elders, who outlived the latter.

Declension sets in, only checked here and there by God's dealings in chastisement.

THE CHURCH

A bright start under the apostles and some faithful men who were instructed by them.

Equally rapid declension only checked by the fire of persecution allowed by God.

ISRAEL

Steady and increasing conformity to the abominations of the surrounding nations.

The Babylonian captivity sets in.

A remnant returns to Jerusalem, the divine centre of Israel, in various detachments, under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and Ezra.

Sad defection appears in that remnant until comparatively few among them fear the Lord. The majority of them reject their Messiah when He appears.

Seeing, then, that John the Baptist's day and our day have so much in common, may we not take this witness concerning him as special instruction for us? We believe that we may, and there is—unless we wholly misjudge the signs of the times—every reason why we should.

At the present moment many excellent Christians are filled with a great longing for some display of spiritual power of a wholly extraordinary sort. Impressed, doubtless, with the low estate of the professing church, they long for something unprecedented—at all events in these latter times—something miraculous which may rehabilitate her in the eyes of the world, rally her scattered forces, and close the mouths of her critics. The desire runs particularly into two channels just now—miraculous powers of bodily healing and speaking with tongues.

We do not, of course, presume to say either that God cannot or that He will not bestow such gifts upon His church or individual believers in these days. We remember that Scripture declares His judgments to be unsearchable and His ways past finding out, and asks,

THE CHURCH

Steady assimilation of the church and the world.

The full-blown Romish system arises, capturing Christianity as an outward profession.

Beginning with the Reformation (so called) God begins to deliver a remnant in varying stages over the course of years.

Equally sad defection: Sardis and Laodicea (Rev. 3.) express it. A few hear His voice and open the door. But as regards the mass He is yet outside.

“Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor?” (Rom. 11. 33, 34). We do, however, unhesitatingly affirm three things:

1. *Scripture gives no support to the expectation that such gifts will be revived.* Indeed, as we have seen, the very opposite. In the closing days of the professing church, when apostasy is ripening, miracles would be no more fitting than they would have been at the end of Israel's responsible history up to Christ. Further, and yet more positively, the miracles and signs predicted in Scripture for the end of this age are evil and Satanic in origin (see Mark 13. 22; 2 Thess. 2. 9-11; 2 Tim. 3. 8).

2. *The genuineness and divine origin of such manifestations as have occurred (particularly in connection with tongues) are, to say the least, open to the gravest suspicion.* We need name but two significant features: The almost total omission of reference to the Lordship of Christ in the recorded utterances and in the literature connected with the movement (1 Cor. 12. 3)—“Jesus” is continually used with irreverent familiarity. Secondly, the disregard of Scripture. In 1 Corinthians 14. 22, 23 we are distinctly told that the normal use of the gift of tongues is in connection with the unconverted: “Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.” That believers should come together in one place and there speak with tongues as a kind of spiritual exercise is discouraged. Their proper use is in keeping with that which took place when first they were given, as recorded in Acts 2.

These apostolic instructions given in 1 Corinthians 14. cannot be lightly brushed aside; they are “the commandments of the Lord” (ver. 37). Yet the modern gift of tongues (so called) is exercised in just that way which the Apostle here forbids, whilst we wait in vain for tidings of their use amongst the heathen, or even amongst the many nationalities which throng our great

seaport towns at home. Scripture, we repeat, is disregarded.

3. *These gifts of such sinister aspect are diverting many from that which really is their great business.* At the present moment attacks, more persistent than ever, are being made upon the very citadel of the faith of Christ. New cults are springing up by the dozen. Beneath the jargon of discordant sounds there is, however, an undertone of harmony. They ALL agree in denying the true Christ of God! Use His name—omitting His titles—they may. Confess the truth of His person, they do not.

Moreover, the tide of apostasy from "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9) runs strongly in the hitherto "orthodox" denominations. Many religious leaders are crying "Hail, Master!" and imprinting the kiss of professed admiration on His brow, whilst they treacherously betray Him by the denial of all that He really is. One would have supposed that every earnest believer would have fervently repudiated such men and their teachings and made it their supreme business to render true testimony to Him. Alas! no. Many are wasting their energies in seeking miraculous endowments. They think of nothing but gilding the turrets of their castle when the enemy is sapping the foundations and thundering at the gates.

Enough, however, of these things. It evidently behoves both writer and readers to look carefully to themselves. Such are Satan's tactics in these days. Let us not play into his hands.

We are just simple and ordinary Christians without any claim to dis-

tingtion or note. We have never wielded miraculous powers, nor do we perhaps expect to. Miraculous power is one thing, SPIRITUAL POWER another, and vastly more important. John the Baptist had none of the former; in the latter he excelled. And the secret of such power is—what? Simply unswerving fidelity in the testimony of life and lip to Christ. As His representatives are we left in this world. To speak true things concerning Him, be *this*, then, our chief concern.

The Spirit of God, the Comforter, is here that this may be so. "And when the Comforter is come . . . the Spirit of TRUTH . . . He shall testify of Me" (John 15. 26). He, then, is our only sufficiency for this holy business. He is still with us and in us. Miracles have gone, but He remains, and with Him remains the ability of the simplest and weakest believer to rightly testify of Christ.

Life first, then lip. That is the order. The character of Christ written upon the inner man of the heart, godly behaviour flowing therefrom, and then faithful adherence to the whole truth of Christ as enshrined in Scripture, and courageous proclamation of the truth publicly and privately—these are the things which go to make up a true testimony to Him.

"John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this Man were true." A splendid epitaph that!

If a few more years shall roll and He for whom we wait has not yet come, and we in our turn need an epitaph, may one similar be truthfully ours!

A Parable.

One day, while walking in the noon-day light of a midsummer sun beneath a cloudless sky, I was accosted by a person, wholly a stranger to me, who, with kind, condescending air, made offer to show me the way. I saw in

his hand a lantern, and in it a lighted farthing candle. Pity checked my rising laughter; so, as gravely as I could, I declined his offer, and went on my way. I was afterwards told that his name was Higher Criticism.—*Chapman.*

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

God's Sovereignty.

A.H.L. writes us, quoting Daniel 4. 35 :

"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?"

And inquires :

(1) *Does the sovereignty of God settle at once the question of God's right to do and say whatever He pleases ; and debar, too, the creature from calling in question anything that He says or does ?*

(2) *Does every statement of Scripture require the unqualified acceptance without questioning or reasoning of the creature, because of the relationship of Creator and creature ?*

(3) *It has been remarked : "If God speaks, I am bound to believe Him."*

"Is the non-receipt of any statement of Scripture sin ?" (1 John 5. 10).

There are those who have said in their hearts that there is no God. Where such a position is taken up your first question could not intelligently be put, for he who has no existence can have no rights. But where the question is intelligently put the mind is thereby evidenced to have already bowed to the truth that God IS ; and that He is as GOD, *i.e.* the supreme Ruler of the universe.

Now, if God be the supreme and eternal One, who before all things *was*, then it must be clear that when it pleased Him, who until then had abode alone in the solitary majesty of His own eternal being, to exercise His creative power, and call that which is created into existence, He must possess *rights* in respect of that which His hands have made.

Again, none else have any rights but He. The creature possesses no inherent rights whatever. Take a man's life, that which he holds more dear than all else, he possesses no inherent right to that life. God gave it to him ; and He who was free in His majestic sovereignty to call him into being, and give him life at a fixed moment of time, is equally free, when the exigencies of His nature and character require it, to withdraw that life.

We talk of *our* rights ; but, looked at simply, and in an absolute sense, we have

none : that which we call our rights as between one man and another are really just the *results* of God's rights. To illustrate : It is true no man may with impunity take my life away, and this may lead to the mistaken thought that *I* have a right to my life ; but that is not so. I possess no inherent rights at all ; but as God has set me here in life, and possesses rights in respect of that which He has created, he who interferes does so in violation of the rights of God, which are the only absolute rights which really exist.

It is well, then, that we should simply and clearly recognize the fact that we are altogether in the hands of God, and that He can do with us as He pleases. There may be recognition of this, as in the case of Job (chap. 9. 4, 12), without the mind being at all at rest that it *should* be so ; but the reason of that is that God is not known. The remedy is : " Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace " (Job 22. 21). When the soul comes into the light, so as to learn what God is as revealed in *Christ*, that He is in nature love, whilst in character He is light, that He is utterly, altogether, and absolutely *good*, infinite in wisdom, power, and grace, then we find ourselves at rest in the thought that He who is such possesses absolute rights in respect of us ; and we find peace in submitting ourselves entirely to Him.

Your second question relates to the Scripture. But there is a necessary preliminary inquiry, namely : " Is the Scripture that which it claims to be, namely, the Word of God ? When it speaks, is it GOD who is speaking ? " If this inquiry be answered in the negative, then, of course, your second question needs no further reply, for the Scripture would then be just the voice of the creature ; and as we have seen that the creature possesses no inherent rights, then it must be evident that that which is merely the voice of the creature can possess no authority. But when the conscience has been brought to recognize that the Scripture is in very truth the Word of God, that in it God Himself is speaking, then that Word must possess absolute and unquestionable authority. From this it follows that the rejection of

anything that God has said is a violation of His rights, a denial of His supreme authority, and involves the opposing assertion of rights on our part, and this it is which constitutes sin, for "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3. 4, N.T.).

Consider for a moment what it means to question that which it is accepted that God has said. If the *wisdom* of anything that He says be called in question, it implies that he who calls it in question possesses himself higher wisdom than Him who is infinite in wisdom. This, too, is of the essence of sin; man exalting himself to take the place of God (see 2 Thess. 2. 4). If the *love* of God be called in question in any of His ways, that implies that the creature who calls His love in question himself possesses a more exalted ideal of love than Him who is in His nature love. So, too, where the righteousness of God is called in question, he who dares to do so thereby asserts that his own sin-warped mind possesses a higher standard of absolute righteousness than that possessed by Him who is light. It needs but to see this, and the true believer must instantly shrink from anything so impious. Our place is subjection, and it is the subject mind which is illuminated with heavenly light.

But with all this we need to remember that He who said "Come now, let us *reason* together," created us not "irrational animals" (Jude 10, N.T.), but with intelligent faculties which He encourages us to exercise in the consideration of the truth in its loftiest range. It is true that things may arise from time to time in our study of the Word which for the time being baffle our understanding, but when further study, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, gives us the key to that which before had been a mystery, we are made to marvel at the matchless wisdom displayed in every part, and our minds are in the very highest degree satisfied. A great place is given to the mind in Scripture, and we do well to note it.

Titus 3. 14.

A.S.B. "Ours" in this verse simply refers to saints. When Peter and the other apostles were let go from the prison (Acts 4. 23), the Scripture says "they went to their own company." Christians belong no more to the world:

they are not of it. The world loves his own (John 15. 19), whilst Christians form a community apart; hence the expression "ours." As to the meaning of the verse, believers were to be diligent in all honest callings, so that they might have the wherewithal for necessary uses.

It is interesting to notice, too, that this was to spring from, and to be, the result of the new life within them: it was to have the character of *fruit* ("that ye be not unfruitful"), and not, as in the world, to spring simply from the exigencies of nature.

Restitution of all Things (Acts 3. 21).

G.R.C. To rightly understand the meaning of this verse it is necessary to observe that the appeal in the chapter is made to the Jew exclusively, and that not on the common ground upon which now Jew and Gentile alike stand before God (Rom. 3.), but as "children of the prophets and the covenant" (ver. 25). The opportunity was given to them of *national* repentance, doubtless in answer to that marvellous prayer offered by the Lord upon the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Before their eyes, in the healing of the lame man, the power of the name of Jesus had been demonstrated, and taking this as his text, Peter urges repentance and conversion upon them: they might reverse the terrible decision made before Pilate; then would their sins be blotted out. The times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord, for He would send Jesus Christ unto them, who was waiting in the heavens until the times of restitution of all things, *i.e.* until the time for the setting up of His kingdom in power upon the earth. When that kingdom comes, God's will will be done on earth as in heaven, and the wonderful things spoken by the prophets will be realized (Isa. 2. 1-5; II. ; 35. ; 52. and other scriptures). It refers to things on earth, and with Israel as the centre of blessing for it. This will be clear when it is seen that the scope embraced in the expression "restitution of all things" is defined in the words immediately following, "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began;" and this at once excludes the thought that eventually everybody will be saved, as

some reason, for that thought is expressly *contrary* to what God has said by His prophets.

They did not repent at the preaching of Peter ; and the Lord is still hidden in the heavens, and the groaning creation still awaits His advent ; and His people have still to pray " Thy kingdom come." Meanwhile, the eternal and irrevocable purposes of God are being carried out, and the moment draws near when that time of which Peter spoke shall come, and the Lord shall have His rights on the earth.

Acts 13. 2.

A.S.B. inquires the meaning of the words :

" Ministered unto the Lord."

There is that when saints are gathered together which has an aspect which is distinctly *manward* ; thus one prophesying speaks expressly for the edification of those present ; and one teaching seeks to instruct. But there is also an aspect which is more properly *Godward*, *i.e.* towards God as such, or towards Christ as Lord : it is this which is expressed in the words " ministered unto the Lord." *He* was the object of their service as so gathered, which service would include, no doubt, worship, praise, and prayer.

I Timothy 4. 6.

A.S.B. asks :

" What is a good minister of Jesus Christ?"
(1 Tim. 4. 6).

The scripture referred to gives the simple meaning. Timothy was to put the brethren in mind of certain things regarding which they might be misled. If these things were not kept in mind, the teaching of demons would displace the truth of God. Therefore Timothy serving in this way would be a *good* minister (or servant) of Jesus Christ (Himself " the truth ").

I Corinthians 12. 7-11.

A.S.B. asks further :

" What is the manifestation of the Spirit to profit?" (1 Cor. I. 7-11).

To every one in the assembly the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit ; that is to say, as the verses following explain, one might be distinguished by the word of wisdom, another by the word of

knowledge, another by gifts of healing, and so on ; but all these gifts or manifestations of the Spirit were given for one purpose, namely, not the exaltation of the one who possessed the gifts, but the *profit* of all.

" In the Testimony."

" Seeker " writes us as follows :

I hear people speak of the " testimony of Jesus."

Can a person who is a member of a sect be in the testimony of Jesus?

What is the testimony of Jesus?

" In the testimony " is not a scriptural expression : no one is *in* it. What Scripture speaks of is some who " *have* the testimony of Jesus " (Rev. 19. 10). The passage explains what this is : " The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy ; " that is to say, all that really was before the mind of the Holy Ghost in the prophetic word given in any age finds its centre and full expression in the testimony of Jesus—that testimony or witness which has " Jesus " as its declared subject-matter.

The character of testimony to be presented to-day is " the testimony of our Lord " (2 Tim. 1. 8) ; that is the testimony for the present moment, Jesus raised up from the dead and seated at God's right hand as Lord. This, as the remainder of the verse shows, is really the *gospel testimony*. Whether the person supposed in your question might have, and present, that testimony or not, is irrespective altogether of any position he might take in regard to a sect, though, properly apprehended, that testimony links the soul with Christ in resurrection, and so outside of humanly devised systems. A system is an *addition* to that which God has made the believer, and, moreover, is an addition which greatly tends to weaken his grasp of the truth.

Genesis 6. 3.

A.T.D. The statement made in a previous issue (December, p. 383), that Adam had died " some hundreds of years before " what is spoken of in this verse, will quite easily be seen to be correct on reference to the preceding chapter, in which all the periods are stated. Adding up the years given, it is clear that the flood occurred some 726 years after the death of Adam.

Mark 13. 32.

"A Brother" Thanks for your letter. We hope to include some notes on this passage in the Study of the Synoptic Gospels now proceeding, and therefore refrain from comments here which would necessarily involve some repetition later.

Paul's Gospel.

W R asks:

The difference between the gospel preached by Peter and that preached by Paul and whether the gospel preached by Paul is that to be presented to sinners or not

Essentially and fundamentally the gospel as preached by Peter was the same as that preached by Paul for Christ Himself, in whom all the grace of God for guilty men is found, as well as all the glory of God maintained, was the theme of both. But each had a special place appointed to him of the Lord, and a special commission to fulfil in connection with His testimony to men, so Peter was pre-eminently the apostle to the circumcision, while Paul was sent far hence to the Gentiles. In the early chapters of the Acts, Peter was the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit to offer, in wonderful mercy, to the house of Israel another opportunity of accepting Christ as their Messiah (see our answer to G R C). It need not be said that this is not the testimony for to-day, though it will be taken up again with the nation of Israel after the rapture of the church. If this offer had been accepted and the nation had repented, the Lord would have come to earth, bringing with Him "the times of refreshing." But that testimony was rejected, finally and fatally for that generation when they gnashed upon Stephen with their teeth and stoned him with stones (Acts 7). Thus it was that they sent the message after the Lord saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19 14).

This rejection of God's mercy on the part of the nation made room for the unfolding of the eternal counsels of God in Christ, and for the bringing out into testimony of the "mystery" which had been hid in God throughout the ages, *i e* Christ in the Gentiles the hope of glory (Col 1 27).

This was Paul's testimony, and it is important to observe that his conversion

comes in between the chapters in which we have the rejection of the Jews as a nation (chap 7) and the opening of the door to the Gentiles (chap 10). At his conversion he preached not only Jesus as the very Christ, but as the *Son of God*, Head of a new race which belongs not to earth or an earthly kingdom, but to heaven, where the Head is glorified.

Peter and Paul alike preached the forgiveness of sins through the name of Jesus (Acts 10 and 13), but Paul's gospel goes further than this, for it sets those thus forgiven 'in Christ' "a new creation." There is no contradiction or discord between these two ministries—we need them both, but Paul's gospel carries us further and higher, it separates more completely from earth and so is less readily accepted in its full scope.

Paul's gospel must certainly be preached to sinners, he declared among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph 3 8).

The New Birth.

R S sends several questions on the subject of the new birth.

We would preface our answers by saying that upon a subject like this, about which there has been more or less controversy, it is well to study the passages which deal with it as they stand, and to avoid introducing thoughts not found therein.

Our replies, owing to our limited space, must necessarily be brief, which is unfortunate in view of the importance of the subject.

1 What is meant by being born of water and the Spirit? and does the water refer to the Word of God?

The water is undoubtedly the Word of God according to its power to cleanse and separate a man from his former thoughts as to himself and God. Psalm 119 9 and Ephesians 5 26 are well-known passages which present the Word in this cleansing character. But the Word of God is also spoken of, in connection with this subject, as the incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1 23), so that by it, in conjunction with the Spirit's operation, there is not only a cleansing from a former condition, but the man becomes, morally, a new being, with new desires and aspirations, though the old evil

nature remains: he partakes, in fact, of the nature of that by which he is begotten, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" So that for a man to be born of water and the Spirit (John 3 5), or born again, as in 1 Peter 1 23, means that by the Word applied in the power of the Holy Ghost there has come about a change in the very springs of his being, and by that operation he has a nature which is not of the flesh, nor produced by the will of man but altogether of God. It is the great initial act in the blessing of the soul.

2 *Is faith in any way connected with new birth?*

There is no mention of faith in connection with new birth in either John 3. or 1 Peter 1 23, though we believe that we should be wrong if we entirely eliminated faith from it, for the Word could not be operative in the soul apart from faith, and where the Word has taken effect faith must be (Rom 10 17), but faith is not prominent in new birth: it is not presented as the procuring factor, or it would be introduced in the passages which refer to it. John 1 12, 13 may be quoted, but if that passage be read aright it will be seen that 'believing on His name' is viewed rather as that which those *do* who are "born . . . of God"

The Lord's words to Nicodemus, 'Ye must be born again,' brought out the utterly hopeless condition of man as he was, there must be a new beginning of and from God. The very figure used should settle the question: no man was ever born by his own will, and the natural figure is used to teach the spiritual lesson. It is God's act, and further than this we cannot go, for 'the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but *canst not tell* whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. *so is every one that is born of the Spirit*" We need to remember those words "*canst not tell,*" for there is that in new birth which eludes all definition

3 *Is there any scripture which supports the teaching that many who have not heard the gospel are born again?*

We have the case of Cornelius (Acts 10), who was evidently born again, for his almsgiving and prayers were acceptable to God, but he had not heard the gospel, for he was directed by the angel to send for Simon, who should tell him words

whereby he should be saved (vers 11, 14). He had not heard *the gospel*, but he had undoubtedly come under the power of God's Word, for he "feared God" The Word of God would cover more than the gospel. It is the Word of God which tells men of their sinful and lost condition, this is not gospel, but by such a word, as presenting *God*, even though it only be in His relation to sin, a man may be born again. It is the Word of God which tells us of God's righteous judgment and His wrath against all ungodliness. By such a word as this, we judge, a man may be born again, but that is not the gospel. The gospel is good news: it unfolds the grace of God in the person of Christ, and by this men are saved. We judge, therefore, that a man may have been born again by some word of God who has not entered into the peace that the full knowledge of the gospel gives.

4 *What is the difference between "new birth" and "eternal life"? And is it possible for a person to be born again and not have eternal life?*

New birth has the *man* in view, it is God's operation in him, and apart from it he is dead indeed, and cannot see the kingdom of God. Eternal life is that limitless life upon which he enters by faith in the Son of God. It involves far more than divine life in the soul, it includes in its wide reach those blessed relationships with the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ into which the believer is brought, for 'this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent' (John 17 3). This life is the life common to the whole family of God, to the babes as well as to the fathers, and it is "in His Son" We see it set forth in Him in all its power and blessed perfection, but that which is set forth in Him is given to us "He that hath the Son hath life" With it *faith* is definitely and repeatedly connected in Scripture

Turning now to the last part of this question, it will be evident, if we have been followed thus far in the passages referred to, that whilst new birth is essentially subjective, eternal life as it is presented in Scripture is largely, though we do not say wholly, objective; for us it consists in the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, His sent One (John 17 3). A

man, therefore, who is simply born again, as doubtless was Cornelius at the time of which we have spoken, could not be said to be in the enjoyment of *eternal life*, nor indeed to possess it in any sense, unless it were meant simply that on the subjective side there was that within him which involved later (when, as a result of a full objective testimony, peace was known and the Spirit received) that limitless life which is the believer's in the knowledge of the Father and the Son.

The Person of Christ.

A.S.L. writes us as to our reply to J.B.L. on page 63 of the February issue, and quotes our words :

"He who was the Word 'with God' in the beginning, 'became flesh' in time, the same glorious Person in altered circumstances, but as to what He was in Himself unaltered, unchangeably the same—the I AM (John 8.), the self-existent One, who is, and was, and is to come" (Rev. 1. 8.).

On this A.S.L. inquires if we mean to teach

That the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ was not a part of His person.

Our words must be taken in their connection. We were writing on the essential glory of the Son of God, the glory of His person, and pointing out that, veiled though that glory was in incarnation, He was never less in time than He was in eternity; and the scripture particularly in view in our notes was John 17.: "Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." He who said "Glorify Thou Me" was, as He uttered the words, a Man here, and yet was the same Person who was with the Father before the world was. In that scripture the "*Me*" in time and the "*I*" in eternity past are clearly the same glorious Person, though in utterly altered circumstances; and that it should be so calls out the adoration of the heart that knows the grace of the One who was thus "rich" and yet for our sakes "became poor."

But the scripture is just as clear and just as insistent as to the reality

of His manhood. He was "the Man Christ Jesus." He "hungered," He felt "thirst," and He was "*weary*"—the Almighty, yet in weariness! How marvellously does this point to the reality of His humanity! He "suffered being tempted," and was "in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart." Fully, clearly, and unmistakably does Scripture, then, witness to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly Man. He was very God and very Man.

The thought which has been advanced by some that He was only in "form" man, His "manhood" being to Him very much as a garment is to us, something capable of being put on and put off without any essential relation to His personality, is a doctrine which we abhor and reject as utterly foreign to all Scripture. Neither "deity" nor "humanity" is a word with any meaning except as standing in relation to personality; but when that is said, if we be asked to analyse, to explain, to *define* that in which the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ consists, we dare not, and wish not to attempt it. Into the ark of God none might look and live. There is a mystery in incarnation into which no finite mind can penetrate.

Which one of us can satisfactorily explain to himself even the mystery of his own origin, that which belongs to human birth? Which of us can define just in *what* his own personality consists, the method of its origin, and its relationship in himself to all that which makes up a *man* as God has constituted him in this world? And as none of us can comprehend the psychology even of his own being, how far should we be from the impiety of attempting to analyse, and bring within the terms of our reason, that mystery beyond all finite comprehension, the incarnation, the birth in time, of a woman, and by the overshadowing of the Highest, of Him who eternally is the Son, God over all, blessed for evermore. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father."

ERRATUM.

Page 72, for "Assur-banipal" read "Assur-nazir-pal," as evidently intended.

Dependence.

(JAMES BOYD).

UNTO Thee I cry,
Light of the world! Star of the cloudless day!
Before me mists like mountains veil the sky:
Chase Thou the gloom away.

On my pathway shine.
Turn into glorious day the face of night;
That I may trace Thy footprints, Lord Divine,
O say, "Let there be light."

If one step I take
Onward amid the gloom, I cannot tell
Where I may wander—O, for Thy name's sake,
Guard me from angels fell.

On my wakeful ear
Discordant sounds of conflict darkly break;
My feeble heart within me melts with fear—
For my salvation wake.

I have none but Thee
To turn to in my spirit's dire distress;
Poor, frail, and laint I am, O guide Thou me
In paths of righteousness.

For infernal powers
Would drive me far from life's unsullied way,
To paths rebellious where destruction lowers,
And starless night holds sway.

At the fearsome noise
And bruit of battle melts my trembling soul:
O let me hear Thy spirit-stirring voice
Where fiery chariots roll.

If I feel Thy hand
About me in the battle I am strong;
By Thy side surely sheltered I shall stand
Amid the struggling throng.

Thou hast gone before.
Thou callest me, Thy well-known voice I hear.
Where wild wolves raven and where lions roar,
O let me feel Thee near.

In the battlefield,
And in the forefront of the fiercest fight,
Thy favour shall my shelter be and shield,
My glory and my might.

Thou hast died for me,
Thou wilt not leave me, Thou wilt not forsake
Thy blood-redeemed, bearing reproach for Thee,
Abhorred for Thy name's sake.

Guard me night and day
From human wisdom, from the fleshly mind,
From confidence in self; the perfect way
Give me, O Lord, to find.

Till my feet shall stand
Within the palaces of peace and love,
The courts of heaven, that empyrean land,
God's dwelling-place above;

And till all is o'er,
The journey, and the desert, and the fight;
Discord, and danger, and for evermore
I walk with Thee in white.

The Bible.

(J. T. MAWSON).

MANY are the glowing tributes that are being paid to the Bible in this tercentenary year of the Authorized Version of it. From every point of view it commands admiration, and all classes seem more or less eager to praise it. This, in a sense, is a refreshing change from the persistent attacks that have been made upon it of late years. But the sacred volume stands high above both laudation and blame: its dignity is neither increased nor diminished by what men may say about it. IT IS THE WORD OF GOD—the Word, "quick and powerful," of the living God; and nothing more needs to be said than that.

* * * *

All Christians accept the Bible as the Word of God, and if any have doubts on this score their doubts are

no part of the Christian faith: they are as some malignant bacteria invading the spiritual constitution of such who doubt, producing debility and moral death there. These questions are the spawn of an imagination which is enmity against God, an imagination darkened by the devil; and though some think, in their pride, that to question that the Scriptures are God-breathed is a sign of vigorous manhood and progress, it is in reality but certain evidence of the mastery that the devil exercises over them, and of the darkness in which he holds them.

* * * *

If the Bible be held by us who believe to be the Word of God, we shall study it. If it be His communication to us, and we love Him, we shall desire an intimate acquaintance with

that which He has communicated, and this can only be gained by diligent reading: hence the importance of the exhortation "give attendance to reading" (1 Tim. 4. 13).

But with the reading there must be understanding: our reading would lead to nothing otherwise; and for this there must be meditation: "*Meditate* upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;" "*Consider* what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (1 Tim. 4. 15; 2 Tim. 2. 7).

But *faith* must also be brought into exercise with regard to that which is read, for without faith the Word cannot be understood; it must be mixed

with faith if we are to profit by it (Heb. 4. 2). And as we appropriate it by faith, as we take it into our very soul, assimilating it as the sincere milk of the Word, we shall be affected by it, it will mould us, and we shall be able to reduce it to practice from day to day. We are to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, it is the doer of the work who is blessed in his deed (James 1. 22-25).

These things must go together if we are to truly benefit by this great gift of God to us. It must be read, understood by the understanding of faith, assimilated, and reduced to practice in the energy and power of the Holy Spirit of God.

Notes of Bible Readings.—No. 3.

(H. J. VINE)

Justification.

Romans 4. 3-5, 22-25; 5. 1, 2.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Ch. 5. 1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THERE are believers who will speak freely and happily about the Lord Jesus Christ, but who, through a faulty apprehension of the gospel, feel a measure of restraint and sometimes a little dread when they think of God. These verses which we have read together are given to remove all that sort of uneasiness and to bring peace to the soul, that we might rejoice, not only in God's grace toward us, but also in God Himself—to make our boast in God (Rom. 5. 11, N.T.).

He has graciously acted from His side to clear away everything that was between us, as sinners, and Himself. He justifies the one who believes, He reconciles him to Himself through our

Lord Jesus Christ, and sets him before His face in all the richness of His own free favour. God Himself in His grace is brought clearly before us in these verses; in fact, *God* is the One we believe on here. He is the Object of our faith. Justification and peace result from believing on God Himself.

Question. Why is Abraham given as an illustration by the Apostle?

God made Abraham a promise, and he believed God. That is the first mention of believing in Scripture (Gen. 15.). He believed God would perform that which He had promised, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. Now

to-day we are not asked to believe God's promise simply, but on God Himself, who has performed a stupendous work for our justification—to believe on Him who delivered the Lord Jesus Christ "for our offences," and raised Him again "for our justification." The whole of the fourth chapter is given to explain that it is on the principle of faith that justification is received.

Question. *What is it to be justified?*

It is to be set in righteousness, and, in result, let me add, in *life*, before God, cleared from every charge which could be laid against us on account of our guilt. There is a remarkable link in Scripture between righteousness and life, as may be noted in such expressions as "if the law had given *life*, then righteousness should have been by the law," and it is in this that the lines of teaching brought out by Paul and John coincide and overlap each other. In Paul's writings what is judicial comes particularly to the front; whilst with John what is vital—LIFE is what is prominent. With John believing brings in eternal life, and as involving no judgment (John 5. 24); with Paul it brings in justification, but that justification is in its full result justification of life.

Question. *Is it referred to in the same connection in Acts 13. 39?*

Yes. All that believe are in Christ justified from all things from which they could not be justified in the law of Moses. There was no justification in the law, but only condemnation for sinners. Many of us used to fervently pray, "Incline our hearts to keep this law;" but God has said, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3. 20). On the other hand, in Christ all who believe are justified—cleared absolutely before God from all things that could possibly be brought against them.

Note that whilst righteousness is imputed to the *person* (chap. 4.), it is not as something apart from himself, for his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness; and in chapter 5. 19 he is, in result, "constituted righteous" (N.T.). We have to learn too, not only that we are justified, but that God is the Justifier; and so in chapter 8. the Apostle raises the challenge: "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?"

Question. *Have works anything to do with justification?*

As evidence of our faith they have, as shown in the Epistle of James, which is in perfect harmony with Romans which shows the faith already ours. Works, however, have no place in the justification of Romans. See verse 5 of chapter 4.: "To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on HIM," etc.

The religions of the world move on the principle of works, but justification before God is not on the principle of works. This is the whole argument of this chapter, so at the beginning it says Abraham might have had something to boast of if he had been "justified on the principle of works" (ver. 2), but he was "justified on the principle of faith," and therefore all Abraham's boast was in God and His abounding goodness.

Question. *How do we get this justification to-day?*

By believing on God, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. The tidings come to us to-day that God gave up His Son to the sufferings and death of Calvary's cross, to remove for ever all our offences from before His holy eye. That having been done perfectly, God raised Him from the dead for our justification. We believe on God who did all this, and our faith is accounted to us for righteousness; we stand clear of every charge, and therefore enter into peace towards God. Some are troubled about the quality or quantity of their faith, as if we were told to believe in our faith. No, we believe ON GOD, who has wrought on our behalf, outside of ourselves altogether, through our Lord Jesus Christ. This gives peace.

Question. *What is the meaning of the ninth verse of the fifth chapter?*

That shows clearly the necessity of blood being shed for our justification—the blood of One who was sinless, spotless, and holy. It is *the means*, the righteous basis upon which this justification is ours; it is because of the blood that God can be just and yet justify them that believe in Jesus. This is important, because many teachers are leaving out the blood. The ignorance and conceit of many of the up-to-date teachers is appalling. No wonder we read in 2 Timothy 4. of the time when religionists would

"heap up to themselves *teachers*, having an itching ear" It is striking that nearly all the epistles warn us as to these men

Question *Explain the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation"*

It is the blessed result of knowing that He has justified us, and reconciled us to Himself in His rich grace through our Lord Jesus Christ All unrest is gone, and we now find our deepest joy in the very One against whom we offended so grievously

We are brought into the presence of God in liberty, with His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us What infinite love! We cannot praise Him enough for it but we boast now in Himself who has reconciled us To Him be all the glory! The blessing is ours

Question *Some people talk of a reconciled God Do you agree with that?*

God never needed to be reconciled It was *we ourselves*, in whom there was enmity, who needed to be reconciled It is a solemn thing to say of the blessed God His heart was ever towards us The very God that we had sinned against took the initiative on His own side and put all our offences away, and He has now placed us before His face, justified and reconciled through our Lord Jesus Christ God is the Reconciler We are the reconciled

Question *Will the question of guilt ever be raised against believers?*

Never! "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb 10 17) "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not at all reckon sin" (Rom 4 8) If a believer does sin, he loses his communion and becomes very unhappy He will be dealt with, as belonging to the Lord, according to that sin, but it is not reckoned against him in the eternal sense If we do not judge ourselves, however, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor 11 31-2)

Question *If a believer sins, that does not break the relationship which he has with God, does it?*

No, nothing can break that, and nothing can touch this justification,

which is once and for ever The Holy Spirit gives us the foundation of our *vital* relationship with God through John, and the *forensic* through Paul, as here in Romans 4 and 5. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" It never needs to be repeated It is a settled question

Question *What is the peace mentioned in that verse?*

It is "peace *with* God" about the question of our sins, our guilt If the truth we have had before us is received in faith, it could not be otherwise than that we should have peace with God, and find freedom of access into His boundless grace

If God has come out in such free favour toward us, the soul asks, "What do I understand about all this grace in which He has placed me?" "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" We are set in grace, in the changeless, everlasting favour of God It is *God* who has justified us It is *God* we have peace with It is the grace of *God* in which we stand, and in that position we rejoice in hope of the glory of *God* We have all this from the gracious hand of GOD HIMSELF, and He has made known His great love towards us in the way He has done it

Question *It covers the past, present, and future, does it not?*

Yes, we have peace as to the past, access into grace for the present, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God for the future It is all condensed in the first two verses of Romans 5 What concentrated wealth! Think and pray over it again and again The hope is a sure and certain hope, because the One who took up our case is already in the glory Politicians have boasted about the wonderful things that they are going to do for Great Britain, and the empire glory they are going to bring in, but we boast in what will be brought about without a shadow of doubt—"the glory of God" The whole earth will be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea That glory will come in, in all its magnificence The Lord Jesus Christ, our precious Saviour, God's Son will be the Centre and Sustainer of it all

Question. *Did Abraham look for it?*

Yes, he exulted as he looked on to that day. Abraham's faith was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he received the promise that he should be the heir of the world. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 4. 13). He also looked for the heavenly city, which, as is now made known, will come having "THE GLORY OF GOD." It is a great mistake to divorce in our thoughts the heavens and the earth. God always connects the two. The prophets

constantly sought to wake up the people to recognize Jehovah as the "Maker of heaven and earth;" and so, when we come to Ephesians and Colossians, we find Christ is looked upon as the great Head and Centre of all things in heaven and earth, when

"He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan."

We rejoice in hope of the *glory of God*, and the more we take in, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, the wide extent of that glory, the brighter and the fuller our hope will be.

Papers on the Higher Criticism.

(H. P. BARKER).

II. Its Origin and Development.

IN order that we may understand the true character of this giant evil which, like an octopus, is gripping with its tentacles the minds of thousands of professing Christians, we must endeavour to trace its origin and consider the circumstances which gave it birth. We shall do this as briefly as possible, for the subject is a sorrowful one.

A German professor named Eichhorn has been called "the father of the Higher Criticism." He certainly contributed greatly to its development, but to discover its roots we must go back some years before his time. Infidelity of the most blatant kind was sweeping through Germany from end to end, affecting all grades of society. Certain University professors felt that it was necessary to find some new mode of defence for the Bible. As the outcome of this the "ACCOMMODATION THEORY" was started. This theory teaches that the Lord and the apostles *accommodated* themselves to the superstitions of their time. They found certain notions current among the Jews as to the Scriptures and as to angels, demons,

resurrection and future judgment, and spoke as if all these notions were true, knowing all the while that they were not so.

But this wretched theory afforded no satisfactory explanation of the miracles recorded in the Scriptures. Miracles have always been the *bête noire* of infidels, and it was considered necessary to find some explanation thereof that would be acceptable to the opponents of Christianity. So Eichhorn appeared upon the scene with his "NATURAL THEORY," according to which every miraculous occurrence was to be explained as a mere natural event. The voice of God, speaking to Adam in the garden of Eden, was interpreted as being simply a peal of thunder which Adam thought was a voice. The lightning and the smoke at Sinai was declared to be the result of a trick played by Moses in order to impress the imagination of the people!

A further advance in this direction was made by the "IMAGINATION THEORY" of Paulus, another German professor. His explanation of miraculous events was different to that of

Eichhorn. He credited the Bible writers with sincerity and truthfulness, but affirmed that they laboured under hallucinations. They *imagined* that the events they recorded really happened. At the Transfiguration, for instance, the disciples saw two people, clothed in white, stopping to talk with the Lord Jesus, and they *imagined* that they were Moses and Elias! When the disciples were at sea, they saw the Lord walking along the shore. The light was dim, and they *imagined* that He was walking on the water. That was all!

This bold speculation was followed by another, known as the "LEGEND THEORY," promulgated by De Wette, a Swiss theologian. His idea was that the narratives of Scripture were not written till long after the supposed events had taken place. Then various traditions, legendary fragments, and mythical tales were seized upon and set down as inspired history. The accounts of Adam and Eve, of Noah and the Ark, of Abraham, of Moses, of the exodus from Egypt, were mere legends, myths, scraps of popular folklore!

Previous to this, however, a French physician, Astruc, had started his famous "DOUBLE DOCUMENT THEORY," a theory which has undergone considerable development and which still holds sway to a large extent in the circles of Higher Criticism. This theory, which has been welcomed with all the applause due to a great and important discovery, is based upon the fact that two distinct names are used for God in the book of Genesis. These names are translated in our authorized version as "God" and "the Lord." In the Hebrew they are "Elohim" and "Jehovah."

Astruc taught that the use of these different names indicates that Genesis is a compilation from two earlier documents, in one of which the name "Elohim" was uniformly used, and in the other, "Jehovah." It seems almost incredible that men of common sense, not to speak of men of learning, should

be deceived by such a transparent fallacy.

Suppose that a history is written dealing with the early part of the present century. The late King is sometimes spoken of as "His Majesty" and sometimes as "Edward VII." Even in the same chapter we find these two names employed, and they seem to be used as equivalent terms. Shall we be justified in affirming that for this reason the history must be the handiwork of two different authors, or that a compilation has been made of two distinct documents? The folly of such a conclusion would be patent to every one.

What shall we say, then, of the blindness that would deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and reduce it to the level of a mere compilation on such slender grounds as these?

The truth is that the two terms, "Elohim" and "Jehovah," are used again and again, not only by Moses, but by other Bible writers. Nor are they used interchangeably. There is evident design in the various uses of these divine names, and when rightly understood, the design affords additional proof of the perfection and inspiration of the Scriptures.

A further idea was introduced by a German writer named Vatke, who enunciated the "RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT THEORY." He affirmed that the early ages of human history were marked by utter ignorance of God, but that in course of time religious instincts began to show themselves in the minds of men. From these rude beginnings progressive notions of religion were evolved. Development proceeded, as centuries rolled by, and at last men reached the idea of a supreme God. The nation of Israel was no exception to this universal law. There could have been no such advanced knowledge as is set forth in Genesis, Exodus, etc., in the remote times when it is claimed those books were written.

They must therefore belong to a much later age, and could not possibly have had Moses for their author.

It will be readily seen that this theory, the application of the doctrine of "Evolution" to religious knowledge, denies the truth of a *revelation*. All that we know of God is merely the outcome of centuries of growth. It has all been evolved out of the conceptions of the human mind. There is no room in this scheme for a God who has spoken to men, revealing Himself, and having direct dealings with His creatures.

These various theories have been worked out and developed, and the present result is the morass of unbelief and critical pride with which we are to-day confronted.

The seriousness of the issues at stake cannot possibly be exaggerated. To the simple believer in Christ, nurtured in the atmosphere of an intelligent faith in the Scriptures as the

Word of God, the reasonings of the Higher Critics will not appeal with much force. But in this superficial age many who profess the name of Christ have little personal acquaintance with the Bible. They have never prayerfully studied it, never fed their souls with its glorious truths, never breathed the atmosphere of communion with God to which it leads, never found *Christ* upon its pages as its constant theme, never allowed it to speak to their consciences with the divine authority which belongs to it. Such fall an easy prey to the specious teachings of the critical school, and little by little they become entangled in the net of twentieth-century rationalism, from which only the mercy of God can deliver them.

In our next paper we shall study some of the tremendous issues involved in the attacks of the Higher Criticism upon the integrity of the Scriptures.

An Outline in Colossians.

(H. D. R. JAMESON).

"Christ in you."

Structure of the Epistle.

FOR the purpose of grasping the content and teaching of this epistle as a whole it will be helpful to regard it in the seven distinct features which compose it, remembering, however, that it is one homogeneous whole, and that therefore its sections, whilst very clearly distinguishable, are yet closely interwoven one with the other.

With this preface let it be said that the central subject of the epistle is brought before us in chapter 2. in the words "the mystery of God wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." To develop and expound this matchless mystery is the purpose of the epistle, and the necessity for it arose from the danger of some at Colosse going out-

side of Christ to seek wisdom in philosophy and the teachings of men. Were the mystery but apprehended they would be effectively delivered from this danger; for in it, be it marked and noted, are enshrined ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. No true wisdom or knowledge exists outside of it: it is all-comprehending.

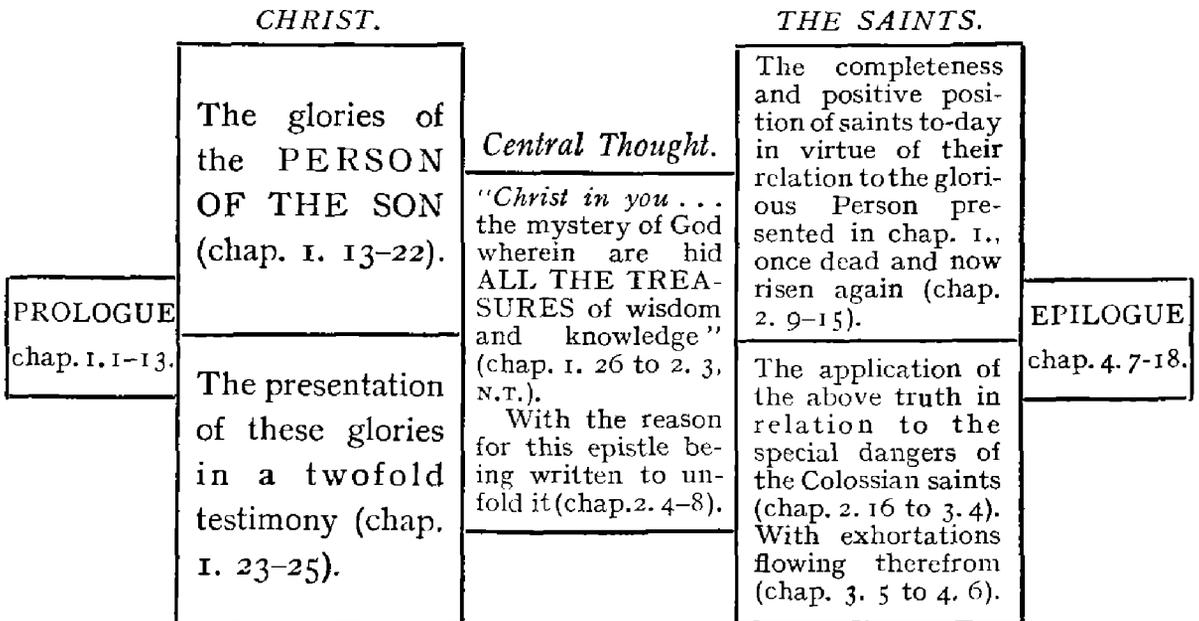
But this mystery is, as to the aspect presented in this epistle, *Christ* in the saints, the hope of glory (chap. i. 27); and the words "*Christ in you*" being the expression of this central thought may be taken as key-words: the truth as to "*Christ*" being unfolded in the early part of the epistle, and the truth as to the "*you*," the saints, being developed in the latter part. This being

the purpose in view in the epistle, we find immediately following the prologue, or introduction, a marvellous unfolding of the glory of the person of the Son, both in relation to the wide universe and in relation to saints to-day. This is unfolded in verses 13 to 22, whilst in verses 23 to 25 we have brought in the twofold ministry of these glories.

In the corresponding latter portion of the epistle we find what flows from this, namely, firstly the completeness and positive position of saints to-day

in virtue of their relation to this glorious Person, once dead and now risen again (2. 9-15); and secondly the application of that truth in detail (chap. 2. 16 to 4. 6). Then finally we have the epilogue, or conclusion, in chapter 4. 7-18.

In order to bring the seven sections clearly before the mind and show how the members on either side of the central truth of the epistle correspond the one to the other, it may be helpful to present a view of its structure diagrammatically as below.



As it is only my purpose here to suggest an outline study of the profound wealth of truth enshrined in this epistle I do not dwell on much detail, and the introductory and concluding parts of the epistle, forming the outermost members in its structure, I shall not touch upon at all, deeply interesting though they are.

The Glory of the Person of the Son.

The second section presents an unfolding of the glory of the person of the Son which is unexcelled in all Scripture in the vastness of its range. He is presented first as the Son of the Father's love. The title, "the Son," describes Him in the essential glory of His own eternal being before all worlds: the Son with the Father in

the glory of Deity and in the circumstances of glory proper to Deity (John 17. 5).

True, He was found here for a time in utterly different circumstances, whilst yet, as to the truth of His own person, ever "the Son" (John 5. 19). But all that was abnormal and but for the moment, a time-episode, in matchless grace, in the being of Him who is the eternal Son from eternity to eternity. The title describes Him not in relation to men, angels, or anything that is created or belongs to time, but outside of all time in His eternal relation to the Father in absolute Deity.

Secondly, He is "the Image of the invisible God." In Him all that God is has been brought into visibility. (As illustrating the use of the word

image, note in 1 Corinthians 15. 48-49 that though there be those to-day who "are heavenly," they do not yet bear "the image of the heavenly:" when they bear the *image* of the heavenly then all that they are as heavenly will be brought into visibility.) The first man Adam was created in the image of God. In him God was so far brought into visibility as regards this world. There was no other creature in this world's order standing in relation to God as the Father of spirits and constituted here as an intelligent moral being exercising will and with authority committed to him. In that sense the first man Adam was in the image of God here. There was in him to that extent, and so far as the world around him was concerned, a representation and setting forth of the invisible God. But in Him who is the second Man from heaven we have One who is in the very fullest and most final sense "the Image of the invisible God," and that not simply in relation to this world, but in relation to the wide universe, in relation to all things, for it is immediately added that He is "First-born of all creation" (N.T.). In Him has God been brought into visibility as regards men, angels (1 Tim. 3. 16), and all created intelligences.

Thirdly, then, He is "First-born of all creation." This is not a point of time: He is presented as such, "FOR" (for the reason that) "by Him were all things created." The first-born is presented in Scripture as possessing certain *rights* (Deut. 21. 17), and that in respect of excellence, "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power" (Gen. 49. 3). Historically, Manasseh was Joseph's first-begotten son, but God reversed the historic order and said of Ephraim, "Ephraim is My first-born:" the precedence was divinely given to him. Of Solomon, figure of Christ, it was said, "I will make him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." Absolute precedence, and the rights attaching,

pertain to the Son by reason of His relation to all else in the universe.

This relation is then developed in a fourfold way. "BY Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him;" He was the means of their all coming into being, they owe their existence to Him, whether they be things visible or things invisible. But all things were created "for Him" too: "for Thy pleasure they are and were created;" the *end* of their being is Himself. Then as to what is historic He takes the precedence also, for "He is *before* all things." And, again, as to the means by which all things "consist," or subsist together, it is "by Him." He is therefore (1) "before all things" as to time; (2) He is Author of all things, in that they all were created by Him; (3) He is Sustainer of all things, in that they subsist together by Him; and (4) He is the sole *end* of all things, in that they are "for Him." He is thus in the fullest and most absolute sense the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

This sevenfold description of the glory of the Son (vers. 13-17) is followed by another equally marvellous unfolding, also falling into seven parts, in verses 18-22.

The Second Series of Glories.

Here we enter another sphere and contemplate the glories of One risen "from the dead"—these three words enshrining all the story of infinite love infinitely expressed in infinite depths. He is "Head of the body, the assembly," which is derived from Him in death.

Secondly, He is "the Beginning:" the outset of everything in that sphere, as we have seen Him also to be in what for distinction we may term the first creation: He is "the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3. 14).

Thirdly, He is "the First-born from the dead;" as to time He is the first (the firstfruits, 1 Cor. 15. 23), and as to the rights in that sphere they all are His, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

Fourthly, that it might be clear that He is not merely an emanation from the Godhead, however marvellous: that instead He comprehends within His own being all the divine fulness, both when first taking His place in creation, and also as a Man in the resurrection sphere, First-born from the dead; that, in fact, there is nothing outside of Him either in the naturally created universe with its principalities and powers, or in the realm of blessing beyond death and in the power of resurrection; that all this may be clear it is now added that "in Him all the Fulness was pleased to dwell" (N.T.); and it is in the domain of death that the Fulness was all expressed.

Next, the work forming the basis of reconciliation comes to view, but not as a separate subject: the theme is still the glory of the person of the Son. All the Fulness was pleased to dwell in Him, and BY HIM, on the basis of peace made by the blood of His cross, to reconcile all things unto Himself. Nothing is done apart from Him, whether we look backward into the far distant past and behold principalities and powers, things invisible and things visible, called into being by the fiat of His power, or look right on past all the unfolding of God's ways to their final issue in that eternal day when all shall be reconciled, when God shall rest in divine complacency in respect of the wide universe, whichever way we look HE is the sole mover in all things: and His glory shines undimmed by any possible comparison, for He is alone in it all. The fifth, then, in this category of glories especially linked with that which is in virtue of His death, is this, that in Him has the Fulness been active so as to make peace by the blood of His cross.

Sixthly, by Him will all things in final result be reconciled; and, seventhly, in the body of His flesh through death has the fulness of the Godhead been pleased even now to reconcile us to itself. Reconciliation has essentially to do with the mind: we were enemies in our minds by wicked works, but are now reconciled as the result of that which has come out in the death of Christ with its marvellous unfolding of all that God is in love and righteousness. Enmity is thereby removed, and our minds are perfectly adjusted towards Him, so that now we "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5. 11); nor could accord and adjustment on our side be more perfect. Then as to the divine side, perfect complacency has been brought in, so that God can look upon all without His eye resting upon a single thing that is out of accord with the divine mind. In reconciliation there is thus the removal of all discord and the bringing in of perfect complacency and accord. As regards the universe, this is yet to be brought in. As regards saints, it is already brought in to-day. In connection with the yet future reconciliation of all things I may remark that all the things specified in detail in verse 16 are *moral* in their constitution.

The Double Ministry.

If I have dwelt in some detail on this double presentation of the glory of the Son in sevenfold relation both to creation as a whole and to the resurrection sphere, it is because on this all else in the epistle depends. In verses 23-25 is the mention of the twofold ministry of these glories as committed to the Apostle: that of the gospel, and that of the church: the former having as its sphere "the whole creation under heaven" (N.T.). In this connection it is interesting to note how characteristic of the epistle are such words as "all" and "every." The former occurs no less than twenty-eight times. And we can quite under-

stand why this should be so, for where we find the fullest unfolding of the glory of the person of the Son we may expect the effects to be correspondingly far-reaching, extending in ultimate issue to the utmost limits of the universe.

The Central Section.

In chapter 1. 26 to 2. 3 we have the central thought in the epistle in the words "this mystery . . . Christ in you." The greatness of this mystery, the intense opposition to its reception against which the Apostle had to combat, and the mighty energy which works to its effectuation, all come before us in a few words, as well as an indication of the state in which this great mystery is apprehended, *i.e.* in love, the divine nature in activity. Verses 4 to 8 give us the reason for the epistle being written to unfold the mystery; whilst verses 6 and 7 contain the central exhortation: as they had received Christ Jesus the Lord so they were to walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him. As rooted they were to find the source of all in Him; as "built up in Him" they were to find all further development and addition IN HIM; in a word, all their walk was to be in Him.

The Completeness and Positive Position of Saints.

I may only touch briefly on the remainder of the epistle. The next and fifth section is the unfolding of the completeness of saints to-day, and of their positive position in relation to the glorious Person presented in chapter 1., once dead, but now risen again. But if there be an apprehension of the manifold glories of the Son of God in something of their limitless fulness as presented in chapter 1., an effectual deliverance will be wrought from the danger which threatened the Colossians, namely, going outside of Christ to the empty philosophies of men. That danger was not peculiar to the Colossians alone. To-day there are

multitudes turning away to Buddhism, Theosophy, Christian Science, New Theology, Humanism, and other "vain deceits" of this world, empty nothings which do but delude and deceive. We are "complete in Him" who is the Head of all principality and power. There is next developed our positive position as dead and risen with Him. In Him we are circumcized with a circumcision made *without hands*. All about us that was contrary to the divine mind was removed in the death of Christ, and removed without a bit of effort on our part: it is "circumcision made without hands." That took place in Him. In Him too we are risen (ver. 12, where for "*wherein*" read "*in whom*," taking the alternative reading). "With Him," which is association, brings in what is experimental and the response of faith. We are buried with Him by baptism into death, and we are raised together with Him through faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead. This is our positive position as saints. In Him dead, and in Him risen, so that as (quickened by God) our souls apprehend the truth by faith, we can take account of ourselves as having died with Him and as now being risen with Him, and are therefore free to set our minds on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

The Application of the Truth.

In what follows in chapter 2. 16 to 4. 6 this truth as to the positive position of saints is dwelt upon in its application to all that with which the Colossians were in danger of being ensnared. How could those risen with Christ have to say to ordinances applying to men in the flesh, such as "taste not," "touch not," "handle not?" How could those who were complete in the One who is Head of all principality and power, and standing moreover in the most intimate corporate relationship to Him as Head of the body, even for a moment think of worshipping angels? How could those whose life was "hid

with Christ in God" be occupied with commandments and doctrines of men, which in their nature cannot proceed beyond what is of earth?

In result, that which characterizes the new man would characterize the saints. Christ would not only be in them all subjectively, but also objectively to each He would be ALL, *i.e.*

everything as object (3. 11). May it increasingly be so with us.

There is very much which cannot be touched upon in an outline study such as this; but if the structure of the epistle be grasped, and the great outlines of its teaching be apprehended, the precious detail can then be simply followed out to joy and profit.

"Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular"

(1 Cor. 12. 27).

A Christian is not merely a saved sinner, but he is a member of the body of Christ on the earth. For this he has not only received the highest favours *from* Christ, but he is *of* Christ. As a member of His body I am part of Himself, and I am, because of my calling, required to do everything suited to Him, as *He would do it*.

There is a great difference between being a recipient of the greatest favours and being a member of the body of the One who bestows the favours.

A recipient of favours might be like a guest in the house of a great king—every good thing in the house conferred upon him—but all the time he must feel that he has no living link with the king. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; I am made

to know that I am of Him. This is the Christian's highest glory: he is not merely in the house of the great King, but *one with Him*, and therefore connected with all His glory.

If we feel the dignity and gravity of our calling here as members of Christ's body on earth we shall, without effort, make all other things secondary to it.

What higher dignity, office, or duty on earth can I have than that which a member of Christ's body involves?

And wherever I am on the face of the globe, if I am walking faithfully in this, I am helping and invigorating the whole body of Christ on earth; but if I am walking wrong, and grieving the Spirit, my consciousness of union is weakened, and I am hindering the whole body.

No greater proof have we of the love of God, than that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse away the sin of those who shed it.

"The very spear that pierced Thy side,
Drew forth the Blood to save."

The Scriptures are the permanent expression of the mind and the will of God, furnished, as such, with His authority. They are His expression of His own thoughts. They edify, they are profitable; but this is not all—they are inspired. It is not only that the Truth is given in them by inspiration. THEY are inspired.

Christians may draw nigh to the world, because the flesh is in us, and this is unfaithfulness to Christ and grieving to the Holy Spirit. The world cannot really draw nigh to the children of God, because it has only its fallen and sinful nature. The approximation is all on one side, and always in evil, whatever the appearance may be. To bear testimony for Christ, and to God's saving grace, in the midst of the world is another thing.

He who does not submit to the Word of God thereby shows himself to be a rebel against God.

The Coming King.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

WE find in Scripture that God deigned frequently to reach the attention of people by means of dreams. Many instances could be adduced. Now, however, we have in the Scriptures the full unfolding of His mind, so that dreams, having that for their object, are unnecessary. There is enough in the Book of God to give complete intelligence to every willing heart as to all that is connected with our spiritual well-being for time and eternity, as well, surely, as to very much more than our personal well-being.

If people only knew the value of the Bible, they would prize it much more.

A mighty king of Chaldea, Nebuchadnezzar by name, had a wonderful dream. He saw, in vision, an image—great, excellent, terrible! It stood before him. Its head was fine gold; its breast and arms were of silver; its belly and thighs of brass; its legs of iron, and its feet part of iron and part of clay!

There it stood—silent, mysterious, significant!

Such a statue, composed of material so heterogeneous, had never been unveiled to mortal vision before.

No ordinary dream this, and none of the wise men of Babylon could relieve the affrighted monarch of the terror of that dream.

God had sent it, and God alone could explain it to him.

He who sent the dream fitted and sent the man to give the explanation.

Daniel, the devoted, godly captive, was entrusted with the dream and the key. Giving all credit to God, he told the king the wonderful secret—a secret of the ages!

Would that the politicians, and the statesmen, and the rulers of to-day would attend to the disclosure of this ancient dream!

An image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay: these are four kingdoms, coming in succession—from the gold of that day to the incoherent iron and clay of our own. It is easy to see them—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—the last being protracted, and its influence being felt universally to-day.

There stood that image, whose form was terrible, containing such elements of wealth and power, such stores of gold and of iron! How puissant, how resistless! No wonder the king was troubled, or that "his sleep brake from him" (Dan. 2. 1).

Such a problem must be worked out. But, notice most carefully, we read: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet . . . and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone which smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2. 34-35).

That was the greatest wonder of all! What could this mysterious stone, cut out without hands, be?

The image was smitten, ground to powder, and displaced by the stone. Marvellous stone! It becomes a mountain and fills the whole earth! The chaff of the threshing-floor is replaced by the stone which smote the image.

Yes, ye politicians, and statesmen, and empire-makers, who are engaged in tasks so enormous and so complex, and for which ye are sacrificing time, talent, brain, muscle, fame, and fortune, see ye not that ye are but building together that which shall become the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, while there is suspended overhead the Stone which is bound to pulverize your

gigantic labours and bring them all to dust?

Mark :—" In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : . . . but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2. 44).

When?

When the kingdom in mystery, as known to-day, shall give place to the kingdom in might—then!

To-day the kingdom of God is in moral and spiritual power; soon it will be in visible actuality.

To-day the church awaits her Lord for the meeting in the air at His coming. Thereafter the Stone shall fall, and grind, and crush to powder, as, like a mountain, it fills the whole earth, and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11. 15).

He is wise who devotes his attention, not to "the chaff of the threshing-

floor," but to the Stone, and the kingdom, and the King. For, as surely as "the gold" of Babylon has passed away and its place can hardly be discovered, so shall "the iron and the clay" of the present moment be dissolved as well. These kingdoms are evanescent, God's kingdom shall stand for ever.

The King, hidden to-day in heaven because of His rejection and death here, is made known now in richest grace as Son of God and Saviour, Advocate and Great High Priest, Head too of His body the church, but soon to appear with her in glory; and then, as the Stone cut out without hands, but introduced and established by the power of God, to reign in absolute monarchy and in perfect wisdom, power, and righteousness.

Such a King and such a kingdom have never yet been known; but, as certainly as "the chaff of the threshing-floors" shall be swept away, so shall this mighty Stone fill the whole earth and "stand for ever."

Some Old Testament Studies.—No. 1.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

Adam: "The figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. 5. 14).

I HAVE in my possession the photograph of an animal. The person who held it in position for the photographer is not seen in the picture, but against the wall there is the sharply defined shadow of a man. When the light threw the shadow on the wall, it must have struck the substance FIRST. The form of the man gave form to the shadow.

This photograph may illustrate for us the meaning of the Old Testament, for there the sharply defined shadow of a MAN is clearly seen on the pages of it. Much more than a man, surely—"God over all blessed for ever," a wonderful, glorious Person, "whose being none can know;" but yet a Man, the Son of God,

the Son of Man, the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. From Genesis 1. to Malachi 4. we find the sacred page full of the shadow of Christ. He Himself talking to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "*beginning at Moses and all the prophets . . . expounded unto them in all the Scriptures THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF*" (Luke 24. 27). No wonder their hearts burned within them as they listened to such an unfolding from such a Person.

Adam, Abraham, Melchizedek, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, and a host of others pre-figured Christ. In them in divers ways we see the shadow of Him who was to come.

Our illustration brings out a most important point. The expression, "*the figure of Him that was to come*," emphasizes it with all the direct force of Scripture. The light must have shone upon the man *before* the shadow was cast upon the wall. In the same way all the perfection yet to be manifested in Christ in manhood, and all the excellency of His work, was present, before God, *before* ever the types set Him forth. The substance was *before* the shadow. The antitype was *before* the type. The New Covenant was *before* the Old, paradoxical as such a statement may appear. Yet it is and must be true, or else Adam and Eve could not have been wrapped up in those coats of skin, nor could Abel have been accepted because of his offering, nor could one bit of blessing ever have reached sinful man.

* * * *

Headships of Adam and Christ.

The expression, "*the figure of Him that was to come*" (Rom. 5. 14), refers directly to Adam. It occurs in a very striking place and manner. The latter half of Romans 5. is occupied with comparing the HEADSHIPS OF ADAM AND CHRIST. One brought in the curse; the other, blessing. One brought in condemnation; the other, justification. One brought in death; the other, life.

And it is just in the midst of the description of the utter failure of Adam, in contrast with the perfection of Christ, that we get this striking expression, "*the figure of Him that was to come*."

We should not have expected the expression to come in just there. It looks disjointed and out of place. But the apparently disjointed place in which it occurs arrests and detains us. A moment's thought, and our soul is filled with a flood of light. Christ comes before us in two ways: by *figure* and *contrast*. Adam, *as God made him*, was the *figure* of Christ; as he made himself in his fall, he becomes a *contrast* to Christ. What a valuable lesson, if we

learn it aright. Never was a finer man placed in finer circumstances than Adam—yet he fell; and, as fallen, became the head of a race of men like himself. What can come from such a source? If the fountain is polluted we shall not expect clean waters to flow therefrom. Let us once and for all "*cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils*," and turn to Him in whom alone incomparable perfection dwells.

* * * *

The earlier a type is found in Scripture the more forcible it is. Such a type is made up of very few but very bold strokes. Later types will bring in details, and the more removed the type is from what is primitive, the more detailed and less strong as a type it will be found to be. We are now considering the *first* human type of Christ found in Scripture.

* * * *

"God said."

In Genesis 1. 26 we read, "*And God said, Let Us make man*." What divine prescience and wisdom are revealed in those two words, "GOD SAID." The words are more remarkable than appears on the surface. They must have sorely puzzled the pious scribe in Old Testament times. The words occur nine times in the first account of creation in Genesis 1. We are told that a Hebrew scribe was accustomed to wipe his pen every time he wrote down the most blessed and most awful word we know—GOD. How sorely puzzled he must have been to have found the word in the plural—not in the singular, which means one, nor the dual, which means two, but the plural, which means three or more in the Hebrew language. And this followed by the verb—*said*—in the singular! A plural noun governing a singular verb. And yet such was the scribe's reverence for the Scriptures that not a *jot*, the smallest letter in the Hebrew language, or a *tittle*, its smallest sign—would he alter. And here was an error in grammar apparently nine times repeated in the early verses of Genesis.

The plural noun governing a singular verb shows that the word *God* is a PLURAL UNITY, if one may so describe it. It is obvious that the Trinity—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—is here indicated. Three Persons—one God: and thus acting.

“*And God said, Let Us make man in Our IMAGE, after Our LIKENESS.*” Here we get two ways indicated in which Adam is “*the figure of Him that was to come,*” viz. IMAGE and LIKENESS, the former referring to what is representative, the latter to moral similitude.

Image.

Adam represented God in the fair scene of the first creation. How quickly he disgraced himself as in some sort the visible representation of God in this world. How quickly he fell, dragging after him in his ruin the unborn race, and affecting the lower creation, which “*groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now.*”

How one turns instinctively and in relief to the Christ, the Image of the invisible God. He has more than glorified God as the second Man out of heaven in the scene where the first man had so signally failed. How good it is that we know Him as worthy of fullest confidence. He is the quickening spirit. He is the last Adam. To Him is committed all judgment as the Son of Man. In His pierced hands lies all blessing for this world. And we look forward with joyful anticipation to the time when He will publicly take His place in this world as God's IMAGE.

Likeness.

Man is like a battered and well-worn coin. You can see the king's head upon the coin. It bears his *image*. The coin represents him as the guarantee of value in currency. But the image is also the king's likeness. But, alas! when we look at man how wellnigh obliterated the likeness of God has

become. The image remains; the likeness has almost ceased.

The image and likeness should go together. But in Adam's fall the likeness to God was greatly marred. What is man in the flesh like now? Ravening beasts, unclean birds. Such similes are found in Scripture.

Again, we turn with joy of heart to the Christ of God. How fully He bore the moral features of God. He made God known, revealed Him fully. *On earth* the Father could say, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Matt. 3. 17). *In heaven* all the glory of God is seen in His blessed face.

Headship.

In Genesis 2. a new name for God is introduced—LORD God = Jehovah Elohim. Jehovah (God in relation to man in a covenant of blessing), Elohim (God in plural unity). Headship involves life and nature. Hence it is the LORD God, who is prominent in Genesis 2. preparing for the race, who should be in association with their Head. And seeing that Adam is “*the figure of Him that was to come*”—of Christ who was to be the Head in new creation—we examine with deep interest the narrative before us.

First of all, and showing what was *first* in God's mind, if not first in point of time, we read: “*And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*” (Gen. 2. 18).

Then every living creature is brought to Adam, and he names them, thus asserting his place as HEAD OVER ALL THINGS. This is surely a figure of Christ. “*The Head of every man is Christ*” (1 Cor. 11. 3). He is “*the Head of all principality and power*” (Col. 2. 10). God “*gave Him to be the Head over all things*” (Eph. 1. 22).

As head, Adam ruined and wrecked everything, and that in a scene where all was most favourable. Christ has come, and tried in the most adverse circumstances He was ever perfect; He has

triumphed, and now as the risen Man He takes the place of Head.

In Genesis 2. the preparation of the garden and the naming of the animals are but preparatory to the introduction of the woman. In this connection Adam is a figure of Christ as HEAD OF THE CHURCH. Here we get the first and strongest type of Christ and the church. We need to complete the quotation from Ephesians 1. 22, 23, given above. God "gave Him to be the Head over all things TO THE CHURCH, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Head of the church as to herself, Head to the church as to her association with Him in rule and dominion. What a place God has given us in Christ! Could anything be more wonderful?

In the type we see how it is brought about. Adam falls into a deep sleep—figure of the death of Christ, by which alone the church could be brought into existence. The rib taken, the side closed, the woman builded and brought to Adam as a help meet, a wife—how striking a figure of the way the church has been given to Christ. This is the only type of Christ and the church where the church is typified as of Christ. Adam could say of Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," even as

it could be said of the church, "*We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones*" (Eph. 5. 30). For indeed the marriage relationship is not a haphazard illustration of the bond between Christ and the church, but was *designed* to illustrate it. That is to say, God had the *eternal* relationship between Christ and the church before His mind before ever the *time* relationship of man and wife was designed by Him to illustrate this great truth. "*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church*" (Eph. 5. 32).

Partnership.

God in creating Eve gave her to Adam in the double character that, whilst he was her head, she was his help meet, and said in creating man, "*Let THEM have dominion*" (Gen. 1. 26).

So whilst we shall ever look up to the Lord as Head—nay, more, we shall say with one of old, "*My Lord, and my GOD*"—yet we shall be associated with Him in His dominion and rule. "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them; . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years*" (Rev. 20. 4). What a prospect! To be Christ's help meet, His bride, companion in His kingdom, sharer in His rule.

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5. 7).

The latter part of this verse literally reads: "For He has you on His heart." He who piloted the patriarch through the deluge, and fed the prophet by the brook, and supplied

the widow's cruse, and watched over the imprisoned Apostle, and numbers every hair of our heads, He has every one of us on His great, almighty heart!—Cuyler.

What a comfort it is to have a path, which we know to be God's path for us, a path which we are able to travel in obedience simply, so that consequences are all His, and He may be trusted for them. The roughest path, if known to be His, can never lack a song.

There is nothing to take the place of the Bible. It comes from God, speaks of God, leads to God; it is meat for men, milk for babes, and medicine for the infirm; it is infinite thought enshrined in a book; it is a miracle set up in type.—*Selected*.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS.)

1 John 2. 1-11.

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous :

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you : because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Verses 1, 2.

THESE verses belong properly to the preceding chapter. The Apostle's object in writing which was "that they should not sin." This, indeed, is characteristic of his whole ministry. If, however, any one should sin, full provision is made for such a case ; and it is well for us that it is so, for, although there is no need for us to sin—and we certainly ought not to sin—yet we all do sin. The fact of there being sin in us is no reason why we should give way to it, and if we walked in the Spirit we should not do so. But, if any man sin, we have a Paraclete, an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, in His character as a righteous one. Of course, it is grace that makes the provision, but it is not on the grace of it that he here dwells, but upon the fact that He is "a righteous one."

The paraclete, or advocate, was the Roman *patronus*—our word "patron"—one who took a fatherly interest in his charge, and, like a solicitor or advocate, looked after his client's interests and kept them in order. So Christ, our Paraclete on high, undertakes for us with the Father above. In John 14. the Holy Spirit down here is our Paraclete, or Comforter, because, as dwelling with us and in us, He encourages and comforts us during Christ's absence, in entertaining our relationship with the Father and with Christ, so that we are not left "orphans" (John 14. 18). But whether it be Christ as the Advocate on high, or the Spirit as the Comforter down here, both are, as to their existence and the exercise of their offices on our behalf, independent of us.

"If any one sin." We should have said, "let him repent, confess his sin, and seek the pardoning mercy of God for his restoration." Doubtless a very good thing too, and rightly to be pressed in its own place (chap. 1. 9). But it is not what is in view here. That is the exercise through which the erring soul passes. It is man's side of the transaction. This, on the other hand, is God's provision. It is His side of the matter.

God has purposed us for blessing, according to His own good pleasure. We were utterly and hopelessly undone. He must interfere, from first to last, of His own self, and arrange to bring His gracious purposes to a successful issue, or all must end in failure. This He has done in Christ. Christ has come, and by His atoning sacrifice has settled judicially the whole question of sin, in the establishment of God's righteousness and the vindication of His glory. He has thus set free the hand of God to lift itself up in delivering power on behalf of those who believe in Jesus—those who in faith receive His Son. They are henceforth allotted a place as His children (John 1. 12), and He will carry them through safely to the end (John 10. 29) ; and that, in spite of every foe without or within. These are they whom the Apostle here calls, "my little children," the beloved family of God.

But if any one sin—and of them he is speaking, not of the world at large—and the link with the favour of God, and the final realization of His purposed blessing be endangered, as it was in the garden of Eden, then, has He omitted to provide

for such an eventuality, and will the erring one be left to the fatal consequences of his sin? No. Thank God, no. We are not here, in this scripture, on the former ground of creature responsibility in the first man, but on the ground of divine grace and the revelation of what God is in Himself and in Christ. Full provision is made for such a case on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of the cross, and we have an Advocate with the Father, who stands, by virtue of that work and in the glory of His own person, to undertake His people's cause successfully to the end. "He is the propitiation for our sins," and His pleadings cannot fail. Such is the transaction that takes place above; and in result it produces exercise of conscience, repentance, confession, the revival of confidence in the soul below, and restoration to the fellowship that had been forfeited through sin. A good example of this we have in the Lord's dealing with Peter. He little knew what was before him—but the Lord did—and how his self-confidence would betray him; and He said to him so tenderly, so emphatically, so earnestly, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath demanded to have you, to sift you as wheat: but I have besought for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, when once thou hast been restored, confirm thy brethren" (Luke 22. 31, 32). What exercises all this produced afterwards in Peter's soul! "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord . . . and he went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22. 61, 62).

Moreover, he says the propitiation is "not for our sins alone," *i.e.* for the Jews, "but also for the whole world." Note, not all the world numerically, as individuals, *πᾶσι*; but the whole world in its entirety, *ἅλοις*. Moreover, he does not say "for the sins of the whole world," but "for our sins;" only the value of the death of Christ is not confined to believers from amongst the Jews: it is available for all men everywhere.

The priesthood of Christ differs from His advocacy in that His priesthood (Heb. 9. 11) is to maintain our liberty of approach to God in the sanctuary; His advocacy is to restore into fellowship with the Father. Both offices are founded on the same sacrificial work, and are closely connected with each other; but they are exercised with different objects in view.

Verse 3.

And now we come to the practical tests of the true knowledge of God. The evidential proof of our knowing Him is the keeping His commandments. When we think of grace, of love, of eternal life, the free gifts of God, and such-like themes, we instinctively turn to John's writings. There we have the free gospel in all the fullness of blessing, and the assurance that we have it now. But while this is true, and because it is true, of all the writers in Scripture, there is no one who insists more emphatically than does John on the necessity of a verification by practical deed of all verbal profession. The words of the Lord, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," evidently left a deep impression on John's mind; for, in one form or another, he recurs to them, in the spirit of them, again and again.

"We know that we know Him" is the perfect tense. "We have come to know Him, and continue to do so" (note *in loco*, N.T.).

Verse 4.

"He who says." This expression occurs three times (vers. 4, 6, 9): he who says, "I know Him;" he who says he 'abides in Him;' and he who says, "He is in the light."

"He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." The true knowledge of God is bound up with obedience. In none was this so exemplified as in the Lord Himself. In the roll of the book above it was written of Him, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Ps. 40. 8). And again, "Though He were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5. 8). And again, "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 8). To Him His Father's commandments were the light and joy of a willing heart, as He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6. 38); and as He is our life, so His spirit and His ways are the test of all that professes to be of Him and to know Him. We must not shrink from the word "commandments," as though they were against the grace and

liberty of Christian life; contrariwise, they are most intimately connected with it, as the light and guide of the new man. In this Jesus Himself is our chief pattern. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John 15. 10). Nor, again, must they be confounded with the law from Sinai, which, as the repression of man's evil nature in the flesh, only brought out into clearer evidence how irrepressibly evil that nature is, so that "sin by the commandment becomes exceedingly sinful" (Rom. 7. 13).

Verse 5.

"But whoever keeps His word"—mark the advance in the expression—"in him verily the love of God is perfected," *i.e.* the enjoyment in his soul of the love of God made known in Jesus; and in this way we not only know Him, but "we know that we are in Him," which is, subjectively, a great deal more.

Verse 6.

But this entails its own obligations, for "he that says he abides in Him ought, even as *He* walked, himself also so to walk." Here, as elsewhere in John's writings, we see that he takes no account of any intermediate position. Everything is for him ruled according to its source. It is either God, or it is 'not-God'; it is either Christ, or it is Antichrist; it is the full light as God is in the light in Christ, or it is the world and the darkness of it; therefore, by the very fact of a man's saying he abides in Him he puts himself at once under the obligation of "walking as He walked." It does not say of being what He was. He was holy, spotless, pure, and undefiled. That no man is. But still he says, "he should walk even as He walked."

Verse 7.

The corrected reading here is, "Beloved, I write no new commandment to you," *i.e.* a commandment of a new kind, "but an old commandment, which ye have had from the beginning." Doubtless there were those even then who were eager in the setting forth of something new. The stagnant mind of man falls into arrears and loses what it has. It

has no energy of pursuit to an ordered end. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting" (Prov. 12. 27); and the warning to the Hebrews is of standing importance, not to be neglectful of the great salvation (chap. 2. 3), but to hold fast the beginning of the assurance firm to the end (chap. 3. 14), and to use diligence all the journey through (chap. 4. 11); while, again, for the active mind there is another danger, *viz.* that of allowing itself to be carried away by its own imaginings, and thereby falling into the snare of something "new." Better by far cleave to that which is true. Many a hopeful career has been wrecked on the Scylla of stagnation; many another has been lost in the Charybdis of "new truth." But, says the Apostle, there is no room for such development here, for "I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment, which ye have had from the beginning." But all the same it is new; but this is what is new about it, *viz.* that "it is true in Him and in you," *i.e.* what is true in Him is true also of the new man in Him, "because the darkness is passing"—it is not yet all gone from this world—"and the true light already shines" in the gospel, and is making headway. But what is making headway is not the activity of man's mind with his new light, but the old commandment which was from the beginning proclaimed in its abiding and ever blessed value, invading the realms of darkness and bringing its own light there. "Advanced truth," forsooth! and "higher criticism!" How vain is the mind of man! There is nothing more advanced than "that which was from the beginning," which abides in its self-sufficient excellency, in its own completeness. There can be nothing higher, nothing greater than God Himself revealed in Jesus, and the eternal life that has come in Him.

Verse 9.

"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in the darkness until now." He was never out of it. It is not that he is in darkness to a greater or lesser extent, but he is in "the darkness" definitely, and he was never otherwise. It is the description of such an one as he is essentially. When the Lord was here He said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9. 5).

But the darkness rose up against Him and drove Him out. Now the gospel is proclaimed, and in the power of the Spirit the true light is shining. This divides the world into two spheres—the light and the darkness. Unregenerate man, the creature without God, is in the darkness thus defined in opposition to the light. He who believes in Jesus and follows Him is in the light. Now he that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in “the darkness,” and, despite of what he says, he never was out of it: the darkness completely possesses him. There is no harmony between his statement and his state.

Verse 10.

But he that loves his brother abides in the light, dwells there, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.

Verse 11.

As well might a man say he is dwelling in Palestine while he is living and carrying on business in Brazil, as for a man who hates his brother to affirm that he is in the light. He is in the darkness as to his state; he walks in the darkness as to

his acts; he has no conscious sense of the nature of the road he is travelling, nor whither it leads, because the darkness has completely possessed him, and his eyes that were made to see the light are blinded by the darkness. It is an awful picture; and it is all drawn from the simple fact that he *hates his brother*. How clearly, definitely, repeatedly does he emphasize the reality of the darkness that has enthralled its victim. Alas! how many there are who are so blinded and misguided!

However much the profession of Christianity may have changed his outward position, if a man walks in the night he stumbles, because there is no light in him, *i.e.* no light reaches him through the avenue of the eye. “And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son” (*θεωρεῖν* = to behold with interest and careful observation, to perceive; *cf.* John 4. 19), “and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6. 40). Such an one, as described in this eleventh verse, has neither got the light of Christ for the present, nor the hope of Christ for the future.

“Bring me a Minstrel.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

A Word to Christians whose Lives are Out of Tune.

2 Kings 3.

THREE kings: the heathen Edomite, the apostate Jehoram, and the godly Jehoshaphat; a strange alliance this—an alliance that pleased the devil well, but that grieved the God of Judah to the heart. No wonder that disaster, swift and sure, followed upon the campaign, for how could that prosper in which a child of God took part which had been conceived and carried into execution without any reference to the Lord, and in association with those who hated Him?

So these kings went, and “they fetched a compass of seven days’

journey: and there was no water for the host;” and it seemed as though the fears of Israel’s monarch were to be realized. “Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.”

Then turned the thoughts of Jehoshaphat to Jehovah; then desired he to know, for the first time in that ill-starred venture, what the Lord would say; and, wonderful mercy! even while he cried out for a prophet, Elisha, the man of God, stood before him.

Mark well this fact, for it will be a help to us in our exercises as we

proceed with our subject. We learn from it, as from many other incidents in the Word, that the thoughts of God's saints never turn to Him in vain; no matter what their circumstances, or the cause of them, He is ready to answer even while they call: "They cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses." How great are the compassions of our God!

But the discord of that unholy alliance distressed the prophet; it jarred upon his spirit, which had been tuned in communion with God, and he would have said nothing at all but for the fact that a saint of God in trouble stood before him. But ere he could speak the word of the Lord the minstrel must be brought: in figure, harmony must take the place of discord.

Let us turn from the picture to the lesson. There are thousands of Christians bemoaning the lack of blessing. In spite of apparent diligent search, they do not find the waters of refreshing; their spiritual life is a desert, like unto "the wilderness of Edom." Their service and religious exercises have become a matter of routine, and in some cases a burden; and they wonder why!

In the majority of cases the reason is not far to seek: it is association with the world, unholy alliance with the godless for the pursuit of things which satisfy ungodly desires. *In every case it is because the life is out of harmony with God.*

A minstrel is needed, one who can take up the life and tune the chords of it, so that the discordant present may give place to the melody of a life in subjection to God. The Holy Ghost is the blessed Minstrel who has come from heaven with this purpose in view. But how easily and soon do Christians forget that the Holy Spirit of God dwells within them, how easily and soon do the vain things of this world and of man attract the mind and heart, so is the heavenly Minstrel

grieved, the life drops out of harmony with God, and the waters neither spring up in praise nor flow out in blessing.

Christ is the key to which every note in our lives must be pitched, and we must know, and the Holy Ghost is here to teach us, where Christ is, and why He is there. He is on the throne, crowns of God's approval shine upon His glorious head, and we gladly own the rightness of this. But have we realized why He is there? He is there, of course, because the Father delights to honour Him; He is there, of course, because He is abundantly worthy of that place of pre-eminent glory; He is there, of course, because none other place in the universe but the right hand of the Majesty on high is suitable to the One who fully carried out the will of God in making expiation for sin. But He is also there because the world rejected Him; He is there because the world cast Him out, nailing Him to a cross of shame. His exaltation in heaven is God's glorious answer to the ignominy that was awarded Him by a world that hated Him.

Let us contemplate this great and solemn truth; let us contemplate it in the presence of God, and give place in our souls for its meaning—for the meaning of *the cross of Christ*. In Paul, the apostle, we see a man in whose life the cross held sway. "God forbid," said he, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6. 14). He could not play the traitor to his Lord by accepting honour from the world that crucified Him. And if he remained in it, it was only that he might drag men out of it, that he might win their hearts for the One who filled his own with worship, so that they might be, even as he was, "not of this world," even as Christ was not of it. Let us take this same road, and say to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us:

"I bind Thy shame upon my brow,
Earth's only crown for me."

If our lives are concordant to the world, they are discordant to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and if they are discordant to God everything else must be wrong. The Scripture, which carries with it all the authority of God, shows clearly that there can be no harmony between God and the world, and it will allow no compromise with the world on the part of those who are God's. Paul asks: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6. 14-17). John tells us that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2. 15). James is stronger than all, for he says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? whosoever then will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (James 4. 4). These words need no comment, they are self-explanatory, and if, by any subtle reasoning by "the god" and "prince of this world," we have been led into compromise with the world our unfaithfulness in this respect is the cause of the low spiritual tone in the soul. All such unfaithfulness is sin, and the way of restoration is by confession. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful

and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 8).

Other things than worldliness also spoil the music and grieve the Holy Spirit: selfish living, hard thoughts and harsh words about our fellow Christians; an unforgiving spirit, indifference to the claims of Christ. Each one knows for himself wherein he fails, and where failure is there repentance must be. But how blessed it is to know that the Lord stands near us in unchanging love.

"How sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, eternal Lover,
Toward me as e'er, Thou'rt bright."

But He will have truth in the inward parts, and there must be the confessing and the forsaking of what is not of God.

Where there is confession there will be restoration to communion with God, and the Holy Ghost will bring us into unison with God by making Christ all in all to us. If He has His way with us He will bring us into full accord with Christ in glory, and keep us right as regards the world, and make every chord in our being sound out its full-souled praise to God.

And every word of God will then be sweet to us, and the waters of refreshing will flow into our souls from the living fountain of all good, making our lives to yield fruit for God.

Correspondence.

Righteousness.

DEAR EDITORS,—Would some of the contributors to your pages kindly help in connection with a doctrinal difficulty? It is often stated, in evangelical circles, that while the believer's sins are put away by the blood of Christ, what constitutes his positive righteousness before God is the perfect *life* of the Lord Jesus, as described for us in the

four Gospels. It is further stated that this is not a mere legal righteousness, in that the perfection of the Lord's earthly life far transcended a bare obedience to the letter of the law. Perfection was found in Him, and *this*, it is said, and not merely His obedience to the law, constitutes the believer's righteousness.

Turning to the Scriptures, I do not find it stated quite like this. Perhaps you will yourselves deal with the matter, and get some of your correspondents to do likewise.

H. P. BARKER.

In reply to the query of your correspondent it is surely important to first avow one's glad accord with much that is held by those who appear to have this difficulty, *e.g.* their apprehension of the perfection of our Lord's obedience, of the necessity of a righteousness other than our own, and of that necessity being met in Christ alone—whatever defect there may be in apprehending the manner in which it is met

When we come to deal directly with the matter of our being before God in righteousness, in harmony with His holy nature and attributes, we are absolutely shut up to Christ. For the Jew who is under the law, "Christ is the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). For the Gentile who calls on Christ for salvation and blessing, He "of God is made unto us wisdom, and *righteousness* and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Both of these chapters are written of Christ in His resurrection state. The Apostle, describing the righteousness which is of faith, *i.e.* the righteousness in which the Christian is seen before God, says that it is not necessary to ascend up into heaven to bring Christ down, nor yet is it necessary to descend into the deep to bring Christ up again from the dead, these being accomplished facts subsisting in all their blessed value before God for the good of men. But when a man believes in his heart that God raised Christ—our Saviour and Deliverer—from the dead, this is an introduction for him into a position in which God reckons him to be righteous before Him (Rom. 10:6-10). Confession with the mouth accompanies this, and the believer is thus recognizable as a saved person.

Everywhere in the New Testament where the doctrine of justification before God is expounded and our standing in righteousness, the resurrection of Christ is implied and taught. He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Adam was the federal head of a race who inherited from him death and condemnation, Christ having completed one righteousness in contrast to Adam's one offence, becomes in resurrection the federal Head of a new race who participate with Him in life and justification of life (Rom. 5:14-21). The grace that reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, subsists in Jesus Christ our Lord, and is administered by Him (ver. 21). It pleases God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe, and of such it is written, "Of Him are ye *in Christ*

Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . righteousness . . ." (1 Cor. 1:21-30). What Christ is made to us, and what we are made in Him, is stated alone of Him risen from the dead and now ascended on high. "Though we have known Christ after the flesh," says the Apostle Paul, "yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, there is new creation, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are of God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God *IN HIM*." Whatever may be the meaning of these wonderful utterances, it is clear that the one who believes in Christ receives most wonderful blessings in Him where He now is; and one element in that blessing is that, *in Him*, God now views the believer with unclouded satisfaction, and invests him with favour which is measured only by what Christ is to Him. It is in Christ, risen and glorified, that he is now seen, and his blessing is not in Adam, nor in himself, nor does it lie in the flesh, nor in the sphere where flesh finds its home.

It is, I judge, in regard to this that your correspondent finds that some Christians, while evangelical in their testimony, do not reach the scriptural truth. Beholding the unassailable perfection of Christ as He was *after the flesh* (I use the Apostle's term) they say that this perfection is transferred to the believer's account, and constitutes his righteousness before the face of God. Now, is it not incomprehensible, if such be indeed the case, that the Apostle says "we know Him henceforth no more" in that character? If he owed his standing to what Christ was, in His blessed perfection as a Man on earth, how could he pen such a sweeping exclusion of what formed his only hope?

We do not lose by having our misconceptions corrected, and I think we all have to learn that what Christ was in His life on earth and the official glories comprised in His person, have all been carried forward into resurrection. Had it not been so all that He is would have been unavailable for us. He would still have been nothing less than Himself, but He would have remained without associates in His glory, and in whatever character we view Him, it was necessary for Him to go down into death that He might remove our every disqualification, and then put us on the same platform with Himself in resurrection before His God and Father.

In the four Gospels Christ is presented in various characters. The records there given are our only means of discovering the excellences that were resident in Him, and His perfect suitability for the offices He is to fill. But in each of the four records He is

rejected in these several offices and characters and goes into death. What He was after the flesh has GONE. It is true that the remembrance of His humiliation can never pass away. A pot of manna was ever kept in the holiest in the tabernacle of old and God will never forget how lovely Christ was in the days of His lowliness though He was slighted and rejected and slain. We also are reminded every time we break the bread and drink the cup of Christian fellowship, of the perfection of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. Yet all that He was here was presented in death to God, and everything went in death. The old footing on which things were proposed to man was destroyed for ever in the judgment of the cross. "one shall burn the heifer in his sight, her skin and her flesh and her blood, with her dung shall he burn and the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer" (Num 19 5 6). Everything went. The cedar wood in its glory and the hyssop in its lowliness. Christ in His human greatness and Christ in His humiliation. Christ in His characters and Christ in His offices all went into death. Nothing shows so much as this the purpose of God to set flesh utterly aside. What Christ was after the flesh has passed into the burning, and there exists no such righteousness any more of that order that can be applied to us. Everything moved forward into resurrection. What Jesus *was* charms and attracts us but it draws us to where He has gone, and that is into resurrection and glory.

Hence, in each of the four Gospels the character which Christ presented in His earthly life is closed in death but reopened in resurrection. This is a tempting theme, but I must not try the patience of the reader. Nothing is missing of all that Christ is and nothing will fail of all that Christ was to be, but all subsists for God and for us in resurrection now.

It is therefore Christ risen and seated at the right hand of God who forms our all. It is not Christ in glory for our Object, and Christ on earth for our righteousness, Christ in glory is ALL as well as in all. To get any adequate idea of the favour in which we are set or of the righteousness according to which we stand before God it is necessary to study Christ where He is. To begin with just as it was a righteous thing with God to consume everything in 'the burning' when Christ stood as our proxy at the cross, so has it been a righteous thing with God to raise our Representative from the dead and to give Him glory. The height to which He is raised corresponds to the depth to which He went for the securing of God's glory and our blessing. But He has taken that place for us for His redeemed ones. It is true that we are still down here in our bodies and are marked by weakness and frequent failure, but nothing of this enters into our standing before God. For a time we tread the desert sand but our destiny is to be conformed to Christ in glory. By and by there will be no weakness to mourn over and no failure to confess. The nature within and the body itself in its resurrection condition and all the environment without will be in accordance with God's nature and attributes, there will be no thought or movement divergent from His will. This is what the Apostle Paul calls 'the hope of righteousness' *i e* full conformity to Christ in glory.

In the meantime our position before God being assured and our destiny secured it is ours to cherish Christ as our present Object, and to yield our members servants to righteousness that practical holiness may characterize us in this unholy world.

Others are far more competent than the writer to open out the position and excellence of the glorified Man who constitutes our righteousness at the right hand of God, but perhaps some of those of whom your correspondent speaks may be led to prayerfully consider and to heartily accept from God as much as has been said.

W H WESTCOTT

Brief further replies are invited

It is from occupation and communion with the Lord that true service flows, for it is only in communion with the Master that we can know His mind. He would have us to be confidential servants.

Sensationalism is one of the means by which Satan is blinding the minds of people in the world—be it the

novel, the concert, or the stage, it is mental intoxication. Are so called "revival" meetings free from this? We must see to it that our rapture or delight is not that in which the flesh takes part, but, on the contrary, that which ignores the flesh, because we are in the Spirit, where the flesh has no part.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 5.

The Ministry of the Lord and Its Character.

IN the ministry of our Lord, whether in word or work, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5. 19). His service in the days of His flesh was not, indeed, the ground on which reconciliation itself was effected: that could only be made good to believers on the righteous basis of His sacrificial death; but it declared God's attitude towards men, the question of sin not being raised. The miracles of the Lord were not merely acts of power, for He entered in spirit into the dire consequences of sin as manifested in this world, as it is written, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8. 17). At the grave of Lazarus "He groaned in spirit, and was troubled." In healing the deaf man (Mark 7. 34), "looking up to heaven, He groaned." How strikingly and touchingly do these expressions declare that God is no indifferent spectator of the misery of His poor fallen creatures! But if man was to be delivered from the thralldom of sin, the Son of God must not only act by works of power in tender grace, but yield Himself the true sin-offering in death. Thus was the Son of Man glorified and God glorified in Him.

MATTHEW presents the Lord in His ministry as "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15. 8-9).

MARK views Him as the One anointed of God "with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38).

Hence the characteristic word in Mark is *εὐθέως*, translated variously "straightway," "immediately," or "anon." Rapidity of action marks His pathway, along with precious details of the grace of His heart and the power of His hand (chap. 1. 41), "moved with compassion" (chap. 3. 5), "grieved for the hardness of their hearts."

In LUKE the Lord Himself depicts the character of His presentation in the Samaritan traveller (chap. 10. 30-37), who in grace makes Himself neighbour to the victim of man's sin and violence, cures, carries, and cares for him, and will presently call for him when He comes again. Much of the special teaching in Luke is devoted to this cared-for people, who are regarded as waiting for the call of their absent Lord. (C.E.H.W.)

Matthew's Gospel.

The Principles of the Kingdom.

In attempting to enter upon the precious ministry of the Lord, with the characteristic differences of the Synoptic Gospels, one difficulty would seem to be to comprise the study of them within the necessary limits of the space available; yet it is an immense help to our profiting by it to be able to trace, even in any measure, the scope of the ministry as presented in each Gospel. MATTHEW may well occupy us first, though for chronological order MARK, with his simple narrative of the blessed Lord going from one scene of service to another, must be looked to, supported as he is by LUKE in the events recorded by both.

The starting-point of the Lord's public testimony was the imprisonment of John the Baptist (see chap. 4. 12, and specifically Mark 1. 14). In Matthew He takes it up where His faithful servant had left it, and "began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and then He gathered round Him those whom He would associate with Himself for service among men.

Then, as in this Gospel elsewhere, there is brought into one point of view a wide circuit of work in Galilee in preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, and in healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people, that must have taken much time. This attracted great multitudes, and nothing, not even the choice and appointment of the apostles, is allowed to come between this and His setting forth in the so-called Sermon on the Mount (chap. 5.-7.) the character

of the kingdom He presented to them, a kingdom so different in character from the carnal expectation of the nation. This is brought out in the principles that should characterize those who entered into it when it was set up. The "Sermon on the Mount" is not the gospel to the unsaved, nor the revelation of the only producing power of what is suitable to God in any one. Two leading characteristics may be discerned as running throughout the instruction: the holy energy of faith in separation to God from the spirit of the world, found in the symbol of "salt;" and that which has to do more with the true representation of God in His own nature and character of grace as "the light of the world."

The teaching of the Lord cannot be truly said to be the spiritualizing of the law, for only two of its commandments are referred to. He had come, not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to give them their revealed completeness. And in connection with this He contrasts the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, which consisted in external forms and the observance of the letter, with the state of the heart to which God has regard—a solemn lesson for us all.

The King.

If the principles of the kingdom are unfolded in chapters 5.-7., the King Himself—Jehovah-Messiah—and His position in Israel follows in chapter 8. To form the portraiture, a series of events are put together; the remarkable way in which they are taken out of historical order shows whose hand is in it. First, there is the case of the leper from the early Galilean ministry (see chap. 8. 2; Mark 1. 40). None but Jehovah could heal the leper, but He was there with both will (which the leper doubted) and power to do it. He was there, as come in Christ, to have to do with the vile, to touch with an infinite tenderness those whom none but He could touch without being defiled.

Next we have the record, without any mark of time, of one of the many visits to Capernaum, though LUKE gives it the same place following on chapters 5.-8. (Luke 7. 1). Here in the centurion is set forth in the most striking way the out-going of grace to the Gentile, and in him faith was found such as there was not in Israel. In this connection there is

brought in the dispensational revelation that many from East and West would sit down with the patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven, while the natural Jews would find themselves in outer darkness.

The healing of Peter's wife's mother on that early Sabbath in Capernaum (Mark 1. 30, 31) is here connected with the many examples of His power, that Isalah 53. 4 might have its fulfilment in the way He bore on His heart of compassion the infirmities and sicknesses that He removed by His power.

But what were the circumstances of the King? Between the commandment to cross the lake to the other side (chap. 8. 18), and the storm that arose during that crossing (vers. 23-27; Mark 4. 37; Luke 8. 22), there is inserted what really followed upon the Transfiguration (see Luke 9. 57), in order to bring out these circumstances. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (ver. 20). This made His claim absolute upon all who would follow Him in such circumstances of rejection. It meant too that His followers would find themselves on a storm-tossed sea while He seemed not to notice their danger. Yet He was with them to rebuke the winds and the waves, which were subject to His authority. Faith would have known that they were safe, but faith was small in those disciples. At Gadara He is confronted with a full (two-fold, as often for Jewish testimony in Matthew) testimony to the awful power of Satan (ver. 28). But so habituated were the inhabitants to it that they preferred the demons to the Son of God (for such even the demons confessed Him to be). So they besought Him to depart out of their coast, though He had proved His power amongst them to deliver from such bitter bondage.

The Principles of His Ministry.

To this remarkable presentation of Emmanuel in power and grace chapter 9. adds the principles of His ministry. The same measure of displacement of the chronological order is not now necessary, though it will be observed that Jairus's daughter and the woman with the blood-issue belong historically to the time subsequent to the parables of chapter 13. The deliverance of the palsied man from his disease was the proof that He, the

Son of Man (always the place which He took), had power on earth to forgive sins.

He also takes occasion to enunciate the character of His ministry while sitting at meat in the house of Matthew the publican (who does not hesitate to give his name as such: the other Gospels call him Levi). He had not come to call to repentance those who were righteous in their own eyes, but sinners. Moreover, it was impossible to connect this new grace and power with the old worn-out forms of Judaism, which was the old garment (ver. 16).

Israel was, like Jairus's daughter, given up for dead; but on His way to raise the dead daughter of His people whoever in the crowd had faith to avail himself or herself of the power that was present received the benefit of it. Blind eyes were given sight according to their faith, and lips, once dumb because demon-possessed, were opened to speak, the multitudes owning that it had never been so seen in Israel; while Pharisees, in awful blasphemy, attributed the casting out of demons to the prince of the demons.

The ever-gracious Lord, moved with compassion for His harassed and scattered sheep, would have His disciples pray the Lord that labourers might be raised up for so plentiful a harvest (vers. 36-8); but He anticipates them by sending forth the twelve, whose names are given us, with power to act as He had done (chap. 10.). Their mission is limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and though suspended by the judgment come upon Israel for their rejection of the testimony, it will be taken up again after the whole present period is over; and they will not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.

The Rejection of the Kingdom.

The first plain intimation in this Gospel of the rejection of the kingdom, as hitherto presented to the nation in the person of the King, is found in the change of the instruction in chapter 10 from verse 16. The actual circumstances of His rejection come pressing upon the heart of the Lord at this time, and give rise, in the perfection in which He received all from His Father's hand, to the revelation of deeper glories of His person than those in which He had been presented to Israel. And from this point on while His person as thus set forth remains for faith, the con-

sequences of the rejection of One to whom such glory belongs comes out in the total change of dispensation afterwards to be recorded.

The more we enter into these early chapters of Matthew, and trace the history of the presentation of Jehovah-Messiah to Israel and their rejection of Him, the more we shall feel the important place they have, so distinct from what is given us in the other Gospels, and yet such a key to the understanding of the whole. (J.A.T.)

The "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew and Luke.

The thoughts and hopes of the Jews were centred on a kingdom to be established by the manifestation of a power which would aggrandize their nation, annul the power of Rome, and introduce themselves as the followers of the King into chief places in His government. In order to deliver souls from this mischievous error and to establish them in the truth of that peculiar moment the "Sermon on the Mount" was uttered. This teaching, if followed, would bring the disciples into line with the life of Jesus in that narrow pathway of which He told them in chapter 7. 13, 14. The comparison of those chapters with Luke 6. is helpful in appreciating the character of ministry given to each. The key to Matthew 5., etc., is found in verses 17 and 20. The Lord here declares that He is come to make good the whole scope of law and prophets, to give them their fullness, apart from which they would have no adequate expression; consequently we find constantly in Matthew the word of Christ put forth, not as correcting what had been before, but giving a deeper meaning to it. In accordance with this, and illustrating verse 20, we find the Lord all through this discourse deals, not with outward acts, but with the state of the heart. The acts of the Pharisee might seem as beautiful as a marble sepulchre. What about the foulness within? The anger of the heart is murder, the look of the heart is adultery. The Pharisee might be conspicuous enough in his distribution of benefits and had his reward; the Father who sees in secret rewards the one who gives for His pleasure. So with regard to prayer and fasting. All this linking on to law and prophets is entirely wanting

in LUKE, who presents the words of our Lord in a somewhat different setting

MATTHEW and LUKE agree in introducing the revelation of the Father's name and giving His character in mercy as a pattern for the disciples. They both terminate the discourse by showing the evil and danger of what was like the truth, yet far from it. How readily are souls satisfied and beguiled by imitation! It is worthy of special notice how in Matthew, after the introduction of the Father's name, all the inward springs of thought, word, and deed are to be ordered in reference to Him thus known. This is in entire contrast with the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, which was wrought before men to be seen of them. Seeking honour one of another, how could they believe? How readily the elements of this evil creep into the hearts of true believers and numb their spiritual senses.

Verses 21-26 of Matthew 5 help us to see for what class of believers the teaching of these chapters had primary application, the references are so Jewish that they could not be literally used in our day. Israel was on the way to the Judge, and needed reconciliation to Him whom THEY had made adverse to them, and in the government of Jehovah they would not issue from their prison till the last farthing was paid. This is seen accomplished in Isaiah 40 1, where comfort is given to 'My people,' for, according to the reckoning of mercy, they have received double for all their sins. Evidently, then, the primary and direct application is to the believing remnant of Israel, both in the days in which the words were uttered and in the coming day in which, on the eve of the millennial kingdom, they will again come into prominence. They are here instructed as to the character of the kingdom and of those who should be qualified for it—*character*, be it observed, not title, the latter is always derived from the virtue of Christ and His sacrifice (*cf* Ps 15). But while it is important to see this primary application, it is important, too, that every believer who finds himself in the place of Christ's rejection, whatever other privileges he may enjoy as one of Christ's assembly (*chap* 16), should make personal application of the principles of this searching ministry (C E H W)

The Lord Himself was the perfect exemplification of the Beatitudes. Those who

make up His kingdom are to be like Him

"Blessed are the meek" (Matt 5). If a man said "I am meek," it would prove that he was the opposite of it. Jesus alone could say, 'I am meek and lowly.' Who "hungered and thirsted after righteousness" as He whose meat it was to do the will of Him that sent Him? Who could say he was 'pure in heart' save Him who, with 'clean hands and a pure heart,' could ascend into the hill of Jehovah and stand in His holy place? Who was persecuted for righteousness' sake as He was? His very goodness and love brought out the hatred.

Note that the five references to *righteousness* in Matthew 5 6, 10, 16, 20, and 6 33 are not found in Luke. In Matthew it is more the person of Christ—the One who loved righteousness, who spoke the mind of God and carried it out, a righteousness that exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees—for the perfection of the Father was displayed in Him. In Luke it is more His work—the salvation—rather than the person of the Saviour, as meeting man's need, and the word operative to effect the blessing, "His *word* was with power," while Matthew says, "He taught them as one having authority" (*chap* 7 29, *cf* Luke 4 32).

In Matthew 5 45 we find "that ye may be the sons of your Father who is in the heavens," while Luke 6 35 has "ye shall be the *sons of the Highest*." It is the Lord's own name in this Gospel (*cf* *chap* 1 32), the millennial title, too, as Son of Man.

In Matthew 5 48 we have, "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father who is in the heavens is perfect," while Luke 6 36 uses 'merciful' twice over instead of "perfect." In Matthew 5 48 it is a question of displaying here the character of our Father, according to the revelation which the Son was bringing. Though Matthew does not bring out the relationship in its fulness, for this we must go to John's Gospel.

In Luke 6 36 it is mercy that is in view—man's need met, though when God exercises it—so wonderfully and specially in this Gospel—He does it in a way that *satisfies His own heart*, hence mercy takes on the character of grace. Note that mercy and forgiveness are not found in John's Gospel. Luke abounds in both (To be continued) (W R S)

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

Hebrews 1. 3; Revelation 3. 14.

C.C.C. Your question as to Colossians 1. 15 is answered, we think, in the outline study of that epistle which appears in this issue.

You ask, further, for an exposition of Hebrews 1. 3 and Revelation 3. 14. Space will compel us to dwell but briefly on these unfoldings of the glories of the Son of God; but note that in Hebrews 1. the subject is God *speaking*. He had done so in many parts and in many ways by the prophets, but now in these last days has spoken fully and finally in the person of the Son. The relationship of the Son to the Father is not the point here, but rather that in the Son God has spoken.

He is established "heir of all things:" into His hands in the ultimate issue do all things fall, as at the outset the Godhead was active by Him in bringing them all into being (ver. 2), and this, as chapter 11. 3 shows, was by the *word* of God.

He is next declared to be "the brightness [or effulgence] of His glory:" in Him the divine glory has become effulgent, the full shining out of the glory of God is in Him. He is, further, "the express image of His person." Image is not the same word here as in Colossians 1. It is a word exactly fitting to the subject, viz. *God speaking*. The word is "charaktēr," from which we get our word character in the sense in which we speak of letters as characters. In Him the divine being has been expressed in living characters: He is the living delineation of all that God is. The new translation of this verse runs, "The expression of His substance," i.e. *essential being*, not *person*. Moreover, He upholds "all things by the word of His power." We have not to conceive of some mighty arm upholding all things, but so glorious is the Person we here contemplate, such mighty power is there in even His uttered word, that by it alone all things in the wide universe are upheld. "Having by Himself made purgation of sins." Here the Son of God is seen in the divine glory of His own person as the One who "by Himself" effected the mighty work. Finally, we read that He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He set Himself there. This again brings

before us His personal dignity as One who of His own right and authority sets Himself in the place of supreme exaltation.

In Revelation 3. 14 He is spoken of as the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God." The context must be read and noted. In Laodicea we come to the last stage of the professing church as set here in the place of witness, and it is seen to have altogether failed and to be about to be utterly rejected (ver. 16). But is there finality here? Is that the end of all? No indeed! HE is the *Amen*: finality is with Him; and He is, in blessed contrast, "the *faithful and true Witness*." Moreover, as all that is linked with man set here in responsibility ends but in failure, and in final result all has to be found in Christ alone, so He is also the outset of all things new and abiding: He is the "Beginning of the creation of God."

The Son of God as Servant.

A Reader writes:

"Is the Lord ever spoken of in the Scriptures as a ministering Servant, as Moses (Heb. 3), or . . . as a Bondsman? Is He not rather the Son in contrast to the official servant and the bondsman's Lord?"

The Lord is spoken of as the Son in contrast to the official servant (Heb. 3.), and He is also the bondsman's Lord; and yet He took upon Himself the bondsman's form, and became in reality the perfect Bondsman, and in this is manifested the moral glory of His humility.

There are several Old Testament scriptures which present the Lord in this character; Exodus 21. 5, 6 is, we believe, the first of these. Here a remarkable type is given of Him as the One who has bound Himself to serve for ever because of the great love He bears towards God and His own, figuratively represented by "my master, my wife, and my children." He will not go out free. We are not going beyond Scripture in saying this of Him, for as to the *past* we read: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20. 28). As to the *present*: "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 25). As to the *future*:

"*Verily I say unto you, that He shall give Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and . . . serve them*" (Luke 12. 37).

Psalm 40. 6-8 may be a reference to this type where the Lord is heard saying, "*Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened [or "digged," marg.]: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.*"

This wonderful passage is quoted in Hebrews 10., "Mine ears hast Thou digged" being translated there into "a body hast Thou prepared Me," as in the Septuagint version.

Isaiah 50. 4 is another precious statement of the Lord as Jehovah's Servant: "*The Lord, Jehovah, hath given Me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the instructed*" (N.T.).

The word translated "learned" in the A.V. is the same one as "disciple" in chapter 8. 16, and the wakening of His ear tells of His absolute subjection and obedience to the word of the Lord; and yet this subject Servant is the One who "clothes the heavens with blackness" (ver. 3).

There is another remarkable passage (Zech. 13. 5)—where the words translated in the A.V. "*for man taught Me to keep cattle from My youth*" should be "for man acquired Me [as bondsman] from My youth" (see N.T.), and yet the One who says this is the One whom Jehovah salutes as His Fellow (ver. 7).

One other passage from the New Testament may be quoted: "*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered*" (Heb. 5. 8).

There is, as has been pointed out, a remarkable connection between sonship and service (see Exod. 4. 23; Hos. 11. 1; Matt 2. 15; Phil. 2. 22).

"Before the Presence of His Glory" (Jude 24).

M.P.L. inquires:

As to whether this passage refers to the manifestation before the judgment seat of Christ.

We think not. It contemplates our

being presented without fault before the full shining of the glory of God, all that God is in His revealed nature and character. He will not be ashamed of us when He presents us there, but will do it with exceeding joy, for there will not be a single thing in us or about us inconsistent with that glory. We need not say that this will be entirely because of the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and the boundless grace of God.

The Lord's Day.

K.M.I. inquires:

Whether the Lord's day (Rev. 1. 10) is the first day of the week, or whether it refers to "the day of the Lord."

The Lord's day here cannot refer to "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5. 2), for that is a period in which the Lord will be manifested in righteous judgment in the world, and John speaks of being in the Spirit on the Lord's day. To say that he was projected by the revelation made to him into the day of the Lord is to say what the passage does not.

It should be noticed too that the vision which immediately follows the statement that John became in the Spirit on the Lord's day was that of the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven churches, and this vision relates, not to the coming day of the Lord, but to the present period.

The title Lord is used here as an adjective, as also in one other case, "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11. 20). It means the day that belongs to the Lord, or the day to the Lord; and we believe that it refers to the first day of the week; for what a day was that when He rose up from the dead in all the glory of His victory—it was truly the Lord's day. On that day the early disciples met together (Acts 20. 7; 1 Cor. 16. 2), and though the keeping of days in a legal spirit is contrary to Christianity, yet we conclude from these passages that this day had a special place in their thoughts. And truly it is a happy thing to be able as each first day of the week comes round to be specially reminded of His resurrection, and to devote, where possible, that day to His things in the happy liberty into which He has brought us.

Burdens.

A.W.F. inquires as to the meaning of

"Bear ye one another's burdens" and "for every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6. 2, 5), and cannot reconcile these passages with the fact that we are to cast our burdens on the Lord.

We are indeed exhorted to cast our burden on the Lord (Ps. 55. 22), and in this passage burden means "the portion assigned to thee," and it does not say the burden will no longer be ours, nor that our circumstances will be changed, but He, the Lord, will sustain thee. There will be the consciousness of His power and grace upholding us, and the heart will be relieved of all anxious care. It is only as we have to do with the Lord thus that we are truly able to help others.

As to the Galatian verses, the Christians there were putting themselves under law; and the Apostle here shows them the law which they were to fulfil, the law of Christ, *i.e.* the law of love, Himself being the perfect expression of it.

We read "even Christ pleased not Himself." He bore upon His blessed heart the sorrows and cares of others. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and could say to His disciples, "I am among you as one that serveth." Blessed Master! He is our example, and He is the only true standard of Christian living.

It is our privilege to follow in His steps, to share in the sorrows of others, to help and support those who are tried and tempted, and perhaps in danger of falling (ver. 1). This is set in contrast to biting and devouring one another (chap. 5. 15) and seeking self-glory, provoking and envying one another (ver. 26). Verses 4, 5, 6 bring out our responsibility. We are each individually responsible to the Lord, and this responsibility cannot be shirked. Every one of us must give account of *himself*: each must bear his own burden.

The Works of the Devil.

W.H. inquires as to the meaning of:

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3. 8).

The devil himself sinneth from the beginning, and the effect of his work in this

world is seen in the inception of sin here: his children are marked by unrighteousness and hatred. The method of Satan's working was by misrepresentation of God.

But the Son of God has been manifested to undo (as the word should be) the works of the devil. He has been manifested, and in Him who was the Light of the world, and who Himself is the Truth, there has been the full setting forth of what God really is, and in result the works of the devil are undone. The accomplishment of this is seen in those born of God. They are practically marked by righteousness and love, and thus in them in actual result the works of the devil are seen to be undone. The verses preceding and following need to be read, and the meaning then becomes easily evident, as we have outlined it above.

Miscellaneous.

M.P.L. It is the Holy Spirit that makes intercession for us in Romans 8. 27.

Paul's gospel follows upon the revelation of grace as presented by Luke. Peter's line of ministry is the continuation of Mark's Gospel (see chap. 16. 19, 20).

The consecration of the priests (Exod. 29.) was done once and for all; the ceremonies covered seven days.

W.H. 1 Thessalonians 4. 3 refers to Christians; they are to be practically clean from the abominations of the Gentiles.

The Genealogy of the Lord.

A Reader. Mark does not give the genealogy of the Lord, but simply states who He was—the Son of God. We need also Matthew and Luke, for the genealogies there given are both the true genealogies of the Lord. In the former the genealogy proves that the Lord came of the line of promise, the One in whom all the promises centred, to fulfil them all for the glory of God; and in the latter His manhood is proved, for His descent is traced to Adam; and it is just as necessary to maintain the true manhood of the Lord as it is His Deity. If He were not both God and Man, we have no Saviour.

Your question as to why it is said that the Lord is presented as the Servant in Mark's Gospel will, we hope, be answered in our next issue in the "Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels."

The Lord's Coming.

"I go and prepare a place for you."

HE has gone to prepare a place for us. We shall be there, ever with Him: no interruption, no decay of joy, but rather ever-increasing delight, as there always is when the object is worthy of the heart, and here it is infinite.

"I will come again, and receive you unto Myself."

This is the language of affection. He does not say, I will send for you—no, that would not satisfy His heart—but "*I will come.*" He would not be content without having us where He is, and to that place He will come and fetch us.

Is the thought of the Lord's coming your daily delight? Does it influence you in all the details of your life? Or are you walking hand in hand with the world, so that the very thought of His coming fills you with shame?

"To wait for His Son from heaven."

The saints of God were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and when they lost that hope and distinctive place, all the mischief came in. If you are constantly waiting for Him it will change you. You will not be heaping up money and treasure here if you are looking for His coming.

There can be nothing of greater practical importance for every-day work and service than waiting for God's Son from heaven. For in the hope of His coming we shall see that the details of life here are but God's dealings with us, that we should be to His praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

"While we wait for Him,
We shelter 'neath the shadow of His wing:
There we're safe from sore temptation
And from every evil thing.
And we raise our songs of gladness,
To His name all praise above,
While we're waiting for the coming
Of the Saviour whom we love."

Papers on the Higher Criticism.

(H. P. BARKER).

III. The Issues at Stake.

IT may be asked by those who have little acquaintance with the subject: "Does it matter so very much, after all, whether people accept the conclusions of the Higher Criticism or not? Suppose that the books of Moses were mere compilations of a late date, and that Moses had nothing to do with them, what difference would it make to us? And if the miraculous element in Scripture were proved to be capable of a natural explanation, in what way should we be losers?"

The answer to such inquiries as these is that the attack of the critical

school is directed against every one of the great fundamental truths of Christianity. The logical result of accepting the conjectures and theories propounded by the critics would be the abandonment of faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God, in the fall of man and the necessity of the new birth, in the atonement, in the Deity of Christ, in the perfection of His manhood, in His resurrection, in His coming again, and in all that the heart of the Christian holds most dear.

Not that all the adherents of the Higher Criticism have gone to such lengths as to avow disbelief in these

great cardinal truths. Some have, and in doing so they have but pursued their false system of reasoning to its logical outcome.

Let me endeavour to show, in the briefest possible way, how these tremendous issues are involved.

If the Scriptures are a set of mere human documents, consisting of compilations by anonymous scribes, forgeries (such as Deuteronomy, Daniel, and other books are declared to be), and collections of legendary tales, no one can rightly receive them as the inspired and infallible Word of God. They cease to exercise any authority over our consciences. We no longer regard them as a court of final appeal in matters of faith and conduct.

If the early narratives of Genesis are nothing but scraps of Chaldaean folk-lore, collected by some unknown person in the time of Ezra, or at a later date, then the story of the temptation in Eden must be a myth. There was no "fall" such as is recorded in Genesis 3. Man's progress from the start has been an upward one. And in this case, what necessity can there be for the new birth? The sacrifices too, described in Leviticus, were never ordained of God. They were never offered at all. The chapters which give us the details of the various offerings are the work of some scribe who lived hundreds of years after Moses. The idea of "atonement" which underlies the sacrifices was not reached, in the course of man's religious development, till a comparatively late date. And since then man's mind has made further headway, and the very notion of an "atonement" being necessary between God and men is scouted as the relic of a past age.

But did not the Lord Jesus quote Moses as the writer of the Pentateuch? Did He not distinctly say of Moses, "He wrote of Me"?

This is certainly so, if we are to believe the testimony of the four Gospels. But we are told that "Jesus

spoke according to the common belief of His day." In other words, He attributed the books of the law to Moses, because it was generally believed that he was the writer until the "Higher Critics," with their superior knowledge, appeared upon the scene. Where, then, is the omniscience of Deity? How could One who knows all things make such a mistake? If what the critics say is true, we can no longer believe in the omniscience, the infallibility, the Deity of Christ. He is a mere man, nothing more.

Nor was He free from imperfection, even as a man. His knowledge was limited. He shared, in some measure, the unenlightened superstitions of His age. He made mistakes. He allowed people to imagine that He performed miracles when all that He did was to use marvellous jugglery, coupled with exceptional mesmeric powers of healing.

It is painful to have to write words like these. But to such lengths do the dupes of the critical fallacies go. They have not hesitated to assail the glorious person of Him whom we worship as our Lord and our God.

As to the resurrection, the critics are not quite agreed as to the best way of explaining it. But the fact itself, constituting a miracle of such stupendous magnitude, cannot possibly be accredited. And as prophecy is akin to miracle, and as both are considered impossible, all expectations of a future coming of the Lord, and His personal reign for a thousand years, are dismissed as the imaginations of a disordered mind.

It may be supposed that learned and scholarly men, as the leaders of the critical school undoubtedly are, must have some good ground for advancing ideas of such a revolutionary character. The reader will be surprised to know upon what very flimsy and unsubstantial foundations the edifice of conjecture and deduction is founded. As a matter of fact, philosophers and

men of learning are generally the people least suited for weighing evidence. A trained lawyer, thoroughly versed in the practice of cross-examination, and ever on his guard against jumping hastily to conclusions, would laugh to scorn the crude and irrational methods adopted by the critics. He would declare them to be contrary to common sense.

We shall in our next paper consider the methods of the Higher Criticism. But let us here clearly state that there can be no legitimate objection to the true *literary* criticism of the Bible. To such criticism we owe much. It has elucidated the sacred text for us, and shed much light upon the meaning of words and the correct rendering of Hebrew and Greek terms. But the Higher Criticism is something quite different. If asked to define "Higher Criticism," we might describe it as *an unscientific, unhistorical, and unphilosophical method of making conjectures and forming unjustifiable conclusions with a great show of learning and great pretensions to piety and impartiality.*

As of old, the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. The "voice" of the critics assures us of the "high regard" they have for the Scriptures, the "divine library" as some of them call it. But with ruthless "hands" they drag the sacred writings from their place of authority and degrade them to the level of mere human compositions.

And shall we suffer ourselves to be

thus robbed? Shall we cease to regard the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God? Then we shall be like ships, without rudder or compass, drifting no one knows whither, driven about by wind and wave from year to year.

Thank God He has not left us to be the prey of such uncertainty as this. With excellent reason we accept the Scriptures as given by inspiration of God, and find therein the revelation of God Himself. There we have recorded the love and purpose of God, and the way He has taken to win us from the paths of sin and self-will in order that we might be linked up in everlasting companionship with Christ, and be co-heirs with Him of all the wealth of the inheritance of God. In the Bible our Saviour is brought before us, and we learn, as we read of His sorrow and suffering, the depth of His love to us. We learn how He lives for us to-day, and how He has given His Spirit that we might have the present enjoyment of all that He has won for us.

We find too the future disclosed to us. We get a glimpse of the dark clouds that are gathering upon the horizon of this world's prospect, and we rejoice that we are no longer of it. "With Christ" will be our happier portion, and we shall be His loved companions through the ages yet to come. The knowledge of all this is brought to us in the Scriptures. Let us thank God, again and again, for them, while we value them more highly, study them more diligently, and obey them more whole-heartedly.

The Eternal Existence and Godhead of "the Word."

As "*the Word*" He must necessarily have existed from all eternity. For who could conceive of God without the power or channel by which to express Himself? Were it otherwise He could not be the Almighty Being. Hence the opening statement of the

Gospel of John, as all can understand, must be held as an undeniable truth. Further, "*the Word was with God.*" That, too, who can reasonably question? Then follows the express statement, "*the Word was God.*" For who could perfectly express God save He who is God?

Our Origin, Mission, and Destiny

As seen in John 17.

(INGLIS FLEMING).

JOHN 17. stands alone. Its character is quite unique. In no other part of the inspired writings is truth presented in quite the same attractive form, for in it we are allowed to draw near and hear expressed in prayer the desires of the Son of God for those whom He has now secured for Himself by His atoning death. Surely no Christian heart can be unmoved as it meditates upon this unfolding of the longings of the Saviour, for they are for us, even though they first of all had in view the disciples who surrounded Him. This is shown in verse 20, where we read: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." His eyes of love looked down the long centuries and He saw every one of His own before Him and prayed on their behalf.

The Setting of the Chapter.

In the end of the sixteenth chapter the Lord spoke of His rejection. He was in the world which was formed by His hands, but it knew Him not; and in its ignorance of Him it hated Him and was about to crucify Him. He was going away, and His own were to be left in THE WORLD OF HATRED. He warns them that in the world they would have tribulation, "But be of good cheer," He says, "I have overcome the world" (16. 33). The seventeenth chapter is linked with this statement, for its first verse opens with: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven." Then in the beginning of the eighteenth chapter we find ourselves again in the world of Christ's rejection, for we read: "When Jesus had spoken these words" (referring to the prayer of the seventeenth chapter), "He went forth . . . over the brook Cedron" (the same brook over which David passed when he had to leave Jerusalem because of the treachery and rejection he experienced at the

hands of his people, 2 Sam. 15. 23), and entered into the garden of Gethsemane, where His betrayal into the hands of His enemies was consummated.

It is the world, hating and hateful, then, that is in view on both sides of our chapter. Men in their rebellion against God, doing their own will, refusing the Son of God, and refusing and hating His disciples also.

In the seventeenth chapter there is another world—THE WORLD OF LOVE—and *into* this we are introduced. The love of the Father to the Son, the love of the Son to the Father, and the love of the Father and the Son to those who love the Son are before us here. We come out of the cold and darkness of man's world into the warmth and sunshine of divine love. And how different is the atmosphere we breathe; how different the thoughts that fill our minds; how different the effect upon our spirits. Here we find that we are infinitely precious to the Son of God, and His delight in us springs most of all from the fact that we are the Father's gift to Him. Seven times over He speaks of us thus.

(1) We are given to the Son that He might give to us eternal life, and that thus we might know the Father and Himself. "*That He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him*" (ver. 2).

(2) We are given to Him out of the world, to which we had formerly belonged. "*I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world*" (ver. 6).

(3) We are given to Him as those who had been the Father's in His eternal counsels. "*Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me*" (ver. 6).

(4) We are given to Him, and prayed for by Him, as those who,

though given Him, still belong to the Father. "*I pray for them . . . which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine*" (ver. 9).

(5) We are given to Him, and He prays for us that we may be kept by the Father in oneness. "*Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are*" (ver. 11).

(6) We are given to Him and are kept by Him. "*Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost*" (ver. 12).

(7) We are given to Him, and are to be with Him in order that we may see His glory which the Father has given Him. "*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world*" (ver. 24).

Thus the past, if we may so put it, the present, and the future of the Christian are all brought before us in the chapter. These form, as we may say, our history in three volumes, and give our origin in the past, our mission in the present, and our destiny in the future.

Our origin is in verse 6.

Our mission is in verse 18.

Our destiny is in verse 24.

Volume I. Our Past: Our Origin.

"Thine they were." Little indeed do our souls grasp the greatness of the thoughts expressed in those three short words, but we may well bask in the sunshine of them and let their blessedness gladden our hearts. "Thine they were." We were in the Father's thoughts before the ages of time began to be. We were embraced in His counsels for the glory of His Son. Those counsels were that His Son should become Man, should accomplish redemption (when sin had come in), and, having died, should become, as risen, the Head of a new race to whom He should give eternal life, and who should be His companions, sharing

with Himself all the joys He Himself should know as Man before the Father's face.

"Thine in eternal counsel,
Before the worlds were made;
Thine—and Thy love-gift to Him
Who all our ransom paid.
Thine, blessed God and Father,
Accepted in Thy grace;
Thine, as Thy sons in nearness
To joy before Thy face."

We were present before His all-seeing eye while ages rolled along their way. The Father's heart went out to us as His own, we were His, but the secret that we were His was undivulged.

The creation of angels, of worlds, of men took place; sin entered and marred God's fair handiwork; dispensations changed and God's dealings with men altered; but the secret was still not disclosed. And then into a ruined world the Son of God came and found nothing but rejection and shame as His portion at man's sinful hands. The Lord of glory was crucified and slain. All God's plans appeared to be frustrated. The devil seemed to be triumphant. But God is above all. He takes unexpected ways of fulfilling His will. He makes the wrath of men to praise Him, and the remainder of it He restrains (Ps. 76. 10). Through the death of His Son the door was opened for the carrying out of all His blessed designs. And now at last is the secret revealed, and we learn that we were as to our past compassed by the deep affection of the Father and were the subjects of the thoughts of the Father and the Son. The question of the lost and ruined condition in which He found us, and the necessity of His death for us—to redeem us from Satan's bondage—do not enter here; here the eternal counsels of the blessed God are laid bare, and well may we bow our heads and worship as we contemplate it all.

Volume II. Our Present: Our Mission.

"Thou gavest them Me." This is our present. We are HIS, and He

gives us His own place before the Father and before the world. Such is His delight in us as the Father's gift of love to Him. Yes, the Son's place—that is, the place He has as Man—is our place. He has Godhead glories which we can never share; but all that He can share with us He does share with us. He has NO RESERVES FROM US. He keeps back nothing which He can communicate. His love "gives not as the world, but shares all it possesses with its loved co-heirs." This, then, is our present portion, and in the joy of it we can overcome the world, for by it are all the world's joys eclipsed, its pleasures exceeded, and its delights excelled. Christ's peace is ours (chap. 14. 27). His joy is ours (chap. 15. 11). The words the Father gave Him He has given us (chap. 17. 8). The glory given to Him He shares with us too (chap. 17. 22), and the love wherewith He is loved is the love wherewith we are loved also (chap. 17. 26). These all speak of our place before the Father.

But what is our mission in the world? What is our business on earth? It is to be here in Christ's interests. He has wrought for our interests. They are fully secured. He has freed us from all need of anxiety as to ourselves so that we may be undividedly on His behalf as long as He leaves us here. In verse 18 He says to His Father, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." And His prayer is that we may be kept from the evil of the world through which we have to pass while we carry out His intent in sending us. He has gone on high, has separated Himself from the world actually and entered into the Father's presence, in order that our hearts, following Him and delighting in His joys, may be kept from the evil of the world, and in the power of the Holy Ghost reproduce something of the grace and beauty of Himself. Whatever earthly calling we may pursue, however we may gain our livelihood, our object in life is to be to

His praise and glory. We are here to live for or, if necessary, to die for Him.

Volume III. Our Future: Our Destiny.

Our past was linked with Him in the eternal counsel of the Father, our present is linked with Him in blessing before the Father and in testimony before the world, and our future is linked with Him also. We are to be in glory with Him eternally. Thus in purpose in the past, in privilege in the present, and in our portion in the future we are indissolubly bound up with Himself.

How affecting it is to hear Him say of us, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." This is love's request. Love is never satisfied save by the presence of the loved one. Nothing can compensate for the absence of that one. How wonderful that the Son of God should value our company: to ensure this—that we should be His companions for ever—He became Man; to ensure this He went into death; to ensure this He has gone into glory and lives for us there; to ensure this He will come again to receive us unto Himself, that where He is we may be also (John 14. 3).

We know the heart of Christ. It has been proved to the full. Calvary's cross is its complete expression. He gave Himself there for us. As to His work within us, we may say with assurance that He who has begun the good work will complete it. For the joy of His own heart He will accomplish all His blessed designs for us. His own, as the Father's treasured gift to Him, are being kept by Him until He shall come for them; and then in His likeness and glory they shall be to the everlasting joy of His heart of love, and the abiding proof of the Father's love to Him.

Well may we say:

"Lord Jesus, come,
And take Thy Father's gift—
The people by Thy cross made Thine,
The trophy of Thy love divine.
Lord Jesus, come."

The Judgment Seat of Christ.

WE read in Romans 14. that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." All the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings that it is in a certain sense difficult to distinguish the acts from the simple thought. The acts manifest the power of the thoughts or of the feelings. I believe the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment seat, not for us, however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us whether when we were regenerate or unregenerate.

Our whole history will be detailed before the judgment seat, and, parallel with it, the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward us. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial.

We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes, by His grace, we are dead. But, then, if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God towards us, ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us then for the first time.

The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded and how He preserved you, how your foot slipped and how He raised you up again, how you

were drawing near danger and shame, and how He by His own arm interposed.

The new nature will enter into the full knowledge of the care, and of the love, which in true holiness, and in righteousness, and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of the race. Some parts of our lives, till then entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed, and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature that perhaps we do not judge to be so pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will then be perfectly explained; and, what is more, the very falls that plunge us now into such bitter anguish will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible. I do not think that until then we shall ever have had a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh.

On the other side, I doubt not the manifestation of God's grace toward us individually will be so magnificent that even the sense of the perversity of the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of divine goodness.

Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace.—*J. N. Darby.*

What a difference when you have found the universal mind of God in the Word of God. In vain people reason, blowing, as it were, with their breath at a mountain to upset it; it remains just where it was, and the character of presumption looks

like madness if it were not malice, and the total ignorance of what they are, and what the mountain is—the only thing proved; but the believer gets truth out of it, and the eternal power of the Word is more clearly recognized.

Type and Antitype.

So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. (Exod. 40. 33, 34).

First, the work FINISHED.

Second, the cloud of the divine presence.

Third, the effulgence of that presence.

“ When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished ” (John 19. 30).

“ I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do ” (John 17. 4).

“ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come . . . suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost ” (Acts 2. 1-4).

“ In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit ” (Eph. 2. 22).

“ But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit ” (2 Cor. 3. 18, N.T.).

“ And the city had no need 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; see also ver. 3).

“ In Christ. ”

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

“ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ” (Rom. 8. 1).

IT is important to bear in mind that the starting-point of Christianity was the exaltation of Christ on high, as consequent upon the accomplishment of the work of redemption. This was an entirely new place for man. *In Christ* sets forth this place as that of every one who believes God as to the value of that blessed work, on the ground of which Christ has taken His place on high. By that work He has won the title in righteousness to set every believer in His own place, in life, righteousness, and perfect acceptance before God.

In Christ is found the new character of the Christian's *life* as possessed in Him. It is life such as it never existed before, life in a risen Man, beyond every question of sin, death, the power of Satan, and the judgment of God. Then, again, it expresses the *righteousness* in which the believer stands: He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness *in Him* (2 Cor. 5. 21). Nor is it otherwise with our *acceptance*; for “ to the praise of the glory of His grace . . . He hath made us accepted *in the Beloved* ” (Eph. 1. 6). Then

we learn, from one all-inclusive statement given in Colossians 2. 9, 10, that while God in His fullness dwells in Christ, we are in Him also: "Ye are complete in Him;" yea, in Him, before the fullness of the Godhead who, also, as the exalted Man, is above all principality and power.

Further, we learn from the Lord in John 14. 20 that it was to be the characteristic portion of the believer, when the Spirit was come, to know that Christ was in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us.

But there are two ways in which this new and wonderful position of the Christian is presented to us in the Word. First, as we have been looking at it, objectively—that is, as revealed to the opened eye of faith in all the perfection of it in Christ risen and glorified. Then, in the ways of God with us in order that we may enter into the position subjectively—that is, so as to be consciously in our own souls in all the blessedness of the position of Christ before God.

For the deeply interesting study of these ways of God with us we naturally turn to the Epistle to the Romans, where are found the great foundation truths of how God, in grace that reigns through righteousness, can take up poor sinners into relationship with Himself.

Our place in Christ comes first fully into view in chapter 8. 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Much had gone before in the epistle to lead up to such a statement—much that is needed for our souls in order that we may enter into it intelligently. "No condemnation" does not merely mean that I am justified, but that being in Christ I am in all the impossibility of condemnation in which He stands. No wave of judgment could reach Noah shut in by the Lord in the ark. So no condemnation can reach those who are in Christ, for ere it could do

so it must first reach Christ where He is in glory.

Let us turn back and trace what brings us, as believers, into such a position—a position in which we are free to look up upon Christ and to know that Christ's place is the only measure of ours. The whole of the first part of the epistle is taken up with our sins and how God has met our case in relation to them. He has done this by the work of Christ, presented in its double aspect: as the *propitiation* through faith in His blood, laying the ground for God to be righteous in justifying any ungodly sinner that believes in Jesus (chap. 3. 25, 26), and as *substitute* for all who have believed; for He "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (chap. 4. 25). So that the moment we rest upon God's testimony as to these accomplished facts of the work of Christ we have peace with God through Him (chap. 5. 1), and receive the Holy Ghost who is the power of our entrance into and enjoyment of the whole Christian position.

But, before it can be ours thus to enter into and enjoy, there is a deeper question than that of our *sins* that has to be gone into in the soul with God: namely, that of *sin*. This is taken up from chapter 5. 12, and is the subject of chapters 6. and 7. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Adam only became the head of a race when he had sinned, and the race of which he is head is involved in his ruin. From him we have inherited a corrupt, fallen flesh incapable of any good; this is the root that produced all the evil of our life. The solemn truth of this, our common state, has to be brought home to us individually in the ways of God with us, in order that we may know in all its reality deliverance out of that state, just as we have to be convicted of our sins to know pardon and peace.

The process is a painful and humbling one, as we see it opened out to us in the principle of it in chapter 7. 14-25; but it is needed to break the will of the flesh, to teach us the incorrigible evil of it and our utter helplessness against it. We have all to go through this experimental learning of what the flesh is in us, sooner or later, whether before forgiveness is known or after, in order to enter into the liberty of our place in Christ. The fact of a struggle within proves the existence of a nature we have received from God by new birth. Only thus could it be said of any, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." This was the beginning of a divine work in our souls. The conviction of sins was the sure mark of it. And when the new-born ones rested on God's testimony as to the finished work of Christ, they were justified from all things, and received the Spirit to dwell within them.

The still deeper conviction of *sin in the flesh*, that we have been speaking of, may have been wrought in them at the same time as that of their sins; and then generally accompanied with great soul darkness. In that case the moment they believed the gospel for the forgiveness of sins they would come into all the light and liberty of grace.

There is in another aspect of the work of Christ which meets the discovery of nothing but that which is so hateful to us—sin within. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." But seeing that this had taken place in the One who gave Himself in death to become our life, we are entitled to account His death as ours before God. "Knowing this, that our old man [that is, all we were by sin] has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin [that is, the whole system and force of it, as we say "the body of a river"] might be brought to naught, that henceforth we should not be slaves to sin." Reckoning ourselves

to have died to sin even as Christ has died to it, we can likewise reckon ourselves alive unto God in Christ Jesus (chap. 6. 6, 10, 11). Thus the soul is free to breathe the free atmosphere of its place *in Christ*, and the Spirit becomes the power of a life of fruitfulness to God.

But, as I have owned, it may be after forgiveness is known that this knowledge of self has to be gained. Where the gospel has been freely preached it is often so. The convicted soul readily receives the glad tidings and is justified from all things, the indwelling of the Spirit always accompanying the belief of the gospel. Yet a few short weeks may suffice to prove to the soul's grievous disappointment that *forgiveness of sins* has made no change in the *sin* that dwells in me. It is no question in such a case of the normal action of the Spirit, though He be there to occupy the soul with Christ. The soul must learn what the state of the evil flesh within is, until at last it submits itself to the absolute necessity of God's way of dealing with the flesh, as announced so early in the history of men: "The end of all flesh is come before Me." Till that point is reached it is "I, I, I" all through—nothing of Christ or the Spirit. Not only is there no good in me, but struggle and strive as I will to gain the victory over the evil within me, it is too strong for me, and overcomes me, until at last I cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" The more the sincerity, the more the wretchedness. But I am brought to this: that instead of victory *over* myself, what I needed was a Deliverer *outside* myself to deliver me *from* myself.

But Christ has been available all the time, and at last the eye lifts from self to Him. "I thank God through Jesus Christ." Christ has displaced self, and the heart bows in a broken utterance of thanksgiving. I am in Christ before God, and can now consciously take up my place as such.

The whole extent of the deliverance lies out before us in Romans 8. 1-14. God's way of deliverance there involved the complete transference of the soul from the headship and race of Adam to that of Christ, of whom Adam was the figure. In full contrast with Adam Christ only became the Head of a new race when He had accomplished righteousness. Sin, death, and judgment were the portion of all who were of Adam; life, righteousness, and glory, of all who are of Christ. The basis of such a transfer from Adam to Christ is the death and resurrection of Christ, made good to faith, as we have seen. But the operation of God that raised Him from the dead also sets the believer in His place. And on Christ's part it is by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (not in its corporate aspect, but as John the Baptist bore witness of Him in John 1. 33). It is Christ bringing us by the power of the Spirit into the whole of His own position as the risen Man. The results are not all produced in the Epistle to the Romans. But the position shines out before us "in Christ," and the soul is established in it and free to enjoy it, by the Holy Ghost.

The first great division of chapter 8. opens out to us doctrinally the deliverance and liberty consequent upon it. There are three parts to it, and the blessed Spirit identifies Himself with each of these parts, as the power of the whole position. He is first the Spirit as the power of the life we have in Christ, which by its own law (or self-acting principle) has set me free from the old order of things, the law of sin and death. Then, He is the Spirit of Christ as connected with the new range of objects presented to the delivered soul—"the things of the Spirit"

all centred in Christ—to form me like Him. These two parts of the deliverance are *present*. And, lastly, He is the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, guaranteeing by His indwelling the quickening of these mortal bodies that they may be like Christ's in resurrection.

"In Christ" is the Christian's standing before God (ver. 1), and this is identified with being "in the Spirit" (ver. 9); because He is the power by which we enter into this standing. In contrast with what we were as in the flesh (chap. 7. 5), it can now be said, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Thus distinctly is the change from the old position of Adam-standing to that of being in Christ referred to the Spirit. Inseparable from that position is that Christ is *in us as life*; and here the Spirit, who was originally the source of that life at the new birth, now come to dwell in us, can be identified with the life of which He was the source, "the Spirit is life because of righteousness"—that is, as the producing power of practical righteousness.

To sum up what we have been looking at as the meaning of being "in Christ." The finished work of Christ is the sole basis and cause of that wonderful position. It was acquired for us by His entering into it Himself as having accomplished redemption; while it is possessed and known as our place in Him by the Spirit whom we received on believing in the efficacy of the work of Christ.

For another occasion must be reserved the full positive light of this glorious position, in the revelation of God's eternal counsels, and as the effect of new creation.

I have found in my experience that in every temptation the victory much depends on resisting the first onset. To reason for a moment is dangerous. Is the object presented

or gratification suggested forbidden? That is enough, if we truly love the Lord Jesus Christ. But when we deliberate we throw ourselves into the arms of Satan.

 Abel : The Murdered Preacher's Sermon.

THE Bible stands, as literature, by itself. In every other book of antiquity the more remote its history the more impossible it is. Indistinct, vague, shadowy, always puerile, often blasphemous, the description of earliest events in profane history stands in sharpest contrast to the Bible narratives. In Bible pictures the strokes are few, but powerful. By the pen of inspiration masterpieces for all time are given in very few words.

One such is the account of Abel and his offering and death. Seven verses only in Genesis 4. comprise all that the Old Testament says about Abel. Four verses exhaust all that is said about him in the New. And yet, as dead, Abel is speaking still. He has preached longer than any, for he was the world's first preacher, and death did not stop his preaching.

"He being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11. 4).

* * * *

We read :

"And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Gen. 4. 2).

Two interesting questions here claim our attention.

(1) *Why is the younger brought before our notice first?* Naturally we should have described the elder brother's occupation first. Does not God here, right early on the page of Scripture, assert His sovereignty? Not by a direct claim, but quietly by the way He presents things. Does not this very principle run through Scripture? Was not Jacob the younger son? And yet the blessing rested on him. Was not Ephraim the younger? Yet Jacob's right hand rested on his head. Was not Moses, "slow of speech," junior to the eloquent Aaron, and was he not

chosen to be the leader of Israel's hosts through the wilderness? Was not David the youngest of Jesse's sons? Yet Samuel poured on him the anointing oil.

God clearly put Abel first because he was a man of faith. The man of faith may appear in a less attractive light than the man of the world, but heaven views things very differently from earth. The world's frown is but for a moment; heaven's favour is for ever.

(2) *Why is Abel described as a keeper of sheep?* This lets in a flood of light upon Abel's character. Sheep were not in those days raised for purposes of slaughter and consumption. Herbs and fruits were given by God for man's sustenance in Genesis 1. 29, 30. Not till after the flood was animal food given to man.

This being so, we may gather that Abel reared sheep for *purposes of sacrifice*, and in this we see his faith made evident.

It is very interesting that the first death that actually took place in this world was not the death of the sinner, but of the innocent victims that provided the coats of sin wherewith our guilty first parents were clothed, which coats were surely a type of "Christ made unto us righteousness"—"even the righteousness of God . . . unto all and UPON all them that believe." In all this is typified the eagerness of God's love in meeting man's need. "Where sin abounded grace did MUCH MORE ABOUND."

Abel must have been instructed in the necessity of the death sentence being met only by *death*, and the lesson must have sunk deeply in his heart. In keeping sheep he put God first. What an encouragement is here for

believing parents to instruct their children in the things of God.

* * * *

In sharp contrast to Cain's offering we read :

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (ver. 4).

Here we learn the height of Abel's faith. He approached God *through death*. Where did Abel get such knowledge? How was he enabled to grasp such realities? For it is evident Cain had similar opportunities. "*FIRST-LINGS of his flock and of THE FAT thereof*" indicates that Abel gave his choicest to God. It is not natural to do thus. In Malachi God complained that His people brought to Him that "which was torn, and the lame, and the sick." It was not so with Abel. His was a deep conviction and a rich faith. Abel's best going through death in sacrifice to enable him to approach God was typical of God's best, even His well-beloved Son, going through death in sacrifice. The antitype was before God in Abel's day or the type were of no value, and Abel's faith rested in a vain form.

The New Testament lights up the scene with all the splendid glory of God's appreciation of Abel's act. We read :

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11. 4).

Here we get the only principle—mark it well—by which man gets divine blessing—"by faith." How the principle shines on the early page of inspiration with all its divine lustre. It came out triumphantly in Adam: sinful by his fall, crushed by the sentence passed upon him, oppressed by the prospect of hard-wrested competence to be wrung by the sweat of

his face from a soil cursed because of his sin, only to end in decay and death; but out of all the gloom there shone a bright ray of faith, when he called his wife Eve, *i.e. living*, or *life-giver*, taking up the thought of God's promise that her Seed should bruise the serpent's head. Again it comes out in Abel's offering. "*By faith,*" "*Through faith,*" "*In faith*" are the magnificent changes rung from one end to the other of the triumphant eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

God's appreciation of Abel's offering comes out in a wonderful way. By it "*he obtained witness that he was righteous*"—righteous not in himself surely, for the sacrifice was the acknowledgment of how very seriously things were the reverse. He acknowledged that *only* death, and that in figure the death of Christ, *God's Lamb*, could meet his desperate condition. And yet God, a thrice holy God, an omniscient God, who knew Abel through and through, witnessed that he was righteous. How could this be? We read the secret in the next clause, "*God testifying of his gifts.*"

Then God did not testify of Abel. He testified "*that he was righteous.*" He testified OF HIS GIFTS. The gifts produced an effect, and God testified of cause and effect, and not of Abel in himself.

Applying this, God does not testify of the believer, save in relation to Christ and His work and its effects. He testifies of *Christ*. It is Christ's sacrifice, *Christ's* perfection, "*Christ made righteousness unto us*" that God has to say to. The moment a sinner puts his simple faith in Him, God is "*just and the Justifier of him which believeth IN JESUS*"—the believer is "*accepted IN THE BELOVED.*"

What a relief of heart it is to turn from self and self-effort and rest completely on Christ, and on what He has done.

No wonder that God will never let the murdered preacher's sermon die

away in silence. Alas! the first man to whom it was preached—Cain—did not believe it. Instead, it roused all the natural hate of a heart bent on salvation by self-effort and self-improvement, and he murdered the preacher. The gospel in that day, as in this, was indeed a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Abel was blessed, Cain was not.

But did it end there? Death indeed stilled Abel's lips; yet we read, "*By it [Abel's sacrifice] he being dead yet speaketh.*"

And if we would read the sermon aright, it will be to turn from Abel's typical offering to what it typified, even the wondrous death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to find the question of righteousness settled in His death, and the believer linked by faith with that righteousness before God for ever.

* * * *

What a rebuke to the shallow Unitarianism of the day—a creed that makes light of sin and refuses the atoning sacrifice of Christ, whether it takes the form of Unitarianism pure and simple or masquerades in the second-hand robes of the New Theology, in which there is nothing *new* but its self-assumed title. These robes that it wears are perhaps scarcely so reputable as second-hand; they are the worn-out garments of pagan unbeliefs, handed down from age to age to the present day, now donned by Spiritualist and Campbellite alike.

There is no book like the Bible. It stands incomparably alone, even if judged from the low level of mere literature. But received as the inspired Word of God, and read by the eye of faith, it takes upon it glories not of this world; it sheds a light "above the brightness of the sun," and on its first pages, as on its last, are stamped the triumphs of God.

God our Saviour.—No. 5.

(JAMES BOYD).

Faith.

THE apostles and evangelists were heralds of the gospel. They went everywhere preaching the Word; and wherever they went there were those who believed the report. As I have already pointed out, faith comes by report. It is so in natural things. If we cannot verify what we hear, we accept or reject it, according to the reliability, or otherwise, of the witness upon whose authority it comes to us. Without report of some nature faith could not exist. The Spirit of God tells us (Rom. 10. 17) "faith cometh by hearing," or *report*; it is not the act of hearing, but the thing heard that is referred to. The report is the Word of God.

Therefore the word *trust* could not well be substituted for *faith*, though in

the things of God they are very intimately connected. It is really because of faith in some testimony which He has given of Himself that I am led to trust Him. If I did not believe the testimony or word addressed to me, I would not trust Him; but His Word is the revelation of Himself—of His thoughts, His mind, His will—and by His Word I get to know Him in some measure, and this begets trust in Him, for He is worthy of the trust of all His intelligent creatures. I know men, therefore I do not trust them, for I know that they are evil and capable of deceiving me. I know myself, and therefore I do not trust myself, for I know that I am full of deception. I know the blessed God, for He has brought Himself to light in Christ, and

Him I can trust with all my heart, for in such an one as Christ there is no deception. But if I did not take Christ, in the first instance, to be the perfect revelation of God, His WORD to men, it would show that I had no knowledge of God, for when He came to light in His Son I did not recognize Him, and without faith in the revelation which He gave of Himself I could have no trust in Him, for I could not trust a Being of whom I was so utterly ignorant.

The witness of men never makes us absolutely certain. There is generally an element of incredulity left lingering in our minds, even after we have accepted what we consider reliable human testimony; for, knowing what man is, we cannot absolutely trust him to tell the exact truth, and we are not very greatly astonished when we find we have been altogether deceived. But the gospel is the Word of the living God, and it sets Him before us in a light never known to us otherwise. It is His intervention on our behalf that it speaks of; and while, on the one hand, it exposes us to ourselves in all our sinfulness, nakedness, and ruin, on the other, it brings God before us in His fathomless grace, drawn near to us in the person of His Son, who gave Himself a ransom for all, that a way of salvation might be opened up for all, according to the desire of Him who would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. The faith begotten by this report is divine. We cannot verify the things reported, but faith substantiates them to us, convinces us of their truth and reality, so that they become dearer to us than life itself.

A great deal has been said about faith, as though it were something introduced by Christianity, which had never been in the world previous to the advent of our Lord. As the *revealed principle* upon which men are brought into, and maintained, in blessing with God, it is indeed new, for there is today no other way of life proposed to

men. But though faith was not the *declared* ground of blessing before Christ, there never was any other principle of blessing from the beginning. There are only two principles upon which blessing has been proposed to men: the one is works and the other faith. And the two are utterly opposed to one another as *dispensations*, though they blend together in perfect harmony in the soul of the saint of God. But "the law is not of faith" (Gal. 3. 12), and grace is not of works (Rom. 4. 3-5). Law sets *me* to work, grace speaks of the work of *God*. During the whole period of the probation of man the fulfilment of his obligations, mingled with grace, was the ostensible ground upon which he was in relationship with God. The law which was given by Moses was the measure of the responsibility under which he was placed, and he was told that if he did these things he would live (Lev. 18. 5). But on the ground of works it was impossible for man to inherit blessing, for he was utterly unable to fulfil his obligations. On that ground man was lost. Neither in the antediluvian, patriarchal, nor legal dispensation were men ever blessed on any other principle than that of faith. But that was not the public testimony of God to men, but rather His secret way of saving those who were the people of His choice. This could not become the revealed principle of blessing until the trial of man was over; for once it comes to light that man is to be saved by faith it is evident that he is a hopelessly lost sinner. Faith lays hold of the intervention of God in grace; but this is unnecessary if man can deliver himself by his own efforts. The law proved that man, even with the help of God, was unable to secure a title to life; for the truth is he never was under pure law at all. The law was spoken from the midst of the devouring fire, and out of the thick darkness the voice of the Lawgiver broke upon the ears of the trembling tribes; but they very soon broke that covenant, and the second time it came to them it came mixed

with the mercy and forgiveness of the Lord (Exod. 34. 5-7). But even accompanied with this announcement of grace on the part of God, it proved itself to be a ministration of death and condemnation. There was no possibility of man living in relationship and blessing with God on the ground of works.

There is a notion in some people's minds that the various dispensations were moral and spiritual stages in the history of the world, each stage being evolved out of the one preceding it, and all leading up to perfection in Christ. Every fresh acquisition of light is said to be according to the ability of man to take it in; that the world is advancing from infancy to manhood; and that the standard was raised according to the growth of the understanding of the disciple. But what we learn from Scripture, supported by the history of the world as we know it, is just the opposite of this, and that, instead of moral and spiritual progression in each dispensation, retrogression has been the invariable order. If we take the antediluvian world, instead of making use of the light given them of God, things became so intolerable to its righteous and holy Governor that nothing would do but the complete destruction of the human race, Noah and his family excepted. Take the patriarchal age: the sons of Noah became worshippers of idols (Josh. 24. 2). Out of this Abram was called: but Isaac does not come up to his father in power with God; Jacob is lower in the scale than Isaac, and the sons of Jacob lower still, while the twelve tribes revolted against the rule of Jehovah, broke the law, stoned the prophets, and murdered their Messiah. And as to the Gentile nations, we have a record of their progress in Romans 1. 21-32, and the reading of it is enough to make the hair of one's head stand on end. The history of the world has been downgrade from start to finish.

Into this world came the Son of God manifesting the Father in His

own person by word and work. Did it know Him? Not in the least (John 1. 10; 1 Cor. 1. 21). Did it welcome the light which came in His person? It hated it with perfect hatred (John 3. 19, 20; 15. 24). The antediluvians could not have displayed more ignorance of God or antipathy to Him. And it was not the uneducated, ignorant, thoughtless multitude which set themselves so in opposition to Him, but it was the enlightened leaders of the people who condemned and crucified Him. The fact is, the infancy of the world was not so far away from God as its manhood is. His ways with men were less restricted then than they are now. The world got farther and farther away from Him as it grew older, and He grew more reserved with regard to it, and His visitations became less and less frequent, until with the corruption of Christianity they ceased altogether.

When man had ruined himself by his primal transgression he could expect nothing from the hand of God but the judgment of which he had been forewarned. Faith in the grace and mercy of God was as yet a stranger to his heart. It could only be brought into existence by report, and as yet no report of the compassions of God had gone forth. Hence his one desire was to get away from God altogether, and, if possible, have no more to do with Him for ever. But though he had broken with God, God had not as yet broken with him. If the creature will not seek his Creator, then the Creator will seek His creature. "*Where art thou?*" brings him from his hiding-place, naked in his transgression. He must now give an account to God as to the cause of his deplorable condition; he must hear what God has to say to him; and his eternal destiny must depend upon what shall go forth from the lips of Him against whom he has so grievously offended. His weal or woe must be determined by the word of God. And because of this, faith must now be the principle of his relationship with God.

In answer to the Creator's question a superficial account of his error is given with callous indifference as to the effect which his words may have upon the fate of that poor deceived creature whom but a little while ago he had taken to his bosom, claiming her as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. He said nothing about the secret and treasonable thought of his heart, to grasp at divinity in eating the forbidden fruit. The after history of that man and his guilty race—above all, the Son of God laid lifeless in the tomb of the godly Arimathæan, murdered by wicked hands—exposes to the very roots the treasonable nature of that primal disobedience.

But the announcement of a Deliverer awakens faith in the heart of the poor sinner; while the coats of skin with which their nakedness was clothed spoke of God as a Justifier, and set in figure before their eyes the way in which their justification could alone be effected. This faith found a resting-place in the heart of Abel, who came in the confession of his sinful condition, but with a sacrifice which set forth in type the sacrifice of Jesus. This God accepted, and Abel obtains witness that he is righteous; for the acceptance of his gifts meant his own acceptance by God. By the same faith Enoch walked with God, and escaped the common lot of mankind by translation. This faith acting in Noah leads him to prepare an ark for the saving of his house, thus condemning the world; and he became the sole heir of the righteousness which is by faith; and in the world which succeeded the deluge he became the witness of the favour of God towards those who cast their souls upon His unfailing grace. Abraham, in the power of the same faith, leaves the world and all earthly expectations, putting his trust in the living God, who, he was certain, would not leave the demon-ruled earth for ever in the state in which He then saw it to be, but would bring in an order of things which would have

moral foundations, and which would be brought about by the God of resurrection. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and myriads of others follow in the same line, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11.). These are some of the effects produced by faith in the heart, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

Faith is the link between God and the soul of man, and it is a link that nothing can break. It is also a great deal more certain than sight. Sight may be defective; we may be mistaken in trusting to it; but we cannot be mistaken as regards faith. It is the Word of God rooted in the soul, the Word that is preached in the gospel living in the heart of the man who receives it. It is like nothing else, and it is beyond the power of man to give a definition of it. No definition of it is attempted in Scripture. Hebrews 11. 1 is in no sense a definition of it, but a statement regarding its characteristics and power. Like everything else, it has been called into existence by the Word of God. Apart from that Word it could have no existence. As I have said, it is the Word of God rooted in the soul, and enlightening it with the knowledge of Him whose Word it

is. The Word of truth implanted in the soul is that which forms an eternal link with God. To prevent this the devil snatches away the preached Word out of the heart where he can, lest it should take root, or, in the words of Scripture, "lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8. 12). If the Word is believed it takes root, for the believing is the taking root. In this I am not attempting to define that which I have said cannot be defined, but I am showing from Scripture, as well as I am able, some of the things which are true of faith. Scripture shows that it is indestructible, that it is the gift of God (Phil. 1. 29), that it overcomes every obstacle and every enemy (1 John 5. 5), and it is by that means we are kept by the power of God to salvation (1 Peter 1. 5). It makes the unseen things much more real to the soul than the seen things are, and where it is not there is no link with the living God.

It is not difficult to see that, man having fallen under the dominion of sin, the power of the devil, and the judgment of death, his eternal destiny must be settled by the attitude which God may assume toward him; and hope or despair must result from whatever word proceeds out of the mouth of God when his guilt comes to be mentioned. From the outset God directed the attention of men to Himself as their only hope, and by revealing His grace and love sought to beget in their hearts confidence in Himself. On the other hand, it was the object of the enemy to prevent the Word taking root in the heart of the hearer, so that man might be kept for ever at a distance from the source of all blessing. He has been successful with the great mass of mankind, but the day is coming in which he shall receive his judgment, and in that day the redeemed universe will rejoice with great joy.

The past dispensation was one of law or works, but the present is a dispensation of faith. It is now no question of what a man's works are; he can be saved no other way than by faith. It is now "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 36). On the ground of works no one could have been saved, for man's works are all evil; but now in the name of Jesus forgiveness of sins is preached everywhere, and the man who believes is justified from all things. He may be the most moral man in the world, or he may be the most degraded, but every man needs a Saviour, and in the gospel that Saviour is presented to him as One who died for our sins, was buried, rose again, and is now at the right hand of God; and by faith in Him salvation is secured.

The hymn which says, "Cast your deadly doing down . . . Doing ends in death," has been said by those who are ignorant of the gospel to be blasphemy, but it is the truth of God. It is faith and faith alone that saves the soul; that is, of course, faith in the Saviour of the lost, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this dispensation God presents Himself as the worker (John 5. 17), and Jesus says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). If man was unable to keep himself in his first estate, we need not imagine he will be able to recover himself once he is fallen. No: God is the Justifier of the ungodly, the Saviour of sinners, and the soul who believes on Jesus is justified and saved by the grace of God. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4. 5).

When truth has become a substance in my soul, there is a capacity for receiving more.

If you put your cares into God's hand, He will put His peace into your heart.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 2. 12-27.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have

continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Verse 12

BEGINS a new paragraph, extending to verse 27, in which he addresses the "beloved children," *i.e.* the whole family of God on the ground of the common grace in which they stand; and then, after a parenthesis from verses 13 to 27, in which he addresses the three classes—fathers, young men, and little children—of which the family consists, he returns (ver. 28) to the general doctrine of the epistle, and addresses himself again to the "beloved children" of the twelfth verse, exhorting them to "abide in Him." He then proceeds to set before them the dignity and hopes of their calling, and to enforce on them the practical consequences connected therewith (chap. 3. 1-3).

τεκνία, dear children, or beloved children (*cf.* ver. 7, where it should read "beloved," instead of "brethren") is the affectionate diminutive of *τέκνα*, children.

τέκνον, a child, comes from *τίκτω*, to bear, beget, and implies relationship by birth, nature, character, dependence. In this it differs from *υἱός*, a son, which speaks of position, rank, glory. "*τέκνον* expresses the origin, *υἱός* the fellowship of life" (*Cremer*); and as the

former throws you back on the source, the latter leads you on to the end, as in Hebrews 2. 10—"bringing many sons to glory." "Son" is a word much used by Paul as he dwells on the position, rank, and glory of the Christian state, according to the counsels of God. John never uses the word "son" in reference to the child of God, until he declares the fullness of his final state: "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Rev. 21. 7); and, where in the A.V. we read "sons," it should always be "children," *e.g.* John 1. 12; 1 John 3. 1, 2, 10. Jesus is "Son of God" and "Son of Man." All the glory of the Father's house, and all the destined glory of man, according to the counsels of God, rest on Him; but He is never called the "Child of God," *τέκνον*. His generation, while truly born of the Virgin, is not so expressed. We are children of God, by grace, now; and in nature, character, dependence, and affection we derive from Him. "What we shall be has not yet been made manifest; but we know that, when it is manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

"Little children," or "dear children," *τεκνία*, is a characteristic term of John's

writings. It is used in John 13. 33, and once by Paul in Galatians 4. 19. John uses it in this epistle seven times (chaps. 2. 1, 12, 28; 3. 7, 18; 4. 4; 5. 21). We are called "children of God," but never "little children of God." The term so used would apparently be too familiar, lacking in divine dignity.

In chapter 2. 13, 18 he uses quite another word, *παιδια*, little children, babes, the special bearing of which we shall see later on.

Now to return to verse 12. "I write to you, dear children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." This is the common standing of every child of God. If he is in the family of God at all, he must be there according to this fact; for—note it well—the family of God by grace are not, could not be under the judgment of God. It is not a question here of how far any soul may have been brought into the light and intelligence of the gospel. There are many true children of God in whom the work of grace is scarcely discernible, hindered and obscured as it is from many causes; there are many who have never heard the story of His grace in its divine simplicity and fullness; many who have no adequate conception of the gospel and of what is implied in "the faith of Christ;" the "forgiveness of sins" has never been preached to them; and as "nobody has ever told" them, they have never entered into the joy of it; they do not know that their sins are forgiven them for His name's sake. For such, Romans, chaps. 3.—8., would be a suitable and profitable scripture to bring them into peace and deliverance; but, as we have already seen in this epistle, that is not the point of view from which the Apostle John writes. It might be said, by way of comparison, that Paul in setting forth the gospel is in measure occupied with the human side of it, in so far as he deals with the exercises and needs of man's fallen state, and the work of Christ to meet those needs; while John regards his subject from the divine side, according to God, in Himself, coming forth in His Son Jesus Christ. "For of His fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace" (John 1. 16). Every child in the family of God is forgiven his sins, according to this scripture, not because of his repentance and faith, however necessary these are in their place; not because

of any work of the Spirit, however necessary this is likewise; but, above the plane of all soul exercises and any subjective work of grace in him, which are necessarily deficient and incomplete, his sins are forgiven him "because of His name"—*διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*. Thank God that it is so! The gospel may fail in the hands of those who have "perverted" it (Gal. 1. 7); the church may fail in the administration of the grace to which she owes her all; man may fail in every department of his responsibility; but the blessed God cannot fail, nor can His grace in Christ in its essential excellency and as the channel of blessing to those whom it deigns to bless. "Your sins," he says, "are forgiven you for His name's sake." This removes it beyond the sphere of failure or doubt; and as ruled in the highest court, sanctioned by the highest authority, settled on the firmest foundation, it is no longer moot, and will never be called in question.

I write unto you "dear children." This is the closing ministry of the Spirit, where, so far as the revelation of God is concerned, the Christian has reached his fullest blessing. Nor can we conceive a sweeter word whereby to be addressed than "dear children;" and none would delight more in it, if any so much, as "the fathers." Possibly some of us might think that we were past that stage and more advanced; but however "advanced" we may think ourselves to be, it is well to remember that our limits here are at furthestmost "very small" (Luke 19. 17). And it is amongst the earliest exhortations in Christian ethics "to every man . . . not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly" (Rom. 12. 3).

In Leviticus 23. we have the calendar of the feasts of the Lord, beginning with the first month (ver. 5), and ending with the seventh month (ver. 24, etc.). In the interval we have the feast of weeks (ver. 15) and the gleanings time (ver. 22). These give us the purposed blessing of God, starting with redemption and the coming of the Spirit, on to the future blessing of the world in the coming age, with Israel as the centre of blessing upon earth; and this again is concentric with a larger circle of blessing and glory in which the heavens and the earth will be linked up together, and the church be

the central heavenly figure (*cf.* Ps. 96. 11 ; Hosea 2. 21, 22 ; Eph. 1. 10 ; Rev. 21. 9, etc.).

But what of the remaining months of the year after the seventh ? Blank silence is kept in regard to them ; nothing is revealed. Is nothing going on then ? Are all the resources of God exhausted, and the fountains of divine purpose dried up by their former travail ? Who could think so ? Already we have intimations of the contrary (Eph. 2. 7 ; 3. 10, 21). " Abraham did not regard his body now dead, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." And if the revelation we have is potential of blessing to the heavens and the earth as we know them, there are also promised a new heaven and a new earth in which the present constitution of things will be superseded by another vastly superior (2 Peter 3. 13 ; Rev. 21. 1-5). What it will be, who can tell ? Or what God has still in reserve, who can conceive, seeing that language has not yet been framed in which to declare it (2 Cor. 12. 4) ? " For we know in part ; and we prophesy in part ; but when that which is perfect has come, that which is in part shall be done away. . . . Now I know partially, but then I shall know according as I also have been known " (1 Cor. 13. 10-12). " Lo, these are parts of His ways : but how little a portion is heard of Him ? but the thunder of His power who can understand ? " (Job 26. 14). Little indeed is known, even by those who know most.

Verse 13.

He now addresses himself to the three classes in the family of God : fathers, young men, and little children.

What characterizes the fathers is that they have known and know Him that is from the beginning ; the young men have overcome the wicked one, and they continue to do so ; the little children have known and know the Father.

Verse 14.

In referring again to the fathers he merely repeats what he had said before. When we first come to know the Lord we learn Him as suitable to our ever-changing need, *i.e.* He changes in our apprehension of Him according to our circumstances. When the prodigal (Luke 15.)

was on his way home, he argues from himself and his needs to his father, and his mind travels around himself in all he purposes to say to him ; but later on he learns to argue from what the father is to him, and this becomes finally the home and rest of his soul.

The young men are strong, the Word of God abides in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. It is not that they let their thoughts run wild and then refer to the Word for correction. That would be to put the Word of God on the shelf until it was wanted, or they thought it was. No ; the Word of God abides in them, the source and guide of thought and deed. Practically there was but one of whom this was true absolutely. When tempted of the devil, He had not to recall Himself and find the scripture for His guidance (Luke 4.). The Word of God abode in Him ; and He could say, " By the words of Thy lips I have kept Me from the paths of the destroyer " (Ps. 17. 4). And such is the character of the young men walking in the same Spirit.

Now their danger was the world. " Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . ." How many a child of God is snared by it ! The world was in the woman's heart when she saw that the forbidden fruit was " good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make wise ; " and thus she was deceived and ruined. The world provides three things—" the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Take these away and the world, is gone. But none of these things is of the Father ; and there is no eternal life in them ; for " the world is passing away and the lust of it ; but he that doeth the will of God abides for eternity." How comforting for the heart to know that in a scene where all is transitory there is within reach of the simplest that which satisfies.

Verse 18.

" Little children, it is the last hour." The word is used of a period characterized by some one thing, *e.g.* " This is your hour, and the power of darkness " (Luke 22. 53). " Mine hour has not yet come " (John 2. 4). The " hour " here is characterized by the presence of many anti-christs, and this marks it off as being

the "last" hour morally, for man's world ends in antichrist.

Verse 19.

Moreover, the antichrist is not an enemy from without. He is a Jew, a false Christ, "coming in his own name." This is apostasy from within, not force from without (*cf.* 2 Peter 2. 1; Jude

4, 12); and in this lies its relevancy to the present time. As from amongst themselves would arise the Christ (Deut. 18. 18), so from amongst themselves would arise the antichrist (John 5. 43). And thus it was of these antichrists; they went out from among us, but they were not of us; and this makes manifest that they were none of them of us.

A Great Revival.—No. 4.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

"Everything" done "with all the Heart."

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (read 2 Chron. 31.; 1 Cor. 9. 7-18; 2 Cor. 9.).

GREAT joy amongst the people, as we have seen, was the result of the revival of God's work in the heart of Hezekiah. This joy was caused, not by an access of wealth or prosperity to themselves, but by the fact that the house of God had been opened, the lamps of it lit, the altars furnished, and the priests and Levites fulfilling their appointed tasks, the feasts of Jehovah had been restored. The joy was entirely because the people had got right with God, because their lives were being adjusted according to His Word—a very important thing for us to remember.

The thirtieth chapter closes in a most beautiful way: "So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon . . . there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven."

Now we learn that the blessing of God produces practical results; and indeed, for us, if Christianity is not practical, it is nothing. It consists of something more than "great joy" and prayer, it has its activities, and these are seen illustrated in our chapter.

"Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities" (chap. 31. 1).

Not a single altar was touched while they went up to Jerusalem. They had not the spiritual power for that then, nor had they then the sense of what was right. But fourteen days in the presence of the Lord, and fourteen days in the enjoyment of the truth, wrought wondrously. There is nothing like that for putting people right; it is in "Thy light" that we see light.

They now go away, and the altars are cut down.

There is a lesson here for us. It is not by the mere condemnation of evil that the work of God is done, but if the truth is ministered to the saints of God, if they receive it and enjoy it, if their souls are brought by it into the presence of God, there will be as a practical result separation from the evil things—the altars to the false gods will

be cast down. The man who spends his time in denouncing what is wrong wastes his life. What you and I have to do is, first to proclaim the truth, and then to maintain the truth, press the truth, and above all live the truth.

If but a few were thoroughly awakened to become the living expression of the grace of Christ, of the truth of Christ, and the ways of Christ, to live daily and hourly in subjection to the Word of God, it would have an immense power in delivering other Christians from evil entanglements. Of course, evil must be exposed, and the saints of God must be warned of the wiles and seduction of the devil; but let there be with the warning the presentation of the positive truth of God, for it is by that truth that saints of God are practically sanctified, and by that alone.

The Priests.

Now we have described a very simple, but a very beautiful outcome of the truth which had found a place in Hezekiah's own heart. He at once begins to appoint and care for God's servants, the priests and Levites. He is deeply interested now in those who were in special relation with God, in connection with His worship. The Old Testament is a very instructive book in the way it describes the office of the priests and the Levites. They are illustrative of God's people as worshippers, and likewise as servants. It is a great thing to see that *all* the Lord's people are priests, and *all* the Lord's people are Levites; they are called "an holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2. 5), and they "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3. 24). Every Christian has a place in the presence of the Lord in which he or she has the privilege of exercising as a worshipper the priestly function; but a priest cannot do his work well if he is not well fed. This is the great point of chapter 31.

Why were not the priests doing their proper work until now? Why

were the doors shut and the lamps out? Azariah tells us in the tenth verse. "*And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed His people; and that which is left is this great store.*" God had been robbed of what was due to Him because the priests had been starved. But what lesson does this teach us? Well, if a Christian you are a priest: see to it that your soul is well fed, for if not, you will never be really a worshipper.

Why is it that there is so little true worship to God the Father? why does He get so little of that which He seeks and delights in? It is because the saints of God feed so little upon Christ, and as a consequence they have no "spiritual sacrifices to offer which are acceptable to God by Christ Jesus" (1 Peter 2. 5). Every person who is part of God's assembly is a priest. And it is accorded to all His children to bring to God that which is His bread. But to be equal to this privilege we must read the Word of God regularly, carefully, and prayerfully, in His own blessed presence. Feed on Christ, feed on the life of Christ; thus as a priest you will be well fed.

The Levites.

Then we come to the Levites. There is here more the thought of service, and all Christians have the privilege of serving the Lord, in some way or other (Mark 13. 34). But if we are not well fed, we shall be feeble in service. The priestly work was to bring the sacrifices and to give to God His bread (see Num. 28. 2). The Levites had to carry the tabernacle through the wilderness, every part of which spoke of Christ. The boards, the curtains, the cords, the brazen altar, the table of shewbread, the candlestick, and the ark of the covenant. They had each some part

of the tabernacle to carry, and they thus, in type, each carried a little bit of Christ. Similarly every Christian is called to bear the name and character

of Christ through this world, but we can only be rightly strengthened for this as we feed upon Him.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

Righteousness.

DEAR EDITORS,—The question, Is it the life or death of the Lord Jesus that constitutes the believer's righteousness before God? can be quickly answered, if we remember that "righteousness" and "justification" are the same word in the original, used in different forms. Justification is equivalent to *judicial* righteousness as distinguished from *practical* righteousness. The word "righteousness" is the same throughout, with one exception (Heb. 1. 8), but the context settles how it is used without any difficulty. Imputed righteousness—the result of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus—is *judicial*; that which in the believer is the fruit of the light is *practical*.

Now for the question. Romans 4. 23-25 is plain, and is surely sufficient to settle the point. In this passage the equivalent values of "righteousness" and "justification" are clear, even in our English translation.

"Now it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Two points are abundantly plain:

(1) The believer's faith is to be in God, as the One who raised Jesus our Lord *from the dead*, thus emphasizing that it is only through *death* that the believer can be in righteousness before God. Nothing is said here about the *life* of our Lord. Surpassing in beauty, incomparable in holiness, perfect in detail, it was surely full and absolute delight to God. But that life is NOT the source of the believer's righteousness. The perfection of that life was all carried into death, and in death alone blessing for the believer was effected.

(2) Christ was *raised again* for the believer's righteousness before God, or justification, again affirming the fact that it is only through *death* and *resurrection* the believer's blessings flow.

One plain text, then, clearly answers the question, and every other text bearing on the point only confirms this.

But it may be urged that Romans 5. 19 seems to point to a different conclusion:

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."

But this in no wise contradicts, but *confirms*, Romans 4. 23-25.

The latter half of Romans 5. contrasts the headships of Adam and Christ—the former by his disobedience bringing in death upon life, the latter by His obedience bringing in life through death—the one, involving the race in ruin, the other, blessing all in connection with Him.

But Headship in Christ can only be taken up *in resurrection*. Our Lord's own word is plain as to this:

"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. 24).

This clearly proves that *the obedience* of Romans 5. 19 is as Philipians 2. 8 puts it, though in a different connection, Christ's *obedience in death*:

"He humbled Himself, and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross."

And further, Hebrews 10. 8, 9 contrasts "*Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God,*" with "*Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin,*" in which God had no pleasure, evidently linking up God's will in this connection with the *death* of Christ, and not His *life*, though in life it was His meat to do God's will.

And as to "*the obedience of One*" (Rom. 5. 19), notice that five verses lower down baptism is introduced. Are believers baptized unto Christ's *life* or unto His *death*? The latter surely.

Finally, all Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, bears out this thought. For instance,

how was the guilty condition of Adam and Eve met after the fall? They were clothed in coats of skin. The *life* of the animals never furnished these, though without their life they could not have been, *but their DEATH did*. God justifies the ungodly, and "the righteousness of God is . . . unto all and UPON *all them that believe*," even as the coats of skin were *upon* Adam and Eve. So we could run throughout Scripture, but space forbids.

A. J. POLLOCK.

S. writes us as to W.H.W.'s letter under this heading last month (pp. 151-3), and says that, seeing Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," he cannot understand

the statement that "what He was after the flesh has GONE." Another correspondent has also written us on this subject.

We think the context of W.H.W.'s letter makes evident that, whether or not as clearly expressed as it might be, he refers only to what Christ was AS after the flesh, and does not mean that any of the excellencies or moral perfections of Christ ever ceased to be, for he explicitly states lower down that "everything moved forward into resurrection," and so in result "nothing is missing . . . but all subsists for God and for us in resurrection."

We hope next month ourselves to add some further notes on the subject.—[EDITORS.]

Are Believers to Seek "More Light"?

(H. J. VINE).

NOT so: they are *in* the light, and are sons of light; their eyes have been opened, and they have turned from darkness to light; what they need now is rather to grow in the apprehension of the *truth*. Light is usually spoken of world-wards, *i.e.* towards those in darkness. Thus in John's Gospel it is spoken of over a score of times up to the middle of chapter 12., where occur the last words of the Lord to the world in the way of testimony. There He says, "While ye have light, believe in the light." From that point in the Gospel all the Lord's teaching is *within*: the time of His testimony, the time during which the light shone amidst the darkness of this world was over. In chapter 13. Judas goes out, and it is *night*. The disciples are within with the One who is the Light, but He is not then so spoken of: light is never again mentioned in the Gospel; instead, what becomes prominent is the truth: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14. 6); "the Spirit of truth" (14. 17; 15. 26; 16. 13); "all truth" (16. 13); "Thy truth" (17. 17).

To illustrate. Here is a class of students; it is broad daylight, and they are examining, under their teacher's instruction, an object whose properties

he is pointing out. They gain in apprehension of the *truth* about that object, but get no increase of light, that they are in all the time. Saints are said to be in the light; God, who is light, is thus known (1 John 1.); and now, as in the light, "His marvellous light," they are to behave accordingly, and seek enlarged apprehension of the *truth* as expressed in the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus is "the *Light of the WORLD*." He cannot be advanced upon. This does not refer to details in our path. "Light" and "truth" are not properly distinguished by many.

The Holy Spirit in and with His own is spoken of as "the Spirit of *truth*," never as the "Spirit of *light*." We are "*light in the Lord*:" to speak of a light *in the church* is subtle error. Satan comes amongst believers in that way, transforming himself into an angel of light and his ministers into ministers of righteousness (see 2 Cor. 11. 14). "Light" and "righteousness" (so called) seem to be his successful weapons amongst them. Boastful expressions, such as "fresh light," "new light," "higher light," etc., carry their own condemnation. The true Light already shines. He that goes beyond has not God.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 6.

Christ's Ministry — Opening and Character.

THE public ministry of our "Lord Jesus Christ was simply the expression of what He was. His words and Himself were identical (John 8. 25), and inconsistency there was none, nor, seeing who He was, could be.

Hence, whether in the exhibition of good or in the denunciation of evil, He only gave expression to the absolute moral perfection which dwelt within.

And, therein, He stands alone. Inconsistency may be traced in other servants of God, none in Him. This will be found in all His ministry, past, present, or to come—in the exercise of grace to-day or of righteousness and judgment in the future; for He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

It may be said that the Lord presented Himself at first to Israel for acceptance by them. They having refused every overture on the part of God hitherto, the Son is now sent, "last of all," to them. "He came unto His own," in order to receive fruit; and, in these Gospels, the treatment He received is gradually traced to its awful close. The probation of man terminates at the cross. No fruit was yielded; there was nothing but leaves. The imprisonment of John was the signal proof of the condition of the people, and is the starting-point of the public ministry of Christ. He retired into Galilee, so that the "great Light," foretold by Isaiah, should shine among a people who had lain in the shadow of death. But although outside of Judæa He attracted crowds thence, as, indeed, from all around, by the might of His hand as well as by the music of His voice.

In Matthew and Mark He called for repentance, because the kingdom had drawn nigh. He was the living embodiment of that kingdom, and there He was, the King, to be owned.

In Luke there is not the same call to repentance. He opened His ministry in Luke in the synagogue of Nazareth by applying to Himself the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." He claimed that place and power:

"The Lord hath anointed Me to preach the gospel . . . to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;" and, having read these significant words, He stopped. All eyes were fixed upon Him. He met the gaze unflinchingly, replying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He maintained His claim to be the Messiah. Then gracious words flowed from His mouth, to which all bore witness; but, strange to say, they only responded by saying, Is not this Joseph's son? How can the Nazarene be the Messiah?

But if grace is despised it can, and does, find acceptance somewhere. If Israel refuse it, a Gentile widow in her need, or a Gentile leper in his despair, will make it welcome. Enough! The brow of the hill and death for such words as these!

He "went His way"! So much for Nazareth.

Thence He went to Capernaum, and performed "mighty works," with what effect we know. Repentance there was none.

He called four humble fishermen to follow Him, and they obeyed. His fame spread through all Syria, but a fame only on the lips of passing admirers; the foundation for that which lasts was lacking.

At this juncture Matthew gives us "the Sermon on the Mount," consisting, as it does, of maxims of the highest possible kind. If the Law, which was holy and just and good, forbade outward acts of evil, this touched the innermost springs of the heart. It makes known to us, not redemption, nor the way of peace with God, but the holy principles of that kingdom of which Christ was the blessed exponent. Such principles, while condemning the innate evil of the human heart, show the intrinsic purity of the kingdom of heaven. It may be added that the Father's name occurs nearly twenty times, in order to indicate that, back of all, there was a fountain of grace, deeper than that which Moses learned ere he received the second set of Tables from the hand of "the Lord God, merciful and gracious." To

be "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5. 48), is clearly the very acme of highest practical attainment. But the way to this is not taught in the Sermon.

In comparing the early chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, one cannot but be struck by the resemblance they bear to the Cherubim (Ezek. 1. 10 ; Rev. 4. 7). There certainly is much of the lion in Matthew—the tremendous *fortiter in re* and unsparing judgment of evil ; then there is the patient, constant, unwearied labour of the ox in Mark ; in Luke there are the grace and moral beauty of the only perfect Man ; while John's Gospel, unfolding that which passes beyond all that characterizes the Synoptic Gospels, would answer to the eagle which soars in the heavens. Each has its own true and suited character. (J.W.S.)

Matthew 8. compared with Mark and Luke.

In comparing the Gospel of Matthew with those of the other writers who describe the same events, it is important to take note of the accompanying details, which will be found to throw a flood of light on the purpose of the Holy Ghost in giving us these different books. The healing of the leper is found in all the Synoptic Gospels, and is the first miracle in Matthew of which the particulars are given. The combination of faith in divine power without the knowledge of divine grace has often been remarked, and represents the state of many in Christendom to-day. The Lord's blessed response "I will," the touch of condescending mercy, the heart's compassion (the last only mentioned in Mark), assure us, as they did the leper in his day, of what God is. But this miracle holds a conspicuous place in Matthew, as being a special matter of testimony to Israel. Divine power, which alone could heal the leper, was present in Jesus ; so the word in all the three accounts is "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony *unto them.*" To this command was prefixed another, "See thou tell no man," by which I understand that the Lord did not seek to make Himself the centre of a crowd of miracle-seekers (see Mark 7. 24), but would by true testimony awaken *faith* in His

person and mission in the souls of men (John 3. 33). It is important to note the difference in the matter of testimony between the healing of the leper here and the case of the ten lepers in Luke 17. 12, etc. At that period the time for testimony "*to them*" had passed, and the one who stayed his journey to the priest and returned to Jesus is the one who acted according to the thoughts of God at that moment. So important is it to understand the character of the time in which we live and act accordingly (1 Chron. 12. 32 ; Luke 9. 54), and not according to precedent.

The healing of the centurion's servant is recorded in Matthew 8. and Luke 7. It would not be gathered from Matthew that the centurion's appeal was made through Jewish delegates. Naturally a Roman soldier *hated and despised the fanatical Israelite*, who frequently caused him unnecessary trouble ; but this man, taught of God, gives the Jew his place of privilege and nearness. Luke, addressing the Gentile, emphasizes this fact ; Matthew, anxious not to minister to Jewish pride, omits it. The special exercise of faith in the divine person of the Christ is found in both. He had not found so great faith in Israel.

The healing of Peter's mother-in-law and the wonderful scenes ("He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them," Luke 4. 40) round the door of the house in the evening of that day are given with a little more detail in Mark and Luke, but Matthew characteristically gives the reference to Isaiah 53. 4, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," which is not an exact citation of either Hebrew or LXX. The A.V. has, "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ;" Matthew adapts these words to his requirement, for infirmities and sicknesses form a large part of our griefs and sorrows. Peter in his first epistle (2. 24) follows the Greek version and shows that they are the result of sin. The *sins* He took in grace as His own and bore their penalty. The *sorrows* attendant on our infirmities and sicknesses He felt in His own spirit, while His power was manifested in the relief of them. At this point in Matthew two incidents are introduced which are found in quite a different setting in Luke 9. There the Lord is seen steadfastly

setting His face to go to Jerusalem, and they are introduced along with a third case peculiar to Luke to show the impossibility of the natural man with the most excellent intentions following Him in that path to the cross, in which natural energy only finds exposure in its utter insufficiency (Mark 14. 51, 52). In Matthew they seem to illustrate the remarkable position of Messiah in Israel at that time, which no natural man could enter into or appreciate. Men need something more than favourable opportunities and good intentions to understand and follow the rejected Son of Man. Is it otherwise now? "Except a man be born again he CAN-NOT see!" How few, even of regenerate souls, know the *absolute* character of the divine claim in grace!

The next scene (ver. 23-26) illustrates the position of the remnant of His people, who, drawn by grace, have followed Him. They are exposed to all the force of this world's storms, and He is asleep; outward intervention in the order and course of this world is not manifested until the close of the age. This miracle of the stilling of the waves and the scene in Gadara are put together in all three Gospels, but are introduced in Matthew out of their historical order to show the extent of the sphere subjected to His authority. Interesting variations are found in the accounts. In Mark the disciples exclaim, "Dost Thou not care that we are perishing?"—care of self being more conspicuous than consideration for the Master and a right estimate of His glory. The disciples share with the multitudes an unintelligent wonder at the sight of the miracles of our Lord, which is very unlike the faith of the Gentile centurion.

The deliverance of the demoniacs of Gadara, or Gergesenes, by the word of Jesus follows.

Matthew records the fact that there were two demoniacs. They are more representative of Israel, and hence are given in the number of adequate testimony, which is the point to be emphasized. Mark and Luke record many interesting moral details of the one chosen by them as exhibiting God's deliverance which are lacking in Matthew. All show the double character of Satanic power, first in oppression and destruc-

tion, then in the no less deadly hostility exhibited by the inhabitants of the land, to which the Lord yields, leaving behind Him a witness of His delivering mercy. (C.E.H.W.)

The Early Ministry of the Lord in Mark.

It has been already noted that the part of the Gospel of Mark is to present the Lord in His service, and this especially in the Word, as Son of God; for it was none less than He who had assumed the servant's form. Many scenes of His life familiar to us from the other Gospels are not found here, as not entering into the scope of the special aspect of His path; nor could this have been from any desire to abbreviate, for the incidents recorded by Mark are often illustrated with a fullness of detail not found elsewhere. This is the more remarkable in that he could not, as far as we know, have been an eye-witness of what is so vividly portrayed. Every such consideration only makes more manifest the divine mind that planned the whole, and guided the vessels in what they record as well as in what they omit.

Thirteen verses suffice for the preface; then comes the simple announcement with which the Lord Jesus comes into Galilee saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Mark passes quickly to the entrance of the Lord on His work, the scenes of which are often linked together by a word of frequent recurrence in this Gospel, rendered variously "straightway," "immediately," "forthwith," "as soon as," and "anon," or more specifically as at chapter 4. 35—all of which goes far to prove that the historic order is preserved.

Thus, after the call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John, as in Matthew, we have that first Sabbath-day at Capernaum, with the healing of the demoniac and of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, and when it was over, in the evening, that of many more that were brought to Him to that door. Then, in the morning, rising up a great while before day for prayer, He is ready to prosecute His preaching in the neighbouring towns [of Galilee, for this was the service for which He had come forth. Here the leper seeks Him,

and is met by the compassionate touch, and proves the Lord's willingness as well as His power to heal (chap. 1.).

It was no part of Mark's allotted task to record the case of the centurion, with Gentiles brought in while Israelites were excluded, which follows in Matthew 8. and in its historical place in Luke 7. At another visit to Capernaum the Lord proves that as Son of Man He has authority on earth to forgive sins, raising up the palsied man from his bed of weakness. This came as the blessed answer to the precious faith of the four men, who, in spite of the press, had found a way to let the afflicted sinner down through the roof before the Lord (chap. 2. 1-12).

At the seaside, His constant resort, as noted in Mark, Levi is called from the receipt of custom and entertains the Lord at his house with others of his obnoxious profession, and this feast gives the Lord the occasion to unfold the precious principles of His grace to sinners as such, the effect of which, in hearts that this grace had won, was, they could not fast when He was there, though they would soon have reason to do so, for He was to be taken away. This grace was not the patching of the old garments, nor could the old vessels contain the new wine of its power. This grace would lead on to the rest of God for man, of which the Sabbath was the figure, and the Son of Man Lord also of it. Another Sabbath-day's work of divine goodness follows upon this to test the Pharisees; the result only manifests that they could not appreciate that goodness, as well as the hardness of their hearts, as in alliance with the Herodians they took counsel to destroy Him (chap. 2. 12-3, 6).

It is not possible, in our limited space, to follow out all the details. But we find here, as not in Matthew, the calling of whom He would, and the choosing of the twelve to be with Him, and for the same service in which He was engaged. It was here, doubtless, that the Sermon on a level place, as they descended the Mount, was given, according to Luke, though to record this does not enter into the scope of Mark. But there is the characteristic note that, with the

pressure of the work, "they could not so much as eat bread," again to be repeated at chapter 6. 31. His "friends" attribute the zeal to madness; the scribes put down the manifested power of God over Satan to Satan, and incur the guilt of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the sin that has never forgiveness. At the end of the chapter the Lord disowned His natural relationships, opening them to whomsoever should do the will of God (chap. 3. 13-35).

The teaching in parables by the seaside follows, but with marked difference from the dispensational form in which it is presented in Matthew. The Sower is here sowing the word, and the history of the work is given to the end. These are the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but only one of the six kingdom parables of Matthew 13. is given, with the addition of one peculiar to Mark. There is the same fourfold character of the hearers, those only where there is good ground bringing forth fruit, and that in different measures. The result is that a light is lit up for God, which it is His will should be manifested, as, indeed, everything shall be. Hence the need of taking heed of what is spoken, and that it might become their own to be communicated again, for "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you, and unto you that hear shall more be given" (chap. 4.).

The relations of the Lord with the work in connection with the Kingdom of God, are here shown in His personal activity at the beginning, and then again not till the close, when the harvest is come (vers. 26-29). The parable of the mustard seed shows the unnatural growth of a tree of worldly power, "shooting out great branches," from so small a beginning (vers. 30-32). The evening of the same day witnesses the stormy passage (vers. 37-41), and the power of Him who, though taking rest as opportunity offered, could arise and rebuke the elements, as well as the unbelief of disciples that would fear to be swamped when He was with them in the boat. This incident had been displaced in Matthew (8. 24), for the purposes of that Gospel, as we have seen. (To be continued.) (J.A.T.)

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

Sleep.

"Subscriber" asks :

"What is the meaning of the scripture, 'So David slept with his fathers' (2 Kings 2. 10)? Does it apply to David's body or spirit, or both?"

It applies, of course, to the body alone : *that* sleeps until the resurrection day. David fell on sleep, and as thus sleeping saw corruption (Acts 13. 36). Man is spirit, soul, and body ; and, as each part is really required to make up the whole *man*, what he is himself, so we can readily understand his *name*, that which denotes him as a man, being applied not only to his conscious personality, but also just as distinctly to the material part of his being, *i.e.* the body.

Thus, when Stephen was stoned to death, we read of his dead body, that "devout men carried *Stephen* to his burial" (Acts 8. 2). As to his spirit, he was "with Christ, which is *far better*" (Phil. 1. 23)—a thing which could not be said if when it says "he fell asleep" it had meant that his spirit shared in the unconscious sleep of the body.

The "Wicked" Servant.

W.S.B. writes us as to a statement on page 69 of March issue of "Scripture Truth," to the effect that the "wicked" servant spoken of in Luke 19. was "a servant by profession, and in name only." He adds :

"Can you tell me anything to warrant this? because I read in Luke 19. 13 that 'He called his ten servants, and delivered to them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come;' and again in verse 22 he is described as a wicked servant. This, as I read the Scriptures, is very conclusive that he was at the very least a servant, whether good or wicked. If not, am I right in assuming that God has servants by profession (unconverted men) in this scene of the Lord's rejection, and, if so, what is their service?"

"In Matthew 25. 14 they are called His own servants, which is stronger than simply servants."

The reason for the statement that that "wicked" servant was a "servant by profession and in name only" is given in the same paragraph as that to which you call attention : "He did not know

the Master, his own confession proves this." No truly saved man would say to the Lord, "I knew that Thou wert an austere Man." Moreover, he was a "wicked" servant. In the parallel parable of Matthew 25. the "unprofitable servant" is cast "into outer darkness ;" and there "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (ver. 30). This will not, certainly, be the portion of any who are truly the Lord's.

There are many who profess to own Jesus as Lord ; it is part of their creed, and they call Him Lord and yet do not the things which He says (Luke 6. 46). They take the place of servants, they own Him nominally as Lord, but of them He has said :

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7. 21). And to such, who have even prophesied in His name, etc., but have had no vital link with Him, He will say, "I never knew you : depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity" (ver. 23).

Every man should serve the Lord, for He is "Lord of all," but the responsibility of serving does not attach in the same way to those who do not know that Christ is Lord, as it does to those who do. "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 12. 47). His portion will be with the unbelievers.

It is a question of the responsibility of those to whom God has in His mercy given the light of the gospel, and more especially of those who take the place of serving Him. Many, alas ! are totally unregenerate.

As to what is the service of unconverted professors who answer to the description of the wicked servant, they fulfil none at all ; whilst *servants* they yet do not serve: the "pound" committed is wrapped in a napkin, that which they have received is not turned to account in the smallest degree (*cf.* Heb. 2. 1-3) ; no trading is done, no service performed.

Judging (Acts 17. 30).

W.T.M. asks :

As to the day spoken of in Acts 17. 30, when God "will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained," whether "judging" there refers to the Great White Throne or to the millennial reign of Christ in righteousness.

Clearly the reference is to the latter. The case of the dead is not here immediately in view : that is dealt with elsewhere. The Apostle always looked upon the second advent of Christ as imminent, and we ought to do so also, and press the woeful consequences which must be the lot of the unrepentant in a day which may come in the lifetime of the present generation, and when all in this world (*oikoumenē*, the habitable earth) will be administered in absolute righteousness by the Man whom God has ordained. The sceptre of His kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. Judging is spoken of here in a comprehensive way, much as we read of those who judged Israel of old, and those who will "judge" the twelve tribes of Israel in a coming day (Matt. 19. 28); whilst we ourselves shall judge the world and angels, inasmuch as we shall share with Him in the administration of His kingdom (1 Cor. 6. 2, 3).

Baptism.

A.H.S. inquires :

Whether "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12. 13) refers to water baptism.

Certainly not. It is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which John put in contrast to water baptism (see Matt. 3. 11 and John 1. 33), and to which Peter refers in connection with the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, upon reception of which the Holy Ghost came upon them. "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 11. 15-17). This happened before they were baptized with water at all (10. 44). The gift of the One Spirit to all who believed formed them into one body, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free.

New Translation.

Inquirer asks :

The meaning of the letters "N.T." which occur not infrequently in our pages after quotations from the Holy Scriptures.

They refer to a new translation⁷ of the Scriptures by the late J. N. Darby : a most excellent translation. The Old and New Testaments are issued separately, and may be obtained from office of this magazine or any Bible depot.

The Lower Parts of the Earth.

A.W.L. asks :

"What is the meaning of Christ descending first into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4. 9)? Has it any reference to 1 Peter 3. where we read that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison?"

No, there is no similarity of teaching between the two passages. Preaching to spirits in prison is widely separated from what we have in Ephesians 4. 9, for that preaching does not refer to anything following the death of Christ, but goes back to His preaching in the Spirit through Noah in antediluvian days (see "Scripture Truth," 1910, pp. 249, 271, 365).

The low parts of the earth are placed in Ezekiel 26. 20 in contrast with "the land of the living." In Psalm 88. the Spirit of Christ speaks thus : "Thou hast laid Me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon Me, and Thou hast afflicted Me with all Thy waves." This indicates the thought : the Christ who has now ascended far above all heavens has once been in the lowest place, He has been in the darkness of death, under the judgment, and in uttermost distance.

The very domain of death has been lighted by the glory of God : and He who did it has ascended up far above all heavens, thus compassing, so to say, the utmost possible range, that in result He might fill *all things*.

Jehovah.

J.W.D. asks :

Why do we get the name LORD in Exodus and other books of Moses (as in Exodus 6. 3), whilst in Ezekiel we get the name Lord GOD (as in 11. 17)?

It is a little difficult for the English reader to apprehend the force of certain of the titles of God in the Old Testament, unless it be understood that whenever Lord or God occurs in *capitals* the meaning is Jehovah. Thus in the scripture quoted in Exodus 6. it is LORD = Jehovah, whilst in Ezekiel 11. it is Lord GOD = Adonai Jehovah—the Lord Jehovah.

The former title, Jehovah, is the name God takes as in relationship with man—especially the covenant relation to Israel. In Genesis 1. the name God occurs as Elohim, which is the root name El, God, in plural—the plural of majesty, with allusion, doubtless, to the truth of the Trinity. But in chapter 2. verse 4 the subject of the preceding chapter is taken up from a new standpoint, man being particularly in view in his relation to his Creator; and hence here it is that we get the statement of what was distinctive in the creation of man (ver. 7), and in the whole account the name Jehovah is used—Jehovah Elohim.

There is progressive revelation of God as we pass along the pages of Holy Writ. To Abraham, God was not revealed as Jehovah—not that that name was unknown to him, but that the especial character in which God revealed Himself to Abraham was as El-Shaddai, God Almighty, or more correctly the all-sufficient God. In Exodus He reveals Himself as Jehovah in relation to Israel. This same title LORD occurs a great number of times in Ezekiel—almost as many times as the title Lord GOD. But the latter, as we have said, is used still more frequently; and we think we may discern a reason for this in the state of things which existed in Ezekiel's day. The people of God were then in captivity. Ezekiel in the land of their captivity beholds in vision the glory departing and unsparing judgment announced on Jerusalem. In these circumstances Adonai Jehovah, a title signifying that Jehovah is the supreme Lord or Master, is surely in keeping, for then God is seen falling back upon His own supremacy when His people have broken covenant and departed from Him.

Atonement.

A.W.L. inquires:

If he is correctly informed that the word

"atonement" does not occur in the New Testament except in Romans 5. 11, where it ought to be reconciliation. If so, is it correct to say that Christ has made an atonement for us? He has been told that atonement only means covering up; which would appear more fitting to Israel's position, when there was a remembrance again of sins made every year, than to ours, seeing that our sins are removed from us for ever.

You are quite correctly informed as to Romans 5. 11, and as to the non-occurrence of the word "atonement" in the New Testament.

But as to the scope of "atonement" itself, we may not think of it as if it were something small and merely a type or shadow. God could go on with His people Israel on the ground of atonement, but this was not because of any inherent value in the sacrifices offered on that day in Israel (Lev. 16.), but because of that which they prefigured—the death of Christ. God could not have walked with sinful men at all had not the atoning sacrifice of Christ been ever before Him.

Now whilst the word "atonement" itself does not occur in the New Testament, the truth of it is found again and again in its pages. Thus as on the great day of atonement blood was taken into the immediate presence of God and there sprinkled on the mercy seat (Lev. 16.), so in Romans 3. we find Christ set forth as a Mercy Seat in His blood on the principle of faith. It was on that basis, the basis of the infinite virtue of the atoning death of Christ, that God righteously passed over the sins of the people in days gone by (Rom. 3. 25); and on exactly the same basis He justifies the believer to-day (ver. 26). There never was any different basis than the atoning death of Christ, though there is now, atonement being accomplished, a fuller revelation to us than there was then of the virtue of that death.

As to covering, the thought is introduced in connection with justification in Romans 4. 7.

CORRIGENDA.

Page 156, line 5 of last paragraph: read Chapter 10 for Chapter 11.

“He Leadeth Me.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

“He restoreth my soul : He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Ps. 23.).

HE does not drive me, nor drag me, but “He leadeth me,” and there is a great tenderness in the way in which He does it. This was illustrated for me the other day when I called upon a young mother. Her baby boy was just learning to walk, and she was anxious that I should see the wonderful progress that he was making, so, taking his small hand in hers, she led him across the room. I noticed that she did not compel him to take the long strides that she could have taken, nor go the pace that she could have gone, but she shortened her steps to his and went as he could go, and spoke gentle words to him all the time in order to encourage his nervous endeavour. As I looked at that interesting sight I said to myself : That is how the Lord treats me. He is touched with

the feeling of my infirmity (Heb. 4. 15), He understands all my fears and tremblings and all the roughness of the way, and just as I am able to go He leads me, ministering comfort and cheer to me all the way.

He restoreth, or invigorateth, my soul by presenting Himself before my eyes in His greatness and grace ; and as I am “looking unto Jesus,” who has travelled the way before me, and as I am held by His hand of power, for He is able to keep me from stumbling, I can tread the paths of righteousness with patience and with confidence.

And it is “for His name’s sake”—for the sake of that sacred name that He has put upon me, that name “holy and true” which I bear in an evil and unrighteous world.

Living for Christ and with Christ.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

“Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14. 8).

The Life of Christ.

WHEN Christ was in the grave the world was one vast moral and spiritual graveyard. No life anywhere. “Then were all dead” (2 Cor. 5. 14). But God has raised Him from the dead and has brought life and incorruptibility to light. Before His death He was the corn of wheat that abode alone. His was a sinless humanity, and His whole life proved how wholly distinct and different was His life to that of the men and women among whom He freely mixed. None were identified in life with Him, nor could they be. He was here truly Man, able to feel

pain, weariness, sorrow, and disappointment ; but in the hidden springs of His life He was ever “the Son of Man which is in heaven.” He laid down His life on the cross and took life again in resurrection. When He laid down His life it was as the propitiation for sins, as a substitutionary sacrifice for guilty man. Having borne the wrath and full consequences of our sins, He cried, “It is finished,” bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. He was raised again from the dead on the third day by the Father’s glory. Now He liveth unto God, and gives that resurrection life to others, uniting them with Himself in the relationship of sons to

the Father, a new family, to enjoy for ever His Father's love, along with Himself, the risen One. That which was impossible whilst He was a Man here is now an accomplished fact as the result of His death.

Christ was not united to man in incarnation, but believers are united to Christ in resurrection. He did not come to uplift or ennoble *fallen* human nature, but that out of His death life might come to man, a new nature and life as free from sin and condemnation as Christ's, for He Himself is the life of every believer.

How we come into it.

Would you know it experimentally? Believe the record God has given; look by faith to the risen Saviour who has abolished death in order that you may possess life and incorruptibility. This is what the gospel declares. Life as a sovereign gift of God to whosoever will—a life beyond death, outside the domain of judgment; a life of association with a risen, heavenly, glorified Saviour; and this life obtained now, not by "imitation of Christ's walk and ways here," or by "an unselfish life," but by a simple act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." "God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." The moment we listen to the voice of the Son of God we have life; His life is our life, *having the Son we have life*; but let us never forget Christ has not only died that we might have life in Him, but that having that life we might be held at the absolute control of the One who is our life.

"My Lord."

"To this end Christ both died and rose, that *He might be Lord* both of

the dead and living" (Rom. 14. 9). The lordship of Christ will yet be universally owned; every knee shall bow to Him, every tongue confess Him as Lord; but it is ours to ante-date that day, to own His sovereign rights over us now. If we do this, we shall consult Him as to our occupations, associations, and recreations; whatever we do, wherever we go, will be in deference to His revealed will. This will is made known in the Scriptures, and although there may not be a specific direction as to every particular thing, the broad general principles of Scripture are always a sure guide. It will not be pleasing our Lord if we love the world out of which He has redeemed us; for He gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world. It will not be pleasing to our Lord if we do not love our brother, and if we set him at naught instead of being patient and gracious with him.

It will not be *living to Him* if we spend our life in selfishness; for Christ pleased not Himself. It will not please the Lord if we continue a bad habit, even though that habit may be indulged in by other Christians. *Our business is to live to Him who died for us*, and to own His claims over spirit, soul, and body, over wealth, energies, opportunities, time, and talents.

It is a great thing to start our Christian course as Paul did with, "Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do?" It is greater to go until, like him, we can say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, MY LORD."

Paul said, "My Lord!" Mary said, "My Lord!" Thomas said, "My Lord!" What are you saying?

Can you honestly look in His face and say, "Lord, Thou hast brought me life out of death, and now I own Thy claims over my life: henceforth I live for Thee; Thou art *my* Lord"?

Only let Christ's claims over you be owned, and walk in obedience to His Word, and this will set you right, and keep you right as to service, worship, and walk.

Life with Him.

What is our future to be when our service here is over? Christ died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we "should *live together with Him*" (1 Thess. 5. 10). Do you meditate on the precious fact that one great purpose before Christ in dying for us was that we might share the home, the life, the affections He now enjoys? He lives *for us now*; presently we shall *live with Him*.

Who can measure the wealth of that expression "with Him"? This, this indeed is life eternal, not only to know *now* the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, but then to *live with Him* in those courts above, to breathe the atmosphere of the Father's house, to participate in the love and rest and joy and peace in which Jesus now lives as a Man in the presence of God His Father. Human tongue cannot describe the "unspeakable things" into which we shall soon be brought, the paradise of delights we shall enter, the fullness of joy and pleasures for

evermore, which will be ours when *living with Him*.

Wilderness toils over, tears wiped away, labours past, we shall share these joys *together* with all the redeemed, for Christ died to gather a company to share the blessedness of a life in His presence and company for ever. Who can conceive what it will be for all the saints to be *together* without a discordant note in their song of praise or a jarring element in their intercourse, and then to know that they are to be *for ever* with the Lord, *together with Him* in heaven's eternal home?

Kingdom glories may intervene, judgment may carry on its strange work, but it will not affect for a moment the life of blessedness which will then be ours. Loved of the Son and loved of the Father, we shall, in the power of the Holy Spirit, enjoy all the intimacies of divine affection for ever and for ever—for ever—and for ever! Then will all the objects of Christ's death be realized. Christians will not only be cleansed from their sins, relieved from death and judgment, but in new and glorified bodies will learn that out of death has come life, out of apparent defeat victory—Satan vanquished, man delivered, God glorified, and life eternal theirs.

My bark is wafted to the strand,
By breath divine;
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail,
I have on board;
Above the raging of the gale,
I hear my Lord.

He holds me when the billows smite,
I shall not fall;
If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light;
He tempers all.

Safe to the land! Safe to the land!
The end is this;
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss.

Your testimony now [as a Christian] is to be enjoying Christ for yourself, and not to be looking at your testimony to the saints of God. As you enjoy Christ for yourself they will find it out, and that will be your testimony to them.

If we get knowledge merely to communicate it, we shall be as dry as a mill-stone. When we enjoy Christ for His own sake, it will flow forth to others.

Truth is to produce fruit; and you have no truth that does not bear fruit.

 Deliverance from Sin.—Romans 6.

AT the outset of our consideration of this subject let us notice carefully how believers stand in relation to *grace*. We are living in the day of grace, when the gospel of God's grace is being preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and accordingly, in chapter 5, verse 20, we read, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." In the first two and a half chapters of the epistle the aboundings of *sin* are shown, and how all are proved to be under it, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" whilst from the latter part of the third chapter the Spirit unfolds how, though there are these aboundings of sin in the world, God has come in and overabounded with His rich and free *grace*. This He has done righteously because of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (chap. 3. 24). Grace justifies the believing sinner freely, and not only clears him from all condemnation, but also reconciles him to God through the death of His Son (chap. 5. 10); so that now his chief joy is in God Himself, whose grace and love are known to him through our Lord Jesus Christ (chap. 5. 11). At the opening of the fifth chapter the believer is seen to stand in grace and to have free access into the changeless favour of God, and what lies just ahead of him is the glory of God—we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (chap. 5. 2, 3). At the close of chapter 5, we have mention of the *reign of grace* (ver. 21).

"Grace is a mine of wealth laid open to the poor;

Grace is the sov'reign spring of health, 'tis life for evermore."

Question. *But is it not important to see that grace reigns through righteousness?*

Yes; but it is a great thing first of all to take hold of the fact that it is *grace* that is now on the throne. Grace is reigning *through* righteousness truly. All must be in perfect righteousness necessarily where God (who is righteous) is concerned. There was the reign of sin (chap. 5. 21), sin had reigned unto death, but now the grace of God has, so to speak,

ascended the throne on the believer's behalf, and on account of the work at the cross, where the question of sin was settled, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life; so that grace not only meets us in our need, and sets us in present favour, but secures for us the glory by and by, when the saints will be glorified with Christ. Then it will be the display of grace—"The riches of His grace."

When the great fact is grasped that GRACE is reigning, we can rightly approach the sixth chapter, where we are seen as "not under law, but under grace" (ver. 14). This must be borne in mind all through.

Question. *Chapter 6. begins with the question, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Is this question one that would occur to the renewed mind, do you think?*

Well, the Apostle raises the question in order to answer the natural reasoning of men, that to believe in grace so free would lead to licence. Nay, he adds, "Far be the thought." The question is raised so that we might have it settled intelligently.

Grace took us up at the start—grace is going to glorify us at the end; but we are not yet glorified. What are we going to do in between, since we are the recipients of such grace? Continue in sin? "Far be the thought."

The truth is very plain—the believer has died to sin. That is a settled thing; then how shall he live in sin? The believer is not told to die to sin. We sometimes hear the remark, "You must die to sin," but Scripture is very careful to say that the believer *has died* to sin (ver. 2). Baptism "unto Christ Jesus" sets forth that the one so baptized is done with sin, because in being baptized to Him he is baptized unto His death. Christ has died to sin, and in baptism the believer has been buried with Him. We are not to be ignorant as to this matter. It is "*with Christ*" we have died. The scene of death was at the cross; not within the believer, but

"with Christ." We are dead with Him and buried with Him.

Question. *Is that the meaning of verse 3: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into [or, unto] Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are [or, have been] buried with Him by baptism into death."*

Yes, and we must keep clear that it is not Christ's death *for* our sins in Romans 6. That is looked at from chapter 4. as a settled question—He "was delivered *for* our offences" (chap. 4. 25). Here it is His death *to* sin, and our death *with* Him. In the early part of chapter 5. we are told what we have *through* our Lord Jesus Christ, but in this chapter it is what we have *with* and *in* Him. We are completely identified with Him in death and in life.

Question. *In Colossians 2. 20 we are stated to have died with Christ from the elements of the world. Is that similar?*

So far as the expression "dead with Christ" is concerned, it is exactly similar. Baptism is burial out of sight altogether, and expresses the fact that in the death of Christ we were cut off from the lawless world; but now, as Christ has been raised again, leaving sin and death behind, even so we should walk in "newness of life," having left sin behind.

The question has often been asked, "Who was the first visitor to the tomb?" The Father was. The Father's glory, all that He is, operated there, giving Him a glorious triumph over death: "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." God forsook Him when He was made sin on the cross; but the Father's glory raised Him FROM AMONG the dead. God's infinite satisfaction and delight are found in that One who went into death for God's glory. We have become identified with Him in the likeness of His death, and we shall be also of His resurrection.

Question. *Does faith look back and say, "We have died with Christ"?*

Yes; baptism is the acknowledgment of it. Many people are baptized, but do not understand this. It is a mere form with them, but the truth that baptism teaches is far more important than the form: and the truth it teaches is here. The truth of deliverance from sin, the only way by which believers can get

freedom from sin is brought out at this point. Those who are of real use in this world, in the service of the Lord, have accepted this road. God has only this one road to freedom, and it is through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ: "He that is dead is free from sin" (ver. 7). We are to know the truth which makes free. I saw a printed letter some time ago from a preacher, saying how much he wished he had known the truth of this chapter at the start of his work.

The practical walk here is in "newness of life," and not in the old life of disobedience which is called sin. There are two questions in this chapter which should be noticed, for, generally, the second is confused with the first. The first question is in the first verse—"Shall we *continue in sin?*" the second is in the fifteenth verse—"Shall we *sin?*" The first is a question of, so to speak, the *sphere* of life morally, and so in the chapter "in sin" is contrasted with "in Christ Jesus." The second is a question of acts or practice, and so yielding oneself to serve sin is contrasted with becoming servants to God. There are these two deeply important lines of thought, the first developed in verses 1-14 and the last in verses 15-23. Both are raised in reference to the wonderful grace which God has shown us—favour through Christ for those who merited the very opposite!

Question. *The first is not a question of sin in us, is it? but of continuing in sin on the one hand, or of walking in newness of life on the other.*

That is so, and the future is looked on to in the fifth verse: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." For, as surely as Christ Himself is raised, we shall be actually raised and fully delivered then, even as to our bodies.

We ought to be marked by triumph in going through this world, having fullness of joy, not like the joy of the world, but true joy in the Lord. "Delight thyself in the Lord!" There is none like Him!

Question. *What about the sixth verse? "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*

It is a matter of knowledge: *knowing* that a certain thing took place for a certain reason. "Our old man" is not exactly the "evil nature within," though it includes it, nor is it precisely the "first man," which is contrasted with the "Second Man;" but in the language of Scripture it is the *old* which was crucified at the cross. It is elsewhere contrasted with the "new" man, which is now created in Christ. It is that in which we had part as belonging to the race of Adam—fallen, sinful, and lawless. But thanks be unto God we now clearly *know* our old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be annulled. The whole organism broken up, in its totality, and rendered powerless, so that we should not serve it henceforth. All the saints are now formed into one "new man" in Christ. The new man is entirely according to God, and is created in truth and righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4. 24). How different is the old man which corrupts itself (Eph. 4. 22). God made "the first man" (mentioned only in 1 Cor. 15.). He could not be said to have made "the old man," for he is utterly corrupt; and this fact may serve to emphasize a necessary distinction of great importance.

Question. *Is "justified" a better word than "freed" in the seventh verse? "For he that is dead is freed from sin."*

Yes, but the meaning is very similar. We are cleared from the old thing, in which we once were, by death. The world is going on in sin still, whether it is the religious world, or the irreligious world, or whatever form the world takes now—it is lawless. It is not "*the earth*" here. We have to do our duties, our business, etc., and to fill our part in our natural relationships, but all that relates to "*the earth*." Continuing "in sin" is what marks "*the world*." It is what we have in 1 John 2., in another aspect—"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." "*The world*" is not of the Father, but "*the earth* is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." If we do not distinguish we shall become legal and unhappy. Happiness (in the sense of grace) and holiness go together. Sin gets a point of attack if we become legal. We are under grace now, not under law.

Question. *What is the first thing on our side? Is it to believe what God has done in raising up Christ from the dead?*

The first thing is KNOWLEDGE. Firstly, "*knowing* that our old man has been crucified with Christ" (ver. 6); secondly, "*knowing* that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (ver. 9). The first is not a matter of our frames or feelings, or it would lead to self-occupation. It is objective knowledge (*γινώσκοντες*), clear to the ken of faith. The second, however, which is a matter concerning the blessed Lord Jesus, we have the inward conscious knowledge of; so the Holy Spirit uses quite a different word (*εἰδότες*=conscious knowledge). This is very striking, and helps greatly when understood; for herein lies the great basic truth of deliverance from sin. Our old man is crucified with Christ, but Christ is raised from among the dead. Our old man is not raised, thank God, but Christ is, and we are alive in Him.

He has died to sin; He has left the whole thing behind Him by dying to it. Will He ever die to sin again? No! Christ will never have to say in that way to sin again. "For in that He died, He died unto sin ONCE; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but ALIVE unto God, in Christ Jesus" (N.T.). We have the settled KNOWLEDGE that Christ died unto sin, and has thus done with it once and for ever, and He now lives to God. We also reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God in Him. An earnest believer once said to me after a meeting, "I see it now! I am to reckon *sin dead to me!*" I replied, "It is just the other way about: you are to reckon *yourself dead to it!*"

We are dead to sin and alive to God in chapter 6., and dead to the law to be to Christ in chapter 7.

Question. *Is it not important to keep the positive side—"Alive to God"—before us?*

It is, indeed, for it is only as being "ALIVE TO GOD in Christ Jesus" that we *can* reckon ourselves dead to sin. Verse 12 shows that sin is not eradicated, but it is not to be allowed sway. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal

body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." We read also, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." As delivered from sin, we are to definitely yield ourselves to God.

Verse 14 is absolute—"Sin shall not have dominion over you." Why? Because we "are not under the law, but UNDER GRACE." Sin wants the sway: it dominates the world; but the wages of sin is death. Our "members" are spoken of here, showing that it is the body: "Yield . . . your members . . . unto God." It is very practical. All our members are to be yielded to this new and happy service in the energy of the life of Christ raised from among the dead. This life is ours, and we can take account of ourselves as alive from among the dead (ver. 13), though we still await the actual resurrection.

Question. *What about the other question, "Shall we sin?"*

This second question divides the chapter, and to answer its inquiry the Holy Spirit uses the illustration of two masters. All are serving either one or the other. No man can serve two masters. Notice carefully how the Spirit leads up to this; God has taken us out of the old circle in which we once were and now He has put us before Himself in Christ, so that henceforth we reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God "in Christ Jesus" (as verse 11 rightly reads). "In sin" (that in which we once lived and moved) is put in contrast with "in Christ;" and in chapter 8. we shall find "in the Spirit" put in contrast with being "in the flesh." No saint is "in sin" (though sin is still in us); all are in Christ, though the truth must be practically recognized. Those who are in Christ are in Him for ever; it cannot be altered; and just because we *are* in Christ, and not in sin, we have a new master to serve. In the new service which is to righteousness there is present blessing, fruitfulness to sanctification, increase in the knowledge of God, and the end everlasting life.

Verse 16 says, that "to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his

servants we are to whom we obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." But having obeyed from the heart the precious truth, the form of doctrine into which we were instructed (ver. 17, N.T.), and having got our freedom from the old master, "sin," we are ashamed of the things which we once did in its service, and in which there was no fruit. In the new service we have fruit unto holiness.

Question. *There is no legal effort in this new service, is there?*

No, for we are "under grace." All true service flows from that. God in grace has justified us, and freed us from sin's slavery; and now in liberty we become servants to the blessed God. Take an illustration: I remember a young typist whose first master was harsh and used bad language. She was very miserable. A new place was offered to her by a Christian. She left her old master, and *gladly embraced her freedom* from him to serve the new master, with whom she has prospered ever since. It is thus with the believer spiritually, but we must avoid legality, and yet be yielded wholly to God, in the sense of His grace, to pursue that which is pleasing in His sight. Fruit unto holiness is the result.

In the service of sin men contrariwise sink deeper and deeper into uncleanness and lawlessness.

Question. *There are two classes here, are there not?*

There are those who are given up to evil: sin is their master. There are also the children of God who are servants of righteousness. They have got freedom from sin. The old master has no claim upon them now. The death of Christ has come in between them and sin. They are now free in the life of Christ raised from the dead to serve the new Master. Those who serve the old master receive his "WAGES," for "the wages of sin is death" (ver. 23). But thanks be unto God "the GIFT" is ours, NOT THE WAGES OF SIN. The "gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Blessed be God for His over-abounding grace. May it be ours to "serve the Lord with gladness," and not with sadness.

"May grace, free grace, inspire
Our souls with strength divine;
May every thought to God aspire,
And grace in service shine."

The End in View.

(H. P. BARKER).

YEARS ago, in one of the remoter regions of Canada, I was taken by a farmer friend, in whose hospitable home I was staying, to see what he told me would be the sight of a lifetime. A drive of about six miles brought us to a scene that was strange indeed to an Englishman's eyes. A long line of blazing trees met our gaze.

"Why!" I exclaimed, "however did this happen?"

"Oh, we set the fire going last night."

"Do you mean that you deliberately set fire to this valuable timber?"

"Valuable timber! The land is worth far more to us than the lumber, and we are clearing the land in order to build a new house upon it, and start fruit-growing."

That incident of the Canadian bush illustrated an important truth for me, a truth that concerns every one of us.

The clearing of the land was not the *end* that the farmer had in view. It was but *the means to an end*. The end he had in view was a twofold one:

- (1) A dwelling-place for himself;
- (2) The production of fruit.

Has the Lord Jesus, your blessed Saviour, *cleared the ground* in your soul? Has He delivered you from all that cumbered the soil—your sins, your doubts, your fears, your misery, your groanings? In so doing He has had a further end in view. The assurance He has given you, the peace He has put in your heart, the unutterable relief which the knowledge of His redemption work brings—all these are *the means to an end*, not the end itself.

What is the end He has in view?

(1) *A dwelling-place for Himself*. He wants to dwell in your heart (John 14. 23), to enshrine Himself in your affections, not as an honoured Guest, but as the absolute Controller of your life.

(2) *The production of fruit*. He desires to make you "fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1. 10), bringing forth fruit to His praise.

Has He gained *the end* He has in view in your case?

Keep out the Little Errors.

VENERABLE names are given as support for this practice or that doctrine, but no venerable name is sufficient authority for going aside from Holy Scripture. "To the law and the testimony," if a doctrine or a ceremony is not there, it should be nowhere for you and for me. Our sole authority is the Word of God.

But we are told that we should be tolerant, that, while we hold to the great truths, we should not be so particular as to those which *appear* to be of lesser weight. But we remember reading of how Pompey who tricked certain cities that would not admit his

troops. He said: "I don't ask you to allow my armies to be billeted upon you; but here are a few sick and wounded men, for whom I ask that you will allow them to rest among you."

When the invalids were within the walls, they opened the gates, and the inhabitants were easily subdued. Keep out the *little* errors for which sympathy is asked, or, if not, your citadel will be captured before you are aware of the attack. Stand fast in the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and let no man spoil you by philosophy and vain deceit.

“Live in Peace.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

A Word on the Carnality of Strife and Division amongst the Saints of God.

2 Corinthians 13. 11-14.

11 *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

12 *Greet one another with an holy kiss.*

13 *All the saints salute you.*

14 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

IN the year of our Lord 59 Paul wrote his first letter to the church of God at Corinth. Five years previous to the writing of that letter he had laboured without ceasing for one year and a half in the city, “teaching the Word of God amongst them.”

His work had been blessed of God, and the saints forming that assembly were the result of it; but alas, they were not consistent with the fellowship into which they had been called, and with an aching heart Paul wrote to chide them about their ways.

They were a proud and quarrelsome people, and, indeed, we should wonder why God had chosen and saved them, or why He bore with them at all, were it not that we, Christians of this twentieth century, are just as bad, or worse than they were, and yet in spite of this we are saved and preserved by the grace of God. Thank God, we know that He does not save men because of any good thing He sees in them, but because of the over-abounding grace of His own blessed heart.

These Corinthians were saved by the *one* gospel; they were called into the *one* fellowship; they were united by the *one* Spirit to the *one* glorious Head in heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ; and they were in consequence formed into *one* body. Surely such should have been of *one* mind and lived in peace with one another, but instead, there were contentions and strifes and divisions among them, and this seems to have been the Apostle’s chiefest complaint against them, for this condition of things was utterly contrary

to God’s thought for them. Yet so blinded were they in their own conceits that they imagined that these divisions and debates were a sign of their wisdom and spirituality, when in reality they did but trumpet aloud their carnality and folly; yes, in the presence of men, angels, and devils they trumpeted their carnality and folly. They gloried in their shame, for their souls were out of tune with God, and that which was discord in His ear was music in theirs. We have to talk softly about them, while the red blood of shame mantles our cheeks, for we see our own sad ways mirrored in theirs, and as was the flesh in them, so is the flesh in us.

One year later the Apostle wrote to that assembly again, and in his final salutation he expressed the mind and thought of God for them. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, *be of one mind, live in peace.*” It was the mind of God that all the saints should live in peace, and in each of the thirteen letters that bear Paul’s name the desire for it is introduced.

This will be readily understood when we see that God is *the God of peace*; six times in the New Testament He is so called; but He is not only the God of peace in Himself, He is the Author of it for others (1 Cor. 14. 33), for all who belong to Him.

Sin and Satan’s power compelled Him to come forth as *the man of war*, and in the greatness of His excellence He has overthrown them that rose up against Him, that He might deliver His redeemed from the hurtful yoke, and guide

them in His strength unto His holy habitation (Exod. 15.).

The great conflict took place upon the cross, and there God triumphed gloriously. His victory was complete, and as the "God of peace" He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13. 20).

The risen Lord came into the midst of His flock, and "PEACE" was the first word that He breathed upon them; and that word of the living Lord was henceforward to be characteristic of that gathered flock, for they were God's assembly, His circle, *to be builded together at the coming of the Holy Spirit, for an habitation of God* (Eph. 2. 22). God is the *God of love and peace*, and where love has full sway there peace will be. It will be readily admitted that God's nature should be manifested in His habitation, and because this is so those who form it are to maintain practically the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of PEACE (Eph. 4. 3).

How preposterous and wicked strife and division in the assembly appears to us when we contemplate the saints of God in this aspect. Yet through the carnality of those within it the sacred enclosure has been invaded by these things which are so utterly contrary to God; love has waned, peace has departed, and the name of God has been falsified.

Strife and contention in the churches could not originate with God, for He "is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints" (1 Cor. 14. 33). It is from the flesh that these things spring, for we read: "*From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*" (James 4. 1). The devil, the malignant and untiring enemy of God, is behind the flesh. He can work upon it; he could have no foothold amongst the saints of God apart from it.

It is not pleasant to dwell upon failure and sin, and yet we should feel these things, yea, deeply feel them, and confess them before God, for only as we do so shall we have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches (Rev. 2. 3). And while we feel the failure we learn at the same time how perfect and changeless is the grace of God. How beautifully this shines out in Paul's first letter to Corinth, and what emphasis he seems to lay upon what grace had made them, when he says: "*Ye are God's tillage, ye are God's building*" (3. 9). "*Ye are the temple of God*" (ver. 16). "*Ye are Christ's*" (ver. 23). "*Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*" (6. 19). "*Ye are bought with a price*" (ver. 20). "*Ye are the body of Christ*" (12. 27). This causeless and changeless grace was the one hope in the Apostle's heart for them: it is our hope to-day.

How it charms our hearts—for these things are true of us who believe, even as of them. What mingled feelings it produces in our souls: it makes us sorrow even to tears, because of the carnality that in us has brought forth strife and divisions in the assemblies of God; but it also makes us rejoice, even to shouting, at the grace that is unchanged by our failure, until we are like those ancient Jews who, when the foundation of their restored temple was laid, wept because of the folly that had destroyed the first, but rejoiced at the mercy that gave them a second, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people (Ezra 3. 13).

But what practical effect shall this grace have upon us? Can we be careless as to what suits our God whose habitation we are? Dare we, or shall we desire to cause or maintain strife and confusion when He has said, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God"? Are our own feelings, views, and reputations of more importance to us than His will? and shall these exhortations lie un-

heeded upon the sacred page of Scripture? God forbid! How can we who are the children of the God of peace live any longer in strife and confusion?

Be assured that no exhortation is ever given in the Word of God that may not be carried out by the saints of God in the new life by the power of the Holy Ghost; and no exhortation is ever given that has not found its living exemplification in our Lord Jesus Christ. Every thought of God as to what His children should be has been lived in this world by the Lord Jesus, and such is the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells within us, that we may reproduce that which has already been produced: the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies (2 Cor. 4. 11).

The first great necessity is the condemnation of the flesh; God has exposed its perverseness and folly, and no flesh shall glory in His presence. The cross of Christ is its condemnation: on the one hand it thought the Lord of glory worthy of that shame, and it viewed Him there in that weakness and degradation with utter contempt. On the other hand, the flesh was ended for God in righteous judgment there that we might stand in it before Him no more. The grace of God has enlightened our souls, and we have received the Spirit of God, and Christ crucified is to us the power of God and the wisdom of God, and in the presence of that cross we turn from the flesh with loathing.

“My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.”

The hatefulness of that proud and cruel flesh that is utterly indifferent to everything but its own advancement stands rebuked in the presence of the One whose love led Him even to the death of the cross. The Corinthians to some extent had reached this point in their exercises, for godly sorrow working repentance to salvation was produced within them (2 Cor. 7.), and as a consequence their vision was

cleared and the Apostle was able to direct their gaze to the Lord in glory.

The exhortations of Scripture are fulfilled by us without effort as our thoughts are upon Him, for beholding the Lord's glory, we are transformed into the same image (chap. 3. 18). And what an object is He for our contemplation, the One who was here on earth in lowliness and subjection to God, who never strove with men for His rights, who was gentle to all, so gentle that He would not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed, and who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a ransom for many. He is the same today as He was then, but now He is crowned with God's approval in the glory. It is as we contemplate Him that we shall be comforted and carry out these exhortations, and the God of love and peace shall be with us.

What a portion is this—“THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU”! “Foolish,” “weak,” “base,” and nothing in the eyes of the world we may be; it is right that we should be so, for such hath God chosen, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. But what dignity, what power, what joy, if the God of love and peace be with us; what more than this could heart, renewed by grace, desire on earth? May this be our happy lot.

There is one other matter about which watchfulness is needed: the men who cause division and strife, contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, are often looked up to as heroes and put in the place of leaders, another evidence of the carnality of themselves and those who treat them thus; we are exhorted in the Word to mark such and treat them as we would a pestilential carcase. Withdraw from them, avoid them (Rom. 16. 17; 1 Tim. 5. 6). In obedience lies the path of blessing. “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*”

 IV. Its Methods.

WILL the reader carefully peruse the two following paragraphs? They purport to refer to the same persons and incidents. But are they not utterly irreconcilable? Can the reader weave all the details given in both paragraphs into *one* coherent narrative? Let him try. To do so will clear the way for a better understanding of the methods of the Higher Criticism.

Par. 1. "A certain 'evangelical' preacher from London was away in the north some time during the winter, in order to attend some meetings of a somewhat exceptional character. He was an entire stranger to that part of the country, unknown, save by name, to all whom he met there. One morning he paid a visit to a spot of historic interest, and here, far away from home and friends, this 'evangelical' preacher might have been seen kneeling with bared head before a cross!"

Par. 2. "I met, while I was down south, a friend of mine, a gentleman in business. He was taking a few days' holiday, and joined with me in holding gospel meetings in the houses of our friends in various villages. Every morning we enjoyed a long ramble among the hills and valleys of that delightful countryside."

If these two paragraphs were found in documents that had come into the hands of the Higher Critics it is easy to imagine how they would deal with them. We should probably be treated to an effusion in something like the following style :

"The second paragraph, evidently the description of an eye-witness, is beyond all doubt of much earlier date than the first, and was probably penned in days that were long prior to the so-called Oxford Movement, with its ritualistic practices. The first paragraph appears to be from the hand of one who was unfriendly to the older 'evangelical' school, and who was desirous of showing that ritualistic devotion to the cross had made head-

way even among the preachers of that school.

"An additional proof of the earlier date of the second paragraph is the use of the somewhat antiquated phrase 'gospel meetings.' We recognize here the language of the Puritans, or at all events of those who lived in the days of the Wesleys. It was common in those times, when village chapels were few and far between, to hold such meetings in private houses.

"It is evident that the writer of paragraph 1, unless we are to charge him with wilful distortion of facts, was not careful to obtain accurate information as to the incidents which he professes to record. He writes with a special bias, and for a real knowledge of what happened we must rely upon the more trustworthy narrative of paragraph 2.

"A critical examination of the two accounts shows that the discrepancies between them make it impossible to give full credence to both. For the sake of brevity, we shall refer to paragraph 1, the story of the narrator, as 'N,' and to paragraph 2, the account given by the eye-witness, as 'E.'

"We remark first that 'N' lays the scene '*away in the north*,' while 'E' states that the incidents in question occurred '*down south*.' Here, at the outset, we have an insuperable difficulty in the way of any attempted reconciliation of the two narratives.

"Further, 'N' affirms that the person referred to was an '*evangelical preacher*' and that the purpose of his visit to the north was '*to attend some meetings*.' 'E,' on the other hand, declares that he was '*a gentleman in business*' and that he was '*taking a few days' holiday*.' 'E' accordingly omits all mention of

the season of the year, for business men do not, as a rule, take their holidays in the winter. The mention of '*winter*' by 'N' would thus show that his account contains a good deal that must be relegated to the region of myth.

"Again, in the paragraph by 'N,' the visitor is spoken of as '*an entire stranger,*' '*unknown, save by name, to ALL whom he met there.*' The paragraph by 'E,' in contrast to this, mentions the various '*friends*' in whose house the visitor held meetings. The eye-witness, himself '*a friend,*' is also said to have '*met*' the business gentleman, a statement which makes it necessary for us to entertain strong doubt as to the reliability of 'N's' statement that he was unknown to '*ALL whom he met.*'

"To indicate just one more difficulty, we have in the earlier narrative the mention of the rambles which took place '*every morning.*' This, coupled with the description of the nature of the country, stamps the account as that of a contemporary. But how can it be reconciled with the statement of 'N' that it was '*one MORNING*' that the visit to the shrine of historic interest and the act of devotion before the crucifix took place? Moreover, according to 'E,' the visitor was always accompanied by his friend, whereas 'N' represents him as taking a journey and performing an action under circumstances where he evidently would not care to be accompanied by any one of his acquaintance.

"We have, then, as an assured result arrived at by the best scholarship of the day, the fact that 'E' is the older and more trustworthy narrator, and that 'N' is a writer of considerably later date, with a bias in favour of ritualism, and that his account cannot be regarded as reliable to same degree as that of 'E.'"

* * * *

If this example of learned (!) reasoning has been given at some length, it is

that the reader may be able to judge for himself the true value of the crude inferences and deductions that are coolly published as the "assured results" of "the best scholarship of the day."

Will it surprise him to be assured that these paragraphs were written within a few days of each other, and that the absolute truth and accuracy of both can be vouched for by the writer, and by his friend, the "evangelical preacher" from London? Yet such is the case.

The many misapprehensions arise from an imperfect knowledge of the facts. And the critic, being himself in the dark as to circumstances which would exhibit the perfect harmony that exists between two apparently contradictory narratives, is often guilty of carelessness in making the most unwarrantable inferences. Thus in the above imaginary criticism it is taken for granted that a visit was paid to a "shrine" and that "an act of devotion" took place before "a crucifix." As a matter of fact, nothing of the sort is mentioned in either paragraph. It is mere inference on the part of the critic. But this is just the sort of thing that we constantly find in the writings of the Higher Critics. Assertions are made as to certain things stated by the inspired writers, whereas on examination it is frequently seen that no such statements are to be found, and that unwarrantable deductions have been made through lack of careful attention to the exact words of Scripture!

The apparent contradictions of the two paragraphs given above disappear at once in the light of a full knowledge of *all* the facts. Let the reader peruse the following account, and observe whether a single difficulty remains.

The gentleman in question is engaged in business in London. He is also a preacher of the gospel. He had a few days to spare from business at the end of December, and spent this

holiday in the north of England, meeting his friend on the way. They attended the special meetings on December 25th and 26th, and spent the rest of the time as described. The "friends" in whose houses the gospel services were held were those whose acquaintance the visitor had made at the special meetings, and to whom he had been introduced by his companion.

In the course of their morning rambles the two friends visited a certain hill where some old ruins are to be seen. The wind was blowing with terrific force, and it was no easy task to climb the steep hillside in the face of such a hurricane. The writer was content with climbing half way up, but the visitor from London persevered and at last reached the top. A cairn of stones, with an iron cross, marked the summit. Unable to maintain his footing, because of the tremendous force of the wind, the visitor crouched down on his knees behind the cairn. His cap, to save it from being blown away, had been removed. Hence his "bared head."

It only remains to be said that paragraph 1 was written at the time when the two friends were "in the north," *i.e.* in Northumberland—together. Paragraph 2 was written in Scotland a few days later, and the writer naturally spoke of Northumberland as "down south." It is south from a Scotch point of view.

In a similar way to that here described the Higher Critics have treated the various accounts of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and its accompanying events; the two narratives in Acts and Galatians of a visit paid by Paul to Jerusalem; and certain histories given in both Samuel and Chronicles.

To take a solitary instance, a mass of inferences have been drawn and conclusions arrived at with reference to the two accounts of David's sin in numbering the people and his subse-

quent purchase of the threshing-floor of Ornan for the sake of building an altar (2 Sam. 24. and 1 Chron. 21.). Various apparent contradictions are pointed out.

In Samuel, it is implied that *the Lord* moved David to number Israel. In Chronicles it is declared that *Satan* was the instigator.

In Samuel, the number of the valiant men in Israel who drew the sword is given as 800,000.

In Chronicles, "all they of Israel" are said to be 1,100,000 "that drew sword."

In Samuel, David is stated to have paid 50 shekels of silver for the threshing-floor and oxen. In Chronicles, it is affirmed that the price given for the place was 600 shekels of gold.

Here are difficulties that seem formidable indeed, and writers of the Higher Critical school have not failed to make the most of them. One of the deductions that have been made is that the "Chronicler" had an inordinate fondness for large numbers, and that he therefore constantly exaggerated, making 800,000 men into 1,100,000, and 50 shekels of silver into 600 shekels of gold. And the critics have not scrupled to suggest an unworthy motive for this supposed "exaggeration."

All such reasoning, of course, intentionally aims a blow at the inspiration of the Scriptures and reduces the inspired writer of Chronicles to the level of an imperfect copyist and wilful perverter of facts.

But how do the critics know that a full acquaintance with *all* the facts would not show (as in the case of the paragraphs given above) perfect harmony between the two accounts? Even with the limited knowledge that we possess, it has been shown again and again that the statements of Samuel and Chronicles are not so irreconcilable as at first appears. For instance, the 50 shekels of silver were paid for "the oxen and threshing-floor;" the

600 shekels of gold were paid for the "place," the whole mountain, the estate in its entirety, afterwards the site of the temple. Where, then, is the difficulty?

Again, there is no real contradiction between the statement in Samuel that the Lord moved David to number Israel and the assertion in Chronicles that Satan did so. We have a parallel case in the early chapters of Job. Satan afflicted Job with sore calamity and disease, but it was by permission of the Lord that he did so (see chaps. 1. 12; 2. 6). Speaking of the loss of his sons and of his property, Job could rightly say in his piety, "The Lord gave, and *the Lord* hath taken away," though it was at the instigation of Satan that the Sabeans fell upon his cattle, and by the power of Satan that the disaster took place that resulted in the death of his children. If the two accounts of the numbering of Israel be read in the light of what is recorded in Job 1. and 2., is not the difficulty removed?

So too with the different numbers of the fighting men in Israel. In Chronicles the number is given of *all* those who were capable of bearing arms. In Samuel only "the valiant," or, as we should say, those on active service, are enumerated. If the number of men constituting the British army, *including the reserves*, were given, the number would, of course, be greater than if only those on active service were reckoned. This may be the explanation of the additional 300,000 mentioned in Chronicles.

We see, therefore, that the difficulties which appear on the surface of these two narratives are capable of easy explanation, even with no further knowledge of facts than is afforded by the narratives themselves.

It is the same with other seemingly incompatible accounts of the same event or events. It will therefore be true wisdom on our part, instead of forming a mass of inferences, deduc-

tions, and "conclusions," to study carefully the words of Scripture, and to wait upon God, that we may learn something of profit to our souls from the very difficulties that confront us.

Turning for a moment to look by way of contrast at other records of the past, it is amusing to read the "ancient histories" penned in the days that preceded the discovery of the monuments. They are full of ludicrous mistakes. Take Rollin's well-known work as an example. In his brief "History of the Assyrians" he makes Babylon to be the capital and Nimrod the founder of the Assyrian Empire. Sardanapalus (Ashur-bani-pal) is stated to have been the last king. Sennacherib and Sargon are identified as one and the same. Belshazzar is merely another name for Nabonidus, and so on.

In Bell's edition of Rollin (published in 1826) the author's mistakes are occasionally corrected in long editorial notes. But these notes themselves make the most grotesque blunders. Pul, king of Assyria, is identified with a mythical hero-god Belus, and is said to be the "first Assyrian monarch who carried his arms westward of the Euphrates." Tiglath-pileser and "Arbaces the Mede" are regarded as identical. Nabonassar and Tiglath-pileser are both made to be sons of Pul, and Tiglath-pileser's name is explained to be a compound of Tiglath, Pul, and Assur.

All these statements and many others of a similar nature are shown by the inscriptions in the British Museum to be utterly unhistorical. If the Bible were a book of merely human authorship, it would teem with blunders of this kind. Every page would display the ignorance of the writers as to the facts of history. But while other "histories" have been proved to be full of mistakes, the accuracy of the Scriptures has been most convincingly demonstrated. Its historical statements cannot be gainsaid. Every attempt to discredit them has failed.

“Honour the Lord with thy Substance.”

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

Others will spend money freely on their own gratification, and on things of no practical use whatever, while probably within range of their own observation, if they had any eyes, some of the Lord's poor are lacking bread. Of such we may well ask John's question, "How dwelleth the love of God in him?"

(1 John 3. 17). Nor let the poor think that they are excluded from this privilege of honouring the Lord with their substance. What are the brightest examples of this "honouring the Lord" in Scripture? Do we not read of a widow who had but a handful of meal and a cruse of oil, whose heart was so under the power of Jehovah's name that she gave her all to His servant? Do we not read of another, whose whole fortune consisted of "two mites which make a farthing," who "cast in all that she had, even all her living," into the treasury of Jehovah's house? Do we not read of another, whose "substance" was but a box of ointment, that "she hath done what she could"? *The greatest gifts, in God's account, are the gifts of the poor.*

On Service.

IF we are devoted to the Lord we shall count it a privilege to speak of Him as we have opportunity, and it is surprising how great is the sphere of individual service. We think it a considerable matter to get a few hundreds of men and women to attend a gospel preaching, but if one hundred Christians were each to speak to a soul a day for one year, *more than thirty-six thousand persons would hear the gospel.* This in no wise underrates the importance of public preaching, but it gives some idea of the large possibilities of individual work.

But if we speak for Him, it is as being in His stead. Our Lord Jesus lays

His pierced hand upon our shoulders, and He says, "As My Father hath sent Me into the world, even so send I you." This position of ours is one of great responsibility; we shall need much grace to fill it. We must behave ourselves, for we bear a great name. We must not disgrace the holy name of Jesus. It was shameful of Sheridan, when he was picked up in the gutter, to give his name to the constable as "*Wilberforce.*" What a cruel wrong to our Lord Jesus when we, who bear His name, act proudly or harshly or after an evil manner. May God help us to be worthy of the embassy on which we are sent.

A Word of Exhortation.

Cherish one another as members one of another, let united prayer be your very life-breath. Ask, seek, knock, wait!

but ask repeatedly, seek diligently, knock persistently, wait patiently, and let *everything* be done in true affection and in the Spirit. (T.O.)

Correspondence.

Righteousness (Continued from page 185).

REPLY BY THE EDITORS.

The question put is as to whether it would be correct to state that whilst the believer's *sins* are put away by the blood of Christ, yet what constitutes his positive righteousness before God is the perfect *life* of the Lord Jesus, as described for us in the four Gospels; it being further stated that this last is not a mere legal righteousness, in that the perfection of the Lord's earthly life far transcended obedience to the letter of the law. Perfection was found in Him, and *this*, it is said, not merely His obedience to the law, constitutes the believer's righteousness.

The Scope of our Reply.

In reply, we affirm, without hesitation, that not only is there no scriptural basis for the suggestion put forward by our questioner, but also that where the idea in question is held the true understanding of the wonderful character of the place and blessing of believers to-day is greatly obscured; and because this is so, we shall not confine ourselves in these notes to merely refuting error, but will endeavour, as the Lord may enable us, to unfold the truth itself.

In order to this end we propose first to examine somewhat carefully what is exactly the teaching of Scripture as to righteousness in relation to the believer's standing before God; and, secondly, to examine a little what lies behind all that, namely the new position and state of the believer as linked with Christ in resurrection—in a word as "in Christ." In this issue we shall confine ourselves to the consideration of the question of righteousness. And let us say here, that as the subject is one commonly beclouded with theological mists on every side, our consideration of it will require at least a brief reference to many passages of Scripture, and the pointing out of certain distinctions which some might be inclined to pass by as only of academic interest. But it is not so indeed: some clear understanding of God's justifying grace is fundamental to the enjoyment of His unclouded favour, and therefore it is with deep conviction of the profitableness of the inquiry to us each and all that we invite the reader's careful and patient consideration of the remarks following.

The doctrine of imputed righteousness is a doctrine of Scripture. Righteousness is treated of in a number of passages as "imputed," and to each of these we shall refer. But what *is* this righteousness that is imputed? That is our question. Many earnest

Christians would reply, "The righteousness of Christ," using the term in just the sense of the doctrine mentioned by our correspondent; but though He is "the righteous One" (1 John 2. 1) who ever "loved righteousness and hated iniquity," that exact expression is never found in Scripture. Nor, as will be shown on consideration of the passages which treat of righteousness in relation to the believer, is there anywhere foundation for such a thought, a thought, moreover, which, as we shall see, obscures the whole truth of the believer's new place in Christ risen. Others, again, who have noticed that what Scripture does speak of over and over again is "the righteousness of God," would reply that *that* is the righteousness which is imputed to us: but our study of the passages which speak of the righteousness of God will evidence what must be most carefully noticed, namely that this is *never said to be imputed*.

Two Words used.

Two words used for righteousness need clear distinction: *dikaiosunē* and *dikaiōma*. *Dikaiosunē* is, as a comparison of the passages in which it occurs will show, rather the state or quality of being righteous, whilst *dikaiōma* contemplates an accomplished act of righteousness or a series of such accomplished acts viewed as one complete whole. The latter word occurs but seldom (only ten times in all), and in substantiation it will be well to note each of these.

ROMANS 1. 32: "Who knowing the judgment [*dikaiōma*] of God:" here is in view the one great act of righteous retribution which is yet future. It is God's righteousness, not looked at abstractly as a quality in Himself (which would be *dikaiosunē*), but in its concrete expression in respect of the judgment of the ungodly.

ROMANS 2. 26: "If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness [*dikaiōma*] of the law," *i.e.* perform the righteous acts it requires; here a series of accomplished acts is in view.

ROMANS 5. 16: "The free gift is of many offences unto justification" (*dikaiōma*). Here justification is looked at in its full accomplished result as in contrast with that in which the offence finally and fully issues, *viz.* condemnation.

ROMANS 5. 18: In the A.V. the verse runs "by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men," and this rendering has favoured the idea that it is the perfectly righteous life of the Lord Jesus which is spoken of here.

But the support this verse affords to the doctrine is only apparent, for correctly translated it reads, "Even so by one righteousness (*dikaiōma*) the free gift came upon all men," and what is thus clearly in contemplation is the one act of accomplished righteousness on the basis of which the free gift comes upon all men. It is the bearing on all men of the one righteousness accomplished when Christ went into death in atonement.

ROMANS 8. 4: "That the righteousness [*dikaiōma*] of the law might be fulfilled in us." Here what is spoken of is "the righteous requirement of the law" (N.T.)—the things, the acts, the law righteously requires of the creature.

HEBREWS 9. 1: "Ordinances [*dikaiōma*] of divine service;" and Hebrews 9. 10, "carnal ordinances" (*dikaiōma*). What is in view here is quite evidently a series of acts, the acts required under the ceremonial law.

LUKE 1. 6: "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances [*dikaiōma*] of the Lord blameless:" the sense is here the same as in Hebrews 9. just quoted.

REVELATION 15. 4: "For Thy judgments [*dikaiōma*] are made manifest," or, as the New Translation, "Thy righteousnesses are manifest." The context makes clear that these are God's righteous acts in His governmental ways.

REVELATION 19. 8: "The righteousnesses of saints" (N.T.). This, too, is *dikaiōma*, and again a series of accomplished acts is in view, the things *done* by saints.

These are all the occurrences of the word *dikaiōma*, and well establish its meaning.

But *dikaiosunē* (which occurs ninety-four times) is not an accomplished act of righteousness, nor a series of accomplished acts, but rather the quality of being righteous; thus where *dikaiosunē* is imputed to a man, it is not a series of righteous acts imputed to him, but, as nearly as we can express it, the quality of being righteous; that is to say, in effect, he is reckoned as being a righteous person, even although in actual practice he has not been such.

It will be gain in consideration of our subject if the simple distinction between these two words be kept in mind, for in every passage to which we shall have to refer in writing upon "the righteousness of God" and "righteousness" imputed to the believer it is *dikaiosunē* which is treated of.

The Righteousness of God—What is it?

It is important, as we have remarked, to note that the righteousness of God is never spoken of as imputed. It is *God's* righteousness, and remains *God's* righteousness, though in its effects, as we shall show, His righteousness, that is to say that attribute or quality of His being which issues in His righteous acting on our behalf, brings in justification for the be-

liever, for His righteousness requires that He act towards those for whom Christ died as He has acted towards the One who was their Substitute, now raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. In order to show the uniformity of thought through all the passage which speak of the righteousness of God, let us briefly examine each of these.

ROMANS 1. 17: "Therein [*in the gospel*] is the righteousness of God revealed from [or on the principle of] faith to faith." God's righteousness, righteousness leading to activity which is on the side of the believer and not against him, is evidenced in the gospel. It is "to faith" that it is revealed, and it is "on the principle of faith" that it becomes available in its justifying effects to the believer.

The passage states that the righteousness of God is revealed in the *gospel*. What, then, is the *gospel*? The earlier part of the chapter declares it to be God's glad tidings concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. That *gospel* reveals how the Son of God came into the sinner's place: He was "delivered for our offences;" the righteous judgment of God fell on Him as thus in the sinner's place, and having met there all God's righteous claims, and borne the judgment due to our sins, He has been raised again from the dead. This the *gospel* declares: and His having thus been raised is proof that perfect satisfaction has been rendered to God in respect of the offences of those for whom Christ died.

The *gospel* presents Christ, then, as raised in a representative character, *i.e.* as representing us. He went into death in our place, as our Representative; and as our Representative God has brought Him out of it again by resurrection into the sunshine of His perfect favour. And if He who is our Representative has been thus raised, it must be "for our justification" (Rom. 4. 25), for the righteousness of God must lead to His acting towards those represented as He has acted towards their Representative. In this way, then, the righteousness of God is revealed in the *gospel*: righteousness evidenced first of all in the blood (Rom. 3. 25) which is the witness that Christ was delivered to death for our offences; righteousness seen in God raising Him again from the dead, the work of atonement being completed; and righteousness necessarily leading also to His accounting those for whom Christ died as clear of any possible charge of guilt as is the risen Christ Himself. It is this last aspect of righteousness which is particularly in view in the passage under consideration: God's justifying righteousness revealed on the principle of faith to faith. True, this is all grace, but at the same time it is righteousness. God's righteousness thus is on our side, and whilst as yet we have not touched on the question of what the righteousness is which is imputed to the believer, we have nevertheless seen clearly that God's righteousness is on his behalf, and that its bearing and effect is to place him before Him-

self in exactly the same place as that occupied by the One who took his place in judgment, but is now in cloudless acceptance and favour with God in resurrection life.

ROMANS 3. 5: "*If our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God.*" This needs little comment, being, from the context, quite clearly God's own righteousness.

ROMANS 3. 21: "*Now the righteousness of God without law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*" This, as the chapter shows, is in contrast with man's righteousness—proved to be utterly absent. That righteousness is on the behalf of the believer "without law," that is to say without any demand being made on him at all: it is a totally different principle from that of law, and yet both the law and the prophets bare witness to it.

ROMANS 3. 22: But it is more fully unfolded in the next verse: "*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*" God's righteousness, that is to say that attribute or quality of His being which leads to the justifying activity which is revealed in the gospel, is "towards all": its benefits are available for all; but on one principle, namely "by faith of Jesus Christ." But whilst it is "towards all" its effects are not "upon all:" its effects reach only to "all them that believe." Notice carefully here that it is God's own righteousness which in its justifying effects reaches to all that believe, so that in result they are justified or accounted righteous.

It is to later verses that we must look for the unfolding of this result, but we mention it here so as to keep clear of the idea of the righteousness of God being put as a garment upon the believer, as though the righteousness of Deity became *in itself* a man's righteousness. The conception of righteousness as a garment is just enough: so in Isaiah 61. 10, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Such a figure sets forth how God views the believer, how he appears as under His eye and before His mind; but whilst God's righteousness provides such a garment, it is not *in itself* that garment. The simple force of the word "upon" is that the effects of God's righteousness as revealed in the gospel come only upon "them that believe." Thus when mercy is spoken of as "upon" believers (Gal. 6. 16), it is quite clearly the effects which are spoken of: nothing else could possibly be meant. The quality of mercy is in God, and so remains; the blessed effects reach out to believers.

ROMANS 3. 25: "*Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a propitiation (or mercy seat), through faith, in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*" This continuation of the unfolding of "the righteousness of God" makes it still more clear that

it is God's own righteousness. The blood of Christ is the evidence that God was righteous when, in view of the atonement yet to be made, He passed over sins in days gone by.

ROMANS 3. 26: "*To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*" This includes what we have seen in the previous verse as to the righteous basis for blessing being found in the blood; but it passes beyond it to bring in explicitly the justifying righteousness of God declared in the living Christ (WHOM God hath set forth, etc.). Here, as in a more veiled way in the previous verse, it is not only that He is righteous *in* blessing the believing sinner, but also that righteousness necessarily *leads* to His doing so. It is not exactly said that God has set forth the *blood* as the declaration of His righteousness, but rather that He has set forth Christ Himself as that declaration—Christ presented in this especial way as a mercy-seat in virtue of His blood and available through faith. In the blood we see the righteousness of God in dealing with sin; whilst in Christ raised from the dead we see His righteousness declared in the way He has treated the One who has rendered full satisfaction to Him in respect of sin. Both thoughts are united in what is said of Christ set forth as a mercy-seat in His blood. The truth is then carried on in the passage to what the righteousness of God does in respect of the believer: it justifies him; and this is God's righteous answer to the blood of Christ, even as is the raising of Christ Himself in perfect clearance.

ROMANS 10. 3: "*They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*" That is to say, that they were ignorant of this righteousness of God's which is on the side of the believer and which in effect would bring justification. They clung to their own righteousness and refused to submit to that which was presented in the gospel. Clearly here all is exactly in line with the earlier chapters of Romans.

2 CORINTHIANS 5. 21: "*He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" Here we have the exact counterpart in the saints of that which God already has done in relation to Christ in raising Him and giving Him glory. God's righteousness is revealed and declared before the universe in that which the saints are made "in Him." In full result we shall be displayed in life in all the full meaning of the words "in Christ." We shall be glorified together with Him and in His own place before the Father. This will be the declaration of the righteousness of God. We ourselves, in respect of our publicly manifested state in that day, will be the righteousness of God in Him—its full declaration.

JAMES 1. 20: "*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*" Still the thought is of God's own righteousness, though presented here in its bearing on the practical life of the believer. To rightly understand the passage, the context must carefully be observed. They were not to ascribe to God any temptation to evil: *that* came from within. All that was good here came from *God*. They had at the outset come into blessing by the will of God (not the will of man, which is what is sought to be made effective in wrath). According to that will they had been begotten by the Word of Truth with its revelation of all that is according to God, and in that Word lay practical deliverance, hence every man was to be "swift to *hear*, slow to speak, slow to wrath," for good practically is not in what proceeds from *man*, but in that which comes from God, that which reaches man as a result of His own unvarying perfection, His consistency with Himself, which is really what His righteousness is.

2 PETER 1. 1: "*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" The alternative reading is "through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ," but the sense is not altered. In any case it is righteousness of God. Again, the thought is that the blessing, the precious faith received, is through the righteousness of God, His faithfulness to the promises and His righteous answer to all that which was accomplished at the cross.

We have now traced all the scriptures which speak of the righteousness of God saving one, Matthew 6. 31: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*" The passage gives no explanation of what His righteousness is. For this we must look to other passages, and all of these we have examined in detail, so as to clearly evidence what is the meaning of the expression.

There are two other passages where the

words "of God" occur in connection with the word righteousness, but they do not occur in the sense of "the righteousness of God." The first is 1 Corinthians 1. 30: "*Who [Christ] of God [or "from God," N.T.] is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" That is to say, God is the source of the righteousness of which the verse speaks, and it reaches us mediately through Christ. Christ is thus to us the mediate source of this righteousness. He is made unto us righteousness; *how*, we shall consider later. But just while dwelling on this verse let us remark, in passing, that it affords no support to the idea that Christ's living obedience here is our righteousness. It is not Christ's *personal* righteousness in that sense, else we should have to conceive of His personal wisdom becoming ours, His personal sanctification, and even His personal redemption; thoughts which will be readily seen to be inadmissible. Moreover, the word is *dikaïosunē*, not *dikaïōma*, as though it referred to accomplished acts of righteousness in His life here.

The other passage is Philippians 3. 9: "*Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" Here, as we have said, it is not the righteousness of God, *i.e.* not His *own* righteousness, but it is quite clearly righteousness which has God as its source in contrast to anything that the believer could himself produce; it is not on the principle of law, but reaches the believer on the principle of faith, the faith of Christ, who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10.). What this righteousness is we have yet to consider.

The question of "Imputed Righteousness" will be dealt with in our next issue, God willing.

(To be continued.)

The Manner of our Acceptance.

The highest evidence of God and His truth is in the acceptance which He accords to the soul which is received by Him on the ground of atonement. The accepted soul has the sense that while God receives He does so in all the strength of His righteousness, so that the reception is not only in grace but

is established in the holiness of His nature. God has, in atonement, righteous and holy ground for accepting the sinner, and thus is the acceptance known to be divine, and its perpetuity and perfection is guaranteed, while the soul that knows this acceptance has a sense of the holiness of Him who accepts.

The dearer Christ is, the dearer souls will be; and His people represent Him for hearts true to Him.

If God cannot walk with the world, my walking with Him requires as its first necessity separation from it.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 2. 20–28.

Verse 20.

YE have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things, intuitively. There are two words in the original translated “know” in English, but the knowledge in each case is of a different kind.

γινώσκω = to know by observation, or experience, to learn to know; as, I know him; *je le connais*.

εἰδέναι = to know by reflection, to see with the mind's eye from within, not by knowledge derived from others (*Grimm*); as, I know it; *je le sais*.

This latter word is used here. And the unction that we have received from Him abides in us, and we need no other teacher, but that same unction teaches us as to all things, so that we have the perception, the conscious knowledge, of them by the Spirit (*cf.* Phil. 1. 9).

No one could say “I know all things,” γινώσκω; for even “if any one think he knows anything,” εἰδέναι, “he knows nothing yet as he ought to know it,” γινώσκω (1 Cor. 8. 2).

Verse 21.

He does not write to them because they do not know the truth, but because they do know it instinctively, and that no lie is of the truth. They might not be able to expose casuistry in a logical way; but a true soul knows that casuistry is not truth; and whatever he may not know, as not having learnt it, this he knows by the Spirit, that no lie is of the truth.

Verse 22.

And Christ is the test for all truth. He is a liar who denies that Jesus, the Man in lowly guise below, is the true Messiah of the Jews. He is antichrist who denies the revelation of the grace of God in Him.

Verse 23.

For whoever denies the Son has not got the Father either; and conversely, he who confesses the Son has the Father also.

Verse 24.

Let, then, the anointing abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. Any pretended advance upon it will lead you astray. The revelation of God in Jesus is perfect and complete. If that abide in you, ye shall abide in the full tide of divine grace.

Verse 25.

And whatever promises the world may offer you, as the serpent deceived Eve, “this is the promise which *He* has promised us, life eternal.” The world does not even promise that.

Verse 26.

There are those who would lead them astray; but his confidence in respect of them is in the power of God—and as the unction they had received would teach them all things, and was true and no lie, so, he says, “ye shall abide in Him.” And thus the victory was assured to them in the truth against all the power of the enemy in deception. “Magna est veritas et praevalerebit.”

After the parenthesis of the previous verses (13–27), the Apostle now comes to the experimental characteristics of the divine life in us, viz. righteousness (chap. 3.) and love (chap. 4.).

Verse 28.

Here we see the solicitude with which he watches over the ministry committed to his charge—a spirit which characterizes every faithful servant, even as the husbandman watches over the seed he has sown, that he may not be disappointed in the joy of harvest. This same spirit is witnessed in many instances, but in none so notably as in the Lord Himself, who waits to see of the travail of His soul in the day when He will not be ashamed to own as brethren the “many sons” He is bringing to glory (Heb. 2. 10). And as we see it in the great Sower of the seed (Luke 8. 15), so also is it reproduced in His chosen servants—in all who are faithful to the trust imposed in them (*cf.* Phil. 2. 16; 1 Thess. 3. 8, *et al.*).

Verse 29.

“ If ye know (consciously, within yourselves, *εἰδότε*) that He is righteous, ye know (objectively, as by testimony from without, *γινώσκετε*) that every one that practises righteousness is begotten of Him, and is in that state ” (*γεγέννηται*, perfect tense). This is the first experimental proof of the existence of the divine life in the soul—that such an one is begotten, or born of God.

This expression, “ begotten of God,” is characteristic of John’s writings. Expressions kindred to it are found elsewhere (*cf.* 1 Cor. 4. 15 ; James 1. 18 ; 1 Peter 1. 3, 23 ; 2 Peter 1. 4), but while there is one underlying idea common to all, John dwells upon it in a manner peculiar to himself. Nine times we find the expression in his writings, viz. John 1. 13 ; 1 John 2. 29 ; 3, 9 (*bis*) ; 4. 7 ; 5. 1, 4, 18 (*bis*) ; and as it is his manner to trace everything to its source, and find therein its essential nature, whatever its subsequent developments, so, as to the life revealed to us in the Son, that life which we now possess through faith in Him, in the very nature and expression of it, we have it as being “ begotten of God ; ” it is essentially divine. This is a deeply important truth, and worthy of the profoundest and most reverent attention ; for, though it is revealed to us in a Man, nevertheless it separates us at once from what is merely human, in our Adamic state, and places us in the category of “ children of God,” as begotten anew of Him, in the truth of His own divine nature, as manifested in His Son Jesus Christ. Whatever the purposes of God as to His people from the beginning, or whatever His actual dealings with them in Old Testament times, Scripture never speaks of them as begotten of God ; they are not ranked as His children. Children of Israel, “ b’nay Israel,” we find repeatedly, but children, or sons of God, “ b’nay Elohim,” is a term confined to angels, creatures of His power ; it is never used of men as begotten of His life and nature (*cf.* Gen. 6. 2, 4 ; Job 1. 6 ; 2. 1 ; Ps. 89. 6. In Exodus 4. 22, Moses says to Pharaoh, “ Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, My first-born. Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” But Israel belied their call, and the Lord disowns them as His children (Deut. 32. 5 ; Isa. 1. 2). Adamic man, with all the privileges God conferred upon him—

ha adam, Isaiah 6. 12—could not answer to the call of God as His child ; he must be “ removed far away,” to allow for the accomplishment of God’s purposes in Christ, in whom will be fulfilled the prophecy, “ Out of Egypt have I called My son ” (*cf.* Hos. 11. 1 ; Matt. 2. 15).

In a national way they can speak of Jehovah as their Father (Isa. 63. 16 ; 64. 8), in contrast to those nations who are not called by His name (Isa. 63. 19) ; but “ begotten of God,” as a term *in se*, involves too much to be predicated of any of Adam’s race as such, or to be used at all, save prophetically (Ps. 2. 7), until the coming of Jesus made it possible to announce the fact that such an One, by the miraculous conception of the Holy Spirit, was born into the world (Luke 1. 35)—that God Himself, in the truth of His own nature, was to be set forth in a Man (John 1. 18). Accordingly, its application in Scripture is coincident with the coming of His Son Jesus Christ ; and so we read, “ To as many as received Him, He gave the right to become the children of God, who were . . . born [or begotten] of God ” (John 1. 13). It is that which characterizes the life they possess from its origin ; it will characterize it throughout to the end.

Christ is not called a child of God—*τέκνον*—but a Son—*υἱός*—that is what He is personally, in the full glory of His estate. But, besides being Mary’s first-born (Luke 2. 7), four times He is called “ Firstborn ” elsewhere (*πρωτότοκος*, from *τίκτω*, to beget, whence *τέκνον*, child) : so that while, in a sense, He is begotten (Matt. 1. 20 ; Luke 1. 35), He is the One who begets, the rather : for “ so it is written : The first man Adam became a living soul ; the last Adam a quickening Spirit ” (1 Cor. 15. 45). It is thus that He puts His stamp on the whole order that He introduces.

1. He is “ Firstborn ” of all creation, because He is creator of it all, and it all takes after Him (Col. 1. 15).

2. He is “ Firstborn ” from among the dead, and so He imprints His mould on those who share with Him therein (Col. 1. 18 ; 1 Cor. 15. 48, 49).

3. He is “ Firstborn ” among many brethren, whom He is not ashamed to own as such in glory (Rom. 8. 29 ; Heb. 2. 12), and,

4. He is “ Firstborn ” as He comes again

into the world, to light it up with the splendour of His throne (Heb. 1. 9, Ps. 89 27)

The characteristics of him who is "begotten of God" are set forth as follows:

1. He practises righteousness. This is the leading feature of the new life. It marks at once a true work of God in the soul (chap. 2. 29). This positively; then negatively:

2. He does not practise sin, because God's seed abides in him, exercising its controlling influence over his whole being, and,

3. He cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God (chap. 3 9).

4. He loves, *i. e.* he no longer makes self the central object of his life (chap. 4 7)

5. He believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah (chap. 5 1). This is the simplest character of Jewish faith, and while as "receiving Him" he is ranked thereby among the children of God (John 1. 12), and he loves all the members of the same family, also.

6. He overcomes the world, he is superior to it, in all the principles that characterize it, as he believes that Jesus is the Son of God (chap. 5 4, 5) This is the highest character of Christian faith, and puts the believer in direct relationship with God Himself, the Father, and with the incorruptibility of the divine nature, as manifested in Jesus.

7. He does not sin, *i. e.* sin is no longer the natural outflow of a corrupt nature from which he is now delivered, but he keeps himself in the power of a life which is divine and incorruptible (*cf.* Luke 4. 1-13, John 14 30), so that the wicked one does not even touch him (chap. 5. 18).

Such is the picture of the child of God, as it sets forth the life of God in him—that life from which the natural man is alienated (Eph 4 18)—the life as shown in Jesus, that belongs to the family of God abidingly. That Christians fail actually in the practice of these things is nothing to the point. The Apostle is not here dealing with the conduct of Christians, but with the life which regulates the conception of Christian conduct. Man's failure, or his shortcoming, does not enter here. That is not

the question, but the nature of that life which has its spring in God Himself. It is of great importance to understand this, because oftentimes the divine ideal is lowered in the mind, however unintentionally, to what is merely human, and the notion of righteousness "according to God," not being apprehended objectively, cannot, therefore, consciously affect the soul, and so, for all practical purposes, the truth is lost, the Christian standard is debased, and the whole course of conduct suffers thereby.

The "new birth" (John 3.) refers to what is set forth prophetically in Ezekiel 36. That scripture points, not to the then state of the people, but to a "new" state in a coming day, and to this the Lord refers when He tells Nicodemus, "Ye must be born anew."

Peter, addressing the elect remnant of Christian Jews, speaks of them as "new-born" by the gospel of the resurrection. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us anew (*ἀναγεννησας*, same word as in verse 23) to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1 3) This could not be their state in Old Testament times. This "new birth" could not be predicated of them then.

James, speaking to the twelve tribes from a national point of view, does not use the same term. In chapter 1. 18 he uses another, entirely different word, which means to bring forth, or produce, as we find it in verse 15, "Sin bringeth forth, or produces death"

In sum, in whatever way the dealings of God with the Old Testament saints be defined, the use of the terms "new birth" and "children of God" is confined in Scripture to saints in New Testament times.

It is interesting to notice the different ways in which the communication of life is dealt with by Paul and by John. The former, occupied in his ministry with the heavenly counsels and purposes of God, looks forward to the dignity and height of the Christian calling in sonship (*cf.* Rom 8 16, 17 29, Eph 1 5, *et al*), the latter traces the nature of Christian life back to its source. Hence the characteristic word with Paul is "son," with John it is "child."

"David."

(JAMES BOYD).

"Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions" (Ps. 132.).

REMEMBER David and His dire afflictions !
 God shall remember—let not men forget
 The greater David, and the contradictions
 With which His foes His weary way beset ;
 The malice merciless, the maledictions,
 The rude, unreasonableness, which met
 Upon His head devoted undefended,
 With not a crumb of true compassion blended.

Shall you—shall I—His blood-redeemed, forget
 Him ?

Shall time His memory from our hearts erase,
 Where few are found to reverence or regret Him,
 Or call to mind His sorrow-furrowed face ;
 Or meditate upon the griefs which met Him
 In the sin-bearer's dread storm-beaten place ;
 Or what they owe the sorrows which He suffered
 When for our sinful souls His soul He offered ?

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Lord of the heavens, Sovereign, Son for ever !
 Lord of the earth, Creator, Increate !
 Come in the likeness of our flesh, but never
 Tarnished by taint of sin, inviolate.
 Come to destroy the power of death, and sever
 Man from its terror, in His mercy great.
 O let us kneel before Him ! let us own Him
 King of our hearts, and on that throne enthroned
 Him.

King, for He is a King ! His birth predicted
 By pen of prophet and by heavenly herald,
 The grace and glory of His reign depicted,
 Right from the first beginning of the world ;
 Kingdom, dominion vast, and unrestricted
 By boundaries of earth, where flags unfurled
 Wave from the battlements of every nation,
 Marking the limits of their proud location.

This, circumscribing in its vast embraces,
 And in the glory of its wondrous years,
 Not only everything in earthly places
 But to the limits of celestial spheres,
 Beings angelic, with the tribes and races,
 Heights of felicity and vales of tears,
 Come, let us worship, at His footstool falling,
 Held in the greatness of His grace enthralling !

.

Gabriel, sent unto the virgin daughter
 Of David's royal line, foretells a Son ;
 And the obedience which grace had taught her,
 Sends back the answer, Let His will be done.
 God, such a message as the angel brought her,
 Sent to no other soul beneath the sun.
 Blest among women was the virgin lowly.
 Son of the Highest was her Firstborn holy.

Far from the east the wise to worship, bringing
 Myrrh, and frankincense, and their gifts of
 gold,
 Come to set every ear in Jewry ringing,
 Racked or enraptured with the tale they told.

From the deep blue the royal star was flinging
 Light over water, desert, waste, and wold ;
 Light to direct them to the Temple holy,
 There with the carpenter in cottage lowly.

Wake up the echoes with your acclamations,
 O world of men, your Maker draweth near ;
 Cry out aloud among the living nations,
 Let every soul of man the tidings hear !
 Rend the blue welkin with your exultations,
 Rouse the lone valleys and the deserts drear ;
 Let every corner of the wide creation
 Hear of the Saviour, and of God's salvation.

Bid Bethlehem, the house of bread, confess Him ;
 Let the broad ways with loud hosannahs ring ;
 Proud let her ancient walls be to possess Him ;
 Wide the glad gates before His presence fling ;
 Old men and young, your voices raise and bless
 Him,
 The Root of David hail, the Christ, the King !
 Remind them that Messiah must be born there.
 Woe to the scoffer who is heard to scorn there !

Zion, acknowledge with a welcome glorious
 The power that plucked thee from the Jebusite,
 And made thy name with heavenly grace notori-
 ous,
 And clothed thy battlements with glory bright.
 Fair in prophetic vision, and victorious
 In royal splendour and in kingly might ;
 Salute that might in the Messiah vested,
 Which soon shall to thine eyes be manifested.

.

Cold the reception that the world's Creator
 Met in His mission of immortal love,
 When in God's mercy, as the Mediator,
 Sought He the heart of fallen man to move.
 On earth none lower, none in heaven greater,
 Not even He who fills the throne above ;
 Yet in a servant's fashion we behold Him.
 Matchless the mysteries which thus unfold Him.

Wisdom incarnate, yet in wisdom growing ;
 In manger perfect as in man's estate ;
 In knowledge limited, yet all things knowing ;
 Omnipotent, yet found in weakness great ;
 Feeling what want was, and yet bread bestowing,
 The hungry heart of man to satiate ;
 Highest, yet lowest in humiliation ;
 Master, yet Servant—God in incarnation !

As one, when born in friendless land forsaken,
 Where frozen wildernesses meet the sight ;
 And where, on bare and barren wastes, awaken
 Thoughts on the threshold of primeval night,
 Must, ere such crude conceptions shape have
 taken,
 Feel the sharp winter mercilessly smite :
 To such a world, in moral likeness, entered
 The One in whom the hopes of men were centred.

Angels, not men, the advent celebrated
 Into creation of the Increate ;
 And on the hitherto Unseen glad sated
 Then holy eyes in admiration great ,
 While their sweet voices, as they contemplated
 Almighty God come down to man's estate,
 Woke up the midnight with their marvellous
 story,
 Proclaiming peace on earth, and highest glory.

But man, to whom this favour is attested,
 And for whose sake this holy Child is born,
 Is the sole creature yet uninterested,
 Blind to the bliss of that majestic morn.
 The grace that thus to him is manifested
 He welcomes with indifference or scorn,
 Except where Herod, Idumean plotter
 Feels his throne murderous beneath him totter

. . . .

Against Him bolt and bar the princely palace,
 Nor favour find Him at the wayside inn ,
 Impress Him cruelly, with conscience callous,
 That want is but a synonym for sin ;
 Press to His infant lips the bitter chalice
 Of man's malevolence ; let Him begin
 Against infernal hosts the furious battle,
 An Outcast cradled where they feed the cattle.

This will impress Him with the world's remotion
 From Him who made it, spite of its veneer ;
 Thus, but the spray of that infernal ocean
 Full of the fury of the nether sphere.
 What will His piety and prime devotion
 Profit Him guided by those scenes of fear ?
 Shall they not fail Him in the hour of trial,
 Meeting reproach, betrayal, and denial ?

. . . .

Him ye knew not, but had ye wished to know
 Him,
 Or had ye pondered the prophetic Word,
 Or had ye longed to see Him, and to show Him
 How ye could welcome David's Son and Lord ;
 Better ye would have known how to bestow Him,
 And Him ye would have welcomed and adored
 But governed by your thoughts, corrupt and
 carnal,
 Ye cast away the wheat and dined on darnel.

Self, and not God, yea, guilty self, asserting
 Its independence and its wicked will,
 Creature responsibility perverting,
 Would Him who righteousness regarded kill ;
 Him who to God pre eminent adverting
 Would all His pleasure faithfully fulfil :
 Come in His Father's name, Him glorifying,
 Where man himself was daily deifying

Yet swift no seraph from the spheres supernal,
 Roused into wrath at the disloyal sight,
 Breaks forth with thunders of the dread Eternal,
 Earth and inhabitant servile to smite
 Could not Omniscience from His seat discern all
 Creature conceit, contention, spleen, and spite

Meted to Him in measure overflowing,
 Who was to man the living Father showing ?

Wicked the way they met the holy Saviour,
 Wicked the world He came in grace to save ;
 There the full torrent of our base behaviour
 Hurl'd o'er His head the overwhelming wave.
 O say, what love was that that thus would brave
 your
 Malice, O men, in spite of cross and grave ?
 And meeting every evil to recover
 Your souls from death and hell—O what a
 Lover !

. . . .

Blind tho' the eye be to His moral glory,
 Hard tho' the heart be set against such love,
 Dull tho' the ear be to His wondrous story,
 Deaf to a message that the dead might move ;
 Hostile the world be, now grown old and hoary,
 Scorning the light come from the courts above ;
 High in the heavens is One whose approbation
 Does more than balance human condemnation.

Not His own will, but His who sent Him,
 doing ;
 Not His own glory seeking here below ;
 Not a path chosen by Himself pursuing—
 How to be subject monarchs first should know :
 Never with murmurs His way bestrewing ;
 Never complaining, tho' the end be woe ,
 Crown, yea, or cross, or curse no man can
 measure,
 Right is all if it be the Father's pleasure

. . . .

There to the will of God by Jordan bending,
 He, the Beloved and for ever blest,
 Bows to the righteousness of wrath impending,
 Ranks with the remnant who their sins con-
 fessed ;
 And thro' the dome above the Dove descending
 Finds on His person pure a place of rest.
 There too the Father owns the scorned and
 slighted
 As His own Son in whom His soul delighted.

There and there only from the world's foundation,
 Was for the first the Trine God declared ;
 There was the Spirit, there in incarnation
 The Son, and there the Father's voice was heard.
 What, on the basis of propitiation,
 Has such a Trinity for man prepared ?
 Things not revealed to man since the creation,
 Things never reached by his imagination.

. . . .

Wounded within the house of friends twice over,
 Once by the nation unto which He came,
 Now again wounded—O eternal Lover !—
 By the proud people who profess Thy name
 Thou who hast sought their guilty shame to cover,
 Thee they have covered with accursed shame.
 Better, far better to have never known Thee
 Than to desert Thee thus, and thus disown Thee.

. . . .

Ah, had ye known Him as my soul hath known
Him,
Earth ye had filled with everlasting song ;
Ye would have owned Him as the heavens do own
Him,
Glad to acknowledge ye to Him belong :
Lord in your heart of hearts ye had enthroned
Him,
Hating their fellowship who work Him wrong :
And had the world degraded and despised you,
What if the heavens above had praised and prized
you ?

Ye shall yet see Him, tho' ye have not seen Him ;
Ye shall yet know Him, tho' ye have not known:
Ye who have fancied ye could stand between Him
And the companionship of all His own :
Ye who have thought that ye could so demean
Him,
No one would give Him kingdom, crown, or
throne :
What will ye say when ye at last behold Him,
When the dread terrors of His wrath enfold Him ?

Say ! Ye shall surely nothing say whatever.
What could ye say where all your thoughts are
known ?
Then ye will understand how vain the endeavour
Conscience to clear before His righteous throne.
Dream not that ye shall manage to assever
Willing at all times ye had been to own
Lordship in Him, so highly venerated,
Had the word better been authenticated.

Once in the form of God, with glory vested,
Enzoned with light, invisible to man ;
All unapproachable, unmanifested,
Whose glorious features could no creature scan.
From thence on human woes His vision rested,
And thence He came according to the plan
Of our redemption, purposed ere the ages,
But undiscovered by the wisest sages.

Man among men, in human form and weakness,
The Servant of the Godhead here below ;
In love and lowliness, mercy and meekness,
Taking a part in all our want and woe.
Praise we the grace, the goodness, the uniqueness,
Seen in that heavenly life with love aglow.
Day on man's darkness and despair awaking ;
Light thro' our gloom in moral power breaking.

The dumb, the demon-harassed and tormented ;
The suffering sick, the leper, and the lame ;
Debtors, diseased, distressed, and discontented ;
Transgressors steeped in all their guilty shame ;
Blind, bruised, defiled, deluded, and demented,
Bound underneath the Ruler's righteous claim ;
Sore smitten by the word from Sinai spoken ;
Accursed by the command so often broken :

Such found a friendly welcome and a healing
With Him who came the lost to seek and save ;
And love, unfathomable love, revealing,
In tides of grace, wave overwhelming wave,

Demons of darkness from His presence reeling,
Their testimony to His Godhead gave ;
While man, so wondrously and well befriended,
Hate with hypocrisy and baseness blended.

This made a Man of Sorrows of the holy
And gracious Saviour, who, to seek the lost,
Came from the Father, sent in mercy solely,
To pay for man's deliverance the cost.
Yet in His path of lovingkindness lowly,
At every turning was He cursed and crossed
By unbeliever, hypocrite, and traitor,
Which made Him stranger where He was Creator.

In lone Adullam or in desert hiding ;
On mountain top, or on the troubled sea ;
Walking upon the liquid waves, or chiding
The storm-tossed waters of dark Galilee ;
Or to the hungry multitude dividing
Bread in abundance free, for grace is free :
Wherever found, the path of love pursuing,
A way to human hearts thro' hatred hewing.

On to the cross, for that must be the ending
Of such a life, by sinful man abhorred ;
A life where heavenly grace and truth were blend-
ing,
And human thought with both in disaccord.
Yet spite of all He still must be befriending
Man, tho' He reap reviling for reward.
Yea, as a ransom for the base offender,
Upon a gibbet He will life surrender.

Love and obedience to the living Father,
In the most small as in the greatest thing,
Marked Him who came in God's great love, to
gather
Souls under shelter of His heavenly wing.
Scorn He would suffer, death adventure, rather
Than He should fail in fully perfecting
What to accomplish He had undertaken,
Tho' this involved His being God-forsaken.

In the lone garden, when the gloom was stealing
Up the deep valleys and athwart the skies,
And while the breath of winter was congealing
Dews which Judea's bleeding land baptize ;
And while thro' sorrow sleep was softly sealing
From the last conflict the disciples' eyes,
Witnessed the stars, accomplishing their courses,
The warlike muster of infernal forces.

Heaven, the solitary sole spectator,
Views thro' the vapours cold the powers en-
gaged ;
Hell, in the person of her imperator,
War with the Lord of life and glory waged ;
Who, with a might than creature prowess greater,
Struck the fell forces which around Him raged.
But who that battle to describe is able,
Fought in the bosom of the darkness sable ?

Not for the first time had these met together,
Nor each at each their fearful forces hurled ;

One from the upper world, one from the nether—
 God of the universe—god of this world ;
 Nor was it now an open question whether
 This one or that One had His cause imperilled.
 One thro' His righteousness and faith was
 shielded
 One all the might of death and darkness wielded.

In miniature Pas dammim saw the battle,
 When with his spear the son of Rapha strode,
 Where the war chariots were heard to rattle,
 Cursing the armies of the living God
 Heard the youth David the perpetual prattle,
 Words, which both boastful and abusive, awed
 All the great heroes of the tribes assembled,
 Who in the presence of the monster trembled.

Saul, taller than his brethren, head and shoulder,
 The people's choice, and every inch a king,
 Beset by this huge terror is no bolder
 Than is the feeblest of his following
 The son of Jesse, the alone upholder
 Of the Lord's honour, with a stone and sling,
 Stands, the blest shadow of the great Redeemer,
 Slaying the impious and bold blasphemer.

Faint this reflection of the battle fateful,
 Foughten by David's Son and Lord, and won ;
 When for a nation and a world ungrateful,
 Crushed He the cherub in the darkness dun ;
 Perfectly paralysed the powers hateful,
 Left them to prosecute the conflict none
 Now thro' man only must the fight be foughten,
 Led by his guilty leaders fiend begotten.

Of this Golgotha was the awful sequel,
 Christ there the chalice dark was made to
 drink

What in the heavens or on earth could equal
 Depths into which His soul is seen to sink ?
 Yet not these horrors, nor the godless clique will
 Make Him one moment from the shame to
 shrink

Yea, let them gibbet Him as a transgressor :
 Death He will 'dure that He may be their Blessor

Drank He the cup in overflowing measure ;
 Drank, till He could the labour done declare ;
 Drank, that my soul as His eternal treasure,
 He might have with Him in the glory there ;
 Drank, when as Azazel the fierce displeasure
 Felt He of Justice, when our sins to bear
 He gave Himself, and thus made expiation,
 Setting us free from fear of condemnation

Who gave the Pleiades their influences ?
 Who drew the stalwarts to Adullam's cave ?
 Who on the lily's lip the dew condenses ?
 Who took the terror from the gloomy grave ?
 Who overthrew the devil's dread defences ?
 Who to the prisoner his freedom gave ?
 He, it is He who shed His blood to save us !
 He, it is He who from our sins did lave us !

Who was it slew, to save the lamb, the lion,
 Plucking the quarry from between his teeth ?
 Who gave his weapon to the great Orion,
 Tore it in triumph from its stary sheath ?
 Ere He was heard of in the halls of Zion,
 Who consternation caused in hell beneath ?
 He, it is He who is the Lord's Anointed !
 He, it is He who is the King appointed !

Heard of in heaven and on earth and under ,
 Heard in the fastnesses of death's domain ;
 Heard from the deep throat of the threating
 thunder ;

Heard in the mighty moaning of the man ;
 Heard in the rending of the rocks asunder ,
 Heard in the passion of the pouring rain ,
 Heard in Golgotha's gloom and grief surprising ;
 Heard in the ouse of the Redeemer's rising.

Youngest of all the sons of Jesse, call him !
 Set him among the mighty men we see !
 Right in the centre of the throng install him—
 Anoint him, Samuel, for this is he !
 Pour on his head the holy oil, extol him !
 Bend low before him in the dust the knee !
 Shepherd of Israel, and God elected :
 Saul is the people's choice, but God rejected

Glorious in holiness, in praises fearful !
 Glad we Thy victories, O Lord, rehearse
 Here Thou didst see us, tost and torn and tearful,
 Crushed by the captor, crying under curse.
 How hast Thou left us ? Free, unchained, and
 cheerful

Who is like Thee in all the universe ?
 Thine is the kingdom, and the might, and glory
 Who would not eulogize Thy marvellous story !

God hath as Saviour and as Prince enthroned
 Him,

Sworn, and saluted Him as King and Priest ,
 Honour and glory great have crowned and zoned
 Him—

Lord of the highest and Lord of the least !
 Soon shall have seen Him all the world and
 owned Him,

When critic carping has for ever ceased ;
 When every knee at His great name has bended,
 And the rebellion of the world is ended.

His name is excellent in every nation ;
 His is the kingdom and the crown by right.
 Fallen is Saul from his exalted station,
 When Gilboa glittered with Philistim might ;
 Fallen before the fiery foes' invasion,
 Fallen tho' panopied in armour bright ;
 Fallen, for Justice has not slept or slumbered ;
 Fallen, as one who long the ground had cumbered.

Name above every name ! God blest ! God given !
 Name that eclipses every name on earth !
 Name that is mentioned in the courts of heaven
 As the one name of everlasting worth ;
 Name that has demons into darkness driven ,
 Name sweetest unto all of heavenly birth ,

Name that the sorrows of the soul assuages ;
Name that endureth to eternal ages ;

Name that the Father hears with gladness spoken ;
Name all intelligences must revere ;
Name that to every soul conveys the token
Of heavenly mercy brought to mankind near ;
Name that celestial melody unbroken
Wafts to the sons of men in every sphere ;
Name that unfolds to us redemption's story ;
Name now almighty in the courts of glory.

Ever, O God, Thy throne is, and for ever ;
This is the sceptre of Thy kingdom, right.
Right Thou hast loved, right Thou hast done,
and never
Shall wrong be suffered in Thy holy sight.
Sharp as a two-edged sword Thy Word shall sever
Sons of the darkness from the sons of light ;
And good and evil Thou shalt disentangle,
And no more falsehood with the truth shall
wrangle.

Bowed at Thy feet be all the souls that hate
Thee ;
Crying for mercy let them cringing come.
Tongues which deceitfully calumniate Thee,
Like to the silent dead let them be dumb ;
But they who venerate and vindicate Thee,
And for Thy sake have borne opprobrium ;
Let such with Thee upon Thy throne be seated,
When as the King immortal Thou art greeted.

Break forth, ye wastes of earth, with shouts glad-
hearted,
Ye wildernesses, let your songs be heard,
Land from which Israel's glory has departed,
Ye vales and hills which have His wrath
incurred,
Ye solitudes which thro' the curse have smarted,
To which no clouds have moisture ministered,
Dry as the barren rod of mitred Aaron,
Bud, and bear fruit like it, and bloom like
Sharon !

Ye heavens—ye heights—celestial hosts, extol
Him ;
Sun, moon, and stars, and all ye sons of light ;
Clouds which Creator and Preserver call Him,
Him praise and magnify with all your might.
Earth, as your Maker and your Lord install Him,
Rejoice before Him, morning, noon, and night ;
Worship Him, oceans, rivers, brooks, and foun-
tains,
Fields, forests, valleys, heights, and deeps, and
mountains !

Kings, princes, welcome give the King eternal,
Bow low the knee before Him—kiss the Son !
Nightly your voices raise ; your praise diurnal
Shall witness that by you His will is done.
Tremble, ye rebels, and ye powers infernal
Broken in battle by Messiah won !

Firmly your fortresses have ye defended :
Howl in your hopelessness, your day is ended.

Earth from her depths cry out ; the heavens
enthunder,
Peal after peal breaks forth from ramparts
high ;
Cleave the red lightnings the expanse asunder,
And flashings fling athwart the central sky ;
The weltering ocean, joyously thereunder,
Leaps to the welkin with ecstatic cry ;
And all the lilies of the field are kissing
His feet who comes the cruel curse dismissing.

From every quarter of the wide creation
The principalities and powers appear,
To grace the triumph of His coronation,
And David's royal citadel ensphere.
Angelic legions in their adoration
Gleam like the lightning holding sword and
spear.
Princes and potentates and powers supernal
Flame in the phalanx round the King eternal.

Lift up your heads, ye ancient gates and hoary ;
Lift up your heads, ye doors that last for aye !
Fling wide your portals, that the King of glory,
Who has the right to enter, enter may !
Who is this King of glory, famed in story ?
The Lord of hosts with universal sway.
Lift up your heads, ye gates, with welcome glori-
ous,
Before Him who from battle comes victorious.

Lift up your heads, ye gates, that He may enter ;
The King of kings, and Lord of those who
reign.
Lift up your heads before the sacred Centre
Of worlds which with His plaudits ring again.
Lift up your heads, ye gates, let Zion vent her
Redundant joy in rapturous refrain.
Who is this King of glory ? Matchless story !
The Lord of Hosts : He is the King of glory.

Lift up your heads, ye gates ! In deep devotion
Bend low, ye hills about Jerusalem !
Shout, fruitful vineyards, which with sweet
emotion
The heavenly dews your purple fruit begem !
Wave, Lebanon, your green boughs like the
ocean !
The King of glory wears the diadem.
Who is this King of glory ? Great His story !
The Lord of Hosts : He is the King of glory.

Lift up your heads, ye gates ; let all creation
Unite in giving honour to the King :
Worship Him, all ye angels : adoration
His portion be from every living thing.
With spears, with banners blue, with acclama-
tion,
The King of glory royally enring.
Who is this King of glory ? This His story :—
THE LORD OF HOSTS : HE IS THE KING
OF GLORY.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 7.

The Early Ministry of the Lord in Luke.

NOTHING could be more significant of the general character of the Lord's ministry in Luke than the announcement by the Lord Himself of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 61. 1 in His presence among them (chap. 4. 16-22). It was the acceptable year of the Lord in all its precious grace to the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, and the blind; and he closes the book at that point, for the prophet goes on to speak of the deliverance by judgment upon enemies in "the day of vengeance of our God," which was not yet.

The eyes of all were fastened on Him: they bear witness of the gracious words which proceed out of His lips, who was for them but Joseph's son. Grace had indeed been poured into His lips (Ps. 45. 2), how could it but come pouring out? But it must overleap the narrow bounds of Israel, as they might have known had they rightly understood the meaning of the blessing given to the widow of Sarepta of Elijah's day, and Naaman, the Syrian leper, of Elisha's. The very idea of such a thing drew out their hatred, and they sought to cast Him down from the hill on which their city was built. The turning-point of the Gospel has come thus early. From the very outset of His ministry He is rejected by the people, only to make way for the full revelation of grace that characterizes it in Luke, all the great cases of it being found here: such as the conversion of Peter (chap. 5.), the woman that was a sinner of chapter 7., the parable of the good Samaritan (chap. 10.), the threefold parable of chapter 15., and the blessing of the thief on the cross (chap. 23.). All this is peculiar to Luke.

We have now the cases given us in Mark 1. 2, and in the same order, save for the displacement of the call of Peter, which comes into its own moral place here. These incidents are recorded as the display of the power of His word in grace over every form of the oppression of evil upon men. First Satan's power is dealt with (4. 35); then the feverish restlessness in which it is so often seen in those who are under this power (verses

38, 39); then deeper, as going to the discovery in Peter's conscience of his unfitness for the presence of the Lord, which had been manifested in the miraculous draught of fish (5. 8). Sin's defilement is represented in the leper who believed in the Lord's power to heal, but little knew His heart. The helplessness of man under sin's power is seen in the palsied man, but the power of Jehovah was present (ver. 17) in the Son of Man to go to the source of it in forgiving his sins as healing his disease. And the whole series closes with the same revelation in this connection as given in the other two Gospels of both the principles and the effects of the grace that was at work, and the absolute incompatibility of it with Judaism. The new would make a rent in the old garment, while to put the new power into the old vessels would be but to destroy them, Luke adding, with solemn moral significance, that the heart of man would prefer the old.

The two Sabbath days follow: * the sign of the Covenant must give way before the rejection of Him who was the key-stone of it and Lord of the Sabbath; nor could it be allowed to stand in the way of the outflow of divine goodness in His blessed person. After a whole night in prayer on the mountain He calls the apostles, and being come down with them to a level spot (as the word really is), where power went out of Him anew, for the multitude that sought to touch Him, to heal them all, Luke gives what answers to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew—not, as there, to bring out the character of the kingdom, but the substance of His teaching in its moral principles, here and there further enlarged, only that now instead of simply pronouncing the blessedness of certain characters produced by grace, He is able further to identify His disciples with those characters, and to pronounce woes upon those of a contrary spirit.

In the next chapter (7.) the healing of the centurion's servant is noted to

* The expression (6. 1), "the second Sabbath after the first," doubtless indicates that the Sabbath preceding the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits had passed, before which they could not have lawfully plucked the ears.

be at the instance of the Jews, but without the application to the 'reception of Gentiles and rejection of Jews as in Matthew. And now, for the first time, death itself is subject to His power in the arrest of the funeral at the gate of Nain, with the effect in the widespread rumour that a great Prophet had arisen among them and that God had visited His people (*cf.* chap. 1. 68); which accounts for what is found here only also: Simon's invitation that he might be the better able to judge if He were a prophet at all, and the revelation of God in grace to the poor woman that was a sinner, and also the precious way of that grace illustrated in her, unwelcome intruder in Simon's house as she was. But between these incidents there comes the testimony borne by the Lord to John, as the greatest of prophets born, even at the moment when his faith seemed to waver; and the rejection of both His servants' testimony and His own by the men of that generation, while wisdom's children would be marked by submitting to each in its place, justifying God in all His ways, of which the despised sinner in Simon's house became the beautiful illustration.

The moral force of the way these things are presented is very apparent, as, indeed, with everything in Luke; as, for instance, what follows in the opening of chapter 8., where is seen the sweet fruit of His grace in the little band of women devoted to Him who had met them in their deepest need, and who now ministered to Him of their substance, while He went everywhere proclaiming and evangelizing the kingdom of God.

(J.A.T.)

One of the special points in the Lord's life as set forth in MARK'S Gospel is His service and the association of His disciples with Him in it. The first thing required of a servant is to listen to the voice of his master (*cf.* Isa. 50. 4, 5, "He openeth mine ear;") "I was not

rebellious"). He takes the place of a servant in this part of Isaiah, and in Mark, as *He* had heard, He calls on those who are with Him to "hearken." Hence the parable of the sower in Mark begins "Hearken," etc., and the stress is laid on the *work*—the *sowing*. Mark tells us to "take heed *what* ye hear"—we have to read God's Word and not trash. Luke, in the same connection, tells us to "take heed *how* ye hear"—we have to take care that we receive God's Word as what it really is, that the moral effect of it may be seen in our characters. In Mark the twelve apostles are "ordained" for service, "that He might send them forth to preach"—as indeed they did, according to the last verse of the book, "the Lord working with them" (an authentication of these much-debated "last verses"). In Matthew the apostles are "called," in Luke "chosen"—and in all three instances the names follow. These three expressions "called," "ordained," "chosen" are in keeping with the respective characters of the books.

Special and exclusive mention is made in Mark of authority being given to the servants, chapter 13. 34 (to carry out the will of their Master)—"And to every man his work." In Mark alone do we find the wonderful comment, "He hath done *all* things well," and also the highest commendation ever given to a faithful heart, "She hath done what she could." In the same story of the alabaster flask Mark records those wonderful and heart-searching words as to devoted service among the poor, "Whosoever ye will, ye may *do them good*." Matthew leaves this out.

The Lord's service as presented in Mark was preaching and teaching the *gospel*—the book begins with "The beginning of the *gospel* of Jesus Christ," and there we also read: he who loses his life for Christ's sake *and the gospel's* shall save it (8. 35). In the parallel passage in Matthew and Luke the *gospel* is not referred to. (W.R.S.)

The temper of mind in which we meet the hundred and one tiny circumstances of every hour determines our happiness or unhappiness far more

than does the detail of what those circumstances are. We cannot choose the circumstances, but we can choose the temper.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

Matthew 18. 10.

M T—The angel is a representative, and this verse assures us that the Lord's little ones are represented, always in heaven, they have free access to the presence of the Father. The Lord had placed a little child in the midst of His disciples, but that little child was but a pattern of what all His own were to be. But those who take up this position, a position of dependence and humility and weakness, will be despised by the world, for they will refuse to fight for their own way and, according to the reckoning of men, suffer in consequence. But behind the scenes, and in the court where everything must be finally settled, they are in favour, and there their case is being maintained. The knowledge of this will make us fear to despise such, and instead, seek that such may be our character.

Colossians 2. 12.

A H S—This passage undoubtedly refers to baptism by water, which is to us the figure of our identification with Christ in death and burial.

Revelation 12.

A H S—The "Man Child" is the Lord Jesus Christ, He it is who has been caught up to the throne of God, and who will yet rule the nations with a rod of iron (*cf* Ps 2 9). With Him in this character are identified saints of this day—"caught up" (1 Thess 4 17), and coming again to rule 'with a rod of iron' (Rev 2 27).

The woman we believe to be Israel, and the dragon, the serpent, is Satan, who has and will yet seek to destroy Israel utterly, but will fail. Michael, who is spoken of in Daniel the prophet as the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, *i.e.* Israel, in connection with this time of tribulation (Dan 12 1), makes war upon him, this, we believe, proves that the Jews are in view in the passage.

Salvation.

A B asks:

Is confessing with the mouth in Romans 10. 10 confessing Jesus as one's own per-

*sonal Lord and Saviour amongst friends, at work etc? It is often pressed so, but if so, what about verse 13 in the same chapter? Please state also what is the meaning of *salvation in that verse in contrast with righteousness**

As to the first question, no doubt confessing with the mouth Jesus as Lord is evidenced first of all in the moment in which the soul is led for the first time to turn to Him really to own Him as Lord. This leads, of course, where there is faithfulness, to the maintenance of that confession amongst friends, at work, etc., but in the first instance the thought is, as in verse 13, calling on the name of the Lord, the soul turning to Him in the admission of His lordship, and at the same time constrained thereto by the sense that that Lord is "rich unto all that call upon Him."

In verse 9 confession and believing are united in respect of salvation, for there could be no salvation apart from righteousness. In verse 10, however, the matter is, so to say, analysed or distinguished, for righteousness is a judicial question between the soul and God, whilst salvation is deliverance from what is adverse, and is distinctively linked in Scripture with the *lordship of Christ*.

Righteousness is not salvation, but where God accounts the person righteous the way is clear for the Lord coming in in deliverance of that one. The first is a question of a person's own state as before God, whilst the second concerns rather what is external—deliverance from what is adverse: and this is realized in coming under Christ as Lord. As under His sway we enjoy in the present time deliverance "from the authority of darkness" (Col 1 13, NT), and as regards the time when wrath shall fall on those yet under "the authority of darkness," He is our Deliverer from the coming wrath (1 Thess 1 10), "We shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom 5 9).

Evil Doctrine.

X Y Z writes us as follows:

The enclosed paragraph is from the 'Answers to Correspondents' columns of a well known religious weekly. The questioner evidently seeks counsel as to whether he should

remain in or separate from a place where serious errors are taught.

"The answer makes no reference to Scripture, but places the whole matter on the ground of mere advisability or inadvisability. Do the Scriptures afford direction as to this matter? Could any 'circumstances' rightly 'constrain' a believer to remain at a place where evil doctrine was taught? The paragraph in question runs as follows:

"Speaking generally, it is better to separate oneself from a place where the errors which you mention are taught but there may be circumstances constraining you to remain. It is quite possible, for example, that by retaining your connection with your present place of worship you might be the means of preventing others from being led into error, your testimony and influence might be of great value; but if you feel, as possibly you do, that your presence in such a place is a betrayal of your Lord, then you had better go elsewhere."

We do not think any "circumstances" could rightly "constrain" a believer to remain at a place where evil doctrine was taught. The language of Scripture is explicit and clear: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ *depart* from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2. 19). It may be said, "That is general." So it is. But 2 John 7-11 deals directly with the question of evil doctrine: "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. . . . Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

From this passage we find that separation from a teacher of evil doctrine is to be the most rigid separation possible. Even bidding him God-speed—the expression of almost common courtesy—is construed of the Spirit, as it really is, as an expression of fellowship, however slight an expression, and he who in the smallest way countenances error derogatory to Christ's glory and subversive of the truth of God is partaker of the evil deeds of the one who propagates it. As to the question of helping others, the best way of helping another out of a

ditch is to get out yourself first. No one can help another who is himself disobedient to the Word of God.

Sanctification.

W.H. writes:

"Who was it our Lord was referring to when He said, 'Sanctify them'? (John 17. 17). What is meant by sanctifying them? and when were they sanctified?"

Sanctification is setting apart for holy purposes. The disciples were "not of the world," and they were practically to be separate from it—separate from it and separate to God—set on one side for holy purposes. Hence the Lord prays, "Sanctify them through Thy truth." The truth was to be the means of their being set apart. As it came home to them in the power of the Spirit they would by it be practically set apart for God. For their sakes the Lord Jesus Christ sanctified Himself: that is to say, He left this world and went to the Father, took up a new position in resurrection outside this world's order altogether, so that they might by the truth of it be sanctified. When He was here in the flesh He ever abode in communion with the Father: there was no need that He should sanctify Himself, lay down the life which He had as after the flesh, in order that He might enjoy that communion: it was ever His. But with the disciples it was otherwise: if they were to enjoy the communion of the place given them in the Father's counsels, if they were to have what the Lord desired, "My joy fulfilled in themselves," they must come into the apprehension of the new position given them in virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ, a position outside this world's order altogether, and therefore, for their sakes, the Son went into death, that in taking up life in resurrection they also might be brought into the enjoyment of the communion of the love of the Father and the Son.

It was the truth of this which, brought home to them practically, thus sanctified them, setting them on one side for holy purposes, and for the enjoyment of this communion. As to *when* they were sanctified through the truth, we doubt not that, in the full sense here contemplated, this was so when the Spirit of truth came, who should lead them into all truth.

“Thou art with me.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me” (Ps. 23. 4).

“THE valley of the shadow of death” does not mean the death-bed—it may include that, but it is more. It is the road that the pilgrims tread as they journey to the house of the Lord: their dwelling-place for ever. That road lies through the world, and the outstanding event in the annals of this world is the murder of the Lord—“*the princes of this world . . . crucified the Lord of glory.*” It is this, first and foremost, that makes it the valley of the shadow of death to those who love Him.

He, the Lord of glory, came into the world, and when it saw Him it hated Him. His feet were beautiful upon the mountains as He published the gospel of peace to men, but thorns grew in the road that He trod, thorns that tore and lacerated those blessed feet in every step that He took. And that path,

“*Uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the cross.*”

There, cast out by men, He laid down His life for the sheep. Blessed Saviour! how high above all human praise is that great love of His, that love which was tried to the uttermost and did not fail.

The hatred of the world followed Him to Golgotha, it could not be satiated except by His blood; and the servant is not greater than his Lord, and He has said to us, “*If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;*” and “*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.*” And so the disciples, those who follow the Lord, tread the valley of the shadow of death.

There are other ways, too, in which the world is known by many to be the valley of the shadow of death, for death is here. They have felt its power, its blight is upon the fairest of this earth’s prospects for them, for the grave-yard yonder holds all that is mortal of those once dearly loved and well remembered

—of a wife, a husband, a parent or a child. And the heart would be lonely, yes, with an unspeakable loneliness, were it not for *His* company. Those who tread the road of sorrow are treading the valley of the shadow of death.

But what splendid confidence is here—“*I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.*” Let the foes be never so strong and the stress never so great, there is consolation, divinely given comfort in His company.

Permit an illustration. A little fellow returning from school is set upon by bigger boys, who terrify him by their threats, so that he fears to go that way again. But his father says, “I will go with you;” and taking his son’s small hand in his strong palm, they set out together. See how the boy squares his shoulders, he seems inches taller as he walks in confidence by his father’s side. “There are the boys, your enemies, my child—are you afraid?” asks the father. “Of course not,” replies the boy, “for you are with me, father.” There is no reason now why he should fear, for his father is greater than those who had threatened him.

It is even so with the disciple of the Lord; he can say, “I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me,” and He who is with us is greater than the greatest of our foes.

He has met the foes on our behalf, He has met them in dire conflict and overthrown their power. His love to us, love that is quenchless and incomparable, led Him

“To stand betwixt us and the foe,
And to willingly die in our stead.”

He died “that through death He might destroy 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). By His dying He has gained a mighty triumph; He has trodden

"All our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down.
He Satan's power laid low;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bow'd to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew."

And having fought the fight for us, and gained the signal victory, He is alive for evermore, and He walks by our side, and His company yields confidence and comfort.

"*He hath said*, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that *we may boldly say*, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13. 5, 6).

It is our privilege to recline in our weakness upon His omnipotence, and

to draw near to His heart of tender love, and to be so conscious of His power and greatness, and of His unchanging care for us, that we shall be kept in perfect peace in the presence of every foe, whether man or the devil.

And actual death itself, that which would be so full of terror to us if we did not know Him, is shorn of all its dread appearance, for He is near, and its power is gone.

"He gilds the bed of death with light."

And we are soon to see the day "when shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Scriptures.

THE inspired writers of the Old Testament reveal the mind of God as communicated to them by Him (and we can admire the wisdom there unfolded), yet God Himself was still hidden behind the veil. If we mistake or overlook the meaning of an expression, we suffer loss, for it was GOD who *spoke*; but in the New Testament it is GOD *Himself*—meek, gentle, human—on earth in the Gospels; and in the subsequent communications of the Holy Ghost instructing with divine

light; yet still GOD—who manifests Himself.

If the light is brighter, both for our personal guidance and for the knowledge of Himself, it becomes a more serious thing to misinterpret these living communications, or to disguise by our own thoughts that which is the truth itself. For we must remember that Christ is the truth. He is the Word. It is God who speaks in the person of the Son, who while truly man, manifests also the Father.—*J. N. Darby.*

Faith.

I LAUNCH my bark upon Thy sea,
Dear Lord of all,
Knowing Thou wilt be near to me
Whate'er befall,
And that thro' all life's mystery
Naught can appal.

I launch my bark upon Thy sea,
Most blessed Lord,
For Thine own voice has called to me,
And I have heard.
Thy love-song sung so pleadingly
My soul has stirred.

I launch my bark upon Thy sea,
And now away;
My hopes and helps are all from Thee,
And rising day
Doth scatter myriad lights so free
That gem the spray.

My bark is launched upon Thy sea!
Sea, bark—both Thine!
Blow with Thy breeze, where'er it be,
Across the brine:
This is my cry—"Send me, send me,
O Lord Divine."

Some Old Testament Studies (No. 3).

(A. J. POLLOCK).

Enoch—the Translated Saint.

UP to the time of Enoch, save for the untimely death of Abel, there is no *record* in the Bible of any death save that of Adam, the father of the human race. I do not say there were no other deaths, but none other is recorded.

With the knowledge, and probably in the presence of many of his descendants, representing no less than eight generations, Adam died.

It was no ordinary death. The death sentence had been passed directly upon him by God Himself. It carried the same consequence to every one of his race. "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*" (Rom. 5. 12).

What a profound and painful impression Adam's death must have made upon his descendants! How it must have pressed home the awful gravity of sin! How it must have spoken loudly to them as to its awful and appalling consequences! With what tears and shame they must have buried out of their sight the progenitor of their race!

* * * *

Little more than half a century rolled by when Enoch was translated. His father and grandfathers up to and including Seth were alive when this wonderful translation took place. All whose names figure in Genesis 5., who could have been, and probably were, present at the death of Adam, were cognizant of Enoch's translation. That is to say, they suddenly missed him—he was gone—translated.

How the event must have set them thinking! The more they pondered over it the more important in its bearing the event would seem. The death penalty was passed upon the sinner. Enoch was a sinner, yet he "*was translated that he should not see death.*"

It is as if a peculiarly bright and arresting beam of glory had been shot into the gloom of the place where death reigned. Thus early in the history of this world God declared Himself superior to death. For Him the power of death was broken, and He declared it triumphantly and emphatically in this one notable example. But how was death broken? BY DEATH. Was not Enoch's translation an answer to the coats of skin that covered our first parents? Was it not an answer to Abel's offering—the firstlings of the flock? Nay, these were but shadows, shadowy shadows, of the substance, the glorious substance. The glory has been unfolded to us, the ray of which illuminated so powerfully the gloom of that far-distant scene. The glory of the work of Christ, the glory of God's righteousness fully maintained, the glory of a victory that has annulled death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel, is what we are blessedly familiar with. All was future in Enoch's day, but the future of *certainty*. CHRIST'S DEATH was the warrant for Enoch's translation.

* * * *

A little reflection will show how intelligent Enoch was, and how he entered into things.

Three things prove this:

First. The naming of his son, Methuselah. His name ("He has sent his death") implies Enoch's intelligent apprehension that judgment must come, and end things as they existed around him. Methuselah's name was, indeed, a prophecy, and implied that when he died the flood would come, which it did in the very year of his death.

* * * *

Second. Enoch's intelligence went far beyond the prophecy of immediate

judgment. It went far beyond the flood, and even yet his prophecy is awaiting fulfilment. Jude tells us :

“ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all ” (vers. 14, 15).

No doubt he prophesied to those around him. We should never have known this, had not Jude, centuries after, told us.

What intelligence and light Enoch had ! What a knowledge of God's ways !

* * * *

Third. By his practical godly life. In the charming brief biography of Genesis 5. we get four words, which sum up a life of purpose, steadfastness, and earnestness—“ *Enoch walked with God.* ” He was no anchorite or recluse, finding in the contemplation of solitude a path free from temptation. One word tells us that he took his place in the ordinary affairs of life. He married and was the father of sons and daughters. He had the care of them, and the duty of making provision for them.

How encouraging to us ! No ups and downs are recorded in Genesis 5. No failures, nor any brilliant successes. Just this brief yet pregnant sentence, “ *Enoch walked with God.* ” It reveals a quiet steady purpose, a saintship which walked in separation from a world under judgment. Hebrews II. 5, 6 shows us it was a life of *faith*, of *diligently seeking God.*

* * * *

Then came the climax. “ *He was not ; for God took him.* ” Is this not the believer's path and prospect to-day ? His path, separation from a world

going on to judgment ; his prospect, translation when the Lord comes.

* * * *

In vivid contrast to Enoch, the *seventh* from Adam, is Lamech, likewise the *seventh* from Adam. Lamech instituted polygamy. The self-denial and uprightness of Enoch's walk stands in strong relief to the self-indulgence of Lamech. Alas ! such a course ends in disaster. Lamech has to lament, we know not the particulars, “ *If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.* ” Evidently a course of self-indulgence had ended in passion and murder.

And look at his children. One was the father of agriculture and commerce. Another of music and pleasure. A third, of all workers in iron. They sought by their ingenuity to make the world happy and comfortable *without God.*

What happened to them ? The flood came, took them *all* away, themselves, their commerce, their music, their brass and iron work—all disappeared in judgment.

So it will be with this age, in which the activities of Lamech's children are revived and extended. “ For as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man ” (Luke 17. 26).

The Christian's hope is the coming of the Lord to catch away His people (see 1 Thess. 4. 14-18) before judgment falls upon this godless, pleasure-loving, and industrial age, similar in these three respects to the age in which Enoch lived. And while they wait for this translation their privilege is to walk with God.

I would notice a beautiful thing as to those words “ made of a woman, made under the law ” (Gal. 4. 4). It shows how completely Christ met the

whole case. The *woman* brought in *sin*, and the *law* brought in *transgression*, and Christ meets both : come of a woman, and made under the law. J. N. Darby.

“In Christ.”—Part 2.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

“He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1. 6).

THE Epistle to the Ephesians brings out the full light of the believer's position “in Christ” from the standpoint of God's eternal counsels. But if we are to apprehend what it is to be in Christ according to that wonderful point of view, we must learn how our state and place as connected with the fallen race of Adam has been met, and the need of transference to a wholly new order of man in Christ.

The truth of such a change of race and headship is involved, as has been stated, in Romans 5. 12 and following verses, where Adam is seen as the figure of Him that was to come; but the full consequences as to the man himself are not developed there.

We learn, as a matter of primary importance, not only that our sins have been met by the cross of Christ, but also that the root that produced them, the flesh in us derived from fallen Adam, has been condemned in the death of the Son of God. But as it is in Him we have received life, we are entitled to look back at the cross and recognize that what has taken place there has happened to us, “knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Christ.” Thus, by faith's reckoning, we have died to sin and are alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord, and free to enjoy a life of liberty and fruitfulness to God in the power of the Spirit.

Colossians.

But the truth goes farther than this, and the Epistle to the Colossians leads us on in it. After the wonderful concentration of the varied glory of Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, in whom also we are complete (chaps. 1. ; 2. 9, 10), there follows in all its extent the work of Christ, needed to deliver the Colossians from the beguiling influences of the philosophy and religion of man. Deliverance from these things was necessary, for while they pretended to

add to the blessing of the saints, they only hindered their realization of it. The truth is that we are brought to the end of the man, to whom alone these principles of the flesh could apply, in the death of Christ, presented to us here as circumcision: “In whom ye have been circumcised . . . in putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ” (2. 11). This is an aspect of the cross not found in Romans.

It is not only a mark made in the flesh (as in circumcision made with hands) of the judgment of God upon it, but a complete end of the man himself for God and for faith in judgment fully executed.

The *man* is gone. He has lost his whole state and place as a living man in Christ's death, to have it in a wholly new way and place as risen with Him (chaps. 2. 20 to 3. 4), and the Christian falsifies his whole position as such as he subjects himself to ordinances (“Touch not, taste not, handle not”) which presuppose the subject of them to be alive in the world.

But in order that we should be brought to a break so complete with the whole position and life of man in the world, the lesson of the ages has to be wrought into *each* of our souls in God's gracious ways with us. In successive dispensations the great trial of the race had been allowed to develop, as recorded in the Old Testament. More especially so from the time that God separated Israel from the nations, that this test might be made under the circumstances most favourable for man. What was the result? The Lord Jesus summarizes the history of it in the parable of Mark 12., bringing us to the end of it, in the last answer of man to the last test that God had to apply to him: “Having yet therefore one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them . . . and they took Him and killed Him.” If there was a provisional dealing with the Jew in Acts

1.-7., it only confirmed the tale of the cross. The Holy Ghost had been resisted all along the line of promise, and law, and prophets; Christ had been betrayed and murdered; and they continued to resist the Holy Ghost in the stoning of Stephen, who was the vessel of that last testimony.

All probationary dealings were over; no remedial measures of any avail; man's true condition had come fully to light. Nothing remained but for the early sentence to take effect, "The end of all flesh is come before Me," in all its reality, either in the judgment of the cross of Christ for faith, or in that of the lake of fire for unbelief.

How blessed when by grace we have bowed to that judgment without reserve, to have received it in death with Christ, that now we might be identified with Him in the whole place He has taken in resurrection. Dead with Him (2. 20): risen with Him (3. 1): life hid with Him in God while He is hidden; the moment He is manifested we shall be manifested with Him in glory (3. 4). How completely this puts the Christian outside the world while walking through it; the things that he is to seek are above where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God, and on those things the mind is to be set, and not on things on the earth.

He has members on the earth, but these are to be put to death (ver. 5), having put off the old man and put on the new. And since Christ is already life in the saints, He also becomes all things to them, that, formed by such an object, nothing but Christ in the precious traits of His life may be produced in them as left to represent Him here, and that in every detail of word and deed (vers. 5-17).

In all this, while there are points of contact with the truth in Romans, there is an advance upon that epistle which, if it be spiritually discerned, greatly clears the way for what is before us as to the full positive revelation of "in Christ" in Ephesians.

Ephesians.

In Ephesians we are on simple ground. There is no longer any question of experiences. The epistle does not occupy us with the way to enter into the position in Christ, but with the position itself as the fruit of what God counselled for Himself in eternity, and of His own absolute work in time to accomplish it in a new creation. "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17). This work of God is necessary to give effect to the good pleasure of His will, when the full truth of man's condition has come to light as "dead in trespasses and sin."

The Epistle to the Colossians, if it looked back to Romans, as we have seen, though going beyond it, looks on to Ephesians. The point of connection with this latter is that in Colossians we find not only that we lived in sin (3. 7)—a life that closed in our having died and risen with Christ—but that we were dead in sins; and then it was wholly a question of God having quickened us together with Christ (2. 13). When carried out to its full result this involves that we are seated in Christ in the heavenlies as Ephesians 2. 5, 6. But this is beyond the scope of Colossians, where our identification with Christ is not carried farther than risen with Christ, so that as risen men upon earth we have our hope laid up in heaven, and mind and heart directed there for our objects in order to the formative power of Christ as our life here.

In Ephesians we are only viewed as to our natural condition, dead in sins. Hence there is no death with Christ to end a former life, nor is Christ viewed as going down to death, but the first action of God is to raise Christ from that scene of universal death, where no pulse of moral life beats for God; and the same power is put forth to quicken us together with Him. The whole work is of God in a new creation. See chapters 1. 19 to 2. 10. But how are we to approach the wonderful revelation of what was in

the heart of God for us from eternity? If the ground is simpler because it is wholly a question of God acting from Himself to make good what He has counselled for His own glory in Christ, it is so much the more beyond all thought in the immensity of the blessing that lies out before us. Worship is the true attitude of the soul as we receive such communications. The Apostle sought relief in this way evidently, as the greatness of the revelation filled his thoughts (ver. 3). We have but to take up the place we are given in simple faith, like the prodigal at the Father's feast, with heart bowed before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to bless Him "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." Not a blessing withheld of the richest character, in the highest place, and all made ours in Christ.

No wonder the Apostle's heart is full as he proceeds to the inspired communication of the blessings in their order.

It is important for our apprehension of these blessings that we seek to get hold of the point of view at which they are presented to us. In verse 4 we read, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." Observe that we are carried back before the history of man opened, before even the world was formed by God for his habitation, before time itself began, to learn what the choice of God was in eternity. It is not the activity of counsel in this verse, but simply what He chose as suited to His own nature. How astonishing to learn by the next words that it was "us in Him" whom He hath chosen, as seen in the perfection of Christ "holy and without blame before Him in love." Time is not taken into account. But if it was in Christ God had us thus before Him in eternity, when Christ was here it was manifested what God's choice was. It came out in Matthew 3. 16, 17, when the heavens were opened to Him and the Father's voice proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased." As we behold Him there, we see that He was holy, and without blame, and out before the Father's gaze as the cherished object of His delight. That is therefore what we were as chosen in Him.

But besides this place of Christ before God, there comes the question of what relationship will suit the heart of God that those so chosen should have with Him. For it will be observed how in this whole passage it is not what God plans for our blessing merely, but what would satisfy Himself in the character of the blessing He sets us in, and this enhances it infinitely. In verse 5 the counsels of God are in activity: "Having predestinated us unto sonship [for "adoption of sons" is really one word, as I have given it] by Jesus Christ to Himself." If God had been pleased to put us into the position of angels, how marvellous it would have seemed to us, but that would not meet His thoughts. The elect angels, though they excel in strength and ever do His will, are but ministering spirits, servants of His, and never could be anything else. But it was the will of God that His house should be filled with the cry of "Abba, Father." Hence sonship was to be our blessed relationship: "to Himself," mark—for that is the most precious part of the verse—"according to the good pleasure of His will." This relationship was also manifested in Christ in all the blessedness of Son with the Father as we have heard the word, "This is My beloved Son."

Yet there is more, for which we are in measure prepared, when we hear of something that is to be "to the praise of the glory"—that is, of the full revelation—"of His grace" (ver. 6). It is that He "hath taken us into favour [for the word expresses nothing less than this] in the Beloved." The oft-repeated "in Christ" of the epistle is here changed with divine design to "in the Beloved," in order to bring out that all the favour in which the beloved Son is in His presence is our place there also; to be the be-

loved of the heart of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not some special thing reserved for Him alone: we are taken into that too, beloved in the Beloved One.

But here it is necessary to guard what has been said of the manifestation in Christ on earth of the position set forth in verses 4-6. When He was here it was what He was personally in Himself as Man before God and as Son with the Father, and He was alone in it, as we learn from His words in John 12. 24, until the precious Seed of corn fell into the ground and died. It was only by redemption that He could associate us with Himself. In resurrection He has done this, for He could say, "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).

God is truly presented according to this revelation in Ephesians, while chapter 1. 3 supposes that we have been brought into both Christ's place and relationship as expressed in the name in which we worship "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The verses that we have been looking at set forth, not our being brought into the relationship, but how God saw us in it in Christ in eternity in the counsels of His own love. Nevertheless, it is very blessed that it can be added that we have redemption also in Him (ver. 7), because it provides the righteous basis for the accomplishment of the counsels and forms the link between God's counsels and us when we were in our sins, involving the forgiveness of them; only that now it is not the same revelation of the glory of His grace as in our acceptance, but of the *riches* of His grace by which we are met in the poverty of our need. But there was yet more in the purpose of God for us. There was to be an inheritance suited to the dignity of such a calling—"His calling" (ver. 18.) What it is comes out in His making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself,

namely, that when the dispensations of time have had their course He would, as the object of His ways in them, head up all things in heaven and upon earth in Christ. For now we find that in Him we have been made heirs of that whole inheritance of glory, having been predestinated to it "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

What thoughts are these of divine and infinite love to be communicated to us that we may enter into them by simple faith. For if verses 4-6 give us His calling in all that is so infinitely above us, verses 9-11 add our inheritance in all that vast scene of glory that will lie below us—all made ours in Christ.

There is but one thing more needed to complete the glorious position of the Christian, as it also gives us the present power of the realization of it: it is the sealing of the Holy Ghost (vers. 13, 14), "in whom also having believed" (that is, when they had heard the word of truth, the glad tidings of their salvation), "ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Again we can look back to see the manifestation of it with Christ when He was here and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and abode upon Him. No first application of blood was needed, as with us, that He might receive the Spirit, who was the seal of all the personal perfection that made Him the object of His Father's delight. It is only in Him, and because of all that has been found for us in Him, according to the salvation He has wrought for us, that the moment we believed the glad tidings we received the Holy Ghost to dwell within us, and were thus sealed for God, while He is the earnest for us of all that is before us in the glory of the inheritance.

May this brief study, however partial and defective, of what is conveyed to us by the expression "in Christ," be used to encourage our hearts to seek to enter into the fullness of the blessing made ours, to enjoy by faith and the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Prospect.

(JAMES BOVD).

O TO be *with* the One who ever liveth
 Within the courts of empyreal light,
 Where the eternal Father glory giveth,
 According to His love and wealth and might,
 To His sons, whom grace
 Shall set before His face,
 For His unspeakable and endless pleasure,
 In blessing which no creature mind may measure !

O to be *near* Him who by blood hath bought me !
 To sit before Him, and to worship Him !
 To hear Him tell me how He loved and sought me
 When, lost, I wandered in the darkness dim ;
 And of how He bore
 For me the judgment sore,
 And drained to the last drop the bitter chalice
 When made the mark for man's disgraceful malice !

To *see* Him—Him in whom my soul delighteth ;
 To feast mine eyes upon His face divine ;
 Where glory, radiant with love, inviteth
 The confidence of this poor heart of mine !
 With supreme delight
 I shall behold that sight
 Reserved for those who here on earth confess Him,
 And morning, noon, and night extol and bless Him.

O to be *like* Him, to the satisfaction
 Of His, and of His Father's loving heart ;
 No more to suffer sorrowful distraction,
 No more from my Redeemer made to part ;
 But with Him to share
 Glory eternal there,
 Free from invasion by the foot defiling,
 Safe from the serpent and his base beguiling !

To be enravished with the heavenly cadence
 Of that sweet voice which thrills throughout
 my soul,
 And with the fulness of the Godhead ladens
 My heart set free from sin's distressful dole !

Life-imparting voice
 Making my soul rejoice ;
 Heard when I, lost, lay in my black transgression,
 Heard now in glory making intercession.

O just to feel that I am His—His only,
 When this great wilderness and waste are past ;
 And all my weary wanderings so lonely
 Have ended in His home, at length, at last :
 Tears all wiped away !
 Come, glad, glorious day !
 For I am Thine in singing or in sighing,
 Thine, Jesus, Thine ! Thine living, ay, or dying !

Lord Jesus, precious, living, loving, Fountain
 Of life eternal and of endless bliss,
 Call home Thy flock from valley and from
 mountain,
 From bruit of battle and necropolis.
 O beloved Lord,
 Speak Thou that welcome word,
 That shall the sons of God together gather
 Into the bosom of the living Father.

Then I shall ever be *with* Thee, and *near* Thee,
 Then shall I *see* Thee, Saviour, as Thou art,
 Then shall I *like* Thee be, then shall I *hear* Thee
 Tell in the glory all Thy loving heart,
 O Thou faithful Friend,
 Come, and the desert end !
 For my poor heart to see her Lord is burning,
 And slow the wheels of laggard time are turning.

Come, break the cords that bind to dust Thy
 sleeping ;
 Wake with Thy voice the quiet of the grave.
 Their souls and bodies, Lord, are in Thy keeping,
 Waiting the first, and the most welcome, wave
 Of Thy power divine,
 Which shall to sparkling wine
 The water turn, and cause this cursed creation
 In freedom to break forth with exultation.

Substitutes for the Gospel.

THERE is a lifeless plain in the heart of
 Persia so sterile and accursed that even
 saline plants do not thrive in it ; but the
 salt itself, as if in bitter mockery, fashions
 its crystals in the form of stems and
 stalks, and covers the steppe with a carpet
 of unique vegetation, glittering and glis-
 tening like an enchanted prairie in the
 dazzling light of the Eastern sun. Pretty
 to look at, but an arid desert.

Like unto this plain is the work of
 those who, while professing to be the
 servants of God, have departed from
 THE GOSPEL OF GOD, and substi-

tuted for it their own sparkling inven-
 tions. They imitate life by the artificial
 flash of culture. Woe unto the congrega-
 tions before whom this substitute for
 life is set, this saline efflorescence of
 dainty errors and fascinating inventions !

But they are not only taking away the
 GOSPEL OF GOD from those who
 listen to them—that would be bad enough
 —but that which they give in the stead
 of it is a deadly poison. In this they are
 like the mosquito, that not only sucks
 the blood of its victim, but impregnates
 him with the malaria poison.

A Great Revival.—No. 4 (Continued).

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

The Giving of the People.

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (read 2 Chron. 31.; 1 Cor. 9. 7-18; 2 Cor. 9.).

HEZEKIAH thought of God's servants who were called to His service and determined that they should be encouraged. *"He commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly"* (2 Chron. 31. 4, 5). This is deeply interesting and instructive. Do you think that we are sufficiently exercised on this point? The ninth chapter of 1 and 2 Corinthians each seem to run parallel to this chapter, and throw much light upon the subject of care for the Lord's servants, and likewise generally on the subject of giving in the interests of the Lord.

God has laid down distinctly in His Word that there was to be a portion for the priests and Levites. Ponder, weigh, and study the scriptures which indicate this for yourself.

It is interesting to notice the scripture where tithes are first mentioned. You will find it in Genesis 14. It was not there a question of demand, but a spontaneous gift. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. *And he gave him tithes of all*" (vers. 18-20).

The Spirit of God comments on this act in Hebrews 7. 4: "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." Without being told

so to do, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoil. Later on, in the history of God's dealings with men, He said, as it were, "My people shall be the children of Abraham in this respect," so He bade them pay tithes (Lev. 27. 30). God made a claim in that day of law. He does not do that now in this day of grace, but He "loveth a cheerful giver," and Christian giving is always a question of devotedness to Christ. In Numbers 18. we see why the tenth was claimed (ver. 8), and then in the next twelve verses how God took care that His servants should be maintained. The reason was this. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel" (ver. 20). Then He says: "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for their inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (ver. 21).

The giving of the tithe brought the giver into touch with God. It brought him to the place of priestly worship, for it is spoken of as a "heave offering." They had to be brought up to that house where the Lord's presence was. All true giving is to the Lord, and so a question of communion with Him.

In Deuteronomy 14. we have further important instructions. "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God

always" (vers. 22, 23). God is very exact about this. "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates; and the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest" (vers. 28, 29). There is more of this in Deuteronomy 26. We have there the instructions as to laying down the basket of first-fruits (ver. 11), in connection with which Israel owned that they owed their existence as a nation to God's intervention for them, and that He it was who had brought them into all the wealth that they enjoyed.

Then there follows: "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled" (ver. 12). It is not only the Levite, mark you, but the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow who are to be thought of. How blessedly large is the heart of God; and He would have His people like Himself. Now observe that at this point a serious command occurs: "Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also *have given them* unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, *according to all Thy commandments, which Thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them*" (ver. 13). This is the prayer of righteousness. The Jew had actually, as a matter of righteousness, to go in and say to God, "I have a clean breast."

In Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, this matter comes again to the front. God asks a question there.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings" (3. 8). "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation" (ver. 9). You would surely regard this as a serious charge. But see what follows. "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 you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (ver. 10).

It is beautiful to note the grace of God here. Mildew had come in, and sorrow had fallen upon them as God's people; and in the prophecy of Haggai, chapter 1., we see the reason: "Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; *Consider your ways.* Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (vers. 5, 6). And why was that? God replies: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house" (ver. 9). That is to say, God's hand was upon His people, because they were not devoted to His interests; they had put their own things first.

You may say, But all this had reference to the Jew under law, and we are not under law, but under grace. That is true indeed, but being under grace, and knowing the giving God as we do, shall we be less devoted than they? The moral principles of God's government are the same, whether in the day of Judaism or the day of Christianity. If we are not devoted the Lord may put His hand upon us. They of Haggai's day put their money into bags, and when they came again they found holes in them. How did

the holes get there? The Lord made them. They did not intend to put their savings into bags having holes in them. The cause of a great deal of the commercial break-up with many of God's people to-day may be connected with this. The heart has not been devoted to the Lord, and earthly principles have ruled the mind, and wealth has been sought from selfish motives. We put what we have robbed Him of into a bag, and by and by come and find there is a hole in the bag. All this is intensely practical and very useful for our souls to bear in mind.

Now go back to our chapter once more. Hezekiah sends out his edict. *"And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. . . . In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month"* (vers. 5-7). The king's heart must have been delighted. He had given out the edict in Jerusalem (ver. 4), that those near by should answer to it, but it had gone right out far and wide, and this was the result. It was beautiful.

"And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord, and His people Israel. Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed His people; and that which is left is this great store" (vers. 8-10). And so, all the servants were well and beautifully cared for. The moment the people began to respond in the right way to what was God's claim, in obedience to God's Word, instead of sowing much and getting little, they sowed little and got much. True is the word, "There

is that scattereth, and yet increaseth" (Prov. 11. 24). You will find this, that the Lord will never be your debtor, nor mine.

I need not say much about the two chapters which I point you to in the New Testament—they speak for themselves. The difference is this: in the ninth chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul lays down the principle "that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (ver. 14). Though he, for reason given in his second letter, would not take a penny of them. When you come to the ninth chapter of the second epistle it is more the thought of an answer to God's unspeakable gift. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (ver. 15). What is the answer of our hearts? Take the illustration of it in Luke's Gospel (chap. 21.). That poor widow was devoted to the house of the Lord. She was reduced to two mites, and she cast them both into the treasury. She is the illustration of the most lovely devotedness. She put them both in, the two mites that made a farthing. The temptation was to keep the one and give the other to the Lord, but she cast in both—all her living. Her heart was true to the Lord. It is a picture of devotion to the Lord which He loves to see in His people.

The Lord help us in the sense of what a privilege it is to be here for God. But our enjoyment of priestly service and worship is very largely connected with what I have been touching on, and the subject is of great practical importance.

Its importance in God's eyes is very clear from the striking comment He makes on Hezekiah's action, which reads thus: *"And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered"* (vers. 20, 21).

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 3. 1-4.

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he

shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Chapter 3. 1.

“**B**EHOLD, see here, what manner of love the Father has given us.” Here is something to which to call attention. Here is love indeed, worthy to be called such; love thoughtful and reflective; love with a purpose in it, “that we should be called children of God;” and some add, though apparently the authority is questionable, “and we are so.”

“That we should be called children of God;” such by our very calling, by indefeasible right, as given to us in the Father’s love (*cf.* John 1. 12). There “He gave them right, authority to become;” here it is, in consequence, our “calling;” “peers of the upper house; peers of the blood,” if one might import the simile, though it be a feeble one.

It is not here the love of God, in the absoluteness of His own being, but the Father’s love relatively to us His children. “Therefore the world knows us not, for it knew Him not.” Here again we see how the Father and the Son are so interwoven in the Apostle’s mind, that while he uses the one as the antecedent, he passes in the most natural way to the other as consequent; and then, in a similar way, he passes on to us, as the children of God. And herein we see very markedly the force and scriptural use of this expression.

This is not the regaining of our original Adamic position, lost through the fall; but the reception of Christ spiritually as our life; a new order of life entirely, not an amendment of the old. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation; old things are passed away: all things have become new; and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.

5. 17). Necessarily, therefore, the world knows us not, even as it knew Him not. And, moreover, it does not know us (*γινώσκει*) outwardly, objectively, externally. It is not merely that it lacks the conscious, subjective knowledge that would sympathize with our feelings; it does not know us at all. You pass a man in the street whom you have never seen before. You don’t know him. He is an utter stranger to you. Jesus says of the Jews, “They have not known (*ἔγνωσαν*) the Father nor Me” (John 16. 3). “Therefore,” says the Apostle, “the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.” The moral separation is complete.

Verse 2.

And “we are *now* children of God.” This is what he wishes to press, with its present practical effect.

What we shall be has not yet come out in actual manifestation; “but we know consciously” (*οἶδαμεν*), because of the life we now possess, “that if He is manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Now compare this with Exodus 33. 20. Under the law no one could see God and live. Even the face of Moses the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away (2 Cor. 3. 7). They were not fit for the presence of God, or for the revelation of His glory, even such as was then given them, a glory which “had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” To behold it could not be their hope: when they saw how the face of Moses shone “they were afraid to come nigh him” (Exod. 34. 30). Neither could it be our hope to “see Him as He is,” were we not conscious of the grace that has “made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”

(Col. 1. 12). The fact, therefore, that this is our hope proves the present consciousness of our fitness to meet Him—while it also acts as a mighty incentive to be as like Him now as possible—to purify ourselves even as He is pure.

It does not say we shall see Him as He *was*. He is now past the circumstances of His humiliation. But we shall see Him as a glorified Man in the glory of God. This does not mean that we shall behold God in the unapproachable, inaccessible light in which He dwells, "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6. 16), nor that we shall partake of the incommunicable attributes of Deity, which belong to God alone; but, as the glory of God lights up the New Jerusalem, and the Lamb is the lamp of it, so all that is communicable of that glory is our endless portion, revealed in the person of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

"And every one that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure."

Verse 4.

From this question of righteousness, and the hope connected with it, he now turns to that of sin—its source, its character, and its actings.

As has been remarked by another (*G. V. Wigram*), in the first chapter we find ourselves in the *presence of God*, in the fellowship of the Father and the Son, in the light of the eternal life which was manifested to us. There we learn the full favour of the divine grace into which we have been brought. But in chapter 3. we find ourselves in the *presence of the world*, but as born of God, and not of it. There, we are in the light that we may absorb its rays and live in the life of it; here, we are in the darkness of the world, in an environment wholly antagonistic, where we have to live out the life we have within. There, it is the eternal life acting in the joy proper to its own sphere; here, it is the eternal life acting according to its own holy nature, and "showing [not the weakness of the vessel, which humbling lesson is yet a part of our sanctification, but] the strength of the life to accomplish in us the will of God, which is put in contrast with the works which those do who are not 'ours;' all around us. The position

of the family of God, the privileges, hopes, light, love in practical exercise, the separation from, or contrast with the *world*, by means of faith and the Spirit, is the substance of the third chapter."

This, then, is the character of the righteousness of which he speaks—that which was manifested in Christ, which appertains to God Himself, and to the life we have now received as born of Him. It is not merely righteousness—note it well—as between man and man: a righteousness which is merely human in its origin and extent. The scope and object of Christ's coming into this world was not to adjudicate between man and man, on the ground of what was merely human. When one said to Him, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me . . . He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness" (Luke 12. 13-15). He came from God to put the believer into right relationship with Him, and to make known the eternal life which was with the Father, so that he might have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and live in the life which is his as begotten of God. This is the practice of righteousness according to John—a practice consistent with the life which is ours as begotten of God; the life of God Himself revealed in Jesus. Wondrous truth!

"The righteousness of God" is an expression peculiar to the writings of the Apostle Paul. It is the text of the Epistle to the Romans (chap. 1. 17). As an attribute of God, already spoken of largely in the Old Testament (*cf.* Rom. 3. 21-26), it is His consistency with Himself in all His actings. It is treated by Paul in connection with the government of God, and as the basis of His actings in grace, unto eternal life (Rom. 5. 21); while John treats it, by implication, as an essential quality in God, livingly inherent in His life and nature; so that those who are begotten of Him partake of it from Him; and the practice of righteousness on their part is their consistency with what they are as His children. "Justus justum gignit" (*Bengel*): a righteous man begets a righteous man; as we would say, "Like father, like son;"

and the latter practises righteousness accordingly.

Now, in contrast to this, "every one practising sin practises also lawlessness." It is the very opposite; and as righteousness is the practice of what is according to the rule or law of the divine life, so sin is outside of its rule, or norm; for so he defines it, "sin is lawlessness." The rendering of the A.V., generally so very excellent, is here extremely faulty, "sin is the transgression of the law;" and some advance still further in this way of error by adding of themselves "the transgression of a known law." Scripture says it is "lawlessness," the movement of an unruly will, whether it transgresses a law laid down as a moral boundary or not. If it crosses the boundary line it becomes "transgression;" but "where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom. 4. 15). Nevertheless, sin already existed where there was no law, from Adam to Moses, *i.e.* before Sinai, for it entered into the world through Adam's fall (Rom. 5. 12, 13). Therefore to define sin as "the transgression of the law" is wholly wrong and misleading. This scripture traces it to what is far deeper than that, in its character (ver. 4), its primal source (ver. 8), and its outcome (ver. 12).

The word "righteousness" comes from a word meaning, primarily, custom, order, and so passing into law, right, and in the Scripture use of it, what is consistent with, or according to God.

Sin, from a word that means "to miss the mark," or standard conformable to, or fixed by God, is the opposite of righteousness, which is conformity to that standard—a very great miss indeed, for "the wages of it is death!" If it misses His mark, it cannot do for Him. It is doomed; it must go. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2. 17), or dying, thou shalt die.

Lawlessness=opposition to, or contempt of, His will. It is the accentuation of sin, with the virus of the devil in it (vers. 8-10), as will be fully expressed in the final incarnation of all evil in the Antichrist, who is described as, *par excellence*, "the lawless one" (2 Thess. 2. 4, etc.), "the king that does according to his own will" (Dan. 11. 36). Thus, as

before he traces righteousness to its source and shows it in its actings, so now he traces sin back to its spring and portrays its characteristics. How feebly have we apprehended the truth of either—righteousness, as coming down from God; sin, as coming up from the devil—and how slow we are to pass judgment on ourselves, in the spirit of our lives, as under the control of the one or of the other! What right have we to act high-handedly, or to give rein to our wills in the house of God? This is the cause of all the trouble, the root of all the sorrow; it is this that evokes the judgment and the wrath of God. In Psalm 40. 8, quoted twice in Hebrews 10., the Lord says, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God;" and this it is that gives its character to the whole Gospel of John (*cf.* chap. 4. 34). "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work;" and the same sentiment is reproduced in one form or another some sixteen times up to chapter 17. 4, where, at the close of His life of obedience here, He says: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Here was a life wholly without sin; here was a life dominated by the will of God. This is the very opposite of lawlessness; it is obedience, but more than obedience; it is the spirit in which true obedience could alone be rendered.

How, then, could any one profess to be a disciple of Jesus and walk in self-will, regardless of, or in opposition to, the will of God? The two positions are mutually antagonistic.

* * * * *

Our Father, God, what hopes are these
To fill our hearts with joy,
Where glory crowning all Thy grace
Shines forth without alloy!

To know the purpose of Thy love,
That we should like Him be;
Like Thine own Son, in light above,
And all His glory see.

Beyond our thoughts Thy glories rise,
The crown of all Thy grace;
To fill our hearts with glad surprise,
As we behold His face.

May this bright hope command our souls,
And by Thy grace ensure
That we may purify ourselves,
As Christ Himself is pure.

Correspondence.

Righteousness (Continued from page 212).

REPLY BY THE EDITORS.

Righteousness Imputed.

We have seen that God has established His right, in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, to justify men; He justifies freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. His righteousness is declared in giving them a standing before Himself in absolute consistency with His own nature. It must be evident that man could have no part in securing this by his own works: it must be of God from first to last.

It is God that justifies the believer in Jesus, that is to say, He clears him of every charge of guilt, so that henceforward no charge can lie against him, He accounts him as righteous. In other words, He imputes righteousness to him (not *dikaiōma*, a series of accomplished acts, but *dikaïosunē*, the state or quality of being righteous, *i.e.* he is a righteous person—whether or not evidenced in specific acts is not here to the point). It is this we have now to consider. First as to the word "imputed" (*logizomai*). It means in this connection to reckon to a person that which he is not by practice. Thus Christ was "reckoned" (*logizomai*) among the transgressors, though He was not such (Luke 22. 37). Again, the uncircumcision would in certain circumstances be "counted [*logizomai*] for circumcision" (Rom. 2. 26), though actually they were uncircumcised. These two examples may suffice for the meaning of the word, though for any who may be interested to trace it further we might refer to Romans 9. 8 (count), 14. 14 (esteem); 2 Corinthians 5. 19 (impute).

The first of the New Testament passages which speak of righteousness being imputed is ROMANS 4. 3: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted [*logizomai*] unto him for righteousness." That is to say, God accounted Abraham a righteous person. It is not that God imputed to him the vicarious performance of acts of righteousness, which is what is meant when it is said by some that the *life* of Jesus is our positive righteousness. It is not acts of righteousness (*dikaiōma*) at all; it is *dikaïosunē*; he was justified, reckoned a righteous person.

Again, what may be spoken of as the act of faith, of believing, is not to be looked upon as an act which God can account as in itself righteousness. Faith is opposed as a principle to works, it is the acknowledgment, on the one hand, of the absence of all goodness, power, or resource in the creature, and, on the

other, it manifests itself in the certain expectation that God will work in perfect consistency with the revelation which He has made of Himself.

It is not faith that in itself justifies a man, nor is faith viewed here an act of righteousness. But God justifies him, he is reckoned a righteous person when he turns to God as his only hope, God who quickeneth the dead.

ROMANS 4. 5: "His faith is counted for righteousness." Here is extended to the believer all that which was predicated of Abraham in verse 3, on which we have just commented.

ROMANS 4. 6. "The man unto whom God imputeth righteousness WITHOUT WORKS." This shows how completely the imputation of righteousness is apart from any procuring cause in the acts of the person himself. Righteousness is imputed to the believer apart from any question of works whatever.

ROMANS 4. 6 and 7. "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It will be clearly seen from this verse that there is here no question of acts of righteousness being imputed. It is the non-imputation of sin. If the Lord does not impute sin to a man he is clear of condemnation, a justified man. If sin be not imputed because of what has taken place in the death and resurrection of Christ, then the man is accounted righteous.

In Romans 4. 9, 10, 22, and 23 we have again Abraham's case considered. Faith reckoned to him for righteousness, and on this we have already remarked.

ROMANS 4. 11: "That righteousness might be imputed unto them also." Here are linked up with Abraham all who believe: righteousness is spoken of as imputed to them.

ROMANS 4. 24 carries on the truth so far as to indicate what is the particular character of faith in question. It is faith "on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." But he who believes on God thus is "justified by faith" (Rom. 5. 1). He is accounted as righteous. Righteousness (*dikaïosunē*) is imputed to him—not *dikaiōma*: that follows, is fulfilled in him practically as walking here after the Spirit (Rom. 8. 4); but as regards his standing before God, *dikaïosunē* is imputed to him who believes on the One who raised up Jesus our

Lord from the dead. God accounts the believer clear of every charge: He accounts him as Christ is, for, as another scripture puts it, "as He is, so are we in this world."

There is one other passage which treats of righteousness imputed, namely GALATIANS 3. 6: "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.*" This, however, is exactly as in Romans 4., on which we have already commented.

Thus far we have looked at righteousness in its bearing towards *all*, and the only ground upon which any man can stand before God, be he saint of Old Testament or New Testament times. If this is clear, we can advance from this point, for the truth of righteousness develops in Christianity far beyond that which could be known by Abraham and David. This advance is evident in Romans 5. in the expression "justification of life." The believer is here viewed not only as justified from his offences, but as severed from the head and race characterized by disobedience and condemnation, and as of the "many," a race of which the obedient One is the Head. The life, as well as the standing, of the Head is the life of every one of the race, and that is a life to which no sin can attach.

In 1 Corinthians 1. 30 the advance on Romans 4. is further manifested, for there we learn that Christ is from God "made unto us righteousness," so that we are not merely reckoned righteous, but we learn the measure of the righteousness which is made ours as being "of God in Christ Jesus."

This righteousness is presented objectively in its glorious fulness in Christ; but there is not only what is objective: there is a positive "ministration of righteousness" from the glory, so that the believer gazing on the glory of the Lord is changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3. 18).

The righteousness, then, which we have as "in Him" is a righteousness which is not of man at all: in its origin and character it is altogether of God; and hence Paul's words in Philippians 3. 9: "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

The full character and scope of the righteousness which is made ours is seen thus to depend on the truth of the believer's new place *in Christ*, and in view of Mr. J. A. Trench's helpful and comprehensive papers now appearing under this title (June and present issues), we shall not dwell on this important side of the truth further than to comment briefly, as promised, on 2 Corinthians 5. 16-18.

Knowing Christ after the Flesh.

The question having arisen out of this correspondence as to what is meant in this passage by "Christ after the flesh" whom

we "know thus no longer" (N.T.), we add the following notes as presenting our apprehension of the truth it conveys.

First let us see what it does not mean. He was the Word who became flesh (John 1. 14), *i.e.* He became man. It is not this that the passage refers to, for He will never cease to be man, though now in resurrection.

He came into manhood to declare what God is to men, for He alone who dwells in the bosom of the Father could do this. That declaration of God in His life and death was absolute and complete; God has been fully revealed, and that revelation abides in all its blessedness for us. Moreover, all the fulness of the Godhead, manifested in Him in circumstances of humility and suffering here, dwells in Him now upon the throne; and the grace declared in word and deed on earth shines from His blessed face in heaven to-day. Nothing of this has passed away, it abides in all its changeless perfection in Christ, and it is there to be known by us.

That was one side of the Lord's life on earth: the presentation of God to man. But there was another side—the presentation of man to God—and this side was as perfect as the other. The moral beauty and excellence of the Lord in the path of dependence and obedience upon earth will be held in perpetual remembrance: that cannot pass away, for what is perfect is abiding; and what He was "yesterday" on earth, He is "to-day" upon the throne, and will be "for ever."

But the life of obedience, in which the moral glory of the Man Christ Jesus shone forth, was lived on the ground of *man's responsibility* towards God. By man's responsibility towards God we mean that the maintenance of man's standing with God depended upon his obedience to God. This was evidently the case with Adam: he stood or fell by one command; Israel was upon the same footing: they were not under grace, but under law—"This *do* and thou shalt live." The law was given for the testing of man, and under the test the people failed, whether under prophet, priest, or king, and the land was desolated in consequence. Every individual failed also, and all the world became subject to the judgment of God. Relationship with God could not be maintained by man on that ground.

It was on this ground, and according to this responsibility, that the Lord came. He was, as Galatians 4. tells us, "Come of a woman, come under law" (N.T.), so that He might deal with all the sin brought in by the woman, and all the transgressions that the law brought forth. But ere He could do this He must first stand in the place of testing, for if He were not able to stand where others had fallen, His coming were vain and all was lost. He did not fail, but held Himself for God against all the assaults of the foe. He fulfilled the law to its last jot and title, covering it with the fragrance of a perfect love.

It is Christ on that ground that is meant by "*Christ after the flesh.*" He is no longer in that relationship; the relationship itself no longer exists: that whole order of life Godward has ceased to be, for Christ came into it that He might end it; it closed with His death, so that we cannot know Him thus any more. He could have lived on in that relationship with God, for He fulfilled as man every demand that God ever made upon man, but He would have lived in it alone. But to live alone before God was not His object in coming to earth; He came to open up a new relationship for man, a relationship in which "many sons" might have part, and to bring forth this "much fruit" He must die (John 12.).

He did not die for Himself, for death had no claim upon Him, but He died for all; and this proves that all were in a state of death, the inexorable result of sin. But He died for all that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and has been raised. They do not know Him any more in that old relationship of which we have spoken, but they live unto Him according to the new relationship which He has established for man with God, a relationship that does not depend upon man's ability to obtain or maintain it, but which is altogether of God. They are in Christ not according to the old

relationship of man in the flesh which belonged to the old creation, but in Him, the risen Man, and so in new creation, where all things are of God.

If the statement "all things are of God" be rightly grasped, we shall see that it is no question here of righteousness according to the law, which was no more than man's fulfilment of his obligations as set in responsibility upon the earth, for that has been annulled, or taken out of the way in the death of Christ, that a more glorious and abiding righteousness might be ministered to us from the glory of God. That righteousness is seen in Christ: He is the measure and the glory of it. *He is Man in the glory of God, according to every attribute of the nature of God and in absolute accord with that glory.*

It is in Him that God has placed us; our position, life, and righteousness—for these three things go together—are in Him; and we become "the righteousness of God in Him," for to this end He who knew no sin was made sin for us. The final issue of all God's actings towards us is still to be manifested; when that is made public, every eye in the universe will see in us who are in Christ the vindication of all God's counsels in eternity and His actings in time. We are in Him now, and faith makes this to be a great reality to us.

Walk according to this Rule.

HERE is a quotation from a letter received from a missionary in Central Africa. We "have been in town with our men helping the townspeople to make their lines of bananas straight. They have no idea of working together, and even if one man gets a straight row, it is certain to be out of line with that of his neighbour. *If one gives them a string to work by, they will plant their bananas where they please and then pull the line to them.*"

The ways of these Central Africans cause us to smile, but it is a smile which ends with a sigh, for how like them we are in some respects. We have the perfect line—the Word of God—by which all

our conduct may be regulated for our own peace and joy and the glory of God; but how often we take our own way and please ourselves, and then try to make the Word fit what we have done.

May God give to us grace that we may subject ourselves to His Word, for only so can we make straight paths for our feet. As we walk according to the doctrines and precepts of the Word our own ways will be straight, and they will be in line, in perfect accord, also with every other Christian's who is also subject to that Word. It is obedience to the Word of the Lord that leads to fellowship according to God.

When the Word of God reaches the heart it proves itself to be the Word of God. I do not need to judge it, it judges me.

Our own strength is just our weakness, as our weakness realized will be our way to strength—a strength not our own.

The Holy Scriptures and Creation.

TH**ERE** is no physical error in the Word of God. . . . Examine all the false theologies of the ancients and moderns ; read in Homer, or in Hesiod, the religious codes of the Greeks ; study those of the Buddhists, those of the Brahmans, those of the Mohammedans ; you will not only find in them repulsive systems on the subject of the Godhead, but you will meet with the grossest errors in the material world. You will be revolted with their theology, no doubt ; but their natural philosophy and their astronomy also, ever allied to their religion, will be found to rest on the most absurd notions. Read, further, the philosophers of Greek and Roman antiquity—Aristotle, Seneca, Pliny, Plutarch, Cicero. How many expressions of opinion will you not find there any single one of which would be enough to compromise all our doctrines of inspiration if it could be met with in any book of Holy Scripture. Read Mohammed's Koran, making mountains to be created "to prevent the earth from moving, and to hold it fast as if with anchors and cables." Read even the cosmogony of Buffon, or some of Voltaire's sneers on the doctrine of a deluge, or on the fossils of a primitive world. What might we not have been entitled to say of the Scriptures had they expressed themselves on the phenomena of nature as these have been spoken of by all the ancient sages ? Had they referred all to four elements, as people did for so long a period ? Had they said the stars were of crystal, as did Philolaus of Crotona ? And had they, like Empedocles, lighted up the two hemispheres of our world with two suns ? Had they taught, like Leucippus, that the fixed stars, set ablaze by the swiftness of their diurnal movement round the earth, feed the sun with their fires ? Had they thought, like Philolaus, that the sun has only a borrowed light, and is only

a mirror, which receives and sends down to us the light of the celestial spheres ? Had they, like Anaxagoras, conceived it to be a mass of iron, and the earth to be a mountain whose roots stretch infinitely downward ? Had they imagined the heaven to be a solid sphere to which the fixed stars are attached, as was done by Aristotle and almost all the ancients ?

Open now the Bible. Study its fifty sacred authors, from that wonderful Moses, who held the pen in the wilderness four hundred years before the war of Troy, down to the fisherman son of Zebedee, who wrote fifteen hundred years afterwards in Ephesus and in Patmos. Open the Bible and try if you can to find anything of this sort.

No ! None of those blunders which the science of every successive age discovers in the books of those that preceded it. None of those absurdities, above all, which modern astronomy points out, in such numbers, in the writing of the ancients, in their sacred codes, in their systems of philosophy, and in the finest pages even of the Fathers of the church. No such errors can be found in any of our sacred books. Nothing there will ever contradict what, after so many ages, the investigations of the learned world have been able to reveal to us of what is certain in regard to the state of our globe or of that of the heavens.

Carefully peruse our Scriptures from one end to the other in search of such blemishes there ; and, while engaged in this research, remember that it is a book which speaks of everything, which describes nature, which proclaims its grandeur, which tells the story of its creation, which informs us of the structure of the heavens, of the creation of light, of the waters, of the atmosphere, of the mountains, of animals and of plants. It is a book

that tells us of the first revolutions of the world, and foretells us also of the last; a book that relates them in circumstantial narrative, exalts them in sublime poesy and chants them in strains of fervent psalmody. It is a book replete with the glow of oriental rapture, elevation, variety, and boldness. It is a book which speaks of the earth and things visible, at the same time that it speaks of the celestial world and of things invisible. It is a book to which nearly fifty writers of every degree of mental cultivation, of every rank, of every condition, and separated by fifteen hundred years from each other, have successively put their hands. . . . Well, then, search through these fifty authors, search through these sixty-six books, search

through these 1189 chapters and these 31,173 verses. Search for one single of these thousands of errors with which ancient and modern books abound when they speak either of the heavens or of the earth, or of their revolutions, or of their elements; search, but you will search in vain.

(L. Gaussen.)

[The above extract from an eighteen-penny volume entitled "Theopneustia. The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures." By L. Gaussen (Farncombe and Son, Ludgate Circus, London) may well lead every reader to purchase the book for himself. He will find in it rare treasure in a day when the inspiration of every scripture is so flippantly denied. (J. w. s.)]

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 8.

Parables common to Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

These parables are six in number:—

	Matt	Mark	Luke
1. The New Cloth and Old garment	ix	ii	v
2. The New Wine in Old Bottles	ix	ii	v
3. The Sower	xiii	iv	viii
4. The Mustard Seed	xiii	iv	xiii
5. The Wicked Husbandmen	xxi	xii	xx
6. The "Fig Tree and all Trees"	xxiv	xiii	xxi

THE word "parable" signifies the act of placing together; hence, a comparison or similitude. A parable is to the subject what a likeness is to the person; it is a resemblance presented enigmatically, but sufficiently clearly to indicate to the attentive mind that which is signified. It can therefore be used without giving offence, and may convey truth both gently and effectively. To be understood, it is necessary that the senses should be alive and exercised, otherwise it would fall on ears unappreciative and deaf.

The parabolic form of communication was frequently used of the Lord. There

are, in fact, nearly forty parables in His ministry, extending from the brief adage, "Physician, heal thyself," to the long and deeply interesting account of the "Sower" who sowed the seed—the Word of God.

It need hardly be said that each of these parables contains a depth of meaning, a width of range, a simplicity, a dignity, and a power all its own. The design lies on the surface, so that it may be read by the opened eye; and yet, though so perspicuous, it remains unperceived by "the wise and prudent" of this world. Like the pillar of fire, it gives light to Israel and is but darkness to the Egyptian. But it is always thus in divine teaching: in order to apprehend the truth we must be taught of God. This is absolutely necessary. The keenest intellect is wholly incapable of discerning the mind of God, which is, alas! but foolishness to it. "The natural man" (be he never so intellectual) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned—a

solemn word for our days of learning and criticism—"but he that is spiritual discerneth all things," he has that capacity because he has the Spirit of God—"the unction" whereby he "knoweth all things." See the force of this in the answer given by the Lord to the query of the disciples: "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" (Matt. 13. 10-17).

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear," were His gracious words to the "babes and sucklings" whose hearts God had opened. How blessed!

We cannot look at the six parables which are common to our three Evangelists without being struck by their immense moral power and divine applicability.

THE NEW CLOTH on the old garment teaches us, in principle, the great foundation truth of the "new birth." The flesh is irremediable—"the carnal mind is enmity against God . . . They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 7, 8). Hence the absolute necessity of a totally new garment. There can be no coalition between the flesh and the Spirit: "Ye must be born again."

THE NEW WINE in new bottles only emphasizes this fact. The receptacle must be new in order to contain the new wine. Hence, "that which is born of the Spirit" is spoken of as well as the Spirit itself. There is the new tenement for the new Tenant. "If any man be in Christ—a new creation." No wonder that each evangelist presents these two basic parables! (J.W.S.)

The Sower.

The importance of this parable is evidenced by the words of the Lord, "Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all parables?" (Mark 4. 13). The truth that it teaches is elementary, it lies at the threshold of all truth. In a sentence it is this: there can be no yield of fruit for God apart from repentance and the Word of God, for the heart of man is as the field of the farmer which brings forth nothing but rank weeds if left to itself. There must be the ploughing of the soil and the sowing of the seed.

The higher critic, blinded by his folly, does not discern this fact: he discards

the Word of God and sows seeds of another kind, the corruptible seed of man's wisdom, in the soil of the heart, and the harvest shall be according to the sowing. Many earnest social reformers are astray here also, they plead for a change of environment, for altered conditions, and hope thus to make men acceptable to God and useful to their fellows, they are wasting their energies as far as any yield for God is concerned, for this there must be repentance: the good and honest heart, and the Word of God sown in that heart, nothing else will do. But repentance would be useless if there were not the incorruptible seed, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; this is the absolutely indispensable factor in the matter. Would to God that we realized more truly the mighty power of that Word which liveth and abideth for ever, the Word by which men are born again, by which they are brought out of death into life, and enabled to produce fruit for God, the Word which is *God's power* unto salvation. We cannot be truly effectual in our service for God and towards men unless we give to that Word the supreme place that God has given to it.

In each of the three Gospels a different element in the parable is made prominent, as may be seen from the interpretations given by the Lord.

In MATTHEW it is the *soil*. He said, "Hear ye therefore the parable of the Sower. When *any one heareth* the Word of the kingdom" (13. 18, 19). It is not difficult to see why this should be so in Matthew, for Christ is there presented to Israel as the Messiah, it is only in this Gospel that the seed is called "*the Word of the kingdom*." And everything depended upon how that Word as to His person and kingdom was received, that Word tested the character of the soil.

In MARK it is the *Sower*. "He said, The *Sower* soweth the Word" (4. 14). The Sower is the Lord Himself, and Mark calls attention to Him especially in this character, as the Servant of God. His Gospel is "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and he shows us how "Jesus came . . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God:" sowing the Word.

In LUKE it is the *Seed*. He said, "Now the parable is this: The *seed* is the Word

of God" (8. 11). It is the Word of God, and from God, perfectly proclaimed by the perfect One, and in itself as perfect as the One who proclaimed it, for the word that He spoke was the exact expression of what He was.

Each evangelist gives a different yield as a result of the sowing. Results there must be, results according to the eternal counsels of God and the word of prophecy; for neither the purposes nor the promises of God can fail, they were committed to the Son of God for effectuation.

The results, as given in each Gospel, must be in harmony with the character of the Gospel in which they appear. MATTHEW in giving "some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty," while, as in all the Gospels, the results in the individual souls that hear the Word are made manifest, presents in a striking way the wider dispensational results of the sowing, when at the full harvest the King shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. He will look out with joy upon the sheaves that He will bring as the result of His sowing in tears. Nearer to Him than all else will be His church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, clothed in the beauty with which He will clothe her, a perfect reflection of Himself: here is the hundredfold. Israel will stand next, beloved by Him with an everlasting love: in Israel will be the sixtyfold. Then the great outer circle of the nations, brought out of death by the Word of the kingdom, they shall come and walk in the light of the Lord. In the nations thus yielded to the universal sway of Christ the thirtyfold is gathered.

In MARK the results are before us in another connection; it is here the work of the great Sower, the results of which must grow to a full harvest to the glory of God. The yield at first was small; it seemed as though He had spent His strength for naught: just 120 poor and despised people in an upper room, without any power, waiting in prayer. That was the small beginning, the thirtyfold if you will; but the hundredfold will be reaped when the scripture is fulfilled which says: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. 150. 6).

In LUKE there is but one measure, and that is perfect—one hundredfold. Here is brought to view what is characteristic

of the gospel—the work of God in the soul by the Word of God. In this Gospel only it is said that the good ground hearers are those who hear and keep the Word in "*an honest and good heart.*" That Word, so received, must bring forth after its own sort; those who so receive it will be fashioned by it, and there will be a moral affinity between them and Him who was the perfect expression of the Word in His ways. The Lord owns such as being of God even as He was. "My mother and My brethren are these which hear the Word of God, and do it" (8. 21). It is interesting to see that the incident which draws these words from the Lord is placed after the parable of the Sower in Luke, while it is given prior to it in both Matthew and Mark. (J.T.M.)

The Mustard Seed.

This parable is the only one of the similitudes of the kingdom which is common to all three Synoptic Gospels, a fact which may serve to indicate the great practical importance of understanding its true meaning. The scribe who has been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 13. 52) finds in it no small factor in determining the current of his life. It occurs first in Matthew 13., where it occupies the third place in the seven parables of the chapter. All these are given to teach *the companions of Jesus*, verse 11 (let us give full weight to the moral character of this qualification, for to others it was not given), what God would bring to pass on earth after the rejection of His Son, which is so plainly marked in chapters 11. and 12. The first parable in chapter 13., the Sower, is not a similitude of the kingdom, but rather an instruction as to how the kingdom will be established during this present time. Following this, three parables exhibit the outward form the kingdom would take as the result of the sowing of the seed. They are truly prophetic (ver. 35), showing what *would* be, not what *ought* to be, not therefore illustrating the character of the kingdom according to the will of God. This is evident from the tares being found among the wheat. The question then arises whether the remarkable growth from a minute seed to a tree greater than all herbs indicates an increase according to God. Could God own as the work of His Spirit the means by which such growth was attained?

The *successors*, not the followers of the Galilæan fishermen, are found wielding, according to this parable, all the power of the last Gentile empire, a truly extraordinary leaven. But of what spiritual good could a great tree be on earth where Jesus is an outcast? In Mark 4 we find two similitudes of the kingdom following the parable of the Sower in place of six, as in Matthew, one (vers 26-29) peculiar to Mark, the Gospel of the Servant, and one, as we have seen, common to all three. The former plainly shows the non-intervention of God in any manifest way except at the beginning and end of the age—"The seed shall sprout and grow, he does not know how." The mustard seed completes the picture by showing what the outward appearance of the kingdom would be during this period of non-intervention. How important for the servant of the Lord to estimate at its true value such an enlargement.

The Wicked Husbandmen.

This parable holds an important place in the last controversies between the Lord and the religious leaders of the nation. These controversies occupy only one chapter in Luke (20), parts of two chapters in Mark (11 and 12), the greater part of three in Matthew (21, 22, 23) being more fully detailed in this, as is fitting in the gospel of Messiah in His personal and final presentation to the rebellious nation.

In all three Gospels the parable is prefaced by the question as to the Lord's authority raised by the chief priests, scribes, and elders who evidently were becoming conscious of the loss of their own, as "all the people were very attentive to hear Him" (Luke 19 48). The Lord distinctly shows, by exposing their own incompetence to solve the question of the moment—really what God was doing at that time—that their authority had not moral foundation. These circumstances and the utterance and application of the little parable of the Two Sons (Matt 21 28), with which that of the Husbandmen is connected as "another parable" (ver 33), indicate that the relations between Christ and these leaders is approaching a crisis. It is just here that the parable we are considering is introduced. Their hypocrisy had been exposed in verses 30, 31. Here not only their utter failure to respond to the divine

claims, but their terrible guilt in persistent opposition to the God whom nominally they acknowledged, is portrayed so faithfully that perforce they recognize their own portrait, and in Matthew they pronounce their own doom, saying themselves, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render Him the fruits in their seasons."

MARK gives this as the word of the Lord as the great Servant prophet. LUKE adds the exclamation uttered by the Jews—"May it never be." The *final* judgment of the guilty nation waits, however, *another day*, as the Lord shows in the brief allusion to the Stone of Psalm 118 which follows our parable in each Gospel. That Stone over which they were then stumbling in their religious pride to their ruin should one day fall on their successors of the same generation and involve them in a worse disaster.

The Fig Tree.

This brief parable occurs in the same connection in all three Gospels, and is part of the instruction given to the disciples, viewed as the believing remnant out of the nation, to guide them in the time of the national crisis which the preceding prophecy made known. The instruction suggests their learning from the events of the time the near return of Christ. The believers of the present interval have another guide than prophecy. The arising *in our hearts* of the Morning Star Himself give guidance of a better character (2 Peter 1). Not, however, that we should not take heed to the word of prophecy, for indeed it is a lamp in this dark place, and has a definite aim as demonstrating the nature of the forces of evil active in this world and also the final triumph of God over them.

Besides this, however, the fig tree is the well known symbol of the nation of Israel viewed on its political side, just as the vine presents the same nation in its original standing viewed on its religious side responsible to bear fruit to God, so in Luke, the Gentile Gospel, the words "and all the trees" are added, for indeed there will be many nations involved with Israel in the coming crisis. Some of these having for a time lost their national position have, even in our day, been revived into a place of importance.

Papers on the Higher Criticism.

(H. P. BARKER).

V. A Walk round the British Museum.

TWO notable attacks have been made, in recent years, upon the impregnable citadel of the Holy Scriptures. A bold frontal attack has been made in the name of science by the Darwinian hypothesis of the origin and development of species. At the same time an attack in the rear has been made by the critics whose methods and conjectures we are reviewing in these papers. Just as Herod and Pilate of old were united in their hostility to Christ, so pseudo-science and pseudo-criticism have joined hands in their antagonism to the Bible.

Confronting the attacking forces, however, both in the front and in the rear, are the collections in the great national museums. The vast natural history collection at South Kensington has been searched in vain for evidence in favour of the Darwinian theory; while the treasures in the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian rooms in the British Museum heap overwhelming discomfiture upon the "results" of the Higher Criticism.

A few examples, selected from an immense mass of available material, are all that can be given in a magazine article. The numbers of the exhibits are quoted, for the use of any who may have the opportunity of examining them.

Sargon.

In Isaiah 20. 1 we are told that an Assyrian king named Sargon sent an expedition against Ashdod, one of the five cities of the Philistines. No mention of this king, Sargon, has been found in any ancient writings, and he has been relegated to the region of myth by the critics, who have roundly asserted that no such king of Assyria ever lived. The mention of this Sargon by Isaiah was said to be a proof of the unhistorical character of the Bible.

Christian commentators tried to explain away the reference. Dr. Kitto, in his *Pictorial Bible*, says: "Sargon appears to be another name for Esarhaddon." Sharpe, in his translation of the Old Testament, gives "Sennacherib" in brackets as an explanatory alternative! Others have expressed the opinion that Shalmaneser was meant. All this was grist to the critics' mill, and loud was their jubilation at the supposed proof of the legendary character of the passage.

In 1842, however, when M. Botta was carrying on some excavations at Khorsabad, he discovered the foundations of a vast building which proved to be nothing less than the remains of a palace erected by the unknown Sargon! Monuments from this palace may be seen in the Assyrian Transept of the British Museum. Amongst them (No. 3) is part of a bas-relief giving a full-length portrait of the king whose very existence has been denied by the Higher Critics!

In the Assyrian Saloon there is a sculpture (No. 12) upon which an inscription appears, giving the name and titles of Sargon, and describing his conquests in various countries. In the Nineveh Gallery (Table-case C, Nos. 1 to 11) are some tablets excavated at Nineveh, upon which is recorded the very expedition sent by Sargon against Ashdod!

Could confirmation of the Scriptures be more emphatic, and the discomfiture of its antagonists more complete?

Date of Pentateuch.

At the western end of the Babylonian and Assyrian Room, just inside the doorway, on the right-hand side, stands a noteworthy object, a black column, covered with close cuneiform writing in twenty-eight columns. It

is a cast of the celebrated stele upon which is inscribed the so-called "Code of Khammurabi."

This Khammurabi has been identified with the "Amraphel king of Shinar" of Genesis 14. 1, "Amraphel" being merely the Hebrew form of the Babylonian word "Khammurabi."

The discovery of this stele at Susa, in the winter of 1901, was a great blow to the Higher Critics, as it disposes completely of three of their favourite postulates, namely—

(1) That Genesis is unhistorical, and that its principal personages are fabulous beings. (Chapter XIV. has been particularly assailed in this connection.)

(2) That Moses could not have written the books which bear his name, as writing was not used for literary purposes at so early a date.

(3) That the so-called books of Moses must necessarily have been written at a date not earlier than the times of the kings, since the human race had not until then developed sufficiently to make a code of laws, such as we have in Exodus, possible.

These statements are proved, by the discovery of this stele, to be false, in that Amraphel king of Shinar (or Babylon) is shown to be a real historic personage, living about two thousand years B.C. Even his portrait is before our eyes in a relief carved on the upper part of the stele. Writing is proved to have been in ordinary use, not merely in the days of Moses, but hundreds of years previously. Finally, a code of laws, some two hundred and eighty-two in number, is demonstrated to have been in existence as early as the time of Abraham!

How is it that no shame is felt by those who, under the influence of such exploded fallacies, have assailed the Word of God?

The Hittites.

In the Nimroud Central Saloon, near the pillars on the east side, are to

be found some of the interesting Hittite remains, discovered by Mr. Henderson in 1878 amid the ruins of the ancient capital of the Hittite empire, Carchemish.

In his fascinating volume, *The Hittites: the Story of a Forgotten Empire*, Professor Sayce quotes the criticism of "a distinguished scholar," in 1843, upon the passage in 2 Kings 7. 6, where we are told that the Syrians, in their panic, exclaimed, "Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites."

Concerning this passage, the "distinguished scholar" observes: "Its unhistorical tone is too manifest to allow of our easy belief in it. . . . No Hittite kings can have compared in power with the kings of Judah, the real and near ally. . . . Nor is there a single mark of acquaintance with the contemporaneous history."

How ludicrous such remarks appear in the light of the discoveries that have been made in recent years. As Professor Sayce says: "The Hittites were a very real power. Not very many centuries before the age of Elisha they had contested the empire of Western Asia with the Egyptians, and though their power had waned in the days of Jehoram, they were still formidable enemies and useful allies. They were still worthy of comparison with the divided kingdom of Egypt, and infinitely more powerful than that of Judah."

Among the remains in the Nimroud Central Saloon may be seen a monolith (No. 10) with the figure of one of the "kings of the Hittites" in relief! In the Assyrian Saloon, in a case at the end of the room, there may be seen a bronze band (No. 1) from a gate made by Shalmaneser II, giving a picture in relief of an expedition against the Hittite city, Carchemish, and representing a payment of tribute from its king to the Assyrian monarch.

Thus once again we find the Scriptures vindicated and the ignorant criti-

cism of "distinguished scholars" put to shame.

Belshazzar.

The references to Belshazzar in the book of Daniel have been regarded by writers of the Higher Critical school as affording them substantial ground for impugning the accuracy of the Bible. Now that we are as well acquainted with the names of the kings of the second Babylonian empire as we are with the names of the English monarchs of the Plantagenet period, and the name of Belshazzar does not appear among them, the critics have assumed a somewhat triumphant air.

"We know," say they, "that the last of the Babylonian kings was named Nabonidus, and that he was reigning when the siege and capture of Babylon took place. Is it not clear, then, that the Bible is in error when it affirms that a king of the name of Belshazzar was upon the throne at that eventful epoch?"

But as we come, in our walk round the British Museum, to the Babylonian and Assyrian Room, we find in Table-case G (No. 53) a baked clay cylinder containing an inscription by King Nabonidus, in which he makes mention of "Belshazzar, my first-born son."

This inscription proves two things :

(1) That in the time of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, there was a person named Belshazzar.

(2) That this Belshazzar was the eldest son of King Nabonidus.

Now it was customary in those days, when monarchs were frequently absent from the kingdoms on military expeditions, for the reigning sovereign to associate his eldest son with him in the government of the realm. It would appear that this was done in the case of Belshazzar, and that he reigned in Babylon in conjunction with his father.

Turning to Table-case E, in the same room (No. 122) we have a clay tablet known as the Annalistic Tablet

of Cyrus, describing the entry into Babylon of the victorious Median army. We learn from this record that Nabonidus was at Sippara with his army, and that he took refuge in flight. Two days afterwards Babylon fell. Some time after this Nabonidus was taken prisoner and loaded with fetters. It follows therefore that the king who died on the night when Babylon was taken could not have been Nabonidus. Who else could it have been but Belshazzar his son and vice-regent?

To make the vindication of the Scripture still more striking, let it be noticed that Belshazzar could only offer the *third* place in the kingdom to Daniel (Dan. 5. 16). Why not the *second* place? The obvious reason is because Belshazzar himself was the second ruler, his father, Nabonidus, being the first, and that therefore the person who occupied the place next to him could be but third.

Thus at every turn the Scripture record is triumphantly vindicated, and the charges of inaccuracy recoil upon the heads of those that make them.

Elam.

One other instance may be given, apparently unimportant in itself, but serving as a very clear illustration of the fallaciousness of the critical "deductions."

In Isaiah 21. 2 the allied powers attacking Babylon are named Elam and Media. The older commentators explained that "Elam" means Persia. And it was taken for granted that their explanation was correct.

But one day the "critics" made a discovery, namely, that Elam and Persia were two different nations and by no means to be confounded.

Here was a good case against the Bible. Cyrus, king of Persia and Media, the conqueror of Babylon, is a well-known character in history, but what has *Elam* to do with the matter?

The Babylonian and Assyrian Room contains a document, however, where-

by the Scripture is shown to be correct. In Case G (No. 67) we see a clay cylinder of Cyrus, in which he is styled *King of Elam*. To quote the exact words of the inscription (as translated by Professor Sayce) :

“Cyrus, king of Elam, he proclaimed by name for the sovereignty . . .

“I am Cyrus . . . the son of Kam-byses, the great king, the king of Elam, the grandson of Cyrus, the great king, the king of Elam ; the great-grandson of Teispes, the great king, the king of Elam of the ancient seed-royal.”

Cyrus, then, came of the ancient line of Elamite sovereigns. He did not become “king of Persia” until he had conquered that country and incorporated it with his empire. Again the victory is with the Scriptures !

* * * * *

Further witnesses to the truth of the Bible may be found in abundance among the vast number of sculptures, cylinders, tablets, etc., in the museum. These relics of antiquity show conclusively how untenable are the positions of the Higher Critics, and in the light of their testimony it is impossible to acquit of bias those who cling to the discredited theories of that school.

May God grant repentance and recovery to those who have been misled, and may He give grace to us who believe in the full inspiration of the Scriptures to study them with greater diligence and to find therein that which shall feed our souls.

Of what avail is orthodoxy unless we are in touch with the *living* God? What benefit is it to us to have correct views of the Bible unless we find its words to be *words of life* to our souls? He turns his study of the Word of God to the best account who discovers *Christ* therein, from Genesis to Malachi, and from Matthew to Revelation.

It may be objected that the ancient monuments do not always confirm the accuracy of the Scriptures, and that

various chronological discrepancies have been discovered. And of course it is concluded that the Assyrian records are correct and the Word of God wrong! The conclusion proves the *annus* of the critic who permits himself to make the inference.

Apart from the fact, established by Professor Sayce, that the inscriptions sometimes contradict each other in the matter of dates, it must be remembered that mistakes of this kind are by no means unknown, even in our own day. In the epitaph on Spenser’s monument in Westminster Abbey there is a mis-statement as to the date of his birth of no less than *forty years*, and as to that of his death of *three years*. There were two chronological mis-statements on the Duke of Cambridge’s monument, erected after his death in 1904, in Whitehall, London. These errors were the subject of a correspondence in the newspapers at the time.

On the coffin-plate of King Edward VII his death is stated to have occurred in the *ninth*, instead of the *tenth*, year of his reign !

If blunders like these can occur in modern times and even in the twentieth century, with all its vaunted accuracy, what wonder that they should also occasionally be found in the records of ages gone by ?

In the inscription of Darius Hystaspes on the Behistun rock no less than *fourteen* mistakes made by the engraver (one of them actually corrected by himself) are noted by the authors of the exhaustive work on the subject issued by the trustees of the British Museum.

In view of such facts, while profoundly appreciative of the wonderful harmony generally existing between the testimony of the monuments and the narratives of Scripture, we must not regard the former as absolutely to be depended upon in every case. Where a discrepancy exists, we may be sure that the error is on the part of the monuments and not in Scripture.

The Approbation of the Lord.

IT should be joy to any one who loves the Lord Jesus to be conscious of having His individual peculiar approbation and love; to find He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none know this but ourselves who receive the approval. But are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or at least that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us—even in the church to be thought nothing of? that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the new name which no man knoweth save only he that re-

ceiveth it? Are we content to seek nothing else? Oh! think what the terrible evil and treachery of that heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favour, but seeks honour (as we do) of one another instead!

Which would be most precious to you, which would you prefer—the Lord's public owning of you as a good and faithful servant or the private individual love of Christ resting upon you—the secret knowledge of His love and approval? He whose heart is specially attached to Christ will respond, "The latter." Both will be ours, if faithful; but we shall value this most; and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on our course as the anticipation of it.

J. N. Darby.

God our Saviour.—No. 6.

(JAMES BOYD).

Righteousness.

FOR mere man there is no other place in relationship with God but innocence or glory. But innocence being now lost, glory is the only alternative to the lake of fire; though the latter place was never intended for man at all (Matt. 25. 41). There can be no return to innocence, for man has acquired the knowledge of good and evil; and he has that knowledge in a fallen condition, having acquired it by an act of disobedience, and this knowledge he retains throughout his history of rebellion against God. God said of fallen man, he "is become as one of Us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3. 22), and he was turned out of the garden with the judgment of death hanging over his guilty head. There was no getting back to his original state, and

therefore he is cast out from the place where he had enjoyed the rich blessing of God. Now if he is to be with God at all in blessing, he must be with Him in a new way; he must be with Him in a way consistent with the knowledge gained by his wicked attempt to grasp at equality with God; and he must be with Him in a way suited to Him who could say that, as far as knowledge of good and evil was concerned, he had become as "*one of Us*." If he is to be in blessing with Him he must not have thoughts of good and evil which differ from those of his Creator, who alone is the source and supply of all blessing for the creature. He must learn to connect good with God, and he must also learn that all good for the creature comes from God, and lies in complete subjec-

tion to His holy and righteous will. And he must learn to connect all evil with the creature, and see it as giving character to those who are in revolt from His authority. He must also be brought to know that "none is good but one, that is God" (Luke 18. 19), and to love the good and hate the evil, as God does.

Having broken through the fence erected by his all-wise and beneficent Creator, and having become acquainted with things which lay outside the sphere in which his happiness was enclosed, man could not be in relationship and blessing with God on the old footing. Of course, if the knowledge of good and evil, which made him as "*one of Us*," had not been brought in by sin, and if his human moral perfections had not been disturbed by that knowledge, this might indeed have been, and in fact it was, what the *law* proposed. But in gaining this knowledge man fell away from God, became His enemy, and also became morally corrupt. He loved the evil which had ruined him, and which was now his master, and he hated the good, between which and himself his sin had fixed an impassable gulf. Upon the ground of creature responsibility, according to the place in which he was set on the day in which he was created, there was no standing for him at all. He not only had lost innocence, but he had fallen under the power of evil; and to innocence there was not only no return, but life as God's creature upon earth, according to his primal relationships and responsibilities, was as impossible as was his return to innocence. It may have taken, and it did take, four thousand years to bring this fully to light, but it was true from the outset, though known only to God.

But the question of innocence being over as regards man, another question comes to light, and that is the question of righteousness. This the law raised fully with man as possessing the knowledge of good and evil, without raising the question of how he came by that

knowledge. It promised life on the ground of perfect obedience. It was not life in heaven nor in the glory of God that it held forth as the reward of fulfilled obligations, but life upon earth, from which man at the beginning was debarred in consequence of the fall. By the fulfilment of his obligations he was to maintain himself in life and blessing here upon earth. This proved to be a ministration of death and condemnation, for the poor creature to whom it came was unable to fulfil its righteous demands. Neither life nor righteousness was obtainable under that covenant. Moses had said, as I have already noticed, that the man who did the things commanded would live in them; but as no one did them there was no one to claim the blessing, and therefore death went on with its work, undisturbed by the efforts of the creature to justify himself, and thus ward off his weapon. Therefore the question of gaining righteousness and life by the law, or, what is the same thing, by the fulfilment of creature responsibilities, is just as completely closed as is the question of innocence.

That trial of man under law was carried out under the most favourable circumstances in which the creature could be placed. The people who were taken up to be thus tested were brought up out of Egypt, from the most bitter bondage that any people could be under; and they were brought out of that bondage by the almighty power of God, their eyes being made to witness His terrible judgment upon those who had held them captive, and who had set themselves in opposition to Him when He had intervened as their Deliverer. In the wilderness they were with God, living upon His bounty. To satisfy their hunger bread was given to them out of heaven, and to meet their thirst the flinty rock poured out a plentiful supply of water, cool and refreshing. By day the cloud sheltered them from the broiling sun, and by night the fire lit up their wanderings. But all to no

purpose, as far as the gratitude of their hearts was concerned; they filled the wilderness with their wretched murmurings.

In the land He fought their battles, gave them the lands, houses, and cities of their enemies. But what report does the law in which they prided themselves give concerning them? "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3. 10-18).

But now the scene is altogether altered. God intervenes for the deliverance of His poor sin-dominated creature. We have seen the way in which He has intervened in the person of the Mediator, who gave Himself a ransom for all, in consonance with the desire of a Saviour-God, who would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. On earth, and in the place where man had dishonoured God, broken His laws, and refused Him in every way in which He had sought to win his heart from paths of sin and death, His beloved Son magnified the law and made it honourable, glorified Him in every one of His attributes, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and thus opened up a way of salvation for the whole human race.

But redemption having been accomplished we see Man gone back to the Father in perfect righteousness, and thus a new place for man is laid open before the vision of faith. It is not now an innocent man, without the knowledge of good and evil, in an earthly paradise, enjoying the blessing

of God in an earthly way, but it is a heavenly man in a heavenly paradise, before God revealed in all the fathomless love of His heart; and this is now, as I have said, the only place of blessing for man wherever found.

Therefore this fact changes the whole character of righteousness. It is now a question of fitness for the glory of God. And this helps us to understand the statement of the Apostle in Romans 3., where he says, there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The Apostle does not mean to convey the impression that man was once fit, but fell away from that fitness. There are two statements made: the first, that he had sinned; the second that he is short of the glory, and the reason this is stated is because the glory of God is now the standard of fitness for blessing. There is no getting back to *what Adam was*. That is all over, as I have said, and as Scripture declares. On the original ground of relationship with God all are *lost*. God has intervened to recover man *in Christ*. All have sinned, and this does away with his title to life here on earth, and as he is short of the glory he cannot come in there, so that he is completely undone.

But the gospel reveals to man a new kind of righteousness altogether, *the righteousness of God*, and entirely apart from law or the conduct of man in any shape whatever, though witnessed by the law and the prophets. These had testified that man had no righteousness of his own, that anything which he might boast himself in as righteousness was only filthy rags; but while rendering this testimony to the unrighteousness and undone condition of those under law, testified of righteousness on the part of God which was yet to be revealed. The sacrificial system under law and the prophetic word brought this righteousness before the people, who found themselves unable to obtain righteousness by their own efforts. But it was not then revealed,

nor could it be revealed while the question of man's righteousness by works of law was still being considered. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3. 21-23). This is a righteousness not to be measured by man's accountability as a child of Adam, nor by the relationship in which such a man stood with God; but it is a righteousness which is measured only by the full revelation which God has been pleased to give of Himself, and by the ability of man to stand in the full light of that revelation. It is righteousness on the part of God which, while it covers the whole ground of man's responsible career, so that he is justified from all things, places the believer *in Christ* before God revealed in all His attributes and in His nature as love. It is a righteousness which makes the vilest sinner who believes the gospel as fit for the glory of God as Christ is, for we are made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21).

This is very different from that which was written upon the two tables of stone, and which was the righteous demand of God upon His creature man. There was no *revelation* of God: He spoke the words out of the *thick darkness*, and man was required to do nothing but love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, and this was simply that he might on earth enjoy immunity from death and from all the consequences of sin. But the gospel unfolds an entirely new order of things—the righteousness of God, a new place for man in glory, in all the light of God fully revealed; and this is the place in which Christ is, in all the value of His infinite sacrifice, by which God was glorified, and according to the excellency of His

blessed Person; for it is on the ground of that which He has done that He has been so highly exalted, and the place of acceptance in which He is tells us of the unspeakable delight of the Father in Him. He has glorified God, and on this account God has glorified Him in Himself (John 13. 31, 32).

Now this blessed Person is preached in the gospel as righteousness for every soul on earth. Just as the one that died for Adam and Eve in the garden became their covering under the eye of God, so is this glorious Person held out as righteousness for all. He is the "*best robe*" in which every poor returning prodigal is brought near to God, and accepted in His sight.

And this is just what made the Apostle not ashamed of the gospel. He says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1. 16, 17). And there was a necessity for this righteousness, for wrath was revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. All were sinners, and sinners against whatever light they had from God, whether that light was creation, tradition, or law: no one was consistent with the light he had, and hence in the day of judgment there would be nothing but condemnation for all, if God had no way of justification for man apart from works of law, for as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law, and as many as have sinned "in the law shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2. 12-16).

The conduct of man having been proved to be inconsistent with whatever measure of light God had in wisdom and in goodness given to him, and the wrath of God having been revealed from heaven against all unright-

eousness, there is no hope for any one on the ground of creature responsibility. And wrath must be the portion of all, whether he be Jew or Gentile; for though all have not had the same measure of light, all have been inconsistent with whatever light they had; and though the judgment will be in proportion to the light so graciously given, there is no one who has not rendered himself liable to it. And as it is "*wrath revealed from heaven*," and not governmental, such as pestilences and the sword, it is in its nature eternal and does not terminate with the present life; it is wrath outside His moral government of the world.

How is this state of things to be met? If none are righteous, and wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, how can any be saved? This is where the greatness and the grandeur of the gospel comes in. If man has got no righteousness for God, God has got righteousness for man, and the groundwork of it all is the *ransom* of the Mediator, the *blood of Jesus*. This blood is on the mercy seat, bearing witness to accomplished redemption. It declares the righteousness of God, with respect to the passing over of past sins, such as the sins of believers in the dispensations which have run their courses. If God took sinners like Abel, Abraham, and David into His favour, and did not deal with them according to their works, it was not because He thought lightly of sin, but it was on account of the work of the cross, where sin has received its judgment, and where God has been glorified about it. This blood of Jesus was the foundation of blessing for all saints in all dispensations, but the principle upon which they were justified was always faith in the Word of God. But now forgiveness of sins is declared world-wide, and the soul who believes the gospel is justified from all things (Acts 13. 38, 39).

And the righteousness of God is just as available on the behalf of the Gentile

as on the behalf of the Jew, for God is as much the God of the Gentile as He is of the Jew; and, indeed, it was when Abraham was in uncircumcision that righteousness was imputed to him (Rom. 4). The Apostle tells us that he believed in *Him who quickens the dead*, and calls those things that be not as being. In the steps of that faith the gospel calls all men to walk. But we have not, like Abraham, to believe that God shall quicken the dead, we have the witness of this power of God before our eyes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and has been raised again for our justification. And thus believing on the God of resurrection, whose power we see acting on our behalf in the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, we are justified from all things.

And the righteousness thus made ours is entirely of God, it is not our own righteousness. We had no hand in it. It is not by our works, one way or another. It is like the coats of skins: they were the work of God. It has often been said that God had not a stitch in man's apron of fig leaves, and that man had not a stitch in God's coat of skins. It is altogether the work of God. He has undertaken to clothe naked sinners, and He has provided the clothing at an infinite cost to Himself. The clothes, to use the figure, are carried to men, to all men, in the gospel. The believer is clothed with Christ, who is made unto us righteousness, and we are "made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

Now being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5). We are no longer short of that glory: we are as fit for it as Christ is; for from God He is made unto us righteousness, and it is in His fitness we are fit. We have none of our own.

“Beside the Still Waters.”

(J. T. MAWSON).

“He leadeth me beside the still waters” (Ps. 23).

THE souls of men are restless, sin has made them so, for “the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.” But the good Shepherd calls His sheep from their toilsome wanderings, He brings them to repose at His feet, and He leads them beside the waters of quietness.

The simile brings a picture of peace to the vision, a wonderful and blessed peace; it speaks of restfulness of heart in a secure retreat. But it does not follow that this quietness of soul springs from external circumstances — these may be most adverse to our natural inclination and contrary to our every purpose. Yet in the midst of them the heart may be unruffled, as another scripture says: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.”

One soul-enthraling incident from the life of our Lord on earth illustrates the truth to perfection. At the bidding of their Master the fishermen-disciples had launched their craft upon as still a sea as ever the sun shone upon. But they had scarce set their oars to the rowlocks when the wind uprose, and increased to a terrific gale; the very fury of hell seemed to be let loose in that tempest, and the waves foamed and dashed about that one small boat with such fierce threatenings that those well-seasoned mariners were seized with a panic of fear; the raging of the waters without the boat created so great a storm of fear within their breasts that they cry aloud in their anguish. But what of the Master in the midst of that storm? Was His cheek pale with terror? Did any anxiety of heart show itself in His demeanour? Nay,

“His head was on a pillow laid,
And He was fast asleep.”

Perfect peace in the midst of the tempest! Blessed repose in the presence

of the threatening waves! Oh, why did not those disciples stretch themselves by His side? Why did they not share His pillow? Had that storm increased its fury sevenfold they would still have been safe, yea, safe as when at the command of the Lord that great calm laid itself down upon the turbulent deep.

But what was the secret of the wonderful repose? upon what pillow did the Lord put down His head? The secret was unbroken confidence in God; the pillow was His Father's changeless and almighty love. He was the Man of absolute dependence, more than man, as we shall see, but truly man, committing all His way to God and satisfied to do His will alone. And the God whom He served was behind every circumstance, He sat above the water-flood, and put a strong bridle on the mouth of the storm. It could not rage beyond His permission, His love would keep His loved One in all His ways, and the ever-blessed and absolutely dependent Jesus rested there. And, Christian, He gives that pillow to you, so that you may find repose in the midst of trouble; He says, “*My peace I give unto you: . . . not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14. 27). This is a great reality — “He leadeth me beside the still waters.” The raging flood without, but the quiet waters within.

The fear of those disciples brought forth an evidence of the divine power of the Lord, a gleam of His Godhead glory. With tender compassion in His heart for their weakness, with the quiet of an eternal calm in His wondrous eyes, and with omnipotence in the words of His mouth, He spoke to the storm; and the great billows fell at His feet in mute submission as

cowers a spaniel at the feet of his master.

The disciples marvelled at that mighty act, and, indeed, it was wonderful; but whether of the twain commands our deepest admiration, the *peace* in the tempest, or the *power* over it?

The former may ever be ours, for the latter is always on our side, to be used for us when immortal love sees that the storm has taught us the needed lesson. But it is a greater thing to go through the storm reposing in perfect confidence in Him than to have

it removed for us. It is more to His honour when we allow ourselves to be led by the still waters while the floods roll about us, than to have our circumstances changed to suit our lack of faith.

Christians, let us trust in the Lord at all times; let us recline upon His bosom, and believe that He will not permit a single circumstance, or place us in any situation which will not further in our souls the purposes of His changeless love. So shall we be led by the waters of quietness. In Him we shall have peace.

The Lord's Care for our State.

IT is too frequently supposed that, because the salvation of the saint is a sure thing, God is indifferent about his character here. But this is impossible, for His love is not a careless love.

A child would eventually inherit his father's property, but what parent would be satisfied, if he loved his child, with knowing that? Would he not anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties, and ordering all the details of his education, so as to fit him for his future destiny? How much more is this the way of the Lord's love with His children!

The declension of a saint is often arrested by tribulation; the Lord's most gracious interest in our spiritual prosperity is often manifested by permitting us to be tested in this way. I say most gracious, because it is wonderful how quickly we go downhill unless a strong hand stops us.

But how does the Lord reveal Himself to souls in tribulation, poverty, and persecution? We see an example in the address to the church at Smyrna (Rev. 2.). He reveals Himself as the *FIRST* and the *LAST*, the One whom nothing can touch, whom not all the clouds and storms and difficulties and trials can affect; like the sun, bright before the storm and bright after it.

It may be said, That is true of Him, but when the storm rolls over us and threatens to overwhelm us, we have no power against it.

But He reveals Himself not only as "the First and the Last"—the One, therefore, on whom we may lean for eternal strength—but also as "which was dead and is alive." He has entered into the weakness of man, and undergone all the power that could come against him, all the trials, even unto death.

Death is the last effort of Satan's power. The unconverted are out of Satan's power when they die; they come under the judgment of God, but Satan has no power in hell. He may have pre-eminence in misery, but no power there; he is "the ruler of the darkness of this world," not of the next. His reigning in hell is the poet's dream, but it is not true; it is here he reigns, and that by means of the pride and vanity, the evil passions and idleness of men.

But whatever may be the extent of the power which he seeks to exercise against the children of God, the Lord says, "I have met it, been under it—I have been dead." Therefore it is impossible for us to be in any circumstance of difficulty or of trial through which Jesus has not been. He has met the power of Satan in death, and He is "alive for evermore." Alive not only to sustain His saints while passing through the storm, but to sympathize with them, as having experienced all the heaviness of their circumstances. He can pity with the utmost tenderness, for He came into the very centre of our misery.—(J. N. Darby).

Atoning and other Sufferings of Christ. (H. D. R. JAMESON).

“A Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

ON this precious theme there has of late years been a great deal written and taught amongst Christians generally. The sufferings of Christ have come to the front and been dwelt upon to an extent which one cannot be too thankful for, as regards at least the fact of their being brought before the minds of saints. The cross has been emphasized and dwelt upon by Christian leaders on every hand. But with all this there has been in certain quarters a confounding of the true characters of these sufferings of our blessed Lord in such wise as greatly to cloud the real truth of atonement, and, indeed, in increasing measure to even deny it. Much has been said as to our having fellowship in His sufferings; but where all the sorrows of that spotless life and the afflictions of His atoning death are classed together without any regard to their widely differing characters, then, the truth being perverted, that which ought to afford precious food for communion, and call forth the affections, ceases to possess its own proper power, all sinks to a lower level, and very serious error is brought in.

There is a danger in attempting to distinguish the things that differ in a theme so profound and precious lest in the process of such analysis the mind should become so absorbed in the observance of the necessary distinctions as that the affections shall cease to be in the fresh warmth of exercise which such a theme should induce. We need to guard against this. Nevertheless, at a time when the minds of thousands of dear saints are being drawn away from a right apprehension of the truth by reason of the way the subject is being handled by Christian leaders, I think it well to endeavour, as the Lord may enable

me, to dwell a little on certain clearly distinguishable features in the sufferings of Christ.

Three Characters of Sufferings.

Broadly speaking, there are three characters of His sufferings. First, that which He suffered at the hand of God directly for sin—that is to say, in atonement. These sufferings are absolutely unique and stand alone—utterly and totally alone in a category by themselves. They are peculiar to the hour in which His soul was made an offering for sin—an hour that in the magnitude of its issues never was approached in all eternity past and never can be approached again in all eternity to come.

Secondly, there was that which He suffered at the hands of men for righteousness' sake. The reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon Him. He was despised and rejected of men. They hated Him without a cause. They mocked and spit upon Him, and with wicked hands crucified and slew the Holy One and the Just. These were not atoning sufferings. Sufferings in atonement were *for sin*: these *for righteousness*. Sufferings in atonement were from the hand of *God*: these from the hands of *men*. Sufferings in atonement were *judicial* in their character and inflicted of God in righteousness; sufferings from men were in contravention of all justice and inflicted of them in unrighteousness. In atonement Christ suffered alone: none could possibly stand with Him in that solemn hour. In suffering from man for righteousness' sake we may suffer with Him. “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye.”

Thirdly, there were what, for the sake of a better word, I may speak of as His intrinsic sufferings—that is to

say, that which He suffered in virtue of what He Himself was in the midst of a world such as this is.

The first and second characters of sufferings were directly *inflicted* upon Him ; the first at the hand of God, the second at the hands of men. The third character of sufferings were not sufferings directly inflicted on Him, but rather that which was His because of what He Himself was—not sufferings for righteousness, nor again *for* sin, but the sufferings that ever were His on *account* of sin, because of the *fact* of sin in the world in which He was, perfect in holiness and love.

Intrinsic Sufferings.

In the order these things assume in my mind I would speak first in some detail of those sufferings of our blessed Lord which I have characterized as intrinsic. I do not care for the word, but have at hand none better fitted to convey the nature of the sorrows of which I would speak, namely, the grief and ceaseless suffering which were His in virtue simply of what He Himself was in the midst of a world of sin such as this is.

In a certain and a very important sense *all* His sufferings flowed from what He Himself was. He could not have been made sin had He not been the sinless One. In that fact lay the agony it was to Him to be made what was so abhorrent to His nature ; and it was because of *who* He was that He was able to meet the claims of infinite justice and satisfy all the requirements of the divine majesty in respect of sin. So too His sufferings from man were occasioned by what He was. He was the true Light, and men loved darkness rather than light, and the perfection of His love and of all His deep and tender sensibilities made their hatred, scorn, and rejection all matters of deepest grief and suffering to Him. But the sufferings I speak of as intrinsic differ from these, in that they are not directly inflicted sufferings.

These intrinsic sufferings may be distinguished, and should be, in several regards. First, there was the sorrow which was His as a divine Person—not merely divine in the secondary sense in which the word is often used, but as absolutely in Deity, one of the Persons of the Godhead—infinite in holiness and love, yet found in the midst of a world of sin and hatred. Who can tell the sorrow that was His in this respect? It was the grief of God in the presence of sin—grief that had been His throughout long ages, as when the swelling tide of evil overswept the world in the days of Noah, and God, looking down on the corruption and violence, and upon the continuously evil imaginations of men, beheld nothing that could give Him joy, but only that which could bring Him grief—"It grieved Him at His heart." Love that suffered in the midst of a rebellious and perverse nation as He journeyed with Israel in all their wanderings, and when "in all their afflictions He was afflicted"—that love now, in a fuller and deeper way, entered into the presence of sin in the person of Christ coming into the world of sinners to come in contact with it at every point in all His wondrous pathway, and then too in the hour which was that of "the power of darkness" when sin rose to its flood-height about Him.

But even in that hour His sufferings in this character were not those of atonement. The infinite sorrow of God in the presence of sin is not that which works atonement, though it is presented as such by Bible teachers whose influence is far-reaching amongst thousands who truly love and honour our blessed Lord. I refer to such as *G. Campbell Morgan*, whose idea of atonement is what he speaks of as "the passion of God," His grief in respect of sin, reaching its climax truly at the cross, but as to its essential nature a sacrifice He was *ever* making, and for the support of which doctrine he quotes Revelation 13. 8, "Whose names are not written in the book of

life of the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*”—the words italicized being understood to indicate a sacrifice ever in the process of making from the very inception of sin here. Thus in his articles on “The Bible and the Cross,” first published in *The Record of Christian Work*, this teacher’s doctrine finds expression in the following words (italics mine) :

“Love is nevertheless mightier than sin. It suffers, and, upon the basis of *that suffering*, is able to forgive, and *in no other way*. Love gathered into its own consciousness all the issue and outcome of man’s rebellion.

“That which we see in the cross *did not begin* at the point of the material cross. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. *In the moment* in which man sinned against God, God *gathered into His own heart of love* the issue of that sin, and it is *not by the death of a Man*, but by the mystery of the passion of God, that He is able to keep His face turned in love toward wandering men, and welcome them as they turn back to Him.”

Such teachers, and they are increasing in numbers, fail to recognize the claims of infinite *justice* : they conceive of man being brought into accord with God as the ethical result produced in man by the display of infinite love infinitely suffering on account of the *fact* of sin, apart altogether from sin being put away by an expiatory sacrifice ; and they base the doctrine on the incorrect translation above quoted of Revelation 13. 8. Literally rendered the passage reads : “Every one whose names had not been written from the founding of the world in the *book of life of the slain Lamb* ;” that is to say, what is traced back to the foundation of the world is not the sacrifice of the Lamb, but the writing of the names. In chapter 17. 8 the same thought is plainly enough expressed in the Authorized Version, “Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,” and this latter passage should have made clear to any one what was the sense of 13. 8. Besides, sin did not come in at the *foundation* of the world : there was an interval when all was very good. What was true from the foundation of the world

was that the names of some were written in the book of life of the slain Lamb.

God’s grief in Genesis 6. did not atone for sin ; nor in the incarnation did the grief, the infinite sorrows which were the lot of the Holy One moving in and out amongst men, a divine Person in the midst of evil, work out atonement. For atonement there must be the *infliction* of judgment ; there must be on the one side *God* and on the other the *Victim*—the two distinguishable persons as we see in 2 Corinthians 5. 21 : “He [God] hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us.” True, the Christ who was made sin for us was Himself God, and it was because of who He was that He could bear the stroke of infinite justice, and atone for sin infinite in its nature as being against God ; nevertheless He is viewed there as being Man. Had He not been truly Man He could not have stood in man’s stead, and it is as having become Man that there was inflicted upon Him from God that which is *for sin*.

On the other hand, these intrinsic sufferings of which I speak are those which were His on account of the *fact* of sin, and not as taking His place as the One who would bear what was its due and glorify God in respect of the whole question of sin.

But *what* sorrows these were—the sorrows of infinite love, infinitely holy, in the presence of the fact of sin in those whom He had formed to be responsive objects of His fathomless affections. “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not ;” and if we would gather something of what it all was to Him, we may follow Him in the same Gospel in which He is thus presented in the full glory of His person as the Son, the Word, who in the beginning was with God and was God, to the grave of Lazarus, where He stands, who Himself is the

Resurrection and the Life, in the presence of death, the breaking up of all that had been set up here in ordered affections and relationships, and the full fruit of sin ; and we read, "Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave" (John 11. 38). It was the very grief of God, God in incarnation.

But, again, there were the sorrows which were His as perfect *Man* devoted to the glory of God, and yet in the midst of all that dishonoured Him. What must it have been to One whose whole delight was in the will of God, whose heart knew no other motive for action, for life, for being here, than to honour and to glorify God, what must it have been for such an One to move in the midst of evil, of that which on every hand and without intermission dishonoured the One who was *everything* to Him ? He felt everything with *God*, looked at everything as it affected God and His glory, and hence everything in this world must have been a constant source of grief to Him. In the synagogue, in the midst of opposition to the grace of God, "He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." So when the disciples would prevent the blessing of God reaching to the little children, we read, "He was much displeased." As relieving the afflicted, He "looked up to heaven and sighed : " and when the Pharisees sought a sign, tempting Him, "He sighed deeply in His spirit ; " on every hand suffering was His as feeling all with God ; and it is remarkable that all the records of sorrowful emotion to which I have just referred occur alone in the Gospel of Mark, in which He is viewed as the Servant perfectly devoted to the will of God (Mark 3. 5 ; 7. 34 ; 8. 12 ; 10. 14).

But, thirdly, there were His sufferings as a Man here perfect in His affec-

tions and sympathies in the midst of men in dire distress and need. If Paul, as in his measure formed after Christ, could say, as he looked round on the saints towards whom his affections were ever directed, "Who is weak and I am not weak ? who is offended and I burn not ?"—how much greater far must have been the perfect sympathies of the blessed Lord ? There was no sorrow of man with which He came in contact that He did not enter in blessed sympathy into it all. "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" as He beheld the grief of Mary and of the Jews that were with her ; and walking with the sorrowing sisters to the grave of Lazarus, "Jesus wept." Blessed tears of sympathy—the sympathy of perfect love ! (John 11. 33, 35).

If He relieved men of the burdens brought in by sin, their infirmities and their sicknesses, He did so by no mere act of power, but Himself felt in the sympathy of love all that of which He relieved the suffering : "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8. 17). He felt *with* men and *for* men, and sorrowed, with a depth of sorrow which with our sin-blunted sensibilities we can but little understand, over those who rejected Him, and who thus entailed measureless loss on themselves. Very touchingly does Luke present this character of the griefs of the Man of Sorrows in chapter 19. 41-44 : "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and *wept over it*, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." All these were sorrows which were His in virtue of what He Himself was in the midst of a world such as this is.

(To be continued.)

Lord, Thou dost prove us, lest we find
A resting-place where none was found for Thee ;
Thy mercy follows us, for we are weak,
Thy wisdom shapes a pathway through the sea.

And Thou art with us ; on Thy name we call,
Thy boundless love our every need supplies ;
Thou art our Guide, our Leader, day and night ;
Thou art the way, Thy glory gives us light.

On Winning Souls.

EVERY preacher should labour to be the means of saving his hearers. Men are passing so rapidly into eternity that we must have them saved at once. But if we would win souls we must act accordingly and lay ourselves out to that end. Men do not catch fish without intending it, nor save sinners unless they aim at it.

The prayer of a certain preacher before his sermon was that God would bless souls by his discourse. After hearing that discourse I wondered at the prayer. How could the man ask for that which he seemed never afterwards to have thought of? His discourse unprayed his prayer. Unless God had caused the people to misunderstand what the preacher said they could not have been converted by his utterances. God works by means—by means adapted to His ends; and this being so, how can He bless some sermons? How, in the name of reason, can souls be converted by sermons that lull people to sleep; by sermons containing mere frivolities; by sermons which say plainly, "See how cleverly I put it;" by sermons which insinuate doubt and cast suspicion upon every revealed truth? To ask the divine blessing on that which even good men cannot commend is poor work. That which does not come from our inmost soul, and is not to us a message from the Lord, is not likely to touch other men's souls, and be the voice of the Lord to them.

The men who have been used of the Lord in soul-winning are men who have sorrowed when souls refused the blessing. They have broken their own hearts when they failed to break the hearts of sinners. They could not endure the thought of their destruction. On the other hand, their hearts have overflowed with joy at the return of the prodigal. They are like their Father, who saw the prodigal a great way off, who ran to meet him and covered him

with kisses. Oh for quickness of eye to spy out the awakened; oh for eager feet to hasten to them; oh for a heart overflowing with the love of God to joy and rejoice over penitent sinners.

The soul-winner will ever give his eyes and ears and feet and heart to the returning prodigal. Nor will he forget the robe and the ring, for love is practical. It does not hide away the robe and ring in a treasury of theology, but brings them forth and puts them on the one who cries, "I have sinned."

Our Example.

The desire is not sufficient, nor will the mere aspiration fulfil itself. Remember how the Saviour lived. He never settled down in desires and resolves, but girded Himself for constant service. He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." His Father's work is that in which we are engaged, and we cannot do better than imitate our Lord.

How did He set about His service? Did He arrange to build a big tabernacle, or organize a monster conference, or publish a great book, or sound a trumpet before Him in any other form? Did He bid high for popularity and wear Himself out by an exhausting sensationalism? No, He called His disciples one by one and instructed each one with patient care. To take a typical instance of His method, watch Him as He paused in the heat of the day. He sat upon a well and talked with a woman—a woman who was none of the best. This looked like slow work and a very commonplace action. Yet we know that it was right and wise.

To that single auditor He did not deliver a list of clever maxims, like those of Confucius, or profound philosophies, like those of Socrates; but He talked simply, plainly, and earnestly

with her about her own life, her need, and the living water by which that need could be supplied. He won her heart, and through her many more; but He did it in a way of which many would think little. He was above the petty ambitions of our vainglorious hearts. He called not for a large con-

gregation; He did not even ask for a pulpit. He desired to win that one soul; and for that purpose He must, in His need, go through Samaria, and must, in His utmost weariness, tell her of the water of life. Brethren, let us lay aside our vanity and pray for grace to be more like our Lord.—(*Spurgeon.*)

The Love of God.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

THE love of God! What pen can describe it, what mind comprehend it?

Its immeasurable heights, its profound depths are beyond our finite comprehension. Yet it is our privilege to know that sinful, fallen man is loved with a love to which the brightest and most glorious angelic beings are strangers.

This love comes to us from a past eternity. The curtain of the unseen world is drawn aside in Proverbs 8. 30, 31, and we are permitted to behold a home of ineffable delight—the dwelling-place of the Father and the Son—and learn that all which has come to light since, in the way of blessing for man, is the outcome of counsel in eternity, the deep, fervent love of God, which planned not only a great deliverance from a terrible foe, but a richer, fuller sphere of blessing than innocent Adam could ever have known.

Then and there were formulated counsels and purposes, covenants and promises; and in the "volume of the book" was recorded the delight of Christ in the doing of the will of God (Heb. x. 7); as here also is recorded His delight in the sons of men. In that register stand promises of life eternal, adoption, and acceptance in the Beloved (Titus i. 2; Eph. i. 5, 6), and all these reveal a love which thought of man and planned for him ere time began, or ruin and misery existed.

To make it possible that the creature should be such as the Creator could delight in, the Second Man has appeared and died in love for the first. In the gift of the only begotten and well-beloved Son, we learn the *manner* and *measure* of the love of God. Creation displayed His power; Providence declares His goodness; but His love in all its fullness is seen at Calvary.

The love shown there was *spontaneous*. Voluntarily and uncompelled, without the influence of an outside cause, or any reason in man why God should love him, His love—like a mighty river, enriching all that comes under its influence—has flowed forth, pouring out its wealth, the outflow and overflow of the divine nature.

Sovereign in choice and action, it has gratified itself in blessing totally unworthy objects. Blessed Himself, supremely happy, it is God's joy to bless others; indeed, it is a necessity of His nature; He cannot rest where misery exists. It was because He *so loved* that He sent His only begotten Son.

In its outgoings toward man it has displayed itself as a love of *pity* and *philanthropy*, patient, forbearing, enduring, forgiving. God has borne with men for nearly six thousand years; He has tested and tried them in every way, with law and without law, under grace and under government; He has shown His providential care and constant goodness, and still goes unweariedly on in longsuffering, in patient grace, over a guilty world, not willing that any should perish.

He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth—the truth as to their lost, ruined, undone condition, and as to His willingness to bless, forgive, save, justify, and glorify all who confide in the Saviour whom He has provided.

He would have them know that it is the *world* He loved—not the “elect world,” or the “religious world,” or the “moral world;” but the world of men and women who are perishing in their sins and must be lost, and lost for ever, apart from the pitying love of a Saviour - God, whose kindness toward man has now appeared in all its fullness (Titus 3. 4).

This love seeks for nothing: it brings everything. It extends to whosoever will; its sphere is universal, its outgoings are to every creature; it radiates to the circumference of the earth. It embraces all men within its circle; there is no human being outside its reach. It stoops to the deepest need of the most forlorn, those morally afar off, and brings salvation even to the vilest of His creatures. It is a love rich in *mercy* and *grace*, descending to the lowest depths of man's misery; it exalts its object to the supremest heights of blessing. It shall ceaselessly display itself in kindness and exceeding grace throughout the ages of an endless eternity. It has taken a thief from a Roman gibbet, and a Saul of Tarsus (mad with rage against God and His Christ, persecuting His people even to death), and has set them in the Paradise of God, witnesses of His abounding mercy and sovereign grace.

But this love is not shown at the expense of righteousness. God's love is a *holy love*.

Scripture reveals Him as a Being fearful in holiness, before whom scraphs veil their faces, and cry, Holy! Holy! Holy!

Holiness is essentially antagonistic to evil, as opposed as light to darkness; it is repellent of moral obliquity

and cannot tolerate sin. It is a necessity of the very nature of God that condign punishment should be meted out to an evildoer, and banishment be the portion of those who have ignored the claims of righteousness and set the demands of His throne at naught. Sin must be dealt with according to His estimate of what it deserves, and as it affects His rights as the moral Governor of the universe.

How, then, can God bless sinful man and preserve spotless holiness? How maintain the claims of light and gratify His heart of love? How be a just God *and* a Saviour?

Golgotha supplies the answer.

That which light demanded love provided. There the only pure and perfect Man suffered, the just for the unjust; the sinless One was made sin, the Holy One of God was forsaken, the claims of righteousness were met, the holiness of God was maintained in all its integrity. The life forfeited was met by the life yielded up; the outrage on the majesty of God was removed by the atoning sacrifice of His equal and His fellow; the precious blood was shed, providing a way of justification, in full accord with the sanctity of His sacred Being, and glorifying His every attribute.

At the cross judgment rose to a flood-tide. The heights above were darkened, the holy Sufferer was forsaken, God hid His face, and visited upon His Beloved the judgment due to us.

Would we know God's love in its sacred holiness, its purity, its intolerance of evil, we must learn it not from the feelings of *our* hearts, not by deductions from the affections of *fallen beings*, not from the thoughts of men, but from the darkened heavens over the holy person of the Son of God when bearing our sins, the hiding of God's face when He was made sin, and the judgment inflicted upon Him, the sinless, holy Sufferer.

Why did not God answer the agonizing cry of His Beloved in Gethsemane that the cup might pass from Him? Why did Jesus drain it to the last dark drop at the "place of a skull?" Surely the answer is, because there is *no other way possible by which sin could be atoned for, sinners saved, God's holiness maintained, and God's love known.*

Vain are the dreams that a few years in hell could satisfy God's claims. Had this been "possible" Christ need not have died.

No, let us face the solemn, serious fact which Scripture declares, that, apart from repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, salvation is not possible for lost, guilty beings like ourselves. Unless we appropriate as our personal Saviour the One who was forsaken of God on our account, eternal judgment must assuredly be ours.

The intolerance of sin displayed at the cross must be continued throughout the eternal ages. The lake of fire will be the standing witness of the eternal holiness of God.

But whilst maintaining His holiness, God has displayed His love. None need perish now, provided they obey the command to repent and believe the gospel. At the cross the love of God rose to a flood, reached a spring tide, flowed forth in all its fullness—an ocean without a shore, a river without a bank.

Although God's love is so vast that no creature shall ever grasp its fullness, yet we may rest assured that, having displayed itself toward those who believe as a forgiving love in pardoning our sins and a giving love in bestowing life, it will never change, never vary; it is ceaseless and eternal, without measure, without end, everlasting in

its very nature. Carry the mind back to a past eternity—God loved, *planned*, and *counselled*; carry the thoughts down the course of time—God loved, and *gave the very best gifts of heaven*, first an only begotten Son to make His love known, then the Holy Ghost to flood our hearts with it. Then travel onwards to eternity: behold Him! *unchanged, unaltered, loving, blessing, enriching*, to the ages of ages, world without end. What a comfort to know *this God is our God for ever and ever!*

Will not the restraint placed upon evil throughout eternity be another way in which God will display His love to the redeemed? The pit first, the lake afterwards, will circumscribe Satan's power and effectually hinder the exercise of his baleful influences.

Even with an earthly parent it is sometimes needful to exclude an unruly son, because of the evil effects on the household; so, apart from the just judgment due to Satan, and all the impenitent and unbelieving who refuse the mercy of God, we can see it will be an act of goodness to effectually bind hand and foot those who would, if they could, harass, tempt, and accuse the saints of God unceasingly, and disturb the peaceful rest of God and His people.

The perfect equipoise of light and love displayed at the cross will be demonstrated throughout eternity. Every mouth will be closed, every creature will admit that His judgments are true and righteous, whilst His saints will rejoice in that love which has cast evil out of the heavens and filled it with the fruits of sovereign grace.

Let us ever remember judgment is not vindictiveness, but a necessity of God's holy being after man has refused every overture of grace.

You must be near to God to have power. You cannot separate power from the state of soul. God will not

allow the effectual activity of Christians to be independent of their spiritual state.

Notes of Bible Readings.—No. 5.

(H. J. VINE).

Christian Liberty.—Read Romans 7.-8. 15.

LIBERTY! Liberty! For this the new life in the believer cries out. The whole creation groans and longs for liberty; but the desire in the inward man of the believer is stronger than all. He desires liberty from all that hinders and holds him in bondage, that he may be free to do that which is pleasing to God. The fallen man wants freedom to please himself, to do his own will; the believer, to do God's will. Now God who has called us by the gospel has called us to liberty. He has no pleasure in seeing any of His children entangled in a yoke of bondage, for we can only glorify Him, and serve in love, as we are in the enjoyment of the holy liberty of grace. The Galatians are exhorted to "stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5. 1). In Romans 8. 15 we read: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." These scriptures show that God's thought for us is just that which the undelivered believer desires, but does not yet know the full blessedness of true liberty.

Question. Does the truth brought before us in the scriptures read show us how the believer is delivered so as to be free and happy before God?

Yes. The Apostle (begins chap. 7. 1) by telling us that he is speaking especially to those that knew law, primarily the Jew, though the majority of the Christian profession have put themselves under law also, and he afterwards describes the state of one struggling for freedom, who had not yet come to the happy day when he could say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (8. 2).

Question. Was it the Apostle Paul himself who passed through this experience?

No doubt it was. He speaks of "I" and "me"; but he had come through it, and knew deliverance, of course, when

he wrote these things down. He looks back upon and describes the experience he once had. Some think this should be a lifelong experience with a believer. The fact is, it is not *proper* Christian experience at all, but it is the experience of one who is on the way to true Christian experience. Paul shows it was a past experience, for he says "when we were in the flesh" (ver. 5); but in chapter 8. 9 he says we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Question. Why is the illustration of the woman and her husband used in verses 2 and 3?

To show that the legal bond could only be broken by death. The woman could not be married to another till death gave her freedom from the law of the husband. She might desire to be free, but death alone could truly give her freedom.

At the beginning of this seventh chapter of Romans we have the *two husbands*; at the end of the sixth chapter the *two masters*. There is no difference in the principle by which we are delivered from the old husband or the old master. The way of deliverance from the law is the same as the way of deliverance from sin. The fact is, we all have to come to this, that the only door for deliverance is through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the only way in which we can be maintained in holiness, fruitfulness, and happiness when delivered is by living to God as belonging to the One who has come out of death, raised from among the dead. We must, nevertheless, be careful not to fall into the snare of those who look for a perfection here which only belongs to heaven. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

This chapter begins by saying that as long as a man lives law rules over him, therefore if the law rules over a man as long as he lives, it is clear that the only door out of it must be by death. The law says: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are

written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3. 10), and he that offendeth "in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2. 10). Every one, therefore, is under the curse who is in an unconverted and unregenerate condition, the law rules over him. God, however, has provided a way of deliverance—Christ has borne the curse of the law, and believers have become free from the law by the body of Christ, and have liberty to take up that position before God, for they belong to Christ who now lives to God, having been raised from among the dead after having become, in His wonderful grace, a curse for them on the cross. We do well to ponder thankfully the wonderful words of verse 4:

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

We look back at His death, and we see the tie is broken. Truly the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives; but by Christ's death we have become dead to the law. Many remember, with deep thanksgiving, the time when they saw this truth of being "*free from the law*," for the first time, after, with the mass of Christendom, having wrongly put themselves under it.

Question. *But verse 6 reads "that being dead!" Does it not mean the law was ended at the cross?*

¶ No, the marginal reading is more correct—"being dead to that." The law is right and of God, and therefore did not need to be ended. We, however, have become *dead to it*, and thus freed from its righteous condemnation by the death of Christ. When we were in the flesh, as we see in verse 5, our passions which were by the law wrought in us; but now (ver. 6) we can "*serve in newness of spirit*." In chapter 6. 4 it is "*walk in newness of life*." Also in chapter 6. it is freedom by death from *the dominion of sin*; in the seventh chapter it is also freedom by death, but from *the dominion of the law*.

The law demanded love from man, but man failed utterly to answer to the demand, therefore the law cursed man. Christ came in and took our place that

He might redeem us from the curse of the law; now we belong to Him in liberty and life, for He has come out from under the curse of the law. Having completely met its demands, He has been raised from the dead, and we are now His in the most intimate way. God would have us to understand this, so that in freedom we may delight in the Lord.

"No curse of law, in Him is sovereign grace,
And now what glory in His unveiled face."

When Moses inaugurated the law—"the ministrations of death"—he had to put a veil over his face. The Israelites could not look at him because of the glory that shone there. It is contrariwise with us, for we have liberty and ability, by the Spirit, to behold the surpassing glory of a greater than Moses, and there is no veil on the face of Christ. We are now connected with that which excels in glory. The Lord Jesus has become our new Object, and as this is so we become more like Him every day. We are not to be thinking—How are we getting on? We are to be learning how precious and glorious Christ is, and in that way we become changed without being self-occupied—"changed . . . from glory to glory"—and there is fruit to God consequently.

Question. *What you were saying as to the law being right is proved in the seventh verse, is it not?*

Clearly, and in the verses following too. The first question asked in the seventh chapter is: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" The answer is: "God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

The Jews evidently blamed Paul for setting aside the law, but he was not doing that. Instead of there being anything wrong with the law, it was the very thing that gave him to know the wrong in himself—his sinfulness. When the commandment was brought home to him he discovered the wrong desires within him. When the Word comes to the soul in this way, in spiritual power, it manifests the evil within. There is no true progress till we find out experimentally how really bad we are. The sixth chapter is practical, this is experimental. Coveting is an inward thing, and the word

“Thou shalt not covet” exposed its presence. In the sixth chapter the question is raised as to being “*in sin* ;” in the seventh as to “*sin in me*.” The believer is “in Christ,” not “in sin,” but sin is still in him.

The law gives a conscience as to sin within us, but it cannot deliver. The Apostle shows, on the other hand, in verses 8–11, that sin gets a point of attack by the law and throws the soul into all sorts of trouble and distress which it never knew before. Sin is entirely to blame, not the law of God, for it is holy, and “the commandment holy, and just, and good” (ver. 12). Paul is careful to emphasize that.

Notice the second question in the chapter, in the thirteenth verse :

“Was then that which is good made death unto me ?” Now mark the reply. “God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good ; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual : but I am carnal, sold under sin.” The soul now says, as it were, “The law is all right, but I am all wrong.” It is a healthful and necessary lesson to learn.

What a mercy it is that God knew all about us before He took us up ! At the cross we see God’s hatred of sin—every true believer learns that. But here all is experimental, and we learn best in the presence of God. Instead of this discovery discouraging the believer, it drives him more to God about that which he hates as God also does. To learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin is very profitable.

Question. *If a soul has learned to hate sin, is it not a proof that there is a work of God in him ?*

It is on account of a work of God in the soul that hatred of sin according to God is produced, though much inward conflict is known at the same time, as we read in verses 15–17 :

“For that which I do I allow not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

Another has pointed out that here he is like a man struggling to get out of a

morass, but as he lifts one leg the other sinks deeper in. We must, however, carefully notice how in the midst of all this the soul learns ; if he hates the thing which he does, then he concludes it is not himself at all. He can now distinguish himself from sin. He says, rightly : “It is *no more I* . . . but sin that dwelleth in me.” Some people are afraid of this chapter because they think it leads to licence. That could never be. We seek to shun sin when there is a work of God in us. It causes all our anguish and distress. God brings the believer to a holy hatred of sin. It is a spiritual work. The unregenerate man knows nothing about this, and where there is mere profession the important conclusions of this chapter are passed over or evaded. The upright soul faces it all. One reason why this chapter is so often returned to is because its conclusions are not thoroughly reached by many.

Look now at the eighteenth verse. Here a further lesson is learned :

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth *no good thing* : for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

Some say, “There is much that is bad in me,” but we must come to this, “There is *NO GOOD* in me,” that is, in the flesh. We never enjoy real deliverance until we learn that. Our full joy is to be in the Father and the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, but that could not be as long as we expect to find good in the flesh. When we have experienced that in the flesh good does not dwell we are thankful to be done with it.

Question. *Does it mean that as a Christian there is no good in me whatever ?*

No, that would be a serious mistake to make. This is what the undelivered soul learns experimentally—there is no good in the flesh. We are, however, “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” as we read in chapter 8. Christ is in the believer and the Holy Spirit dwells in him ; again, “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” The flesh, however, remains unaltered—good does not dwell there. New desires after what is of God are found in the soul in the seventh of Romans, but he finds he is powerless to carry out what he would. He falls into what he would not, and

notice again he concludes: "It is *NO LONGER I*, but sin that dwells in me." *He* would do good, but evil is present with him (vers. 19-21). *He HATES SIN*, he has *NEW DESIRES*, he has found there is *NO GOOD* in the flesh, and that he has *NO POWER* to practise the good he would. And mark what he next recognizes—he has *NEW DELIGHTS*, and *AN INWARD MAN*.

"I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Amidst all this struggling an inward delight is discovered in what is of God. The only person that has got this "inward man" is the believer, and he accordingly delights in the wonderful law of God. Another once said, "O how I love Thy law." Men often talk of feeding the inner man when they really mean the outer man which perishes.

Question. *What are the two laws spoken of in verse 23?*

One is the law or principle which delights in that which is of God, the other is the principle of sin within, which causes all the trouble, and makes the soul cry out for deliverance when it has learned it cannot deliver itself. "O wretched man that I am! *WHO* shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is often a great relief to those passing through this experience to find in the Bible another describing how he passed through the same thing.

He has reached here a step beyond "no good in me," also beyond "no power in me"—he is utterly wretched! He had got where we all must come to—to see that there is no help in self at all. But one little word is enough—"WHO?" He has had enough of "I," "I," "I," and "Me," "Me," "Me." He is done with self, and he cries "*WHO?*"

He looks away from himself and his inward struggles altogether, to seek deliverance outside of himself. The answer is immediately found. God's way is always "through Jesus Christ our Lord"—deliverance is there. Like a man struggling in the water to save himself, and who is the more blinded to what is about him by the very earnestness of his efforts, but finding at last that he is powerless to save himself, he gives up the struggle, and looking up for deliverance he finds a lifebuoy close at hand. So here when self-efforts are given up and

the question is asked, "*WHO* shall deliver?" God's way is seen, and the soul says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is important to see that if deliverance could be reached by our own efforts our last estate would be worse than the first, for we should be self-satisfied; but having learned our utter good-for-nothingness, how precious the Lord Jesus becomes to our hearts, for there is nothing but good in Him. God's way of deliverance is through Him, and He becomes the blessed Object of our hearts and minds now instead of self, and we serve in newness of spirit.

Deliverance is maintained thus; but if we get down we never need to ask again, "*WHO* shall deliver?" for we already know. Justification is once and for ever. Deliverance is to be maintained, though there is a time when the soul enters upon it. *Full* deliverance will be when the Lord comes. We shall then be taken right out of this sinful world.

Question. *You said that the flesh remains unchanged. Is that what is meant at the close of verse 25?*

That shows I may have learned God's way of deliverance, and with the mind "I myself" serve God's law, yet the flesh when allowed to act will do nothing but serve sin's law. That is an abiding principle. In the early verses of chapter 8. it is shown clearly that believers are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The mind of the flesh is death; on the other hand, the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. What a contrast!

The Holy Spirit is here, and that means life, joy, and peace for us. When Christ comes again He will quicken our mortal bodies (raising the dead and changing the living), and meanwhile as we walk after the Spirit, who keeps Christ before us, we fulfil the requirement of the law without being under the law; whereas those who are under it are under its condemnation. The believer is redeemed from that once and for all. The law cannot condemn him, as we have seen.

Question. *Is that the "no condemnation" of verse 1?*

Well, there it is *no condemnation whatever*. It includes what you refer to, but the truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore all our condemnation on the

cross, is raised again from the dead, and no condemnation of any sort can now apply to Him. How could there? Then there can be none for those who are in Him. "There is therefore now *NO CONDEMNATION* to them which are in Christ Jesus." The rest of the verse is in its right place at the end of verse 4. It is clearly out of place in verse 1. No qualifying clause is needed.

We have seen that the law, though good in itself, could not produce good in man who is bad in himself. It was "*weak through the flesh*" (chap. 8. 3). God then sent His Son as a sacrifice for sin, and sin in the flesh met its full condemnation when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. It has been completely condemned at the cross. Believers are now to walk after the Spirit, not after the flesh. Freedom is theirs so to do, and they are *in the Spirit*, not in the flesh.

There is a new principle of life in Christ Jesus which has given us freedom from the old principle of sin and death which once held us fast. Each believer individually speaks for himself, as in verse 2: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made *ME FREE* from the law of sin and death." The truth of "in Christ" is of great importance. Salvation is in Him, also redemption and eternal life. We are to take account of ourselves as alive to God in Christ Jesus. The love of God is in Him, and we are to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. There is not only no

condemnation there, but also a new creation. We should know one another in Him, and not in sects or parties. Our ways should be in Him. Paul said of his bonds even that they were "in Christ." Our blessings are in Him, our present acceptance also. We are enriched in Himself, in whom we have obtained an inheritance of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest.

Question. *Have all Christians received the Spirit of adoption spoken of in verse 15?*

The proof that it is so is heard in the way they address God. The youngest babe in His family knows the Father and cries, "*ABBA, FATHER.*" You would not have heard Abraham thus address God, nor Moses either; he knew Him as "Jehovah;" but He is known to us now as "*FATHER,*" and we so address Him. Bondage is gone. The Spirit which is ours is not a spirit of bondage again for fear. Adoption is ours, with all the wonderful family rights, dignities, and privileges—yea, the very "*spirit of adoption*" too. What blessed liberty is thus ours in the presence of *OUR GOD AND FATHER!* All fear gone! There is no more condemnation! Perfect love has cast out all fear! We are His children! We now address God Himself as *FATHER.* What a blessed and marvellous exchange from the miserable self-occupation and wretched bondage of which we have spoken! How can we praise Him enough who has brought it to pass through our Lord Jesus Christ by His precious truth in the power of the Holy Spirit?

If the mind rest on the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes unbelief. God may allow many things to arise to prove our weakness, but the simple path of faith is to go on, not looking beforehand at what we have to do, but reckoning upon the help that we shall need and find when the time arrives. The sense that we are nothing makes us glad to forget ourselves, and then it is that Christ becomes everything to the soul. There is real strength in pursuing the simple path of obedience in what we may have to do, whatever the trial may be.

Mark any gathering of saints or individual Christian; if there is not energy of positive testimony which acts on others, there is decline. God in grace cannot be inert in testimony in a world of sin; it would be a contradiction in very terms.

We are apt to think that we must do great works in the Lord's name, in order to glorify Him; there may not always be opportunity for this. He takes notice if we do but hold fast His name amid circumstances which make even that measure of faithfulness difficult.

“The Golden Preface.”

(J. MACBROOM).

John 1. 1-18.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 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.

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me : for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

HOW exceedingly rich and blessed a privilege it is to us that our God should permit us to meditate upon *Himself* (Ps. 104. 33, 34). To have the Scriptures and delightfully trace His purposes and counsels, His ways, faithfulness, lovingkindness and mercy, is wonderful indeed, but beyond all this is the supreme favour that we should be engaged with, and delight in God Himself.

There are three well-known chapters in the New Testament where we get the glory or glories of our Lord set forth: John 1., Colossians 1., and Hebrews 1.: each has its own peculiar character. Let us look a little at the first passage, which was called by the ancients “The Golden Preface.”

At the outset let me say that as, being but finite creatures, we can neither grasp nor define eternity, neither can we fully know nor fathom divine Beings, the Triune God. Deity as such is beyond creature ken. All thought, all language is defective here: in the nature of things all must come short. Keeping this in view we see the importance of keeping close to the Holy Scriptures,

where we have the only perfect and infallible standard of truth. Alone, absolutely alone, stands the written Word, contrasting with all else, and as far above man’s productions as the Creator is above the creature. What a mercy to have such a Book in a world like this !

And how important that we read it aright. There are two ways in which it may rightly engage our earnest attention: (1) careful reading and taking in divine facts ; (2) reading it in a devotional way. The importance of this distinction cannot, I think, be over-estimated. The lack of the first is the cause of much ignorance, while lack of the other gives occasion for the well-known saying, “One may be as clear as a sunbeam and as cold as an iceberg.”

In the other Gospels Christ is set before us as coming in relation to certain divine dealings which came out in the Old Testament ; but in John He is presented as come to make God known, and in connection with that which existed before the world was. He comes to reveal the Father.

"In the beginning was the Word," and if for a moment we read verse 14 along with this we see that "the Word became flesh" (N.T.). This is the incarnation. The One who is called God in verse 1 is said to have become flesh in verse 14. But note first of all the rich cluster of glories in these first verses. "In the beginning was the Word:" *eternity of being*. "And the Word was with God:" *personality*. "And the Word was God:" *Deity*. "The same was in the beginning with God:" *co-equality*. The One who is all this has been pleased to become flesh and dwell or tabernacle among us. This is the truth of the incarnation, stated here in words remarkable for their simplicity—stupendous in its greatness, incomprehensible in its nature, and marvellous beyond all telling in its results. Results wrought out in that body for God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for man; for angels; for all creation; for time and for eternity. What a wonderful truth, then, is the incarnation. No marvel the Spirit says by the Apostle, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16).

It is of all importance to have established in the soul first of all the truth of the Deity of the Word; and then we are enabled to see that He is also spoken of as Son. We do not need to leave the chapter before us for that. It is a solemn consideration that that which the mind of man views as contradictory is but bringing out the excellences of His person. One beautiful touch in this connection is given in Hebrews 1. 8, where God the Father is presented as addressing God the Son in the words, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." But, some one asks, Why insist on these things? Because they lie at the foundation of everything. All that concerns the glory of God and the blessing of man hangs upon *who* He is. The cross in all its wonderful story has all its glory from the Person who hung there. "If the

foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11. 3).

But, says one, "It is beyond my depth." Perfectly right, so it is. It is a deep that knows no sounding. If I cannot understand it I can *believe*; and so can every Christian. Every Christian has faith (Eph. 2. 8), and therein lies the ability to lay hold on divine facts. If the truth is taken in there is safety, the whole security for the Christian lies just there. To take in the truth is to have error exposed, and to take in the truth puts the soul in a position that the Spirit of God can unfold before its adoring gaze the depths of God. To meet error we have not to explore the pit of evil: we need but to know the good.

Verse 3 is the work of His mighty power before incarnation. Creation is the product of almighty power, a power which calls into being things which previously had no existence; but in itself it comes in by the way, and is the platform for the display of *what God is morally*. This thought is introduced in verse 4: "In Him was life." Creation was *by* Him, life was *in* Him; and immediately we come to the moral sphere man is brought in: "The life was the light of men." It is not said the light of angels, fallen or unfallen, because not distinctively for such. Fallen angels are never spoken of as recovered, and unfallen are kept in the order in which they were created; but for man God purposed to bring in eternal life, and this life is in His Son (1 Tim. 1. ; Titus 1. 2 ; 1 John 5. 10).

Next comes the sad tale of the light shining in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. What a picture of the incompetency of the creature to whom these counsels applied.

The intervening verses—6-13—have a character of their own, different from the five that go before and the five which follow after. His coming is viewed in relation to John's witness to Him, to the people, and to those

that received Him. They give in epitome His whole path here.

Verse 14, already mentioned, shows Him full of grace and truth. What a beautiful figure for our hearts to delight in, in the measure in which we have appreciation for what is morally excellent. Taken together with verse 17, it shows the perfect embodiment and expression of what God is in His nature as light and love, and it gives force to that word "of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," or "grace heaped upon grace" (compare Rom. 5. 17, "Abundance of grace").

But the parenthesis of verse 14 shows what He is *with the Father*, and goes deeper than display. John here brings the light of the Holy Spirit to bear back upon that wonderful path, and shows Him in His own unique distinction as an adequate object for the Father's heart. The glory here is different from that in chapter 2. There it is dispensational and official, here it is personal and moral.

In verse 1 we have *who He is*, verse 14 *what He became*; but in verse 18 *what He has done*—revealed God; and this involves *where He has gone*—into death, for the culmination of all was in His death upon the cross. If in verse 3, then, is shown His mighty power as in Deity, this verse shows Him as Man in the condition to accomplish that which never could be done by creation. "Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, *for the suffering of death*" (Heb. 2.).

How wonderful that the God of glory should take this way of glorifying Himself!

My impression is that no stronger proof of His being God is to be found than this verse, for none less than God could reveal God. The words "in the bosom of the Father" are to be understood as His eternal place, a place He never left, and indicate that though He took the relative place by becoming Man, nevertheless He is absolutely God.

The meditation on these verses raises another question which is beautifully met by the Apostle in Colossians 1. with reference to this same subject. He is there leading on to the divine and eternal glories of the Lord, but in the preceding verses (Col. 1. 12-14) the question of our state is first settled, and this qualifies for the contemplation of these things. The soul at rest in His presence, every moral question settled, all gone in His death, we can *meditate* on Him.

What shall we say to these things, to the fact that the high and lofty One, the Omnipotent, the Eternal has become Man, "God manifested in flesh?" Truly it surpasses all thought, but where shall we find the cause? Blessed be His name, it is found in one word, love! the love of God, and that love has found an outlet in this way, a way which never could have been conceived by the creature.

Matthew and Luke give the earthly and human side, but John gives the divine, and Paul, in Philippians 2. and Hebrews 10., goes back by the Spirit with John into the eternal regions, and shows us who and where He was before being here in the likeness of man in the body prepared for Him.

May the immensity of the favour rest upon our spirits, that such an occupation should be ours, that we should be permitted to behold our God (Isa. 40. 9) and to meditate upon Him (Ps. 104. 33-34).

His works in creation, providence, and government may be explored, but it is through redemption He has made Himself known, and this hangs on the great truth of incarnation. Well might we say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11. 33, 36).

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 3. 5-24.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Verses 5, 6.

BUT if sin is lawlessness, "Ye know within yourselves that He was manifested to do away with our sins," for the divine life, whether in Him or in us, and sin cannot exist together. They are mutually antagonistic to and exclusive of each other. "And in Him sin is not." Accordingly, "he that abides in Him does not sin." Every one sinning, so characterized, "has not seen Him, nor known Him." The abstract truth of this statement must not be enfeebled by the imperfection of the believer's walk. It is no question here of the amendment of our life in the flesh, but of the nature and communication of the divine life, as manifested in Jesus.

Verses 7-9.

The Apostle now warns them not to be led astray as to this subject of righteousness and sin. Both of these he traces to their sources respectively, God and the devil. The terms he uses are abstract, as setting forth the character of each in itself; and keeping this in mind, what might otherwise appear difficult becomes simple. We must also remember that our language

has not the flexibility, the facility of expressing by the use of the participle, as in the original, the character of the actor as distinguished from the act. Take as an example "The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." This is the present participle; "the taker away of." So also, "he that practises righteousness"=he who has this character; and so again, "he that practises sin"—the same. Now the character of a thing is derived from its source, whether God or the devil; either the practice of righteousness, or the practice of sin.

Here it is instructive to note that while it is said that "the devil sinneth from the beginning," *i.e.* from the beginning of the devil, of what we know of him as such, Scripture does not speak of him as coeval, with God. God "was" when the devil was not, and God will be when the devil's works will be fully and finally undone; for "to this end the Son of God was manifested, and that he might undo the works of the devil." This statement runs parallel with John 1. 29, and will be effectuated according to 1 Corinthians 15. 28, etc., and

Revelation 20. 10, etc. While, therefore, we have such expressions as "Ye are of your father, the devil" (John 8. 44), "Thou son of the devil" (Acts 13. 10), "He that practiseth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3. 8), still it is never said they are "begotten of the devil," although they had fully fallen under his influence.

Verse 10.

It is now most interesting to see how he connects righteousness with "loving your brother." Indeed, as the Apostle sets it forth here the two are inseparable. For righteousness with him is not a legal correctness of conduct, or moral uprightness of a human kind, however excellent; but that which flows from the life and nature of God Himself, the spring and source of the divine life which is the very characteristic of Christianity. Righteousness is always "consistency with itself," whether in God absolutely, or in man relatively to the place he occupies. Here, according to the line of thought in which the Apostle moves, it is consistency in the Christian with the character of that divine life of which he is begotten. He "is righteous even as He is righteous," *i.e.* as God is righteous in His own being essentially, and as Christ is righteous, as the One in whom He is manifested.

Verse 11.

"For this is the message ye have heard from the beginning," so that it has in no wise altered, that we should love one another. Has any message, or any commandment (ver. 23) been ever so ignored? Nay, even—a fact stranger than fiction—for very righteousness' sake, we have refused to obey it!

Verse 12.

But, sad as the story is, there is nothing new in it. No; it is as old as the history of the world—from the beginning of it. So that while we are thus warned, we must not be astonished. The first man born into this world was the archetype of this evil spirit. He was the proto-hater of all good. His name of Cain appears four times on the page of Scripture.

1. Genesis 4. gives us his history, and the world which he founded.

2. Hebrews 11. 4 says that his sacrifice was not acceptable to God, as was that of his brother Abel.

3. Jude 11 puts him as leader of a "way," the end of which is perdition.

4. 1 John 3. 12 describes him as a murderer, hating good because it is good. No doubt he was moved by jealousy; but the reason given why he murdered his brother is, "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." The like is not said of any one else. No wickedness is depicted as so inexcusably wicked as this, until we come to John 15. 25: "They hated Me without a cause" (*cf.* Ps. 35. 19; 69. 4).

Verse 13.

There is therefore no ground for wondering, brethren, "if the world hate you;" on the other hand, we know consciously (*οἶδαμεν*) that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Now these two things are put in direct contrast: the hatred of the world and the love of the brethren. The world has always hated living Christians as it has hated Christ, and it would fain get rid of them as cruelly as it got rid of Him. Witness the persecutions they have endured through all ages, not only from the world outside the church, but from the world within. No doubt there have been times when the hand of persecution has, under the restraining power of God, been outwardly relaxed, and the distance between the world and the children of God has been in consequence reduced. But at bottom the spirit has remained the same, and the old cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him," voices still, and will again voice more openly, the real feelings that are for the moment hidden beneath the veneer of accommodation and conventionality.

Verse 14.

As to the love of the brethren, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love them." This is an immense distance, "from death unto life." In John 5. 24 "passing from death unto life" is founded objectively on hearing the Word of Christ and receiving in living faith His mission from the Father. Here it is subjective knowledge of it in the soul; "because we love the brethren."

Now it is not the individuals as such that are in question; but to love "the brethren" is to love the children of God because they are His children; and it is

important to consider this, and to entertain such thoughts and feelings toward the children of God, our brethren, as are consistent with the common life and relationship which is the portion of all the family of God.

Verse 15.

In direct contrast with this, "every one hating his brother is, like Cain, a murderer : and ye know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

Verse 16.

But you may ask, What is love ? How is it made known ? Now as to this, we are not left in doubt as to the manifestation or the obligation of it. Hereby we have come to know—by that which has been enacted before us (ἐγνώκαμεν) in order that we should learn thereby—what love is. It is not by any subjective consciousness within ourselves, by which, as subject to the influences of our own predilections, we might be betrayed, but by the great objective fact that He has laid down His life for us, and *we* ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Verse 17.

To this precept (of ver. 16) many would agree theoretically. It is of an exalted nature, and something to discuss ; but though this exercise of it is seldom called for in practice, the excellency of the high theory is quickly put to the test in the common-place affairs of daily life ; for if one having the world's substance, and seeing his brother have need, shuts up his bowels from him, how does the love of God abide in him ? Christ in glory is the object and hope of our souls there ; the life He lived on earth is the model of our lives here. It is not that we are perfect in following it ; but there is no other life set before us to follow. He realized the ideal of love in His pathway here, and His Spirit sets our feet in the same path. It is not a question of how much we fall short, or of how much we attain unto ; but this is the nature of that divine life we have in Him. There is no other.

Verse 18.

There is a love which is merely nominal ; there is love which is real love, "love in deed and in truth."

Verse 19.

He now passes to the experimental effect in the soul of pursuing this pathway of love. It results in a confidence in God peculiar to itself, conscious and living, which abides in the heart, and which no theory or doctrine, however right in itself, can produce. It is quite right to have the doctrines of Christianity clearly cut and defined for the mind—doctrines and truths on which faith can lay hold, and the spiritual intelligence can rest. These objective truths are necessary, so that we should be able to enter into the revealed thoughts and mind of God, and to maintain the "confidence and hope of our rejoicing stedfast unto the end." But the "assurance" here spoken of is of another kind. It is personal, subjective, self-conscious, the fruit of the life within which is of God ; and while that which comes down from God to us necessarily justifies that which is its own fruit in us, that which is thus produced in us equally rises up in response, and "hereby we shall know that we are of the truth [ἐκ, on that very principle] and shall assure, or persuade, or pacify, our hearts before Him." It is not a question here of the conscience, which is met by the blood of Christ and His work external to us, but of the heart, the seat of life and affections—of that which is subjective and internal in us.

Now this is a very real test *to us*. The cross was the supreme test for Christ. He was tested there to the uttermost, and was found perfect ; and the resurrection is God's open vindication of His work. We are tested here, and this test we apply to [ourselves, viz. that if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, greater than all the consciousness of what we know of ourselves, and He knows all things ; there is nothing hidden from Him. Paul was in the sense of this when he said, "I am conscious of nothing in myself ; but I am not justified by this ; but He that examines me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4. 4).

Verse 20.

And as we submit ourselves in a like spirit to this testing, the result is that "if our hearts condemn us not, we have boldness towards God." It is not that we are thereby justified, for God is judge, and not our hearts ; but as our hearts rise

up to Him, they rise up in the sense of our sincerity towards Him, and in the boldness engendered by this integrity, the fruit of His grace working in us. Note this spirit frequently in the Psalms, *e.g.* Psalm 4. 1: "Hear me when I call, O God of *my* righteousness . . . the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself; the Lord will hear when I call unto Him." And then Psalm 5. 8: "Lead me, O Lord, in *thy* righteousness, because of mine enemies. . . ." Dwell upon this.

Verse 22.

And so here again we find this boldness of approach to God brings us to the matter of prayer. "Whatsoever we ask of Him, we receive, because we keep His commandments, and practise what is pleasing to Him." This was the very "life of Jesus." "The Father," He says, "hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" (John 8. 29); and again: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me always" (John 11. 41). Yet we are not to understand that every request is always answered, literally, for the Lord Himself was not so answered, when in His great trial He prayed and "prayed again more earnestly" (Luke 22. 44). But His prayer was subject to the will of God: "Not My will, but Thine be done." And again, Paul having prayed thrice that the thorn might be removed from him, was answered thus: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

But though every request is not answered according to the terms in which we present it, yet in principle we have access to God, and the assurance that our petitions are the subject-matter of divine consideration; and seeing that the doing of His will is our paramount desire, we can always 'leave it at that' with Him.

Verse 23.

All the commandments of verse 22 are reduced here to one formula in the union of faith and love, as the experimental proof of the divine life in us.

Verse 24.

The keeping of His commandments is the life of obedience fully manifested in Jesus; as He says, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John 15. 10). Such an one dwells in God, and God in him. He is morally outside the influences of the world. He dwells in God Himself. The home, the atmosphere of his soul is divine. But also "'God dwells in him' by the communication of His own nature. He is Himself thus the element of our being. He has given us of His Spirit; we have received the life manifested in this world by the Son; and the Spirit we have received is God Himself in us" (*J. N. Darby*).

Wonderful, wonderful grace!

Evolution, or the Reverse?

(*J. C. TRENCH*).

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (*Gen. 1. 27*).

THERE is no room here for the "origin of species" idea as applied to man! no trace of the "germ" or the "cell" theory. No doubt it flatters man's good opinion of himself to think that he has sprung from very small and insignificant beginnings, and is still rising; but Scripture does not support such a conceit. It presents an unmistakable movement certainly, but it is not progress, it is retrogression, or, if the word "progress" must be retained, for it is a

word dearly loved in this twentieth century, it is not progress upwards but downwards, not towards God but away from Him, and so into greater darkness.

Evolutionists imagine that as to his body man is derived from a germ, and that after the lapse of ages he progressed by slow gradations and became an ape, and that at long last as a result of the imperceptible changes of myriads more of years he has arrived

at his present state in an ever-upward progress. But is it true? It is not. It is the exact reverse of the truth, for, as we shall see from Scripture, man's movement has been *downwards* from the earliest days of his history.

At the outset he was created in a perfect condition, in God's own image and likeness (Gen. 1. 26), and antediluvian specimens demonstrate that even physically he was a far finer creature then than he is to-day. How long he abode in this condition we know not, but the period would appear to have been very brief, and his sudden fall was followed by swift judgment. God, his Creator, banished him from the garden of delights. This was "progress," but in the wrong direction. Some 1656 years pass away, and chapter 6. of the first book of the sacred record gives the further "progress" of the human race: "God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt" (ver. 12). "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (ver. 5). So terrible had been man's development and advance in evil that "all flesh had *corrupted* his way upon the earth" (ver. 12), and in result God, who had driven man out of paradise at the beginning, had now to sweep away in the overwhelming judgment of the flood the whole population of the globe, saving only the one family left to continue the race for further trial.

These two events, the banishment from Eden and then the deluge, are awkward facts for the evolutionist to get over.

Some 1300 years later, after various testings, we read that God again "looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." But with what result? What saith the Scripture? "They are *all* gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is *none* that doeth good, no, 'not one'" (Ps. 14.; Ps. 53). This was three

millenniums after man first fell in Eden, and in vain do we look for the record of the slightest improvement. Satan and sin had the mastery of him, and there was "not one" exception.

But passing on some one thousand years later still, we find that God, who had "*looked*" down from time to time upon the earth, at length *came* down Himself in matchless grace in the form and estate of a Man with the declared intent "to seek and to save that which *was lost*" (Luke 19. 10), for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5. 19).

Here, then, if any latent good existed in men, was a splendid opportunity for it to show itself. God had come into the fallen world in human form in order that in His love He might get near to man, and attract him to Himself by His tender acts of mercy and compassion—feeding the hungry, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead to life again, and speaking words of truth and love and comfort to all—telling of pardon, and life, and salvation, to be had by the vilest who would accept these great blessings by faith in Christ Jesus.

But what was man's attitude towards God thus come down in love? Let answer be made in Peter's words when preaching the Lord Jesus; he says, "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts 10. 39); "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2. 23).

This is man after the *fourth millennium* has passed away. Man, whom God at the fall drove out of paradise, had now become so utterly the slave of sin, and so hardened in rebellion against his Maker, that he casts God out of His own world in the person of the rejected Christ. If this is progress, it is truly awful in its character, but this is the progress of the world of which Satan has become both god and prince, and in which soon will be manifested the man of sin, opposing

and exalting himself above all that is called God or is worshipped.

But now what has happened? After the cross nothing of good can ever be expected from *man*. What will God do? Will He now hurl the thunderbolts of His wrath against poor sinful rebellious man and burn up this world with unquenchable fire? Not yet so. Instead, He falls back on *what He is in Himself*, and makes the very cross where man's sin rose to its highest point the greatest conceivable expression of His love to man. The blood that was shed in deepest crime is made *to atone* for sin itself; for "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6). He "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God;" and "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). God has thus turned the very greatest sin into the means of the greatest blessing to man; and sin which thus rose at the cross to its flood-height is for faith (to quote another's words) "gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act!" Eternal glory be to His adorable name!

Justice is satisfied—God is glorified in Man (the Second Man, the Lord from heaven), and the One who glorified God as to the whole question of sin at the cross has been raised from the dead and placed on the throne of the universe.

Sin in the flesh, the perverted nature of man that *could evolve nothing but sin*, has been condemned by God at the cross in the death of His Son—the flesh that no evolutionary process could *mend* has met its judicial *end* at Calvary, and God, having raised our Lord Jesus from among the dead to exaltation and heavenly glory, has made *a new beginning* in Christ risen—through and in whom He gives to every repentant sinner pardon, life, righteousness, and acceptance. Adam and his guilty race come necessarily under the judgment of God, but in the last Adam there is to be had "freely" all that God in righteousness, love, and power can give. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: but he that is not subject to the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 36).

A Word of Exhortation.

(THOMAS OLIVER).

HOW great are the horrors of fallen humanity—seen in various ways in every unconverted person, and, alas! so often in many of God's dear children.

How great are the splendours of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus unfolded for us in the written Word.

On the one hand a seething mass of Satanic corruption, and violence is in view (see Gen. 6. 5, margin, and Ps. 14. 1-3, margin), and on the other hand there comes into display a new creation—the accomplishment of the full purpose of God; awaking in the likeness of Christ, morally and bodily—not upon earth, but in heaven, not for time, but for eternity (see Ps. 13. 15 and Phil. 3. 20, 21).

No human thought can fathom or human language give expression to the one or the other.

Meditate upon the wonders of the revelation of God in Christ given to us in the Word by the Spirit. Then all that is antagonistic to God will be more clearly seen and turned away from.

The eternal Son who has become Man that He might suffer and die, in order to declare the infinite love of God, will be before the soul in all His loveliness.

The sacred fact that the Holy Spirit indwells us will become a governing factor in our lives; the relationships in

which God has set us in Christ will be the theme of our wonder.

The call to walk in the Spirit, in newness of life, doing all in Christ's name, will be responded to with great gladness.

As with Enoch, we shall have the testimony that we please God (Heb. 11. 5). As with Paul the Apostle, we shall exercise ourselves "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24. 16).

An uncondemning heart will mark us, and our prayers will be answered (1 John 3. 21, 22). Christ will be found dwelling in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3. 17). We shall be in the secret of the *power* that prevails with God and men (Gen. 32. 25, 28); "and the *peace* of God, which passes all understanding,

will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4. 7). Thus, and then only, will the love of Christ constrain us to spread abroad His fame and to care for all saints by every means in our power and as opportunity serves.

Damnation we have, through the sovereign mercy of God, escaped.

Salvation, through the grace of God, is ours.

Stagnation is our present danger, and threatens our whole testimony and usefulness as saints of God. Let us be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves (see James 1. 22-27).

Brethren in Christ, what we need is a revival in our souls *of the whole truth of God*, a return to first love and to the practice of first works.

The Apocrypha.

(H. P. BARKEE).

THERE is a great difference between the canonical books and those of the Apocrypha, bound up with Roman Catholic versions of the Bible. These books, like other histories by uninspired men, contain inaccurate statements. A couple of instances will suffice.

Passing over as possibly capable of explanation the statement in Tobit 1. 18 that Sennacherib (the son of Sargon) was the son of Shalmaneser, a king of a previous dynasty, we read in Tobit 1. 23 that Sennacherib was killed by his sons *forty-five days* after his return from the disastrous expedition to Judæa. The inscriptions show that, on the contrary, he survived the disaster many years and spent a large part of his subsequent life in building a palace at Nineveh on a grander scale than had ever previously been attempted. Many of the wall slabs in the British Museum were excavated from the ruins of this palace and illustrate details of its construction.

The Scripture narrative makes no blunders such as this in Tobit 1. It

tells us distinctly that after the disaster to his army in the land of Judah, he "departed, and went and returned, and *dwelt at Nineveh*" (2 Kings 19. 36).

Again, in Judith 1. 5, Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of as king of the Assyrians, reigning in Nineveh. It is now well known that the Assyrians and Babylonians, though often confounded, were distinct nations. Nebuchadnezzar was a Babylonian monarch, and by the time he ascended the throne (B.C. 604) Nineveh had been destroyed.

In contrast to the Apocryphal narrative, the Bible record is in full harmony with the historical facts as disclosed by the inscriptions on the monuments.

Let us ever remember that "the words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of fire, purified seven times" (Ps. 12. 6). That is, they are absolutely free from anything of the nature of dross and imperfection. They are not like the words of men. Instead, therefore, of sitting in judgment on them, let us submit ourselves to *their judgment* of us.

the Lord, and owned as such, they are professedly His servants (25. 14-30).

The household is a circle of still greater intimacy; those who form it are attached to the person of the King; they know what is suitable to Him, and are greatly concerned when they discover that in His field He had been wronged. Moreover, they have access to Him, they can carry their exercises to Him, and receive His assurance that the evil shall not triumph, but that all that offends shall be gathered out of His kingdom, and that the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (13. 24-30, 36-43). What a priceless privilege is theirs who are servants to the Householder, and who enjoy this near place of knowing His will and being intelligent as to the end of things.

The Bridegroom sets forth a greater intimacy still, though the bride is not here mentioned, for the truth presented is not that of infinite love receiving a full recompense for all its travail, but the rejected One coming at last into His rights (25. 1-13).

Space forbids our going into the deeply interesting details of these parables, but we would point out that that which abides is that which partakes of the character of the King, and that which is characteristically evil, and so of the devil, is cast out into the fire, or into the darkness, or into the prison. The things that abide are "the righteous" (13. 43), "the good" and "just" (48, 49), the obedient (21. 31), "the wise" (25.), the "good and faithful" (25. 21), and the merciful (25. 31-46). Searching, indeed, is the truth which Matthew unfolds, setting before us as it does the thoroughness with which every circle and individual will be scrutinized and tested by the Lord, when every one will be judged according to his fruits, and not according to his profession.

The Parables of Luke.

The parables peculiar to Luke are strikingly different from those of Matthew; they set before us for the most part the tender compassions of God, and that grace of His which flows forth without measure wherever there is need. But observe that this grace only reaches those whose need is manifest. In the parables, as in the whole Gospel, the

words of Mary, most blessed of women, are illustrated: "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away" (1. 52, 53)—which words may be taken as a key to the Gospel.

The rich fool goes into eternity stripped of his possessions (12. 16-20). Those who possess the oxen, the ground, and the wife, and want nothing outside these things, miss the great supper (14.). Dives passes from his gay attire and sumptuous fare to a shroud and unquenchable thirst (16.). The Pharisee goes down to his house without the blessing (18.).

On the other hand, how untiring is the grace of God. We have not here the *attitude* of God, but His *activity*. It is seen in the pardon of the debtors (7.), in curing and caring for the robbed and ruined traveller on the Jericho road (10.), in compelling the hungry and homeless to come into the great gospel supper (14.), in searching out that which was lost, and receiving that which was repentant (15.), and in justifying the publican who had nothing to plead but the mercy of God (18.).

But while the poor and needy become the objects of compassion and blessing, as magnificent as it is undeserved, we are also taught the absolute necessity of dependence upon God the giver. If we have learnt that He is gracious, He would have us to act upon this knowledge, and go to Him with importunity and expectancy, whether for the blessing of others (11. 5-10) or for our own deliverance (18. 1-7).

Yet we may not too definitely and closely divide one side of the truth from the other, for if in the parables of Matthew's Gospel the rights of the Lord are prominent, yet His grace cannot be hidden; it is seen in His treatment of the labourers in the vineyard, who only toiled one hour (20.); it is seen also in His forbearance with the second son, in that space for repentance was given to him (21.).

While if in the parables of Luke the unmerited grace of God is proclaimed, yet His rights are fully and clearly maintained as set forth in the parable of the Fig Tree (13. 6-9), and in the parable of the Pounds (19.). (J.T.M.)

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

“Christ and Him Crucified.”

R.J.R. inquires whether the passage

“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2. 2), *refers to knowing Christ Jesus at the right hand of God, and whether knowing “Him crucified” is an additional thought. Alternatively he asks whether there is just the one thought in the passage of “Christ crucified.”*

We believe that the whole passage, from chapter 1. 17 to 2. 8, presents Christ crucified and not Christ glorified. The Apostle was determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ. And in what character would he present Him? Amongst *them* in but one especial character—as *crucified*. It was his task at that time to press home upon these Corinthians the much-needed truth that the flesh would not do for God, and that in His way of blessing men there was no room for the boasting of man. No weaker nor more foolish and futile thing was ever seen, in the estimation of men, than Christ crucified, for of what apparent use to others could One be who could not save Himself from such degradation? But that which was folly to the Greek was the power of God and the wisdom of God. It is Christ in the lowest point of degradation and shame, in the estimation of man, who is presented as the One who, then and there, was the power and wisdom of God.

“Wouldst thou know in My great creation
Where the rays of My glory meet?
Where to My awful righteousness
The kiss of peace is sweet?
Where shine forth the wisdom and wonder
Of God's everlasting plan?
Behold on the cross of dishonour
A cursed and a dying Man.”

The Ten Virgins (Matt. 25.).

R.A.T. and M.N. inquire

“As to the meaning of the oil and the lamps in this parable, and whether the virgins represent the church or not.”

Dealing with the last question first, we would point out that it is the *kingdom of heaven* that is likened to ten virgins; and one great feature of those similitudes of the kingdom of heaven in which what is real and unreal are mingled is that the

King is not present. This will be seen in the parables of the wheat and the tares, the mustard seed and the leaven (Matt. 13.) and the virgins and talents (Matt. 25.). The kingdom of heaven, then, is that which owns the lordship of Christ during this period of His presence at the right hand of God. It embraces the whole profession of Christianity, but in this profession there are those who are merely professors. They have no oil in the lamps, they have not the grace of God, for they have not been sealed by the Holy Ghost.

The parable does not introduce the bride at all, and though those who compose the church which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself are included in the picture, yet that is not at all the side of things presented, but rather the responsibility of those who have taken up the name of Christ during His absence: these are the virgins of the parable.

As to the other question: the lamp is emblematic of profession or witness-bearing; it is that wherein the light is held. The oil speaks of the presence of the Holy Spirit as the witness-bearer, for only in the power of the Spirit and by grace supplied through Him can there be any true light of Christ in this world; and this is the great distinguishing mark between those who are real and those who are not.

H.W. To adequately reply to your question would take more space than we feel justified in giving, as the question is hardly one of general interest. If you will kindly send us your address we shall be glad to reply privately.

Epistle to the Romans.

F.N. asks

If we will give him some plan of reading the Epistle to the Romans, as he finds some difficulty in understanding it; and asks for an outline.

In the study of Scripture nothing can replace careful and prayerful personal reading; but it may help if we just broadly indicate the divisions of the Epistle as follows.

Chapter 1. 1-17 is introductory, the seventeenth verse bringing in what is really the thesis or subject of the Epistle—the righteousness of God revealed on the principle of faith to faith.

Chapter 1. 18 to 3. 20 is occupied with proving that neither Jew nor Gentile has any righteousness before God; that all were alike without excuse and guilty before God. In the latter part of chapter 1. is depicted the state of the heathen world, unfaithful to the testimony of God in creation, and sunken in corruption. The early part of chapter 2. depicts the philosopher judging others, but himself also guilty; and the remainder of the section of which we have spoken brings in the Jew instructed in the will of God, possessing the oracles of God, and yet equally with the Gentile guilty before God.

Chapter 3. 21-26 treats definitely of the righteousness of God, human righteousness having been proved to be non-existent; and at once the great basis of all blessing is presented in the blood. On the ground of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, God can justify freely through His grace; He can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Chapter 4. shows the great principle by which the blessing comes to men; it is faith in contrast to works.

Chapter 5. discloses some of the blessed results to us, but a division must be noted at verse 12 of this chapter. Up to this point the question had been justification from sins. From this verse onward the question of sin, the root from which sins spring, is in view. It is now a question of state, of practical deliverance from sin (chap. 6.), from the bondage of law (chap. 7.), and the perversity of the flesh (chap. 8.). These practical questions being traced to a triumphant solution, God is seen to be in every way "for us," and the soul reaches the conclusion that nothing can separate it from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This closes the doctrinal part of the epistle so far as it relates to the deliverance and blessing of saints of this day.

Chapters 9., 10., 11. form a parenthesis, proving that God has not broken His

word to Israel, but that their hardness of heart and consequent setting aside for a while had all been predicted by the prophets, and did but make way for the fulfilling of the wider purposes of God.

Chapters 12., 13., 14., 15. give exhortations as to that conduct which should flow from the doctrine received.

Chapter 16. is a postscript.

We commend to your careful study the "Notes of Bible Readings" which have appeared in alternate months in this year's issue of the magazine, and which have been mainly on this epistle.

The Holy Scriptures.

J.H.L. writes us inquiring:

"(1) *What is the evidence that the Bible is the Word of God, that in it GOD is speaking?*

"(2) *Do we consider that those who selected the books now constituting our Bible, and first put them together as we now have them, were inspired and infallible?*

"(3) *If not, what is the evidence that each of the books composing the Bible is the Word of God in a different sense to that in which, say, the apocryphal books are so?"*

Your inquiry covers much ground, and would require much more space than we could afford to adequately answer it. But as to your first question, we would state that man having been formed as to his conscious personality as a moral agent by the direct inbreathing of God, the Father of spirits, is so constituted that his conscience recognizes the voice of God wherever it reaches him, whether in creation, through prophets of old, in Christ in incarnation, or in the Scriptures to-day. If it were not so God would not be able to judge the world. The Bible claims to be the Word of God, and that claim is admitted by the conscience of all to whom it comes, even where the insubject carnal mind refuses to submit to it as such.

You hear a man speaking to you. What is the evidence that you have heard him? The evidence is that afforded by your sense of hearing. There may be confirmatory external evidence. You may observe the movement of his lips; or you may observe the effect of what he says on others, as, for instance, were he to cry "Fire!" in a crowded building; but after all

and in the last resort the evidence to yourself that that man really has spoken to you is afforded by your own sense of hearing. The Word of God claims to be a revelation from God, and every awakened conscience admits this claim. It addresses man as a moral agent; it deals with moral and spiritual questions, with the relations of the creature and his Creator, and therefore the evidence that it is indeed God speaking must, as to what is final and conclusive to man, be found in the realm of the moral and spiritual: that is to say, it is the *conscience* of man which recognizes the voice of God in the Scriptures.

There is indeed abundance of deeply interesting external evidence, as, for instance, the indestructibility of the book, though its enemies have sought throughout the centuries to stamp it out. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy; the evidence afforded by its effect on others around, the miracles of transformation it effects in the lives of men; the wonders of its internal composition; and other evidences too numerous to dwell on here; but with all this it is the *conscience* in any man which really recognizes that in the Scriptures God Himself is speaking to him. He may not like to listen if he is unrepentant; he may probably put it out of his sight, refuse to read it, and profess to disbelieve it, but for all that every man to whom the Word comes really knows that in it God is speaking.

As to your second question, we certainly do not think of the Christians to whom you refer as having been in any sense inspired; though God, who is over all, preserved for the blessing of men that Word that had come from Himself, and undoubtedly guided them in their rejection of other writings. They recognized what was truly the voice of God amidst conflicting claims, as we may do to-day. Thus reading the Bible on the one hand and the Koran on the other, no person true to the conviction carried by that which is written can fail to reject the second, whilst admitting the first to be indeed the voice of God to himself.

Then as to the third question. The evidence of each of the parts is identical with that of the book as a whole, *i.e.* each part bears internal evidence that in it God speaks. Of course the un-

converted man cannot be expected to understand as the Christian may the depths of wisdom displayed in all the parts, the meaning of the types, shadows, and historical incidents which interweave all the separately written portions one with the other so as in glorious fullness to present the picture of but **One**, namely Christ. Such cannot be expected to discern, as the Christian may, the perfectly marvellous unity of the whole; but where a man submits himself to that which he *is* conscious that God has spoken, even if it be in that which is most elementary, namely the call to repentance, his apprehension of the truth soon becomes wonderfully enlarged, and he is able to hear the voice of God in all the Scriptures as they bear testimony on every page to His Son, our Lord.

A note as to the apocryphal books will be found on page 281.

“The Wrath of God abideth on him.”

H.H.H. :

“*He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*’ (John 3. 36). *Please state in what sense the wrath of God can abide on any one to-day. That the wrath of God will eventually abide on him who hath believed not on the Son I quite see; but how is it that the wrath of God can abide on any one to-day whilst God is acting in mercy and grace towards all?*”

God is indeed acting in mercy and grace towards all, but the blessing His grace bestows becomes available only through faith in Christ, the obedience of faith. The passage you quote states that the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands. Everything and everybody in this world and in all worlds are given into the hands of the Son to do with them as it shall please Him. Everything depends, therefore, on the attitude of the soul towards Him; those who believe on Him have everlasting life, whilst on those who are not subject to Him (which is the correct rendering of the latter part of the verse) the wrath of God necessarily abides; for they refuse Him into whose hands the Father has given *everything* and thereby show themselves antagonistic to the Father’s thoughts and will.

In John’s writings things are viewed characteristically, eternal life is spoken

of as a present thing, whilst in the writings of Paul it is viewed in its full fruition as future; so in John wrath is spoken of as abiding on one not subject to the Son, whilst Paul speaks of the coming day of wrath and of revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

The Son came into the midst of men, and everything was brought to an issue by His presence, some believing on Him and receiving everlasting life, and others refusing to be subject to Him and so abiding under the wrath of God.

Treading under foot the Son of God.

H.H.H. asks if it is the Son of God who is spoken of as sanctified in Hebrews 10. 29:

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

We read this as referring to the person who, in the way the passage describes, treads under foot the Son of God. In the epistle in which the statement occurs Hebrew figures are used. The sanctification spoken of is positional; it is not a question here of what is done *in* the believer—it is, as we have said, positional.

The chapter contemplates some from amongst Israel who had professed to leave the ground of Judaism and to take up the Christian position as set apart for God not by the blood of the old covenant, but by the blood of the new covenant; but who, after receiving the knowledge of the truth (ver. 26), yet abandoned the whole Christian profession and accounted that precious blood as an unholy thing, treading under foot the Son of God. They refused *Him* again as did their nation when He came to earth. Such really placed themselves, in virtue of that act of apostasy, quite beyond the reach of mercy, for apart from the Son of God and the blood which He shed, there could be no salvation.

It is important to keep in mind that the sanctification spoken of is positional. None who are sanctified in the subjective sense spoken of elsewhere (e.g. 1 Peter 1., "through sanctification of the Spirit;" John 17. 19, "sanctified through the truth;" and 1 Cor. 6. 11, "sanctified . . . by the Spirit of our God") ever

would apostatize from Christ in that way: they could not. But that is not the side of the truth taken up here.

Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire.

U.S.A. writes:

"The Lord has saved me, and I have been baptized, but I was very puzzled a few days ago when I was asked if I had received the Holy Ghost with fire, without which I could not be used of the Lord in His service.

"I have always understood that when a person is saved, they at once receive the Holy Ghost. Is this a separate thing from baptism by fire?"

There is a great deal of teaching on the lines of that which has puzzled you which is most pernicious in that its whole tendency is to turn the thoughts of Christians in upon themselves, making them self-occupied. On the other hand, the truth turns the thoughts from self to Christ. The mission of the Holy Spirit is to take of Christ's things and show them to us (John 16. 13-15), and not to centre our thoughts upon self or our state or service. Indeed, we are only in a right condition of soul, and so only fit to serve, when Christ is alone our object. "In all things He" must "have the pre-eminence."

Fire, in Scripture, is figurative of the holy judgment of God testing everything that comes under it. It has not a meaning other than this in Matthew 3. 11, 12 and Luke 3. 16, 17, to which scriptures we suppose your questioner referred.

The prophecy of John given in these two passages announced the solemn fact that not only would the Lord give the Holy Ghost so that everything that was of Himself might be developed and maintained in His kingdom in divine power, but that there would also be the searching and testing judgment—the fire which would remove the dross and destroy the chaff. This will be publicly manifested in the kingdom of the Lord when He comes to reign, which kingdom John announced.

This was fulfilled in part on the day of Pentecost (see Peter's speech), as recorded in Acts 2. The Holy Ghost came down upon the disciples, and the tongues of fire were there. He had come as a dove upon the Lord Jesus; there was no fire

then, for in Him there was nothing that was obnoxious to the holy presence of the Spirit. In the disciples there was the evil flesh, thence the fire which speaks of God's judgment which tests all things. The destruction of Ananias and Sapphira was an example of that fire in holy activity.

Zeal in the things of God is most desirable, and to be neither "cold nor hot" is to come under the condemnation of the Lord; but "zeal" is not what is meant in Scripture when "fire" is thus used.

Without zeal for the Lord and earnestness of purpose you could not be of use to the Lord, but if you have owned Him as your Saviour and your Lord, the Holy Ghost dwells in you without question, and all the power and energy and wisdom you need for service is in the Holy Ghost. Your responsibility, as it will be your joy, is to be subject to the Lord, to follow Him, and then the Holy Ghost, ungrieved within you, will be free to use you for the Lord's glory without any thought or questioning as to self.

"Baptized for the dead."

W.W.G. :

"Will you please explain 1 Cor. 15. 29: 'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?'"

Christians are in view here as a company out of whose ranks some have passed by death, and in many cases death by martyrdom. In this sense they look for nothing from this world but death, for by their baptism they are identified with the death of Christ. The places of such who died were filled up by others who, *in that sense*, are baptized for the dead. Entrance on the distinctively Christian position is by baptism. Baptism is that which cuts off from the old life, that is to say, that is the proper bearing of the ordinance. Now it was being averred that there was no such thing as resurrection from the dead; and the argument of the Apostle is that, if that be so, Christians are indeed in a poor case. By their baptism they are cut off from the enjoyment of the present course of things, and if death ended all, so that in result they got nothing beyond the grave, then were they losers indeed, and foolish must any be who would by

baptism fill up the places thus rendered vacant by death.

Death, however, does not end all; there is a glorious resurrection: hence the saint is vindicated as possessing heavenly wisdom in following Christ in the way that He has gone: accepting death with Him to the course of things here, and finding beyond the grave his own true and lasting portion.

"Treasures of darkness."

M.J. inquires as to the meaning of this expression in Isaiah 45. 3.

The reference is evidently to blessings and wealth of which the one addressed had no knowledge or conception—things beyond the power of man to discover or obtain. These were to be given to the servant of Jehovah, that he might know that the One who called him was the God of Israel.

"Unto every one that hath shall be given."

E.P. inquires as to the meaning of the verse:

"For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away" (Luke 19. 26).

This is the Lord's summing up of the parable of the pounds, in answer to those who expressed surprise that the one who had ten pounds should have given to him another pound, the one forfeited by the "wicked servant." The fact that he had ten pounds already was evidence that he had been faithful with that which had been entrusted to him; by his faithful trading for his absent Lord he had gained these ten. Having already proved his faithfulness, the Lord could entrust him with more, because "he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16. 10). A solemn word for us, and yet one that should encourage us to use with diligence that which has been entrusted to us, for our faithfulness to the Lord now will affect our place in the kingdom when He comes to reign.

The "wicked servant" had proved himself altogether unworthy of trust by his treatment of the pound. It had been placed in his care, but he had judged it a useless thing, had gained nothing by it, and even it is taken from him.

A paper on this parable appeared in the May number of this magazine.

A Chinese Prayer.

(H. P. BARKER).

"Be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4.).

IN the city of Nankin meetings were being held for the preaching of the gospel and for the help of Christians. The hand of the Lord was with His people in a marked way, and there was a deep realization of the power of the Holy Ghost.

At one of the meetings a certain man rose as if to engage in prayer. He was a believer, well known among the brethren at Nankin. Those present were surprised to hear him begin to cry for mercy, with groans and tears. When, at length, he found utterance, he prayed, "O God, forgive me; I have been a dummy Christian. When I was converted, the devil came to me and said, 'There are preachers to do the preaching; you need not bother about it.' I listened to the devil's lie, and all these years have been a dummy Christian, living in ease while souls have been lost."

Are there not many, who, if they spoke the truth, would have to make a similar confession? Instead of each realizing his own responsibility to serve the Lord to the best of his ability, is not the work of evangelization too often regarded as the duty of a special class?

There are, of course, those who devote themselves exclusively thereto. To this all are not called. But when the Christians were driven from their homes in Jerusalem they went everywhere, not to attend gospel meetings, nor to listen to the preaching of certain men, but to preach the Word themselves (Acts 8. 4).

It is a shame for a believer to be a mere hanger-on, to take no active part in the promulgation of the glad tidings, to be, in the expressive language of our Chinese brother, "a dummy Christian." Would that we

entered more into the spirit of the old refrain, so popular in bygone years among the negroes of the Southern States:

"We'll roll the old chariot along,
And not hang on behind!"

All sorts are needed as soul-winners. Where one fails another may succeed.

Some years ago, when the ice was breaking up in the river several miles above Milton, Pennsylvania, a farmer got into one of his boats, purposing to drag it out on to the bank. Unfortunately, it was struck by a floating mass of ice and carried, with the farmer in it, out into the current. A neighbour, seeing the danger, rode off to Milton and gathered some people together with all the ropes that they could procure. They went to the bridge, and each man dangled a rope over the parapet. They could not tell at just what point the boat would pass, so they placed the ropes at distances of about three feet apart.

By-and-by the farmer was seen, wet and cold, standing in the half-submerged boat, drifting rapidly down the stream. When he saw the row of ropes, he seized the nearest one, was drawn up and saved.

The preacher hangs out the rope of the gospel from the public platform. The Sunday-school teacher hangs out a rope in his or her class. But more ropes are needed. If Christian business men, if mothers and wives, if *all* believers would hang out ropes, many sinners would certainly be saved.

Think of the point of vantage which we Christians occupy.

"Yours must be a very responsible position," said a traveller to a switch-

man who had charge of the switches at a junction where five lines converge. "Yes," was the reply, "but it is as nothing compared with yours as a Christian!"

May God give us greater zeal in seizing opportunities for testimony and service. "I belong to the church *diligent*," said a dear little Sunday-school lassie to her teacher. Of course, she meant the church *militant*, as the saints on earth are sometimes called, in contrast to those in heaven. But it would be well if we all belonged to the "church diligent."

Unconsciously we affect all with whom we come in contact. An ice-

berg drifting south sometimes gets stranded on the shore. Disastrous results follow. Crops growing in the neighbourhood will not ripen. A blight seems to fall upon the whole countryside. Even the birds forsake the chilly region. In spiritual things it is the same. If warm-hearted ourselves we warm the hearts of others. If zealous, we inspire zeal in those around. If cold, we spread a freezing influence: we chill the souls of our fellow-believers.

Oh, that the prayer of our Chinese brother might find an echo far and wide. "God forgive us; we have been dummy Christians!"

Conflict

WE are often surprised at grievous falls in ourselves and others; but if we fail to watch against the flesh, such falls are not really at all surprising. Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling.

It is quite certain that Satan shall be bruised beneath our feet "shortly," yet the certainty of Christ's final victory with the church should not lessen our sense of the power of the enemy in the meantime. This power is so great as to make constant watchfulness necessary, for without it we shall be giving him a dual handle against ourselves. The flesh, by which Satan works, is still present, and it needs to be "mortified."

This keeping the flesh mortified is the great thing, the secret of all strength in practical difficulties; and only living in communion of fellowship with the Lord will enable us to do it.

We must watch against its first strivings and desires, or, before we are aware, it will be giving a handle to Satan's temptations. If we are holding fast that which we have in the Lord, we shall gain the victory over Satan, he will lose his power, and then all is joy,

even suffering for Christ's name's sake—
all will be joy.

But if there is not the everyday commonplace diligence to break the power of the everyday difficulties and keep down everyday evil, we shall have to contend with the flesh instead of Satan (with whom our conflict ought to be), while it will give him power to come in when we are not ready to meet him; we shall have to get the armour in order at the time the fight should begin.

If we fail in this daily judging and keeping down the flesh, we lose the power of victory over Satan; in conflict he will gain the advantage over us, or at least we shall only stand our ground, instead of gaining ground on him and triumphing in victory over him. If it be so, we are unfaithful to Christ; we owe it to Him to gain ground upon the world where Satan reigns—to stand in such a position as to be able to go forward and deliver individual souls from his power in every shape. There is not the looking to His grace and the holding fast His name if it is not so.

J. N. Darby.

Atoning and other Sufferings of Christ. (H. D. R. JAMERON)

"A Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief."

(Continued from page 262.)

Sufferings from Man.

THUS far I have dwelt alone upon what I have spoken of as the intrinsic sufferings of our blessed Lord, the measureless sorrows which were His in virtue simply of what He Himself was, perfect in holiness and love, in the midst of a world of sin such as this is. But I would speak for a moment now of that which He suffered directly at the hands of men. "He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53. 3); for His love He had hatred (Ps. 109. 5); the world hated Him and persecuted Him (John 15. 18, 20, 25). He was light in the midst of moral darkness; but "he that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be made manifest." Time and again they sought to slay Him, and throughout His pathway He was ever the rejected of men; and then finally in the hour which was characteristically "man's hour" (Luke 22. 53), when every check which had hitherto restrained them was removed, then the malignity and irreconcilable hatred of man's heart found vent in the mocking, scourging, and cruel indignities heaped upon Him whom with wicked hands they crucified and slew.

He could say in that hour, "Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness" (Ps. 69. 20). Lover and friend were put far from Him (Ps. 88. 18); strong bulls of Bashan beset Him round; the assembly of the wicked enclosed Him (Ps. 22. 12, 16); and in all that was about Him there was not one solitary ray of comfort: all was dark: it was man's hour and the power of darkness. He "looked for some to take pity, but

there was none," and for comforters, but He found none (Ps. 69. 20).

But this was not all; there were the far-reaching consequences of all this rejection by man, the breach which sin in this way brought in on all the ordered relationships in which He was set as Man here perfect in all His affections and sensibilities. Thus He was the Messiah of Israel, but as such He was cut off and had nothing (Dan. 9. 26). Did He not feel it? He came to His own and His own received Him not. He was a King, but He was rejected. A Light to lighten the Gentiles, but *they* crucified Him. There was no relationship in which He was set here that was not broken in upon by sin. And what sorrows the breaking through of every tender tie must have brought on His loving heart: sorrow told out in the words spoken on the cross to Mary, His mother, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Son, behold thy mother," when every tender affection proper to Him as perfect Man in that divinely ordered relationship was broken in upon for ever. So, too, with every other link: everything went in death. He was cut off and had NOTHING.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings.

In all the characters of the sufferings of Christ of which I have spoken so far as His intrinsic sufferings or sufferings from man, the saint to-day is privileged in his measure to share. The children of God are morally "of Him," and as such must grieve over the fact of sin here, feel the dishonour done to God in it all, and feel too with men and for men in the sorrows and distresses which sin has brought in on every hand. Besides this character of suffering the saint to-day is

given as privilege to suffer for Christ's sake (Phil. 1. 29), and to suffer as He did for righteousness' sake: that is to say, to suffer from men on account of the testimony he bears. The course of things here is all against the will of God, and so he who will walk in the path of that will "must suffer persecution." But all this side of things in which we may share in the sufferings of Christ, be "partakers of His sufferings" (1 Peter 4. 13), is absolutely and totally apart from His atoning sufferings, which stand alone, as I have said, in a category by themselves, unapproached and unapproachable by men.

Scripture expressly distinguishes sufferings for righteousness sake and sufferings for sin (see 1 Peter 3. 17, 18): "For it is better if the will of God should will it to suffer as well-doers than as evil-doers; for Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (N.T.). It is our part to suffer as well-doers: to suffer *for sins* is Christ's part alone. He died that we who were unjust might be brought to God, and so, being set in the path of His will, might be found here ready to suffer, if need be, as well-doers.

And notice carefully that that which is spoken of here as suffering for sins is not, as often falsely taught, merely that which our blessed Lord became involved in *because* of the sin of others, as a mother might suffer grief and shame because of the sin of her child (a very different thing, however poignant the grief, from love leading to her satisfying justice by bearing the penalty due to the child's sin); but here it is explicitly judicial suffering *FOR* sins, that is to say, Christ's substitutional sufferings as the Just One bearing for us the unjust the judgment due to our sins.

To suffer as an evil-doer (*e.g.* as a murderer or thief, as 1 Peter 4. 15) would be to suffer judicially the penalty attached to the crime of which one

was guilty: it would be to come into the place (in the first instance, it may be, under the government of man) which Christ in grace took for us under the government of God. I remark this to make clear that it is of *judicially inflicted suffering* that the passage speaks: it is government that is in view. Then, too, this suffering for sins is *substitutional*, for He who suffered was the Just One suffering for us the unjust; and it is *atoning*, for its effect is to "bring us to God."

The two kinds of sufferings are thus explicitly contrasted: suffering for sins on the part of *Christ*, and suffering as *well-doers* in which *we* may share.

We are set in Christ's place here, that is to say, in the place which He occupied in His lifetime, not in that which He took in atonement, and as following in His steps His sufferings in that pathway will be ours, as well as indeed His joys, the compensations that belong to the path of God's will. He could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me;" and we read that it was "for the *joy* that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame." If men rejected Him, the Father ever was with Him; if for His love He had hatred here, He Himself ever abode in the unclouded sunshine of His Father's love; and leaving us here in His place of rejection, He has left us also the privilege of sharing in His joy: "These things have I spoken unto you that *My joy* might remain in you" (John 15. 11). He gives also His own peace, the unutterable, fathomless peace in which He moved in the midst of all the distressing circumstances about Him: "My peace give I unto you" (John 14. 27). Then, too, taking His yoke upon us we may learn of Him, and though distresses surround us, find *rest* unto our souls (Matt. 11. 29). Such are the blessed compensations of the path.

But while we are given in this way to share in our tiny measure in the

sufferings of Christ, no saint who understands even a little of what his sins have cost the Saviour would ever think for a moment of classing His *atoning* sufferings along with those sufferings in which we may share with Him. Yet this is being done on every hand to-day, and piously phrased books teaching such doctrines circulate by thousands amongst the more earnest of those professing Christ's name, and by subtly undermining the foundations, are rapidly preparing the way for the final apostasy. Does any one say, How so? I reply that if Christ suffered only that which we can share in, then either there is no such thing as atonement, or we are all capable of atoning sufferings; and if that be so, then the death of Christ were not necessary unless indeed as an example of love, and we are all potential redeemers! This is the apostasy of the present day now nearly fully developed, apostasy which exalts the capabilities of man and denies the need of atonement, the need of Christ suffering judicially at the hand of God in infinite justice.

It is not seen, it is not understood, but to this solemn end moves the popular teaching of the day; and if I make quotation to illustrate that of which I speak, I shall not do so from books such as R. J. Campbell's *New Theology*, with its gross and, to every true Christian's heart, offensively worded perversions of the truth, but from writings in which error is so mingled with fervently expressed admiration of the Saviour as to pass unnoticed and be assimilated by multitudes of earnest and true-hearted believers, who, if the false doctrine were plainly and baldly stated, would shrink from it as instantly as, it may be, would the author of the writings themselves, did he but see how effectually his pen was furthering the enemy's designs and wronging Him whose redemptive work he thus robs of its distinctive glory.

The following extracts (*italics mine*) are from S. D. Gordon's "Addresses

on Calvary," first published in the *Overcomer* last year, and now issued in widely circulated book form:—

JOSEPH.

Joseph suffered. He suffered *sacrificially*. He suffered very really as a substitute for his people.

In Egypt he suffers imprisonment, reproach, slander, because of his purity, through the sin of others. He suffers the keenest kind of pain, bodily, of mind, and of spirit. . . . The fact of substitution comes out in this Joseph picture likewise. . . . Joseph by his suffering was the means of his family, his nation as it became a nation, coming into a new life. Through his suffering there came to his clan, to the tribes, to the nation, life, a national life.

DAVID.

If you would know how keenly David suffered read Psalm 22. and Psalm 69. . . . and if you will step a bit further off for better perspective, you will find substitution in this picture. Because David's suffering was all undeserved—he suffered because of the sin, the hatred, the enmity, the envy of another one. . . . Through that suffering his nation came into its great life as a nation. He was in effect *his nation's substitute-saviour*.

THE PROPHETS.

I suggest to you that you take time and run through the old Hebrew Prophets and trace bit by bit their sacrificial sufferings as prophets *on behalf* of their people, and, furthermore, mark that life came to their people through their sufferings.

JEREMIAH.

He suffers torment and indignity and reproach for years because of his message. And out of it all, undeserved by him, out of it, there comes a new, fine spiritual life for his people.

ISAIAH.

Isaiah 53. . . . originally depicts what Isaiah suffered in his own life because of being God's messenger.

THE LORD JESUS.

But none of these suffered as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered. He had greater suffering *capacity*. He was far more *keen* to suffering. The things that would make us suffer would make Him, as a Man, suffer far more, because of the greater sensitiveness of His spirit.

Through giving up His life men are won back home to God.

CHRISTIANS.

There must be a Calvary spirit, a Calvary sacrifice, a Calvary shadow in every life. . . . It means this, that you give up your life, if need be so, that something may come to others. And because, through your sacrifice, there comes new life to others, you are singing.

"He that hateth his life *for others' sake* shall find it" and many another too. (*A glaring misquotation of John 12. 25.*)

The underground road is the only pathway into life for us abundantly, and *through us* for all the world.

Now, the serious feature in all this

I have the knife?" He is told that he would certainly hurt himself with it if it were given to him. But he persists in his complaint, which is now very real to him, for he sees one in the hand of an elder sister, and why should he be denied what she is allowed to have? "My child," says the patient mother, "that which would be a dangerous weapon in your small and unskilled hands is a very useful thing in sister's hands, for see, she is cutting the loaf for your tea with it."

Earthly possessions are like that polished knife; if another has them, it is to use them for the good of all and the glory of God, and if they are put beyond your reach it is because they would hurt you if you had them. Let your heart be happy and contented then, for God, who is your Father, knows what is best for you. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not *with Him* also freely give us all things?"

Yes, everything that He can give to us "with Him" He will, and that without a grudge.

But, say you, "Some Christians have wealth that they do not use for others' good, and it seems to hinder the progress of their souls." That is so; and do you desire to handle the weapon that is injuring them? Distrust of self would lead you to thank God that in the wisdom of a perfect love He has made it impossible for you to hurt your soul as others seem to be hurting theirs.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE."

His company is better than broad acres and a large income. And if *He hath said* that He is with us, "*we may boldly say, THE LORD IS MY HELPER, AND I WILL NOT FEAR WHAT MAN SHALL DO UNTO ME*" (Heb. 13. 6).

"He Gave Gifts."

(H. NUNNERLEY).

CHRIST'S care for the church is expressed by the bestowal of gifts to perpetuate the service He inaugurated. The scriptures which refer to them are Ephesians 4., 1 Corinthians 12., Romans 12. From them we learn that gifts, as to their *administration*, are dispensed by Christ as Lord (Eph. 4. 8; 1 Cor. 12. 5), whilst their *manifestation* is connected with the Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 7) and their *operation* with God (1 Cor. 12. 6); these scriptures direct us to their source and speak of their nature and object.

Sign Gifts.

Many of the gifts bestowed abide with the saints to-day, others known as "sign gifts" have passed away, having answered their purpose.

In 1 Corinthians 12. to 14. we read of many of these sign gifts which do

not now exist. The reason is not far to seek; a divine Person came to dwell on earth at Pentecost. He did not clothe Himself with a visible human body, as did the Lord Jesus Christ, but manifested His presence in two ways. He shed God's love abroad in *believers'* hearts, gave them the consciousness of adoption, baptized them into one body, bore witness with their spirits that they were the children of God, comforted them in Christ's absence, and was the earnest of their glorious inheritance. All this was evidence to *them*, but *unbelievers* needed a different testimony. To them His presence was demonstrated by *sign* gifts. A man who had never acquired languages spoke the wonderful works of God in a foreign tongue; others, who had never studied medicine, wrought miraculous cures; dead men

is that the atoning sacrifice of Christ (His substitutional sufferings) is affirmed to be of the same character, the same *nature*, as that of the sufferings of Old Testament saints and of Christians to-day, though of course admitting that His sufferings were greater in their *extent* simply because He had greater capacity for feeling them.

Space would forbid detailed examination of what is quoted above, even if one desired it, but the central error in it all may be clearly seen on briefly considering the case, for instance, of Joseph. Had he indeed taken the place of a substitute he would have been cut off instantly under the judgment of God. But his suffering was not *substitutional*: God inflicted nothing upon him, it was simply suffering at the hands of men; and in all of which it is repeatedly affirmed "the Lord was *with* Joseph"—striking contrast with Christ, who, when He took His place as the sinner's Substitute,

was "forsaken," and necessarily so on account of the holiness and majesty of God.

To be a substitute one must not only be in the sinner's place, but also bear the sinner's *penalty*; and who alone can inflict the penalty, the judgment, due to sin? None but *God*, for sin is against *Him*. Now, it is just here that we meet with the significant and fatal omission in all this teaching. There being no just idea of the righteousness of God, what is judicial is absolutely ignored, treated as if it were non-existent, and as if God were an indulgent Being who could forgive sin apart from the satisfaction of the righteous requirements of His throne. Let the religious writings and books of the day be tested in this regard, and the result will to very many be startling indeed. The foundation truth of Christ's atoning sufferings is almost universally wanting in the teachings of the Christendom of to-day.

(To be concluded.)

"Godliness with Contentment."

(J. T. MAWSON).

WE are not surprised at the unrest and discontent which are more than ever manifest in the lives of those that know not God. We are not surprised that the poor, who are not rich in faith, should cast envious and covetous eyes upon the possessions of those who seem more fortunately placed than themselves. But it is surpassingly strange when this spirit of discontent and covetousness breaks out in the lives of those who have God as their Father. It is strange because it means that a rebellious will is at work, and that confidence in One who cannot make a mistake has been abandoned, and these two things are utterly alien to the spirit of children, they are base intruders into the family of God. Yet undoubtedly this discontent is prevalent and is sapping the spiritual vitality of thousands

who otherwise might be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." To depend in simple trust upon God alone, and be satisfied with what He gives, must be great gain indeed; and yet—"Well," says one, "if only I had an income like Mr. ——— I should be quite contented, and I could do a lot of good with it; and why should I be denied that which he has so abundantly?"

Hear a parable. A little child is attracted by the sight of a highly polished knife; it is so pretty to look at it must be nice to possess, and he attempts to grasp it. But a watchful mother places it beyond his reach and under lock and key. But he whines and complains and asks, "Why can't

were brought to life, blind eyes were opened, paralysed men leaped for joy, deaf heard, dumb spake, and multitudes were awed by an unseen but mysterious power, which could open prison doors and shake mighty buildings. All this was inaugural and intended to *manifest the presence of the Holy Ghost*, to call men's attention to the all-important fact that *another divine Person* had visited this world, to abide until His work is finished. He still carries on His work; every soul saved, every saint comforted proves He is still here. He will remain until the spoils of redemption are gathered, and the church is with her Lord. In the meantime that which Christ *administers* the Spirit *distributes*. He imparts gifts according to His own will.

If the outward and visible indications of His advent in an unbelieving world ceased—when He had fully demonstrated His presence by miracles, wonders, and signs—He still *abides*, He has found a dwelling-place in the church. If the church had remained in unbroken unity, possibly, miraculous manifestations might have continued, but in the present broken state what is needed is not the "gift of tongues," but the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." It is the Spirit's delight to reproduce in the saints the walk and ways of the meek and lowly Jesus. We may have the *graces* of the Spirit, if we have not all of the *gifts*, and these graces are the best witness of the Spirit's presence and power.

The Gifts in Ephesians 4.

When we turn to Ephesians we find a difference both in the gifts and their object. These are intended to carry on the work of Christ during His absence from the earth; and the whole five mentioned were embodied in His earthly ministry. An *apostle* is one sent of God—the "sent" One is a term constantly used in the Gospels as descriptive of Christ.

A *prophet* reveals the mind of God

for His people. Who did this so fully as the Lord Jesus?

An *evangelist* makes known the compassions of God for a lost world. Who wept over the insensibility of man's heart to God's love like the One who came to make that love known?

A *pastor* binds up that which is broken, strengthens the feeble, seeks the wanderer. How all this marked the ministry of the blessed Lord!

Then what a *teacher* He was, how patient, how gracious, how forbearing! The lessons He taught He daily exemplified, He *was* what He *spoke*.

Have we apostles now? YES and No.

No, since the men, who were the gifts, are no longer here.

YES, because they continue in their writings. He that is of God still listens to them (1 John 4. 6), their teachings being permanently treasured up in the Scriptures.

Have we prophets now? YES and No.

If by a prophet is meant one who foretells future events, or makes some fresh revelation hitherto unknown, No, for the canon of Scripture is complete, all its revelations culminating in the mystery (Col. 1. 25-27).

If the kind of prophet spoken of in 1 Corinthians 14. 1-3 is meant, YES. This is a gift Paul specially desires we should covet, and one who has it will edify, exhort, and comfort God's people. When a servant of Christ stirs up, builds up, or cheers up the saints he is doing the work of a prophet.

Barnabas exercised it when he exhorted them to cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord. He was a *good man* and full of the Holy Ghost, one who was cleaving to the Lord Himself, and wanted to get others into line. Edification and consolation marked much of Paul's ministry: he comforted others with the comfort

wherewith he was comforted of God. Many of God's children to-day have their hearts and minds distracted by disturbing elements ; such need cheer and encouragement.

The great Prophet knew how to speak a word in season to him that was weary ; in order to this, His ear was opened morning by morning ; He listened for divine communications, and He imparted them in due season.

Paul exalts this gift ; to edify an ignorant saint, to stir up a cold saint, to comfort and console a drooping saint he esteemed a gift to be greatly desired. Shall *we* not earnestly covet it ?

Evangelists follow. The great salvation was first spoken by the Lord ; He started His ministry as the bearer of glad tidings ; He published peace. Indifference to the message weighed heavily upon Him—how heavily those hot burning tears and that sorrowful lament witness. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye *would not*." He still carries on this ministry ; His heart still goes out to this perishing world ; the evangelist is the exponent of His pity and compassion for souls. He is sent by his exalted Master to gather the lost sheep, bring prodigals to the *Father*, excavate stones for the temple, seek a bride for the bridegroom.

It is of the deepest importance that a seeker of souls should keep *in view the end for which he is sent* ; he must bear in mind the one great absorbing object of Christ is the ingathering of the church. All labour must be directed to that on which God's heart is set. The *destination* of the "great stones and costly" for Solomon's temple was the real cause of their *excavation* ; they were dislodged with a view to being built in.

Pastors are next mentioned. Timothy was a true pastor, he cared for the

state of the saints ; their spiritual well-being occupied him. A pastor and a shepherd are very much alike : the lambs call for his tender care ; he gives them food in due season ; he enters into the sorrows and difficulties of the flock, helps them in their perplexities, seeks the wanderers. His desire is to see them united ; he dreads whatever may scatter them ; preservation and restoration occupy him. Let us pray for more pastors !

Teachers close the list. Their mission is to unfold and expound the mysteries of the faith. Scripture is not a mere history of facts ; it is a repository of divine truth, each part bearing a harmonious relation to the whole. It is the teacher's mission to present what will edify, and unfold each part in its proper setting.

Look for a moment at the way the gospel is mentioned in the Epistles. In Galatians the emphasis is on the *truth* of the gospel ; in Ephesians on the *mystery* of the gospel ; in Philippians on the *defence* of the gospel ; and Colossians on the *hope* of the gospel. What unfoldings are here ! An evangelist might proclaim the *truth* of the gospel, be ready to die in its *defence*, rejoice in its *hope*, be conversant with its *mysteries*, but it is scarcely his work to instruct the saints on the different bearings of these things in the Epistles. That is more the work of a teacher. Paul had both gifts ; this seldom occurs now, so if an evangelist turns teacher, or a teacher evangelist, he certainly is not waiting on his ministry, though he is to be ready to every good work. Christ gave to every man his work, each must find out for himself *what it is* and do it, and one servant must not interfere with another, though in a day of brokenness we are often called to be "maids of all work."

The test of all true ministry is profit, for this the servant must be in direct communication with his Head. The end to be reached is the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

A teacher may be able to show the way each section of truth stands in relation to the whole, point out the perfectly consistent harmony of every part, discover precious truths hidden under the letter of Scripture, but if this is not ministered in due season, or if it is ministered apart from the unction of the Holy Ghost, it may fill the *head*, but it will not move the *heart*.

For a teacher to be proud of his knowledge, or use his gift to exalt himself, will certainly not fulfil the object for which Christ gave him to the church. He must learn of the meek and lowly One, be content to be as one that serveth, wait at the doorpost of his Master's house to get a message; all must be subservient to the great end of imparting the knowledge of the Son of God in the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

The Gifts in Romans 12.

Romans 12. not only mentions gifts, but moral qualifications and accompaniments of true service. The body is to be presented as a living sacrifice, the mind is to be renewed and transformed, the world and its ways separated from. These are essentials for acquiring the knowledge of God's will. The first requisite in a servant is *acquaintance with his master's will*, the second is *absolute obedience to that will*.

In the household of faith each servant has a place to fill which none other can fill. If the knee joint is not doing its work, the elbow joint cannot take its place. All members have *different* offices, but each is a member of *one* body, and each is to minister to the well-being of the whole.

One servant may estimate *his* work at a high value and depreciate another's; such an one forgets that it is a *favour* from God to be allowed to serve Him in any way. The best servant in the house said in speaking of his service, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

The most gifted member is only part of one great whole, and needs every other member. Let a particle of dust blow in your eye, how instinctively your little finger seeks to remove it; in this act we may discern how the smallest member may minister to the greatest.

Certain gifts are here singled out, thus, prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, rule, etc., and practical directions are given for their use. Prophecy and faith are to be in due proportion. We believe and therefore speak. Every gift has to be waited upon, it must not lie dormant. Timothy was to *stir up* the gift conferred. Many a Christian's gift lies dormant; some because they are so placed that they cannot use it. How can a man who is not allowed to cross the boundary of his parish, or a minister who has to preach year in and year out to the same company, exercise the gift of an evangelist and go into the world to announce glad tidings? A teacher is often hindered in the same way. He is a gift to the whole church (not to any particular company). He is to edify every member of Christ's body.

Romans 12. presents the widest range of service—no member of the body is left out. When David was rejected servants of various kinds ministered to him; Ittai the Gittite abandoned everything to be at his disposal; Barzillai put all the resources of his house at his command; Mephibosheth could only stay at home and weep. The counterpart of these we find here. Some, like Ittai, renounce all other occupations to be free for their Master's use; they leave all to follow Him. Others, unable to teach or preach, show hospitality to those who do so; they minister their carnal things in return for spiritual things. Then there are others, who have neither house, means, nor gift. Have these no place? They have. They come in among the joints and bands. They can weep with sorrowing hearts, they can unselfishly enter into

another's joys and rejoice therein. How cheering is brotherly affection! Some one said the *kindness* of a brother in the hour of trial *cheered* his spirit and lifted him up far more than the gifts of his richer brethren, deeply thankful as he felt for *their* practical care and God's goodness through them. There are none so poor that they cannot pray for, and weep or rejoice with others.

Then we are not to be *wise in our own conceits*. A brother who imagines he *knows* more than all others, and is always forcing his special views, needs to take heed to this word. It is the meek and lowly in heart with whom God dwells. Such was Jesus. We are to consort with the lowly, as He did. Abounding good is to overcome evil; indeed, so full is the chapter of the details of service that every member of Christ's body will find his work here; and yet Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13. there is something more excellent than service—there is that which remains when service is over. How needful, therefore, for each one, after discovering the special service

committed to him, to seek grace to carry out every line of 1 Corinthians 13. It is the holy oil of the sanctuary; its properties are divine. If we honestly seek to love, as there set forth, it shall practically produce all the precepts of Romans 12.

The study of these scriptures shows that no man can claim to possess a gift unless dispensed by Christ and divided to him by the Spirit. University training and human learning avail nothing as to gifts apart from Christ and the Spirit! These gifts are given for a special end, as we see in each place where they are mentioned, their object (whether evangelist, pastor, or teacher) being connected with the out-gathering and edification of the body of Christ, the church of the living God.

We are also reminded that *every* believer has some service assigned to him. Let us seek direction from our Head, and power in the Spirit to answer to the place in the house of God and the body of Christ in which God has set us, saying, like Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do?"

"Praise Glorifieth God."

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out" (Mark 14. 26).

"In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. 2. 12).

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy" (Rev. 5. 9).

Hark! the solemn strain uprising,
Sweetly swells the note of praise,
From the chamber where the Saviour
Leads His own the voice to raise.
'Tis the night of sad rejection,
All is darkness, deep'ning gloom;
And the Son of Man goes onward
To the cross, the death, the tomb.

Hark! the gentle strain uprising,
Softly swells the note of praise;
All His anguish we remember,
As with Him the voice we raise.
All our guilt was laid upon Him,
Him, God's own beloved Son;
All the waves and billows pouring
O'er His head, He cried, "'Tis done."

Hark! the gladsome song uprising,
Louder swells the note of praise,
Now we hail Him as the Victor,
While with Him the voice we raise.
He, whom men despised, rejected,
Now is crowned upon God's throne;
Praise Him, He alone is worthy,
This we gladly, fully own.

Hark! the mighty song uprising,
Loudly swells the song of praise;
Heaven and earth shall now adore Him,
All to Him their voices raise.
He has loved us, He has washed us
In His blood from every stain;
Raise we then the joyful chorus—
"Worthy is the Lamb once slain."

I. Revell.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

I John 4. 1-10.

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God :

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God : and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them : because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world : therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God : he that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is love

9 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.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

GOD'S purpose in redemption was that He should dwell with man. This fact is at once notified in the song of Moses (Exod. 15. 13); and again further on, "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 29. 45, 46). The Apostle Paul sums up the constant testimony of Scripture to this fact thus : "Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor. 6. 16). And now in confirmation of this, and giving us further light as to the way of its accomplishment, the Apostle John says, "He that keepeth His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us" (1 John 3. 24).

Here, for the first time in the Epistle, mention is made of the Spirit. Hitherto he has spoken of the Father and the Son ; and now he vitalizes, as with spiritual energy, and realizes the promises of olden times (*cf.* Isa. 32. 1-5 ; Ezek. 39. 29, *et al.*). The same reference to the three Persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, is noticeable throughout the Gospel of John, chaps. 14.-16. being specially devoted, as is the case in the latter part of this Epistle, to the subject of the Spirit.

It is important to note that while the Epistle of John is essentially subjective,

and connects the Christian with all the truth of Christianity by the possession of a life which is his, as born of God, yet at the same time the truth is guarded from the corruption of a mysticism, or an auto-suggestion, that looks for the movements of the Spirit as having their spring within. It is thus preserved in its proper force, objectively, in the Father, Son and Spirit, in whom are found its source, expression, and energy, so that the believer is never thrown in on himself to look for any of these things. At the same time they are all made good to him in the movements of his soul, as though they were his own ; while, in fact, they are the reproduction in him of what is true outside of him, and remain so, independently of the exercises through which he passes. The eye receives the landscape reproduced on the retina, and the picture becomes its own ; and without mental effort the relation between the landscape and the eye is, all unconsciously, maintained. Were the subject of this relation, and not the landscape, to be brought in question, the landscape would disappear from view, and another subject, not the landscape, would take its place. So the Spirit is given us that we should be occupied with Christ in the enjoyment of the divine life which we have in Him, and not with our own experiences.

Verses 1-3.

But the mention of the Spirit leads at once to the warning to "try the spirits whether they are of God ; for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (ver. 1). The subject of the Spirit's

testimony is Christ (John 15. 26). Christ therefore is the sole and sufficient test whereby to try every spirit. "Every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God." It is not as in the A.V. the historical fact, "that He is come;" but the confession of His Person "come in flesh;" and the refusal so to confess Him is the very spirit, or principle, of Antichrist, that will appear without restraint in the last days. It is now already in the world, the spirit of apostate Christendom to-day.

It is not the deity of Christ that is the test. There are those who own His deity, and deny His humanity. It is not His humanity only. There are those who own His humanity, but deny His deity. It is not simply the union of both in one Person, for, by the very idea of union division is implied; and so they hold that part of Him is divine and part is human, that such and such things He did as God, and such and such He did as Man. And so the hymn, inspired doubtless by the best intentions, says, "the union of both joined in one, form the fountain of love in His heart;" and by its endeavour to express in human language a divine mystery, which cannot be fathomed or expressed, it is misleading as the others. God's works are the works of infinite resources and almighty power. In their manifestation they are intelligible to the simplest (Rom. 1. 19, 20); in themselves they are "past finding out." So with the incarnation; the unlettered Christian believes alike in the true deity and the real humanity of "Jesus Christ come in flesh;" the most learned cannot explain it; the spirit of Antichrist denies it. "No one knows fully (*ἐπιγινώσκει*) the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27), and it is well that it is so. If we could solve that "greatest of all mysteries," we should be equal in knowledge to God.

Verse 4.

And now in the presence of all this the Apostle turns, not to the advanced in spiritual growth as such, but to the "little children." "Ye are of God, little children," he says, "and have overcome them;" not because of any might of their own, but "because He who was in them was greater than he who was in the world." It is thus that the triumph

of God is secured. Had it been left to men, to the best of men, how much otherwise it would have been, let the history of the church bear witness.

Verse 5.

They are of, or from the world—on that principle—as the spiritual source of their existence; even as before Jesus had said to the Jews, "Ye are from your father the devil" (John 8. 44). The Apostle is not here occupied with the men merely; but he traces to its source the spirit that is at work in them. They were of the world first formed by Cain; the world where Christ was crucified; that hates both Him and the Father, and is preparing to receive the Antichrist; the world which, with all its religious profession, is under the judgment of God; such is the world from which they are, from which they speak, that lends them its ear and gives them its approval; and such is the world, the death-trap of the Christian, when he submits himself to its influence.

Verse 6.

On the other hand, "we are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us; hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Previously he had spoken of the family of God generally as "ye" (ver. 4); now, when it is a question of light and leading, he says "we," the apostles; and the hearing or not hearing them, *i.e.* to-day for us, their inspired writings, was the test whereby to know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. How important this is, and what fatal results have accrued from ancient times to the present day, by the assumption to have light other than this, and authority to dictate, claiming the right to be heard, instead of listening to, and leading others to listen to and obey, the written Word of God.

We may look a little further at the way in which the Apostle uses the words "me" and "us." Their primary reference is to the Jew. Then later on (vers. 14, 15; chap. 5. 1, as before, John 3. 16, *et al.*) he broadens out to the wider field of the Gentile world, so as to take in all—the "other sheep, who are not of this fold" (John 10.)—and to unite them all in one flock. But the order is ever "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1. 16); for though they are to-day

"lo-ammi," yet to them belong the adoption, the glory, the promises, etc.; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 9. 4, 5). Furthermore we must remember that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4. 22). The world has contributed nothing to God. Men of eminence have sprung from it in religion, science, statecraft, and such-like; but neither the wisdom of Egypt, the philosophy of Greece, the classics of the ancients, the learning of the moderns, the conservatism of Rome, nor the free-thought of modern times has added one iota towards the accomplishment of the purposes of God. The "new theology" of to-day is but the old lie of the Devil, the apotheosis of man, the deification of intellect. "In the day ye eat thereof . . . ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." There is nothing new about it.

God has not given up His purposes as regards Israel. What He does He does for ever, and "He does it that men should fear before Him." (Eccles. 3. 14). There can be no change with Him. The Jew will yet be the centre of blessing for the world. It must be so, for Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and He will yet "reign in Jerusalem, and before His ancient people gloriously" (Isa. 24. 23). And not only so, but as His wide dominion stretches into the heavens above, "the great and high mountain, and that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God," will be the extension in vaster scenes of what was but adumbrated in the glory of the city below (*cf.* Zech. 8. 3; Rev. 21. 10).

Jesus was born a Jew; but there were those who could say of Him, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14). Such is the company, personated by the apostles, of whom he says, "He that is of God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us." "Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." They owe nothing to the Gentile world, except to communicate to it the glory of the coming age, and meanwhile the gospel free of charge (3 John 7).

His warnings complete, he now returns to the subject already introduced (chap. 3. 23, 24), viz. love and the Spirit, *i.e.* the nature of God Himself begotten in us, and the Spirit as the power to put it into exercise.

Verse 7.

He addresses them all as "Beloved." Now every child of God as such is beloved; and because this is so, he says, "Let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and has been taught to know God. He that loveth not, has not learned to know God," whatever else he may have learned; for had he learned to know God, he would have learned that "God is love."

As righteousness in the preceding chapter is not merely human righteousness in the ordinary affairs of life, so here, love is not merely benevolence, being good to all; nor is it love of a personal kind to one's own, but it is the divine nature that links together the whole family of God as such in one bond of love. It is not the same thing as liking one another. There may be many things far from likeable in any of us; but though, from individual idiosyncrasies, you may not always like another, yet you should challenge your heart before God to say, "I love him." He who has not learned this has not learned to know God. Before, he had said that "love is of God;" now he goes further and says, "God is love." Accordingly love is not a mere duty, though "we ought to love one another;" but it is the very nature of God Himself, the nature we have as begotten of Him.

Verse 9.

He then proceeds to show the manifestation of this love in respect of us.

1, in that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him;

2, to be the propitiation for our sins; and

3, the perfection of that love in regard to us, that we might have boldness in the day of judgment.

"That we might *live* through Him." When God took of the dust of the ground and breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, He showed His creative

power. When He sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we should live through Him, that was *love*.

Verse 10.

But that is not all. This love was further shown in that it moved freely of itself. There was nothing in us to attract it. Nay, more, we were living in our sins, and in the alienation of our hearts against Him. And this further question had to be settled, not merely by the love of God, for He is holy too, but by the atoning work of Christ upon the cross. And for this purpose "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;" "He sent Him, a propitiation for our sins." That was *love indeed*.

The expression "only-begotten Son" occurs five times in John's writings, viz. John 1. 14, 18; 3. 16, 18; 1 John 4. 9; and there only.

"This rendering (only-begotten, John 1. 14) somewhat obscures the exact sense of the original word, which is rather

'only-born;' i.e. the thought in the original is centred in the personal being of the Son, and not in His generation. Christ is the one only Son, the One to whom the title belongs in a sense completely unique and singular, as distinguished from that in which there are many children of God. The use of the word elsewhere in the New Testament to describe an only child (Luke 7. 12; 8. 42; 9. 38; Heb. 11. 17) brings out this sense completely. In the LXX the word is used, among other places, in Ps. 22. 21; 35. 17, of the soul, the one single, irreparable life of man; and in Ps. 25. 16 of the Sufferer left alone and desolate" (*Westcott*).

Accordingly we may regard "the only-begotten Son" as expressive of His essential and unique glory, as the channel of communication to us of the glory of God the Father—the divinely qualified instrument of the mighty work of redemption, whereby God Himself in all that He is should be made fully known, and His promises fulfilled to us in eternal life.

The Ulterior Aims of Spiritism.

(H. P. BARKER)

NATURALLY, those who love their friends follow them in thought and affection beyond the grave. Truly and pathetically they write upon their tombstones, "Gone, but not forgotten," and tenderly they cherish in their hearts the memory of those dear faces which they will never see on earth again.

To those whose hearts are thus bowed under the grief of a sore bereavement, modern spiritualism, or spiritism, comes with great speciousness, affirming that there is a possibility of receiving communications from the departed friends.

By this means people are persuaded to attend a spiritualistic séance, when evil spirits personate those who have "gone before." The poor dupes imagine that they are renewing intercourse with their loving friends. In reality they are holding intercourse with hateful fiends.

That there is a real impersonation on the part of evil spirits cannot be doubted. Ample proofs are forthcoming as to actual happenings of this sort. Not that there is no fraud connected with this devilry. Thomas Waugh, in his *Cricket Field of the Christian Life*, pertinently says:

"Of course there is no end of trickery and chicanery in spiritualistic meetings and séances. Lying and deception pervade the very atmosphere of such gatherings. Credulous, Satan-blinded dupes have been fooled and hoodwinked, times without number, on such occasions. The multitudes of crushing exposures that have taken place put that fact beyond all doubt. Those who conduct these God-forbidden meetings are so completely in the hands of the great deceiver of the whole world, that we are not surprised that deception

and falsehood are the governing principles in spiritualism.

"Nevertheless, we are always sorry when we hear good people in the pulpit, and in the presence of young people elsewhere, assert that 'there is nothing in spiritualism, and no truth in any of its claims.' *The devil is in it*, and is using it for deep and far-reaching malevolent purposes." *

It may be asked, if the manifestations of spiritualism are really demoniacal, if wicked spirits really possess the power of impersonating dead people so craftily as to deceive their nearest surviving relatives, what need is there for the use of trickery? Would not the real thing be more convincing than the counterfeit? Why should demons, who can work such wonders, have recourse to petty deceits and impostures?

A. J. Pollock, in his *Modern Spiritualism, briefly tested by Scripture*, points out the reason. Says he:

"That there is trickery in it is certain; it is part of the skilful deceit of the system. To throw people off their guard is half the battle. Without this ability modern Spiritualism would make slow progress.

"Seeing that neither Satan nor his agents are omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent, I believe trickery is necessary to cover lack of knowledge, and other deficiencies. Hence darkened rooms, luminous material secreted within the tips of the medium's nails, grown long for the purpose, so that a shadowy appearance of materialization may be effected. It is well known that the innocent-looking cabinets of the mediums contain very clever devices for purposes of deception. But with full allowance for all this, there are effects produced, which are beyond the power

* So also Sir R. Anderson in his remarkable brochure on *Spirit Manifestations*, says in a note, page 19:

"No one but a professional sceptic will doubt that the spiritualists have real dealings with the unseen world; but the intelligent Christian will recognize that it is not the dead who appear to them, but demons who personate the dead."

of trickery, and which can be attributed only to the influence of personating demons. *Their powers, as those of their prince and lord, Satan, are limited. Hence the necessity for trickery,—the necessity their limitations impose upon them.* Added to this, I would draw attention to the vagueness of replies given, which is *only a cover for lack of knowledge.*"

But in spite of all the deceptions, there is a real, superhuman, Satanic power underlying spiritualism. Scripture implies and affirms this so clearly and emphatically, that it is needless to enter into further detail for those who study and believe their Bibles. And no others would value a magazine such as *Scripture Truth*.

It will be well, however, to inquire what is *the ultimate object* that these demons have in view, when they pretend to be the spirits of departed friends, and by this means get foolish people under their influence.

We are warned by an express utterance of the Spirit of God (see 1 Tim. 4. 1) not only against "seducing spirits," but also against "*doctrines of demons.*" Evidently the object of the evil spirits is to secure the acceptance of the demoniacal teachings that follow. Timothy was to "put the brethren in remembrance of these things," and in so doing he would prove himself to be "a good minister of Jesus Christ."

Let us therefore examine, Bible in hand, some of the Satanic doctrines which the great enemy of souls seeks to spread by means of spiritualism.

The attack seems to be directed first not so much against the *citadel* of the truth as against what we may call its outworks, though these outworks are an integral part of the truth of God.

By the "outworks" I mean the institutions of God in connection with creation and His providential and governmental ways.

Thus, "forbidding to marry" is named first, as one of the "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4. 3).

The record of the institution of marriage is given to us in one of the earliest chapters of the Bible. It manifestly holds an important place in the mind of God for man, and has consequently been assailed from various directions by the adversary. The enforced celibacy of the Romish priests, monks, and nuns, often a mere guise for a life of concubinage, and the well-known polygamous practices of the Mormons, are phases of this attack. But the main onslaught seems to come from the grosser teachings of spiritualism.

One has only to refer to the writings of advanced spiritualists, on both sides of the Atlantic, to find that the total abolition of the marriage tie is aimed at, and a system of unrestrained relations between the sexes advocated. True, this gross doctrine is not taught to the uninitiated. The subject is not introduced in the ordinary séances to which the general public is invited. The way is gradually prepared by high-flown language about "spiritual affinities" and so on, till by degrees the mind is led to accept the full teaching of the demons. How many blighted lives, wrecked families, ruined intellects, and wasted bodies bear testimony to the awful results of the acceptance of this doctrine amongst spiritualists. None can act contrary to the institutions of God without courting disaster.

In the providential ways of God in connection with the government of the earth, animal meat has been given to man for food (Gen. 9. 3). The "doctrines of demons" are directed against this divine arrangement also. "Commanding to abstain from meats" follows the "forbidding to marry" in the enumeration of these pernicious teachings. Hence spiritualists advocate abstinence from animal food for their mediums, and in some places "spiritualist" and "vegetarian" have become practically synonymous terms.

It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus, even after His Resurrection, partook of animal food. He ate "broiled fish" (Luke 24. 42, 43). Any suggestion,

therefore, that animal food is wrong, is a shaft aimed at Him. Moreover, there is direct apostolic sanction for the continuance in Christianity of the divinely allowed practice of eating meat. "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat" (1 Cor. 10. 25).

In attacking these two things, the institution of marriage and the providential provision of God for the food for man, the teaching of the demons impugns the wisdom of God's government of the earth. If these outworks can be carried by force, the very citadel of Christianity would soon be at the mercy of the attacking hosts.

But the "doctrines of demons" do not stop here. In 1 John 4. we are put on our guard against the spirits who are carrying on a propaganda of evil, using as their instruments the "many false prophets" that are "gone out into the world." Christians, addressed by the Apostle as "Beloved," are evidently in danger of being deceived by these spirits. We are therefore bidden to put them to the proof. There is a sure test by means of which we may infallibly distinguish between the voice of the Spirit of God and the voice of "seducing spirits." The Spirit of God delights to exalt the Lord Jesus, and to honour the name of that glorious One who, though the mighty Creator of worlds, became flesh, and sojourned on earth a lowly and obedient Man.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 John 4. 2), or as it may more properly be rendered: "Every spirit which confesseth *Jesus Christ come in flesh* is of God."

On the other hand, "Every spirit that confesseth not *Jesus Christ come in flesh* is not of God."

What does this confession of Jesus Christ come in flesh imply?

It implies, first, that the Lord Jesus Christ, though a real Man, was infinitely more than man. He *came* in flesh. This could not be said in the same

sense of either the writer or the reader of these pages. We did not thus *come* into the world. We had no previous existence. But He had. Through the unfathomable ages of the bygone eternity "the Word was with God." In the course of time He came. "The Word was made flesh." Of no other could this be predicated.

It implies, secondly, that the Lord Jesus became *Man*. He came in flesh. Our attention is drawn, in Hebrews 2. 16, to the fact that He did not become an angel. Had He done so, possibly the hostility of Satan would not have been so virulent and inveterate. Man was from the first destined by God to exercise sovereignty over the earth, and this seems to have marked him as a special object of Satan's subtle and persistent malice. It was galling in the extreme to the prince of darkness that the Son of God should become a *Man*. But, thank God, this is the truth. He came in flesh.

It implies, thirdly, that this blessed Man is the Anointed One of God, the Man of His eternal choice and delight; that He is exalted and enthroned, and will have all things in heaven and earth headed up in Him. All this is involved in the name "Christ."

It implies, fourthly, that the One of whom all this is true is none other than He who was known on earth as *Jesus*. He who triumphantly overcame the prince of the world; He who drove a legion of his infernal myrmidons from the body of the Gadarene; He who cast seven demons out of Mary of Magdala; He against whom all the fiery darts of the devil were powerless. No marvel that the "seducing spirits" confess not *Jesus Christ come in flesh*.

Their refusal to confess *Jesus* as the One who *came*, and who came *in flesh*, and who is the *Christ*, stamps them as evil.

But there is something further. We have seen that the "doctrines of demons" are directed:

(1) Against God's institutions in creation, and His providential arrangements

in connection with His government of the earth.

(2) Against the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We shall also see that they are directed:

(3) Against Christianity.

The apostles were the divinely appointed exponents of Christianity. "We are of God," says the Apostle John: "he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error*" (1 John 4. 6). The attitude of any, men or spirits, to the apostles, as the exponents of Christianity, marked them as "of truth" or "of error."

The apostles are no longer with us, but Christianity as expounded by them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit remains; and the attitude of any, man or spirit, towards Christianity, as taught in the Epistles, enables us at once to determine whether they are of God or of Satan.

"He that is not of God heareth not us," and it is notorious that spiritualists refuse to hear the apostles. If there is one part of the Scriptures that is more distasteful to them than any other part, it is the apostolic writings, the Epistles of Paul, John, etc., wherein Christianity, properly speaking, is expounded.

Into this awful morass the "seducing spirits" of the spiritualistic séances held to-day in so many of the towns and cities of this and other lands aim at leading their dupes. The temptation to seek in a forbidden way a communication from a departed friend opens the door for this evil work to be begun. Then, slowly but surely, the coils of the terrible system tighten around the victim, till his sun sets, and his soul passes out into the darkness of eternal night.

With some the process of destruction goes on more rapidly than with others. J. Boyd, in his book of poems, *The Story of the Glory*, tells of two women who undertook to establish communi-

cation with the spirit of a dead spiritualist leader. Both were overtaken by a fearful fate.

“One home was brought
Brain-fevered, raging with a mind distraught,
Stark-mad the other to the mad-house hurried,
And both within a fortnight dead and buried.”

But whether retribution be quick to come, or whether it linger, the danger of meddling with these matters is great.

Man cannot with impunity overstep the bounds that God has fixed.

May He Himself be a “wall of fire round about” His people, protecting them from in any way being deceived by the devices of Satan. And may He graciously save many of the poor victims, entangled in the meshes of the fearful net so craftily set for the destruction of their souls.

Devoted Service.

WE bring our Lord most glory when we get from Him much grace. If I have much faith, so that I can take God at His word; much love, so that the zeal of His house eats me up; much hope, so that I am assured of fruit for my labour; much patience, so that I can endure hardness for Jesus' sake; then shall I greatly honour my Lord.

Oh to have much consecration, my whole being being absorbed in His service; then, even though my talents may be slender, I shall make my life to burn and glow with the glory of the Lord!

This way of grace is open to us all.

To be saintly is within the reach of each Christian, and this is the surest method of honouring God. Your service may be small or even unnoticed by men, but if the Lord is the object in it, it will be true gold.

You may not get credit for your work in the statistics which reckon converts by the scores and hundreds; but in that other book, which no secretary could keep, where things are weighed rather than numbered, the worker's register will greatly honour the Master.

“Thy Lovingkindness”

Lord, when I wake, too often other sounds—
The past day's sorrows—echo in my ear;
“Thy lovingkindness,” that abounds,
“Cause me to hear!”

Creation's groan, the sigh of the oppressed,
Pained hearts' dull moaning, draw forth
many a tear:
“Thy lovingkindness,” pledge of wrongs
redressed,
“Cause me to hear!”

Sorrow and grief insistent daily cry,
The rumbling deepens of foreboding fear;
“Thy lovingkindness,” — ere the sun is
high—

“Cause me to hear!”

And when Night's weeping soon is overpast,
And Day eternal breaks so bright and
clear,
“Thy lovingkindness,” fully known at last,
“I still shall hear!”

The Old Testament throws infinite light on what we have often only the facts of in the New. There is sufficient in the New to connect it with the Old, as in the case of Christ's sacrifice, but far more detail in the Old.

We have all, as children of God, as bright opportunities still for victory as any who have gone before us. But the only victories of value are those that are won under the shadow and by the power of the cross.

God our Saviour.—No. 7.

(JAMES BOYD).

Deliverance.

THE gospel not only brings righteousness to man, it brings also deliverance from the dominion of sin, so that man may be no longer under sin's bondage. Its reign, as far as the believer is concerned, is to be brought to an end; he is no longer to be controlled by it, but instead of that, he is to become a bondsman to righteousness, having his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Thrice happy are those who know and enjoy this marvellous and blessed deliverance.

But the question may be asked, Is man in his natural condition sin's bond-slave? Can he never practise righteousness? Must he always and only yield obedience to this terrific master who pays such dread wages as death for all the service rendered to him by his poor degraded servants? Yes, unless delivered by a power greater than his own, he must, as long as he is in this world, continue to serve that pitiless tyrant who for his service brings him dishonoured to the grave. Nor is that all, for afterwards there is the resurrection and the *judgment*.

But God says that all have sinned; and for the creature to deny this is to fling back the truth as falsehood in the face of his Creator. And God has not only said that all have sinned, but He has said that all *are under sin* (Rom. 3. 9); and the proof that this is so lies in the fact that both Jew and Gentile serve sin with every member of their bodies. Sin reigns in the members, and every member serves it with all its might.

Now, to deliver man from this dreadful and unhappy condition, God has drawn near to us in Christ. Surely to justify us, as I have already shown, but also to deliver us from the bondage of sin, so that we might be servants of righteousness.

In answer to this it may be said that *freedom* does not seem to be any part

of the gospel, but that it is only out of one bondage into another. Such is not, however, the case. The only power that held man in bondage universally was sin, and from this he gets deliverance, not by coming under a new master exactly, which would be only out of one condition of slavery into another, like a slave changing masters in the market. It might be all very well if he got a good master in place of a bad one; still, it would not be liberty for him, however much bettered his conditions might be. The gospel sets you free, free absolutely; so much so that the Apostle is able to exhort the Romans with regard to their future conduct, which is now to be *willing* service—service rendered to God out of pure love to Him.

There is one thing—and only one in such a slavery as that of sin—that can set the slave at liberty from his master, and that is *death*. And this is just the way in which the believer has been set free from the bondage in which the gospel found him. It is through death that he has part in all the blessings of the glad tidings of the grace of God. Not his own death I need hardly say, but the death of Christ for him—a death which he is to appropriate and make his own as one who lives in the life of Christ risen from the dead. He is henceforth to reckon himself dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ. That which is true of Christ he has the privilege of reckoning true of himself. But let us see how the Apostle sets before us this important and blessed truth, and may the Lord by His Spirit guide our thoughts as we inquire at the fountain of eternal truth.

In connection with deliverance there is one thing that has been truly said, and that is, that no one can be in it until he desires it with his whole heart. The doctrine of deliverance is placed

before us in Romans 6., the experimental process through which the soul has to pass before it is ready to accept the doctrine is set before us in chapter 7., and the happy results which flow from the acceptance of the doctrine are found in chapter 8. But, as I have said, we cannot be in it until we desire it ; and how few there are who desire to be dead to all that the flesh longs after. Many seem to be content to know that their past sins are forgiven, and they flatter themselves that their shortcomings are not so heinous in the sight of God as are those of the unconverted, or, if they are, that they have Christ to intercede for them, or else they will hold tenaciously to the eternal security of the saint, or that the righteousness of Christ will make up for their deficiencies : in some way or other they confidently expect all to come right in the end, though their present relations with God are not of the happiest kind practically. A full gospel it was not their privilege to hear at the beginning, and now that they are converted the old wine of a fleshly religion is preferred to the new wine of spiritual Christianity.

In our natural condition it is not only true of us that we are *sinner*s and therefore need righteousness, it is also just as true of us that we are *without strength*, and therefore require power if we are to be as to our walk well-pleasing to God. And the former is not so difficult for us to learn as is the latter, for conscience, even without any work of grace in our souls, keeps reproving us on account of our ways ; but we are all very confident that with a little help from God the latent good that we fancy dwells in us would be filliped into activity, and result in righteousness. But what we have to learn is, that our sins were only the outcome of our sinful state, the evil fruit of the evil tree, and that death to the old is the only way of deliverance for us.

Therefore it is indeed a great day in the history of our souls when we learn that "our old man is crucified with

Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (ver. 6). Our *old man* is our old condition in the flesh. The cross has cut us off from the old sinful head, the first Adam, and we are brought face to face with a new position created for man *in Christ risen*. And to apprehend this is of the utmost importance ; indeed, there is no possibility of deliverance without it. My new place before God is in Christ risen : I have no other. There is no other standing for any one in relationship with God. This new place has been created for man by His death and resurrection, and it is there for my appropriation ; and what is true of Him I am to reckon as true of me. "In that He died, He died unto sin once : but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vers. 10, 11). I am not in the flesh at all, I am in Christ ; I am alive to God in Him. Nor am I now alarmed or distressed on account of the incorrigible wickedness of the flesh. It is no better than ever it was ; indeed, I now know it to be a great deal worse than ever I knew it, because I have an increased apprehension of what is suitable, or otherwise, to God ; but it is *not I*. It is what I was, but what I am no longer ; I am what Christ is before God, for "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17). *He* is dead to sin, so am *I* ; *He* is alive to God, so am *I*.

Perhaps it may be asked, What is it to be in the flesh ? It is to be in the standing and condition of a child of Adam, responsible to fulfil all the obligations resulting from the relationships belonging to such a standing. These obligations were set before Israel in the law given from God at Sinai ; and where there is a work of God in the soul which causes that law to be recognized as holy, just, and good, the attempt to fulfil these obligations is just what causes all the exercises described in the latter part of chapter 7., and which leads the soul to

the discovery of its own utter weakness, and the powerful nature of the law of sin which reigns in his members. He learns that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be" (chap. 8. 7, R.V.), and that they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Deliverance is found when the soul realizes that it is *in Christ* before God. It becomes no longer in my mind a question of what *I* am for God, but of what *Christ* is for God. I have got Him as righteousness, holiness, and every other thing that I want; I have Him for my acceptance, and for my life, and I lose sight of myself altogether, and know that there is no condemnation to them that are in Him (chap. 8. 1). Self no more occupies my thoughts, but God revealed in Christ in His fathomless love, and Christ who supplants self altogether. I now reckon myself dead to sin, and alive to God in Him.

This great truth is set before us in baptism. The Apostle asks the Romans if they are unaware that so many as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death. The initiatory ordinance into Christianity, which placed us outwardly in relationship with Christ as Leader of our salvation, placed us upon the ground of His death: we were baptized to Him, but in being baptized to Him we were baptized to *His death*. It could not be otherwise, because the Christ to whom we were baptized was a Christ who had died and risen again. And the object in thus placing us on the ground of His death was "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (chap. 6. 3, 4). The doctrine of dead to sin and alive to God in Christ was thus in figure set before them, and they had obeyed it from the heart (ver. 17). Thus had they their freedom from sin, and ability by the Spirit, who shed the love of God abroad in their hearts, to live to God; and in this the Apostle seeks to encourage their souls.

Power to obey this doctrine set before us in Romans 6. lies in the Spirit of God. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (chap. 8. 9). It is by the Spirit we are enabled to occupy our new position in Christ. "*In the flesh*" describes our position previous to our reception of the Spirit of God. Even a work of God in our souls does not seem to take us out of the flesh, for it is clear that the exercise described in the latter part of chapter 7. is that of a soul who loves righteousness, but is under law, and in the flesh. Law and flesh seem to be correlative terms.

The experience described from verse 5 to the end of verse 24 of chapter 7. is not Christian experience, but the experience of a soul under law and the power of sin, and the Christian is under neither (chap. 6. 14). Neither is it the experience of an unconverted man, for he delights in the law of God after the inward man (chap. 7. 22). It is evidently the experience of a soul made alive by the quickening power of the Word, but in ignorance of the new position for man created in the person of Christ by death and resurrection, and without the indwelling Spirit. The reason I say *without the indwelling Spirit* is because he speaks of himself as "*in the flesh*," and Scripture says, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (chap. 8. 9). The soul whose experience is here described is in the flesh, under law, and under the dominion of sin; and these things are not true of any one indwelt by the Spirit of God. Next, he struggles against sin, which has the mastery over him, speaks of the commandment as holy, just, and good; delights in it, and is wretched because he cannot fulfil its requirement; and this is not true of any unconverted soul.

In chapter 8. we have that which is really Christian experience: there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free

from the law of sin and death; for such the whole state of flesh has been brought to an end by the cross of Christ, so that they may walk after the Spirit and fulfil the righteous requirement of the law; they are in the Spirit; the Spirit of God dwells in them; Christ is in them, and the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness; and the Spirit of the God of resurrection dwelling in them is the pledge of the quickening of their mortal bodies; by the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body, and live; He is the Spirit of sonship, whereby they cry, Abba, Father; He bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God; and He makes intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Who would be foolish enough to suppose that all this is true in the man whose experiences we have so graphically described by the Spirit in chapter 7.? The fact is, whatever may be said against it, new birth and sealing with the Spirit are not the same thing, neither do both take place at the same instant. The Word of God has power enough in it, apart from any reference to the death and resurrection of Christ, to quicken souls: but in order to the knowledge of justification the death of Christ for our sins and His resurrection for our justification must be believed (4. 24, 25; 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4.) Paul did not, we may be sure, preach a different gospel to others from that which he preached to the Corinthians, and what he preached to them was, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and this is the gospel, he says, "by which also ye are saved." We see from this passage, and also from the third and fourth of Romans, as well as from many others, that the accounts we get in the Acts of the preaching are not intended to give us the *doctrine* of the gospel, but rather the fact that *Christ* was preached, and the reception

the preaching met with in the world. In Acts we have no account of Paul's setting before the Corinthians the facts of Christ's death for our sins, and yet he tells them that this was the gospel he preached to them.

This is a dispensation in which the truth is all declared and the *secret* ways of God in His grace with men are over, and He does not now propose to bring us into blessing without giving us to understand in some measure the ground upon which our blessing rests, and upon which it righteously can be ours.

Therefore I am thoroughly convinced that the experience of which I have spoken, as described in the latter part of Romans 7., lies between the impartation of a new spiritual nature to man and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The chapter does not enter into the modifications which may be found in the practical lives of the saints of God; the truth is given in its own proper nature and power, and we have to receive it in this way. But to attempt to make the Scripture fit into the practical experience of souls is to rob ourselves of its glorious truth and power for blessing. Our business is rather to seek to find out where souls are by the light given to us in that which the Spirit has been pleased to put upon record for our instruction. We may find souls in an experience similar to that described in Romans 7. who, we are confident, have the Spirit. This will be through not knowing the truth of a full gospel. But that is *what we find in souls, not what we find in Scripture*: let us stick to the latter.

Power does not lie in new birth or in any other work wrought in us, but in the Holy Spirit of God. He is the power of the new nature, and if we occupy ourselves with the objects which He sets before us in the acceptance of the new place given us in a risen Christ, reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Him, and go on in constant dependence on God, realizing our own weakness, the victory over sin will most surely be ours.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 10.

The Dispensational Changes in Matthew.

IT will be helpful to trace the dispensational changes that were the result of the rejection of the Lord which comes to a head in Matthew 12.

The change in the character of the Lord's instruction to His disciples will be seen in chapter 10. 16. In the words, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," He prepared them for the momentous change that was at hand.

The general state of the people was evidenced in the utter indifference of the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, though there was a remnant—wisdom's children who justified wisdom's ways, whether in the testimony of John or that of the Lord Jesus. Pressed back by the unbelief of the people on the line of earthly promise in which Christ had been presented to them, there was only pressed out the more *who He was*, whose deeper glory was veiled in the lowly form He had assumed. These glories were hid from the wise and understanding; yet there were babes by sovereign grace to whom these things could be revealed (chap. 11. 25).

The blessed Lord submitted Himself absolutely to His Father's ways and took all that came upon Him from no lower source than His Father's heart, and called to Him those who had proved, as He had, that the world was empty of anything to satisfy, that He might give them rest in revealing to them the source of His own rest in the knowledge of the Father. Then they had but to learn of Him to submit themselves, as He had, to have rest as a practically maintained experience of the soul.

It is to be observed that the immediate connection between the inscrutable glory of the person of the Son and the revelation of the Father, which shines out everywhere in John's Gospel, is not pursued farther in Matthew, who brings out the total change of dispensation that hinges upon the rejection of such a Person; while His glory becomes the touchstone of faith and unbelief in all that follows. But underneath the great public changes it is blessed to see the

Lord caring for His own in providing from the first such a resting-place for their hearts in the revelation of the Father, before He leads them out into a path so new and strange to them.

Chapter 11. needs to be looked at a little more in detail to prepare for what follows in chapter 12., where facts and application are grouped together, as before in this Gospel, to present the great impending change. The two Sabbath-day incidents which, as Mark shows us, belonged to the opening of His ministry are brought in in chapter 12. to indicate the setting aside of the Sabbath, the sign of the covenant God made with Israel. For the covenant was no longer outstanding when the Lord of it was disowned. The God of the temple was greater than the temple, and the duties of the priests of it were above the Sabbath (ver. 5). They ought to have known from their own prophets that the mercy of God's character was more to Him than ritual, and so have been preserved from condemning the guiltless (ver. 7). Besides, as Son of Man He was Lord even of the Sabbath day, and would not be restrained from the exercise of His mercy by their pretended regard for that day.

This excited their murderous hatred, and they took counsel against Him to destroy Him. Knowing it, He withdrew Himself, continuing His work of grace, but not to attract attention to Himself. And again, as so constantly in our Gospel, prophecy is quoted as to His position, which was one of forbearance with the varied forms of their enmity until He should bring forth judgment to assured victory. And, that He would be set forth to the Gentiles, in judgment and as the object of their faith (vers. 18-21).

The case of healing of one demonized, blind, and dumb excited the people's amazement, and they asked, "Is this the Son of David?" The Pharisees, blinder still, put down the power that they could not deny to Satan, their favourite resource; but the kingdom of God was come upon them in the power of it in His person. Their blasphemies were only

the corrupt fruit of a corrupt tree, a viper-brood they were condemned by their words, though they might have been justified by words of confession of their true state, and of Him ; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (ver. 37).

To this evil and adulterous generation no sign would be given with presence of Emmanuel, the Virgin's Son, with them, save that of Jonah, speaking of His death and resurrection, which they would not heed. The unclean spirit of idolatry had gone out of them, but he would return to his old haunts with seven others (a complete number) worse than himself, and the last state of that (moral) generation would be worse than the first. Thereupon He announces that the true relationship with Himself exists with those who were subject to His Father's will instead of a natural one, as with Israel ; and in solemnly suited action He leaves the (Jewish) house and goes out by the seaside of nations to begin a new work—no more looking for fruit from the nation, but sowing the seed broadcast in the world to produce fruit (chap. 13.).

As the result we have the first great change of dispensation presented in the six subsequent parables, wherein the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are unfolded to those who have ears to hear, the sentence of judicial blinding, according to Isaiah 6., having come upon the nation for their unbelief. The kingdom would now take a form suited to the absence of the King in heaven. It would be established by testimony and embrace all who professed subjection to the testimony, though only those who *understood* the Word would be the real children of the kingdom (ver. 19). Hence we are prepared for a mixed state of

things in the kingdom in mystery, as the first of the parables of it plainly declares, the interpretation of it to the disciples (vers. 36-43) showing too that it goes on to the end.

Meanwhile the kingdom, small at the beginning as a mustard seed, would become a great tree of worldly power ; while secretly spreading and permeating a given mass, there would be a system of doctrine extending far beyond those reached by it in power. These three parables, along with the introductory one of the Sower, were spoken to the multitudes, and when they were dismissed He added three more to the disciples in which we learn of the hidden reality which His heart finds in the widespread but unreal profession. The treasure hid in the field, for which He bought the field, would refer to all the redeemed. But there was one pearl of great price that so appealed to the Merchantman seeking such that He sold all that He had that He might possess Himself of it. This is the church that Christ loved and gave Himself for (Eph. 5. 25-27). And, lastly, if the kingdom was likened to a net let down into the sea that gathered every kind, the fishers had their work marked out for them in putting the good into vessels, the rest being left for the angels to deal with in judgment at the end of the age, as in the parable of the tares.

The teaching in these parables finished, the Lord departs to His own country, where, though impressed with His wisdom and mighty works, for which they cannot account, they stumble on the stumbling-stone—He was but the carpenter's son : a prophet not without honour indeed, *save* in His own country and kindred. (J.A.T.)

“We know.”

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8. 28, 29).

No chance hath brought this ill to me.
'Tis God's sweet will, so let it be.
He seeth what I cannot see.

There is a need-be for each pain.
And some day He will make it plain
That earthly loss is heavenly gain.

Like as a piece of tapestry,
Viewed from the back, appears to be
But tangled threads mixed hopelessly,

But in the front a picture fair
Rewards the worker for his care—
Revealing skill and patience rare.

Thou art the weaver, I the frame.
Lord, for the glory of Thy name,
Perfect Thine image on the same,

Some Old Testament Studies (No. 4).

(A. J. POLLOCK).

Noah—the Condemner of the World.

TEN generations lay between Adam and Noah. Five is the number of human responsibility; two, that of adequate testimony. Twice five, then, signifies adequate testimony concerning human responsibility. The *Ten* Commandments formed an adequate test as to man's ability or otherwise to answer to God's claims. The human body illustrates the use of the numbers five and ten. We have five senses. We have five fingers on each hand, ten in all, for work. We have five toes on each foot, ten in all, for walking.

* * * *

Ten generations afforded full demonstration, then, of the utter corruption of fallen man. "*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,*" is the solemn summing up of Scripture.

The way in which Satan succeeded in getting things into this awful condition is very significant, and conveys a solemn warning to us at this present time. "*The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose*" (Gen. 6. 2). The sons of Seth,* the line of promise, allied themselves with the ungodly seed of Cain. The effort of Satan ever has been to obliterate the distinction between good and evil. The alliance of good with evil never purifies the evil, but always defiles the good. Absolute separation one from the other is ever God's way.

The next verse contains the solemn statement: "*And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man,*

* Many think "the sons of God" here referred to are angelic beings. If this view is correct, it leaves unaffected the warning we seek to give against unholy alliances. The writer thinks Matthew 22. 30 is conclusive on the point. That distinctly states that there is no marrying in the higher world, either of human beings, who have attained to the resurrection, or of angelic beings, who are indigenous to the scene,

for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

Thus it ever is. The end of the violence which resulted from the unholy alliance was the *flood*; the end of the awful mix-up we see all around us will be *fire*.

* * * *

And yet at the end of this ten generations we find Noah "*a just man and perfect in his generations,*" one who "*found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*" His name means *Rest*, a triumphant prophecy of Lamech's when all around was labour and toil, sweat of the face in the man, sorrow in conception in the woman—the result of sin. But faith looked on. Faith pierced the clouds, and laid hold of that which is beyond.

It is ever thus with those whom God enlightens. Be the outward portents never so bad, be the clouds never so lowering, let men's hearts fail them for very fear—nay, we know from Scripture that as the world was once destroyed by a flood, it shall yet be destroyed by fire—still can the believer *rest* in the knowledge that good will triumph, that a way of deliverance will be found in Christ, that we shall emerge into a scene of *rest*, where there will be no more curse, no tears, no pain, no death. The present moment is but a speck of time, a moment of pressure, and then the *rest* that remaineth for the people of God will be ours.

* * * *

In tracing the history of man's wickedness we see shining through it traces of God's gracious workings, His power and long-suffering.

Look at the history of Enoch. Compressed into very few words, it is like a verdant oasis in the midst of an arid

desert—like a sunny spot lighted up by the smile of God where all around is gloomy and grey and on which His frown rests.

Look, again, at the prophecy of God's long-suffering involved in the meaning of Methuselah's name. It meant, "when he is dead it shall be sent," *i.e. the deluge*. None have lived longer than he. Older than Adam with his 930 years, older than Jared with his 962 years, surviving his own son, Lamech, with his 777 years, Methuselah's great age was a standing witness of God's long-suffering compassion, of His unwillingness to judge. What a light is thrown upon His blessed nature when we read in another connection that He "*endured with MUCH long-suffering the vessels of wrath*" (Rom. 9. 22).

Methuselah's great age must have caused deepening wonder as year slowly succeeded year until his years almost spanned a millennium of time. Would men pay no heed? Alas! no. As then, so it is now.

At length there came an end to God's long-suffering. Methuselah died. *That year* the flood came. The awful blow fell. God's long-promised but sure judgment on the world was carried out.

* * * *

Look, too, at the prescience of Scripture. Examine carefully the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs when they first begat sons and daughters, and mark the solitary contrast Noah affords.

Adam	.	.	130 years.
Seth	.	.	105 "
Enos	.	.	90 "
Cainan	.	.	70 "
Mahalaleel	.	.	65 "
Jared	.	.	162 "
Enoch	.	.	65 "
Methuselah	.	.	187 "
Lamech	.	.	182 "
<u>Noah</u>	.	.	<u>500</u> "

And yet the Bible makes no comment on this. It is like the Bible that it does not—its self-restraint is majes-

tic. It does not stop in the calm recital of events to say this is striking and that is wonderful. In this it affords a great contrast to the uninspired works of men, which take the reader behind the scenes, and explain how and why the puppets of men's imagination are made to work.

The great age that Noah attained before he became a father is on parallel lines with Methuselah's longevity. It bespeaks two things: (1) God's long-suffering; (2) His care, planning for hundreds of years, that several generations, including little ones, should not go through the flood in the ark, with all its difficulties and privations.

The three sons of Noah, all married men, did not carry one infant into the ark. Eight *adult* persons passed through the flood. What a touch this is, bespeaking God's thoughtful contriving, His arranging and planning tenderness! And occurring as it does in such an unexpected place, it may well come as a comfort to many who are tried in circumstances.

* * * *

Hebrews II. 7 tells us that "*Noah . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he*

CONDEMNED THE WORLD

and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." The lines on which Noah acted are well worth our careful consideration. His condemnation lay rather in what was positive than negative. By negative, I mean it was not by rebuking the actions of the wicked that he condemned the world. That would be comparatively easy, and place him on the judgment seat. But he condemned the world *by his actions, by his life*. That is a higher thing, and reveals the whole spring of his being—faith. By mouth he was a *preacher of RIGHTEOUSNESS*, he placed what was positive before his hearers; by action in the preparing of the ark he passed a long-drawn-out positive condemnation upon the world.

Every stroke of the hammer, every placing of a plank into its place told in the same direction.

Let us speak to our consciences. This world is becoming more and more corrupt. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. The last times are upon us. The spirit of Antichrist is more and more in evidence. The world is to be destroyed by fire and things cannot be long delayed. Are we so shaping our course outside of this world, its politics, its aims, its maxims, that by our *positive* speech and actions we condemn the world? Faith lays hold of what God says.

The triumph of Satan is the mixing up between good and evil. Ecclesiastically its bitter fruit will be seen in the spewing out of the professing church, neither cold nor hot, when the Lord comes (Rev. 3. 16). May we lay this more and more to heart.

* * * *

In conclusion it may be stated that Enoch's translation is a type of the rapture of the saints of this dispensation; Noah's passing through the flood a figure of the Jew going through the great tribulation, and emerging in a purified world in virtue of the death of Christ.

But there are great moral lessons to be learned. Dispensations may alter, but the great moral foundation of God's dealing with men remains the same, and the answer in piety in the lives of those who are the subjects of His gracious working has the same broad features. Thus Abraham stands as the great example of faith, Enoch of walking with God, Noah of righteousness in condemning the world. May we lay these lessons to heart, "*for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*" (Rom. 15. 4).

A Great Revival.—No. 5.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

The Attack on the "One Altar."

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (read 2 Chron. 32. 1-22; Isa. 38.).

THE leading feature in the works of Hezekiah was that "in every work that he began in the service of the house of God . . . to seek his God, HE DID IT WITH ALL HIS HEART, AND PROSPERED." The things of God had the uppermost place in his thoughts.

Yet he had his fears and his failures, and about these the Word of God tells the plain truth, and it also records how his faith triumphed in spite of them; and here lies the help for us.

No child of God ever prospered in the things of God without being attacked by the enemy, and God allows this that the prosperity may in the end be greater and more enduring. Therefore we are quite prepared for the

attack which the enemy delivers against Hezekiah.

We will turn back to this part of his history, as given in the second book of Kings, chapter 18. His record there is very fine. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel. . . . For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and *he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not*" (vers. 5-7).

That was the root of Sennacherib's invasion: he had lost a servant. Hezekiah's father had become a permanent tributary to the king of Assyria, and

now we find that Hezekiah flings off the yoke, and the consequence is this : "Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

"And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended ; return from me : that which thou puttest on me will I bear." This was his first hasty impulse, an impulse of fear when the strength of the enemy was more in his mind than the power of God. "And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria" (vers. 14-16).

I dare say some one says, "Why, that takes the breath from me. The idea that a man who had come out so nobly for God should at the very first difficulty actually strip the house of the Lord of its gold and surrender it to the enemy!" Hezekiah was exactly like you and me, when faith is not in exercise, for if faith is not in exercise the very brightest saint will go down under pressure. For a moment Hezekiah's faith failed. Although a true, real, and devoted saint, he was but human. But I do not say this to encourage or excuse failure. God forbid. We can never excuse ourselves. And I do not think Hezekiah excused himself. There is a very intimate moral connection between the stripping of the doors and that man covering himself with sackcloth a few days after.

The tribute was sent to the foe, and what *was* the effect? Did the king of Assyria retire satisfied with what he had obtained? Not he. This weak action did not help Hezekiah. Sennacherib pocketed the gold, and then

he sent Rab-shakeh against Jerusalem. Give an inch to the devil and he will at once seek more. Surrender any bit of truth for the sake of quietness and ease, and larger demands will at once be made upon you.

Then Hezekiah strengthened himself and built up the wall, made shields and darts in abundance, and began to drill his forces. He had tried to buy off the foe, then he prepared to meet Sennacherib's warriors in stern battle. Both alike were equally futile. Finally he got back to his resources ; he got back to God ; and spoke unto the people, saying, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him : for there be more with us than with him" (vers. 6, 7).

It is a great thing, beloved fellow-Christian, to get back to God. Hezekiah's is a sample case. Have you ever gone through anything in the history of your soul at all similar to this? If not, I think it is very likely you will go through it yet. Those who have gone through difficulty, temptation, and exercise can tell us how they have got on. They can say with Hezekiah, "For there be *more with us than with him.*" Then, if so, why surrender anything to the enemy? Hold fast to every bit of truth that God has shown you, whether as to the person of the Lord, the gospel, or the church.

"Well," you may say, "I feel I have failed." So did Hezekiah. Yet God has told us of his failure to encourage us and to teach us that He never fails.

"*With him is an arm of flesh ; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles*" (ver. 8). Quite true, he had built his towers, prepared his darts, but there was no deliverance by them. Bring God in and all is changed.

It is not that God would have us neglect anything ; but the point is—What is the first object of our lives?

Is God first? Is the Lord, the house of the Lord, the assembly, the gospel, the interests of Christ? or is it ourselves and our own things? The sanctuary of the Lord was everything to Hezekiah. And he had learned what it was to go into that sanctuary to worship; and now in his difficulties he goes again into that sanctuary, and he has to do with God. There on his knees he wins a bloodless victory, a most wonderful victory.

And now he stills the people. The influence of one man who knows God is wonderful.

Turn now to Isaiah 37., because you get there details which are very interesting. In the second verse of chapter 36. we read that Rab-shakeh came up to Jerusalem with a great army. "And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? . . . Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him" (vers. 4-6). He did not know that Hezekiah was leaning on the King of kings, and the Lord of hosts, the One who made heaven and earth. His soul, in this moment of extreme difficulty, was clinging to God in the beautiful confidence that faith always has in God. Sennacherib and Rab-shakeh knew nothing of this.

Then he says: "But if thou say to me, We trust in the Lord our God: is it not He, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, *Ye shall worship before this altar?*" (ver. 7). Satan is very cunning. He will even use the very devotedness of your soul as the reason to dislocate your soul from God, if he can.

If you advance in the knowledge of the truth, and act upon it (for indeed you will cease to advance if you cease to act upon what you know), if you act, for instance, upon the truth of the one

body, the one Spirit, and the unity of the Spirit, and you are prepared to seek to maintain that truth, as Hezekiah acted on the truth of the one altar, you may depend upon it you will have the devil and all his servants down upon you.

Here Hezekiah's faith was tested. Rab-shakeh takes very bold ground. He says: "And am I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it?" Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers simulate the righteous. Look at the following language: "The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it."

This charge of the enemy had not only come in the form of words, but evidently it had come by letter. And now we read: "And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord" (chap. 37. 1). He had a deep sense of his weakness and failure. Sackcloth, in Scripture, is generally connected with repentance and brokenness. I have no doubt that Hezekiah felt he must come to the Lord, and as he passed into the house of the Lord, he must have seen those stripped doors. Ah, how sorrowful, how humbling, that he had had so little faith in God! And now he comes into the house of the Lord; but in what a different state of heart from that in which he stripped those doors. Unbelief and fear ruled him then. Now he has faith in God. The man is right here. There was the Assyrian king with all his hosts outside, and you would have thought it was impossible to escape his power, but this man, now covered with sackcloth in the house of the Lord, is leaning on God. He is bowed down before the Lord with the sense of weakness, and with the sense of failure, and good-for-nothingness. But he draws near to, and counts upon God. He had known for fourteen long years the sweetness of coming into the house of the Lord, to commune with the Lord, and to worship the Lord, when things were

in peace, and now in difficulty he comes in before the Lord, and tells Him the whole situation. This is ever the privilege and the way of faith. God heard and answered.

"And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (vers. 2, 3). That is to say, it is a hopeless case unless God step in. That is the idea. "It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left" (ver. 4). He had this feeling, that this attack of Sennacherib was not against him really, but it was against God and God's house, God's people and God's altar.

And you too must get hold of this, beloved Christian friend, that the attack of the enemy is not against you personally. His aim is at the Lord. And he does it through His people. That explains what the blessed Lord said to Saul of Tarsus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*?"

"And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have *blasphemed Me*. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land" (vers. 6, 7). Thus was Hezekiah comforted.

"So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethi-

opia, He is come forth to make war with thee: and when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?" (vers. 8-11); and he finally recounts the story of the victories of his fathers and himself. And now we read: "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord," and his prayer was a beautiful prayer; it is a most charming unfolding of the man's confidence in God. "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, Thou art *the* God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open Thine eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent *to reproach the living God*. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries." He admits that. He does not deny the power of the enemy. Let us ever bear in mind that we are in conflict with a terrible foe; and we must not make light of the power of Satan. Admit it, and count on God. Then he says, "And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand." And he does not ask for this that he and his people might be delivered from their difficulties. His heart is full of desire that the Lord might be known by all, so that he finishes his prayer with the beautiful and unselfish request, "*That all the kingdoms of the earth may know*

that Thou art the Lord, even Thou only" (vers. 15-20).

His heart was set, you see, on the testimony to the power and the glory of God; and while Hezekiah prayed deliverance came. He got a wonderful answer. "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: this is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel" (vers. 21-23). God took up the challenge of the proud Assyrian.

And then, having unfolded what really was the thought of this proud king's heart, God answers him. "But I know thy abode, and thy going out,

and thy coming in, and thy rage against Me. Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult, is come up into Mine ears, therefore will I put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest" (vers. 28, 29)

That was God's answer to Sennacherib. And now a lovely word came to Hezekiah. "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake" (vers. 33-35). And that night God sent out His angel, and in the morning one hundred and eighty-five thousand men were dead corpses (ver. 36). Nothing can stand against God. You bring God in, and all is right. Leave Him out, and all is wrong. That is the lesson.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

"Child of the devil."

A.S. inquires:

"Whether it is right to speak of unsaved people generally as children of the devil, because the Lord Jesus, who alone knows the hearts of men, did it."

We should certainly shrink from definitely designating men generally as of their "father the devil" in the way in which the Lord addressed the Jews in John 8. 44, for the occasion was unique: in Christ there was the full presentation of the love and grace of God, and everything was brought to an issue by His presence.

As our correspondent truly observes, the Lord alone knows the hearts of men; moreover, those to whom He thus spoke were by their hatred of Him and their murderous designs towards Him manifested to be of the devil. They did the deeds of their father the devil; they were characteristically what he is.

In Acts 13. Paul denounced Elymas the sorcerer as a "child of the devil;" but Scripture is careful to state that he

was "filled with the Holy Ghost" when he did so; and the works of Elymas were also manifestly directly of the devil, and not merely the perversity or wicked will of the human heart.

In 1 John 3. is a solemn passage, setting forth undoubtedly two families known by their practice or character: he that committeth sin is of the devil; while he that practiseth righteousness is of God.

By such a passage we may test ourselves, and freely state what it says that others also may test themselves by it; but farther than this we would not care to go.

The Immortality of the Soul.

G.B. The soul does not die with the body; this is plain from such scriptures as Mark 12. 26, 27; Luke 16. 19-31; Philippians 1. 23; Revelation 6. 9, 10.

At death the souls of those who die "without mercy" pass into hell (Luke 16. 19, 31); those who have died "in faith" are with Christ (Luke 23. 43; Phil. 1. 23).

Good Works.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

"For we are His workmanship, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2. 8-10).

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2. 12, 13).

THOUGH the works of a man have no place in his salvation, for that is by grace through faith, and not of works, lest any man should boast, yet they have a very prominent place in God's purpose for those who are saved.

God's saints are to be "zealous of good works," and that they might be so "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus 2. 14), and those who have believed in God are exhorted to "maintain good works." Indeed, if a man is careless as to this, he cannot be accounted as a Christian.

Our responsibility in this regard receives an added emphasis when it is seen that *we are God's workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus with this end in view. The production of good works has been God's intention for us from the first. And, further, if we are *God's workmanship* we cannot plead that good works are an impossibility for us, for God's handiwork must be altogether suitable for the accomplishment of that for which it has been created.

It is as though a man made a loom; his inventive genius and powers have been concentrated upon the machine, and at last it is completed. It has been made with one object in view—the production of cloth. If it does not fulfil the purpose of the inventor it is only fit for the scrap-heap.

We will take the loom for an illustration of the Christian in this respect, and observe that no loom can produce cloth by its own effort or from within itself. It must be in contact, first of all, with the power-house; then is it

prepared to receive the warp and woof from the weaver's hand, and as he works these into it, it works out the finished material. Now it is just this that the Scripture says of the Christians: "*Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God that worketh in you.*" What a thought for us is this! We are not only God's workmanship, He Himself has prepared the loom; but such is His desire that we should produce the works for which He has prepared us that He stands over us as the watchful weaver, working in us all that is needful, so that we may be neither idle nor unfruitful.

On our part obedience is necessary, and fear and trembling. The loom of our illustration cannot hinder the purpose of its maker, though often, through the carelessness of the weaver, the work is marred, and much time is lost. In our case, however, there is no failure on God's part, the failure, shame to us, is on our part; by our insubjection and self-confidence we often stand in His way, and so waste the precious moments and spoil the work.

Let none think that these good works in which we are called to walk have a time value only. They have a time value, for they are to appear in the lives of God's redeemed people as the adornment of the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; but they have a further value, for they are to appear in imperishable beauty when time has ceased to be. The loom of our illustration was made that it might produce material for the wedding robe of a noble princess; Christians are producing *now* "the righteousness of saints," which shall form that fair

garment of "fine linen, clean and white," in which the Lamb's wife shall be arrayed on the great marriage day.

What a day that will be! Its advent will be greeted by the great "Allelujah" shout which, like the voice of mighty thunderings, shall roll throughout a rejoicing heaven. The Lamb shall be there, the cause of heaven's joy, in all the glory of His might, and fully recompensed for His sorrow and travail in death, for with Him shall appear His wife, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, arrayed in her raiment of needle work, the "fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19. 8).

What joy fills our hearts as we project our thoughts into that day! Shall we not discard all slothfulness, carelessness, and disobedience, and set ourselves with a holy determination to add our *quota* to that priceless raiment?

Let it not be supposed that only those who do the more prominent

works are contributing to this garment. Often they are the ones who are doing the least towards it, for they are much before the eyes of men, and are in constant danger of working for the applause of men; and work which springs from such a motive cannot be acceptable to God.

It is often the lowliest of the saints, living in obscurity, and perhaps poverty and pain, who is most diligent in this work. When the motive for living is Christ, it matters not how menial the task, it will give the opportunity for the reproduction of the life of Jesus. And to follow in His footsteps, and to show out the blessed traits that shone in their perfection in Him is to be adding to the garment of "fine linen, clean and white." But for this there must be fear and trembling lest self should intrude and spoil the piece we weave, and there must be obedience to the will of God, which will is found in the Holy Scriptures: there alone can we discover what the good works are, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

"He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about"
(Ps. 32. 10).

"Mark that text," said an aged Christian to his grandson, who read the words to him. "I read it in my youth and believed it; and now I read it in my old age and can say I have proved it to be true."

Faith in God is the great charmer of

life's cares, and he who possesses it dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded by a bodyguard of mercies.

For the believer, even when he cannot trace its workings, mercy is as all-surrounding as omniscience, and every thought and act of God is perfumed with it.

"He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10. 23).

Oftentimes it is difficult to see how certain promises of God are to be realized. We have nothing to do with that whatever. God keeps our hands off His promises quite as surely as He keeps them off His stars, and if He will not let us intermeddle with His planets, and do our little scrubbing and burnishing upon those great lights, He will not ask us to

have anything to do with the outworking and realization of His promises. He asks that their fulfilment be left to Him, and afterwards He will challenge our own life as the witness and answer and confirmation of all that is gracious and all that is sure in the outworking of His words of promise.

Atoning and other Sufferings of Christ. (H. D. R. JAMESON).

"A Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief."

(Concluded from page 294.)

HAVING spoken of some of the many and ceaseless sorrows of the lifetime of our blessed Lord, I would dwell a little now on the sorrows peculiar to that hour which stands alone in the annals of all the ages—the hour of atonement.

Gethsemane.

In the first place there was as prelude the agony in Gethsemane's garden, where reached its climax a character of suffering I have not touched upon: it was not only man's hour, it was the "*power of darkness*" (Luke 22. 53).

There was not only pressure from man on every side, but in the Lord's pathway here He had also to meet the adversary, the devil, and He "*suffered being tempted.*" There had been the forty days in the wilderness in which He was tempted of the devil, and was with the wild beasts. But He overcame, He bound "the strong man," and in the course of His gracious ministry "*spoiled his goods*" (Mark 3. 27). He "*went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him*" (Acts 10. 38).

But *this* hour was of another character. He who had left Him "for a season" (Luke 4. 13) came again in his might, not this time to allure by the promises and suggestions made in the temptation in the wilderness, but to press upon the burdened spirit of the Saviour all "*the power of death,*" that which, being perfect as He was, "*He feared,*" and out of which He sought deliverance "*with strong crying and tears*" (Heb. 5. 7). It was the hour of which the Lord spake when He said, "*The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me*"

(John 14. 30). It was the "*power of darkness.*"

In the deepening gloom of that night of betrayal and rejection there rose up before the soul of Jesus what was far beyond all that the wickedness of man and the enmity of the powers of darkness could bring upon Him—those infinitely deeper sorrows which were to be His as coming into the sinner's place—and entering the garden of Gethsemane He "*began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and saith unto His disciples, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.*" There, withdrawn from the disciples, the Saviour looked into the full depths of that cup of infinite sorrow which was to be given Him to drink. He looked into it all, and the contemplation of it was agony to Him, so that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground; but blessed be God, He passed through all its agony, and accepted the cup as from His Father's hands. "*The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?*"

This was the prelude to the drinking of the cup: it was not the drinking of the cup itself; and there is a character of the sorrows of Christ connected with all this time in which He was fully the rejected Messiah of Israel, and about to take their place, and endure the wrath due to the guilty nation, which will doubtless be of especial value to the remnant of Israel in a coming day, when under the sense of their awful guilt they come under the pressure of some measure of realization of the wrath due to that guilt. This character of the sufferings of Christ as connected with the governmental ways of God with Israel I do not pursue, but pass on now to speak

of the hour in which He took the cup which His Father gave Him to drink, and suffered in atonement.

Atonement.

Atonement was accomplished by that judicially efficacious sacrifice the effect of which is to "bring us to God" (1 Peter 3. 18). It is that in virtue of which God and the sinner are brought together in perfect consistency with the nature of God and with all His attributes: light and love in perfect equipoise: the love of God, His mercy and grace, exercised in almighty power in absolute accord and harmony with His holiness, righteousness, majesty, justice, and truth.

Looked at as to its bearing on *sin* atonement is expiatory: in it there is expiation for sin, the *putting away* of sin (Heb. 9. 26), in virtue of an adequate sacrifice in which is the full bearing of penalty.

Godward the effect of atonement is propitiation. *Usward* and *creationward* its effect is reconciliation. In propitiation the offended majesty of God is propitiated by a sacrifice meeting the requirements of His justice, and more than simply meeting those requirements, a sacrifice glorifying God in all that He is. In Romans 3. we have this side of the death of Christ, for there God is spoken of as setting forth Christ Jesus as a propitiation (or mercy-seat) "in His blood." In that chapter it is not a question of what we find in the blood; it is what God finds. There He finds a basis on which He can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. It is expressly stated to be "that He might be just and the justifier"—that is to say, the aspect of the death of Christ there presented is entirely Godward, that which meets the righteous claims of God.

Reconciliation presents the atonement in its effects, usward and creationward, as seen in Colossians 1. 20-2. But on this I will not dwell, for it is not what is at the moment in question. What is

being denied is that the sufferings of Christ in atonement were sufferings *judicially inflicted upon Him by God Himself*. In some comments on 1 Peter 3. 18 I have already shown from that passage that the sufferings there contemplated were judicial, substitutional, and atoning; and I would refer now to other passages which make very clear the precious fact that Christ has already in grace suffered at the hand of God ALL that which is the due of our sins.

Immediately that sin entered, the coming of Christ was announced, and God said to the serpent, "Thou shalt bruise His heel, and He shall bruise thy head." There is, as it has been remarked by another, a hint and indication here of the majesty and glory of the Person spoken of, in that all that Satan could do, all the sorrows and afflictions he could bring upon Him, including the suffering of death itself, looked at as that of which Satan wielded the power, was but the bruising of His *heel*. But there was something passing beyond all this. It is presented in that wonderful sorrow chapter of the Old Testament, Isaiah 53. In the chapter the sufferings of Christ at the hands of men are fully recognized: He was despised and rejected of men; but it passes on to speak of what is deeper far (ver. 10): "Yet it pleased *Jehovah* to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of *Jehovah* shall prosper in His hand." What is this? It is not the bruising of His heel: it is the bruising of HIMSELF. It is not that which Satan should do, it is that which *Jehovah* should do to Him. *Jehovah* should bruise Him, and what is spoken of is expressly *His soul* being made *an offering for sin*. This is atonement: Christ suffering judicially at the hand of God that which is the due of our sins, for it is "with His stripes we are healed" (ver. 5).

Great Essentials.

For atonement, for substitutional sufferings, there are certain things absolutely essential. The first is a *sinless* sufferer. This is clear, for if one must suffer for his own sins he is not free to become substitute for another. This is a truth insisted on throughout Scripture. A sacrificial lamb to typify Christ must be without blemish. The pass-over lamb must be kept from the tenth to the fourteenth day, that its perfection might be evidenced; so Christ from the thirtieth year of His life to His crucifixion in the thirty-fourth year evidenced by the perfection in which He passed through every trial and test that He was indeed the Lamb of God "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1. 7). David was not this, nor were any of those of whom present-day teachers lightly speak as "substitutes."

It is essential, secondly, that the substitute stand in the sinner's place; and that He who is the Judge, the Administrator of infinite justice, account of the substitute as having marked upon him the sins of the offender: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6). He was "delivered for our offences" (Rom. 4. 25), and, deeper still, "Him who knew not sin He has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21, N.T.). The words of the last-quoted passage are profound; in it there are depths that none can fathom; but withal the statement is intelligible to the simplest. There we have Christ made at the hand of God that which we were, treated absolutely and exactly as being that which characterizes us, *sin*.

The Curse.

And this necessarily involved the judgment of God, that which is sin's due. The last word of the Old Testament is the word "*curse*:" and its position is significant, for the Old Testament, though it ever pointed on to Christ, is in itself the record of

Adam and his race, as set here in responsibility, a record black with the detail of man's course of persistent sin and rebellion against God, a course of which the curse is the climax and necessary end. The curse of God (see Deut. 28. 15-68) is the terminus of man after the flesh; and is that inflicted by God as the absolute necessity of His holy government where all the overtures of His mercy are rejected. And notice carefully that the curse in its full extent, as seen in the fuller light of the New Testament, embraces the judgment which lies beyond death and the grave. This is expressed in those solemn words of the Lord, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25. 41).

The closing thought of the New Testament, on the other hand, is grace: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (Rev. 22. 21); and, between these two, the curse at the close of the Old Testament, and grace at the close of the New Testament, there comes in that which explains the change—the CROSS; for there in grace Christ came into the very place of the curse for us; in the words of the Scripture He was "made a curse for us" (Gal. 3. 12). This was a great reality; He was fully in the sinner's place; and as becoming a *curse* for us that which otherwise would have been our eternal portion, the fire of divine judgment against sin, necessarily fell upon Him there, as is also the uniform witness of all the types where sacrifice for sin is in question. The "fire" is what God is in the infinitude of His holiness—"our God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4. 12, 24; Heb. 12. 29)—that which where sin is necessarily expresses itself in judgment. Thus Christ, having taken the sinner's place and having to be treated by God as SIN (that which He was "made"), all that God was in His majesty, holiness, truth, and justice, necessarily bore against the holy Sufferer.

Forsaken.

But if He were there in the place of the curse sustaining that which was sin's due, this necessarily involved what amid all His sorrows was unknown to Him before, it necessitated that utter abandonment expressed in the cry which issued from out of the darkness, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Sorrows of every kind had pressed about the Man of Sorrows, they had grown with ever-increasing intensity as the march of events pressed Him onward to the cross, but NOW sorrow was His which, as it were, eclipsed them all, a sorrow beside which none other could be mentioned—*He was forsaken of God.* In that hour there was withdrawn from Him that which had ever been His delight, the sunshine of the countenance of God: that was withdrawn. Throughout all His pathway here it had been true that "God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38). He could say, "The Father hath not left Me alone," but now He was forsaken of God, and ALONE, alone in the universe. It was an hour without a parallel, and without possibility of one.

In the twenty-second psalm, from which is quoted the cry of abandonment, is given also the reason of this utterance. That reason lay in the necessities of infinite holiness—"Thou art holy." Even in the hour of abandonment the Saviour's perfection is seen in His justifying the action of God in these words, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (ver. 3). In that psalm, too, the position of every other godly soul is contrasted with that of Christ: "Our fathers trusted in Thee, and *Thou didst deliver them;*" but as to His own cry He had to say, "*Thou hearest not.*" In His lifetime He could say, "I know that Thou hearest Me always:" *now He was NOT HEARD.*

He was "made sin," and so all its consequences came upon Him. With sin came in the curse (Gen. 3. 17), bringing with it sorrow (ver. 17),

thorns (ver. 18), sweat of toil (ver. 19) death (ver. 19), and banishment (ver. 24): and all found its answer with Christ as coming into the sinner's place. A crown of thorns wreathed the sacred brow of the Man of Sorrows, the bloody sweat of anguish and conflict in Gethsemane's lone garden being succeeded by the fuller and deeper answer to the word, "So God drove out the man," when He, the Man of Calvary, in the hour of death, went out in matchless grace into the sinner's place in the darkness of utter abandonment, under wrath, displeasure, and judgment.

Do any ask that it be explained in what consisted the judgment poured out there upon the Saviour, of what nature was the storm that there burst upon Him, when He could say, "All Thy waves and Thy billows have passed over Me?" Let it be said that here there is mystery that no creature mind can fathom. Into the darkness that encircled the Saviour's cross no eye can penetrate. That this is so is indicated for us in type in Genesis 22., where, when Abraham and Isaac (typifying the Father and the Son) go together to Mount Moriah for the offering up of Isaac in sacrifice, the young men may journey with them *so far*, but on the third day are told, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." They *might not draw near*: so with us we can but listen to the cry of abandonment, read the words which indicate its necessity, and stand, as it were, afar off, in but dim apprehension of the vast magnitude of the transaction there taking place.

"It is Finished."

There is yet another essential to atonement, it is that the sufferer be able to exhaust the judgment, for if the judgment be not exhausted sin is not atoned for, there are yet claims of justice unsatisfied. And as sin is infinite in its nature as being against God, we must come here to some apprehension of the glory of the Person who

undertook the work of atonement, for none but One who was infinite in His being, One who Himself was God, co-equal with the Father in the glory of Deity, could exhaust the judgment due to sin, satisfy all the claims of infinite justice, and glorify God in respect of the whole question of sin. But such a Person was He who died upon Calvary, and in the words "IT IS FINISHED" was announced, ere He bowed His head in death, the fact that the judgment indeed was exhausted, the work for ever finished, and, having glorified

God, He is now glorified in God, and is the Giver of life on a platform other than that forfeited by sin, a platform for ever free of invasion by sin and death.

To Him be everlasting praise !

" Mercy and Truth unite,
Oh, 'tis a wondrous sight,
All sights above.
Jesus the curse sustains,
Guilt's bitter cup He drains,
Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love."

Correspondence.

A CORRESPONDENT, after calling our attention to the feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23. as filling up in figure the whole time from the cross to the glory with God's joy in Christ and His redeeming work, continues :

" Have you noticed that there is another feast brought before us in chapter 24.—the *priestly feast, in the sanctuary*? The pure olive oil beaten for the light speaks in figure—does it not?—of Him who was ' the green olive tree in the house of God,' but whose fruit had been *beaten* and became thereby the source of light to the priests *in the sanctuary*. The light that shed its beams *in the holy place and in which the priests lived*, all that light which irradiates the holy presence of God, came from the *olive tree and its beaten fruit*.

" Further, placed on the *golden table* every Sabbath were the twelve loaves of *fine flour baken* (note, *flour baken*), which suggests to us the perfectness of Christ tested in every detail, passing through the *fire*, baken. The loaves thus prepared speak of Him as presented to God on the *golden table* (upheld by the glory of His divinity), and pure frankincense (all the manifold sweetness of Christ's humanity), set in order for God to see and for His sons and priests to feed on from Sabbath to Sabbath ; for when the course of days ended a fresh set of loaves was placed on the *golden table*, so these were always *fresh*, fragrant, and satisfying to God's priests.

" On this '*presence bread*' the priests always lived.

" I suggest to you that God would lead His priests and sons along the whole course of time filled up not with man's sin and failure, but *time filled with the manifold perfections of God's redemption in Christ Jesus* ; and the soul of the priests could delight in THAT as they passed from view to view of Christ and His work, all declarative of God's glory and the creature's benefit (Lev. 23).

" Yet THAT is not all, though all in the feasts of the Lord called into exercise the service of the priests of the Lord. *There is something more*, something that is outside time, earth, nature, and man. There is the *holy place*, and there the priests and sons of God found another order of festivity which surpasses all in the seven or eight feasts in chapter 23., which is time filled up with the glory of Christ in redemption. This is an unique feast—the feast of feasts. The sons and priests of God shall pass entirely out of time, earth, nature, and man, even in his best and brightest joy in redemption. " They shall go into the light of all Christ was as the vessel of beauty and fruit in the power of the Spirit below that now lights the courts of bliss, and in all that light they LIVE, and live in it for ever. And finally they feast on God's own portion in Christ, which is fresh and fragrant through eternity. That is our portion now and for ever. Yours in Christ. (I. M.)"

The Holy Spirit.

POWER belongs to God (Ps. 62. 11).

It does not lie in the new nature, though that nature be of God, and though it be both incorruptible and indestructible. The soul newly and only born again is as weak and helpless as is a babe newly born after the flesh: it can do nothing but desire. The desires of one born again are right, but he has no power to put these desires into practice: the good he would he does not; but the evil he would not, that he does. I have already spoken of this; it is the state of soul described in the latter part of Romans 7. The Spirit of God is the power that makes the difference between this and the next chapter, but along with that heavenly gift the realization of the new place we have in Christ risen from the dead. For the soul who has the Spirit of God, and knows his new place in the risen Christ, and walks in dependence upon God, uninterrupted victory over sin is his constant realization. It is not that there will not be conflict, but the conflict described in Romans 7. is a conflict which is so one-sided that one of the combatants has it all his own way, and the other can do nothing at all but groan out his utter wretchedness, like a weakling in the hands of a giant; but when the Spirit of God is there it is He who takes up the conflict, and victory is ours (Gal. 5. 17).

It is necessary to have the Spirit, for without His indwelling there is no power against sin. There is no power in the creature, let the creature be in nature or in new birth. Power is only in God. Adam fell when in innocence; and, indeed, every creature falls who is not upheld by the might of God. It is impossible to suppose that power could reside anywhere else than in the Creator Himself. Redemption places man in the power of God, and this is one of the first things he has to learn, in order

that his walk may be in dependence upon his Redeemer. No inherent power is bestowed upon the creature by any work that may be done by God in his soul. A great work has been done already in the souls of His people, and we are still looking for a great work to be done, for we wait the Saviour from heaven who will change our bodies and fashion them like to His own (Phil. 3. 21); but no work shall ever be done in us that will set us up in a power independent of God. Indeed, the principle of sin is just this, that man arrogates to himself an independent existence from God, and claims the power and prerogative of doing as he pleases. Christ is said to have been crucified through weakness, but lives by the power of God (2 Cor. 13. 4). He was weakened down in death when He gave Himself for our sins, but by the exceeding greatness of the power of God He now lives in resurrection, and by that same power we now live *in* Him, and soon shall live *with* Him (Eph. 1. 19, 23; 2. 1-6; 2 Tim. 2. 11; Rom. 8. 11). God, on the ground of the death of Christ, is setting everything up in His own power, and this is just the security of the new heavens and the new earth, and of all that will be in them.

Therefore, if we are to be brought to the knowledge of the truth, we must not only learn our sinfulness and the need of righteousness, but we must also learn our utter weakness. But this weakness we only begin to learn when there is a work of grace done in our souls; and the first work of grace is new birth. It is that which the Lord tells Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3.). When that work has been wrought in our souls our great desire is to please God; and though we mix up our acceptance with our doing, and expect God to approve of

us because of that which He may find in us, still our delight is really in the doing of His will so far as we know it, and the misery of our condition lies in the fact that we are under the dominion of sin, and unable to do the good which we approve of. This is the way we learn that we are without strength.

Now the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from this terrible bondage. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. Where He is there is always a measure of this liberty, even where the soul is yet in ignorance of his true place in Christ risen. Where the doctrine of the gospel only has been learned there is no more power than where it is utterly unknown, for, as I have said, all power lies in the Spirit. But even where the Spirit is, and our place in Christ unknown, the measure of liberty enjoyed will not be complete. The cross and the Spirit go together, and both are necessary for complete deliverance.

The Spirit sheds abroad in the believer's heart the love of God; is in his heart the Spirit of sonship crying, "Abba, Father;" witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God; occupies us with objects that carry us out of ourselves altogether, and which are more attractive than any earthly things; and without such objects liberty would be impossible for us. But the cross has severed us completely from the old things, and in Christ we are brought into a new order of things altogether, and the Holy Spirit is the power by which these things are known and enjoyed, but when they are known and enjoyed the reign of sin is over for us for ever.

Now, though saints in the past dispensations were born again, they are never said to have been sealed with the Spirit. Indeed, the Spirit as a Person dwelling upon earth and in the bodies of believers was unknown till the day of Pentecost. The blessed Lord told His disciples that it was expedient that He should go away, for if He went not away the Spirit would not come to

them; but if He went He would send Him. But John the Baptist had already pointed Him out as the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This divine Person came to the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and He has been here ever since, and will be here as long as the church remains upon earth.

Christians are builded together for His habitation. They are His house, but of that I have already spoken. But He also dwells in believers' bodies. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. God claims them: they are His (1 Cor. 6. 20); and we are to present them to Him a living sacrifice (Rom. 12. 1); but we can only do this in the power of the Spirit.

No greater gift could God bestow upon His people than the gift of the Spirit. The Lord says to His disciples, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11. 13). No less a gift would do for those who have no might in themselves. Nothing would suffice for our redemption but the death and resurrection of God's Son, and no other power than that of His Spirit could lead our souls into the blessedness of the new place that is ours in and with Christ.

The first thing in the history of the dealings of God with souls is new birth, for without that there would be no seeking after God. This is produced by His Word, and His word of glad tidings. When this takes place the soul becomes a seeker after God. His eyes are opened, and he turns from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan to God, that he may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith (Acts 26. 18). There clearly we see a work of grace in the heart previous to the soul coming to God and receiving forgiveness, and I do not think that Scripture speaks of any work done in the soul previous to new birth,

indeed, the very term "*born again*" precludes the idea of anything previous.

Quickening is also the first beginning of that work of grace, for until that takes place the soul is in moral death. Still, these terms do not both convey the same thought to the mind, for one is a man's birth, and with that we cannot connect any previous history. But with regard to quickening, it is a *dead man* who is said to be quickened; that is to say, a new life has been communicated to him. And yet life is connected with new birth, for we are born again by the *living* Word of God. This settles the question that Scripture does connect life with new birth. But "*quickened together with Christ*" (Col. 2. 13) is only predicated of a person who has received the Holy Spirit. It is consequent on His "*having forgiven you all trespasses.*" It is the same life surely, but now in the energy of the Spirit of God, for in no other way than by the gift of the Spirit could we be said to be in living association with Christ. He "*liveth by the power of God*" (2 Cor. 13. 4); He was quickened by the Spirit (1 Peter 3. 18); and by the Spirit gave commandments to His disciples after His resurrection (Acts 1. 2). Therefore, in order to be said to be *quickened with Him*, the life we have must be looked at as in the energy of the Spirit.

We are sealed with the Holy Spirit when we believe the gospel of our salvation; and that is the deliverance of Christ for our offences, and His resurrection for our justification (Eph. 1. 13; Rom. 4. 25; 1. Cor. 15. 1-4). New birth, faith in Christ raised from the dead, and the gift of the Spirit: this is the order in which these things come to us if we believe the Scriptures. It is because we are sons, not to make us sons, that we have received the Spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, "*Abba, Father*" (Gal. 4. 6). By one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body (1. Cor. 12. 13). In the power of the Spirit we worship the Father (John 4. 23; Phil. 3. 3);

in His power the gospel is preached in the world (Luke 24. 49; 1 Peter 1. 12); by the Spirit the things which ear has not heard, nor the eye seen, nor the heart conceived, are known (1. Cor. 2. 9, 10); and these things have been spoken by the apostles in words taught by the same Spirit (ver. 13); prayer is also to be offered in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20); and He makes intercession with groans which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8. 26).

We are not to grieve Him, for we are sealed by Him unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4. 30). He does not leave us when He is grieved, but we miss His gracious and blessed leading of our hearts and minds into the glorious sphere of heavenly relationships and affections which are ours in Christ. He has, when we grieve Him by the allowance of the flesh, to occupy us with our miserable selves, and our sad failure, in order that we may be led to self-judgment, confession, and restoration. But leave us He never shall, until we meet in the air the Christ to whom He is guiding us, when we shall never again grieve Him. The Psalmist has to ask that Jehovah may not take His Holy Spirit from him (Ps. 51. 11), for he had the Spirit only as the Spirit of prophecy, but we have Him as the seal of the righteousness which is ours in Christ, and as the Spirit of sonship; and He is so linked up with the life which is ours in Christ that, whatever our ways may be, He is in us and with us for ever. And this is a great incentive to a holy walk, and is so presented in the Epistle to which I have referred above.

It is also by Him that our affections are led out to Christ as the coming One, the Morning Star, the Harbinger of the day—the One who will come for His church before He appears to the world as the Sun of Righteousness: "*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.*" Our interest is great, no doubt, in the coming of our Lord, but His is greater. How often and how greatly has He been grieved and quenched in that

which professes the name of Christ ; and what, if I may use the expression, extra trouble and expense has He been at in bringing the bride of Christ safely to her heavenly Bridegroom ! But that day of days, when He shall see the infinite joy of Christ in His bride brought home to glory and the Father's house, and the unspeakable joy of the bride at meeting Him of whom she has heard so much, but whom she has

never seen, shall more than compensate Him for all the grief that His heart has been put to by our naughty ways.

What a gift He is ! May we be filled with His power continually, and may we ever walk so as not to grieve or vex such infinite holiness and love as is expressed in His continual care and tender grace toward us.

“ I will hear what God the Lord will speak ” (Ps. 85. 8).

To enter the place of a *doer* before you have occupied that of a *listener* is to reverse God's order and throw everything into confusion. Happy is the suppliant who has grace to lie patiently at the Lord's door, and wait until His love shall act according to its old wont and chase all sorrow away.

Bernard thus described a good ear : One which willingly hears what is taught, wisely understands what it heareth, and obediently practises what it understandeth.

If God be not first in the ear, He is neither sanctified in the heart nor rightly confessed with the mouth.

“ When Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not . . . by Urim ” (1 Sam. 28. 6).

A solemn lesson as to the Urim and Thummim is taught in the experience of Saul, whom the Lord answered not, even when he sought counsel through the Urim. These gems, or media of communication, were still in the breastplate, but the Spirit of God, who by them gave answer, was silent. Many a man by re-

bellion grieves and quenches the Spirit. The inspired Word is still in his hands, and the throne of grace still open to approach ; but something in the man makes all responses of God impossible. The Spirit is silent. “ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

Tune: “ He is not a disappointment ” (H. of C. and F.).

Let us urge the gospel forward,
Let us tell what Christ has done :
In the power of God the Spirit,
In the name of God the Son.
There are countless souls in danger,
Thousands blind and dead in sin,
And the Saviour came from glory,
These deluded souls to win.

Let us think of all the ransomed
Purchased at such priceless cost,
Soon to shine in Christ's own image,
Who were once among the lost !
See them scattered, bruised, divided,
Knowing scarce which way to turn :
We should love them as *He* loved them,
With His own compassion burn.

Let us treasure still the Bible,
God's own Spirit-uttered Word,
'Tis the food of the believer,
And the Spirit's mighty sword.
Soon the conflict will be over,
And the endless rest begin,
Gone will be the night of sorrow,
And the power of hell and sin.

Now lift high the drooping banner
And go forth to meet the foes,
For our mighty Lord and Leader,
Must be Conqueror where He goes.
We have failed full sore and often,
But our God is faithful still,
And in His own strength we battle,
Until good has vanquished ill.

W. B. Westcott.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 John 4. 11-21.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent us the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Verse 11.

“WE ought also to love one another.” It is interesting to notice the way the Apostle here uses this word “ought.” Of frequent occurrence elsewhere, it is used six times by John:

John 13. 14: “Ye ought to wash one another’s feet.”

John 19. 7: “By our law he ought to die.”

1 John 2. 6: “He . . . ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”

1 John 3. 16: “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

1 John 4. 11: “We ought also to love one another.”

3 John 8: “We . . . ought to receive such.”

The word properly means a debt owed; so that it behoves one; one ought. “It is used thus of a necessity imposed either by law and duty, or by reason, or by the times, or by the nature of the matter under consideration. ‘Owe no man anything, but to love one another,’ because we must never cease loving, and the debt of love can never be paid. Romans 13. 8” (*Grimm*).

“It is the personal moral obligation, rather than the necessity. 1 John 4. 11” (*Cremer*).

Although clearly connected with “responsibility,” with which in law it coincides, it differs from it in that it is what flows out naturally from the circumstances rather than what is imposed by contract, and so involving legal penalty. Israel was responsible under law (Exod. 19. 8; 24. 3, 7), and consequently “under

a curse” (Gal. 3. 10). But though the Christian is not responsible under law, yet, because he is a child of God, he is under obligation—he “ought” to act accordingly. “If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” is then an incentive to the new nature, not a repression, under penalty, of the old.

Verse 12.

The comparison between this verse and John 1. 18 has often been pointed out, and is very interesting. In the Gospel we read, “No one hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” In the Epistle, instead of Christ’s so declaring God, the Apostle passes to the divine life in the believer: “If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.” Thus the life in the believer by the Spirit is of the same nature as it is in the Son. The divine life is the same wherever seen.

“His love is perfected in us.” Here, again, we reach finality; for that is the meaning of the word. Four times it is used in this Epistle:

1 John 2. 5: “Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily the love of God is perfected.”

1 John 4. 12: “If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.”

1 John 4. 17: Love in regard to us is perfected.

1 John 4. 18: “He that feareth is not perfected in love.”

The first man was not made perfect.

The work of God's hands in him was "very good" (Gen. 1. 31); but the purpose of God was not fulfilled in him. Neither did perfection come by the law. "The law perfected nothing" (Heb. 7. 19). But now that Christ has come, perfection—finality—has come by Him; and what is true as regards the nature of life in Him is true also of us by the Spirit (1 John 2. 8). It is not that the final purpose of God in glory as regards us has been reached; but the nature of it has been already revealed in Christ; and God Himself dwells in us by His Spirit, and His love is perfected in us.

Different words in the original are translated in the A.V. by the word "dwell," e.g.—

John 1. 14: "The Word became flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled, ἐσκήνωσε] among us." The figure here refers to the tabernacle in the wilderness.

2 Corinthians 6. 16: "As God has said, I will dwell [inhabit, have a house, ἐνοικήσω] among them." The figure here is connected with the temple, God's house in the land.

1 John 4. 12, etc.: The word "dwell" here, μένει, means to remain, abide in the continuity of unbroken communion. So in John 14. 2: "In My Father's house are many abodes. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." The word "mansion" is from *maneo*, and the Latin word again is derived from this word μένω, to place so as to remain.

Verse 13.

In chapter 2. 5 he says, "Hereby we know that we are in Him;" now he goes farther, and says, "We know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." This is more than the operation of His Spirit in O.T. times. It is our partaking with Him of His own nature. It is not that this nature is immanent in us. Scripture does not lead us to self-examination to find this blessedness, but to the fact that God calls us to share with Himself that which is of His own Spirit. Nor is it ever called "our Spirit," though it "bears witness with our Spirit" (Rom. 8. 16); but while we have it, as given to us of God, still it is always carefully guarded as being "the Spirit of God," and we thereby are guarded from mysticism.

Verse 14.

Twice over we find in John's writings this title "Saviour of the world," John 4. 42, and again here. It is the "Zaphnathpaaneah" of Genesis 41. 45, which is also rendered, and perhaps more correctly, "food of the living;" and Joseph, in the circumstances of his day, is strikingly typical of the Lord as we find Him here. Rejected of His own, despised of the world, outcast from all the courts of men, yet was He the One on whom the hopes of all depended. Moreover, as Joseph said to his brethren, "God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45. 5). So here the Apostle says, "We have seen and do testify, that the Father has sent the Son [as] Saviour of the world." The world can find no Saviour of itself. Philosophy cannot satisfy the cravings of man's mind; by all his searching he cannot find out God; he cannot even solve the riddle of his own existence, nor unravel the mystery of his being; he knows neither his origin nor his end; nor can he explain to himself why he is here at all. The thread of his relationship with the "unseen" is broken, and he cannot forge the missing link; he is plainly under the pressure of a blinding power from which he cannot escape, and his helpless cry is, "Who will show us any good?" Then it is we read that "God so loved . . ." and "the Father sent the Son as Saviour of the world." And what but love could plan salvation and effectuate it thus? What but love could settle all these outstanding questions that call anxiously for solution—questions that carry sorrow and misery, heart-burnings and strife, wretchedness and ruin in their train? And love the world knows not, nor its sovereign virtue for its every ill. Of all things, the greatest is love. But where is it to be found? Instinct provides a certain natural affection for its young till they reach the age of self-preservation, when the sense of relationship wanes and parental affections wane with it. Creation may adumbrate but does not illustrate the love of God. When God chose Israel as "a special people to Himself" from among the nations, He loved them nationally, "because He loved them" (Deut. 7. 6-8); but that does not define the love He has shown to us in sending His Son as Saviour and giving us of His own Spirit,

that we might know and enjoy His love.

Verse 15.

Moreover, this blessing belongs not to any special class of Christians; but "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God." Judaism was essentially national and tribal; but the subject of John's ministry is the divine nature, and his characteristic word is "*whosoever*." Trained up and educated as we are in our actual surroundings, it is difficult for us to enter into the full force of this and similar expressions. But our ignorance or unbelief does not make the Word of God of none effect.

How excellent are the Scriptures, inspired of God! How far above the plane of man's puny thought! How pure and incorruptible, in spite of every effort of the enemy to corrupt them! How truly divine and outstanding to the glory and praise of God!

Verse 16.

And we have been taught to know (*ἐγνώκαμεν*, *i.e.* it is objective, not subjective knowledge), and we have believed the love which God has in respect of us—in our case. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Four times in these few verses he rings the changes on these words:

Verse 12: "If we love one another, God dwells in us."

Verse 13: "We know that we dwell in Him, and He in us."

Verse 15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God."

Verse 16: "God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him."

God dwells in us by the communication of His own nature; we dwell in God in the confidence and communion of His love. A bottomless basket can hold no water; but if the basket is put into the water, the water is in the basket and the basket is in the water; so the soul that abides in love abides in God, and God in him. This is our present and our lasting home.

Verse 17.

"Herein has love been perfected with us." Beyond this it cannot go; and the object in view is "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment;" boldness, not because of a holy life and upright, however devotedly lived, excellent as this is in its own place (*cf.* 2 Tim. 3. 10; 4. 7, 8); not because the Saviour sought us as sinners and washed us from our sins in His precious blood, though without that we were for ever lost indeed; not because we were made children of God and members of the body of Christ, priceless blessings as these are; but because, "as He is, so are we, in this world." Here is the grand climax of all gospel truth, set forth in these nine simple words. "As He is," *i.e.* as Christ is in all that constitutes His glorious risen state, "so are we," even now, "in this world."

Let none say that this is a matter of attainment belonging to a special class; for who could attain to it? Let none say it is too high for him to enjoy, for it is the portion of every child of God as such. It is ours, because God has said it.

"This is an unspeakable source of joy, a character and capacity of joy which is most blessed and intimate. Nor is this left out in chapter 4. 17, 'as He is,' even 'in this world.' It is before (*i.e.* before the day of judgment), but it is not simply forensic (*i.e.* legal, belonging to the law courts), as men speak; but we have part in the perfectness of Christ, forensically, because we share His life in fact. It is not this life *in us* which is the perfectness; but this life *in us* is the way that we have to say to Him, in whose perfectness we stand before God. Paul gives the forensic aspect of the same truth in Romans 6. and Galatians 2. 19-21" (*J. N. Darby*).

Verse 18.

Now, fear and love do not go together. "Perfect love casts out fear;" and since God so loves us there is no room for fear.

But that does not mean that we are not to fear God, because we have no fear for the day of judgment. We are told to fear Him (1 Peter 2. 17), for "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints" (Ps. 89. 7), and to "serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12. 28); moreover, he who does not fear God now will certainly fear

in that day. "There were they in great fear, where no fear was, for God is in the generation of the righteous" (Ps. 14. 5 and 53. 5).

Verse 19.

On the other hand, "we love, *without fear*, because He has first loved us."

Verse 20.

But now comes a test as to whether or not we understand what love is. "If any one say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar." This is a solemn word, and we do well to take heed to it. It would prove that his professed love to

God was but self-deception. Not seeing God, he knows nothing of Him, nor of his own heart. If he saw Him, he would assuredly hate Him, even as he hates his brother. This is a serious consideration (John 15. 23-25).

Verse 21.

Moreover, love is not intrinsic in us, as it is in God; and the exercise of it is at all times a matter of obedience. For "we have it as a commandment from Him, that he who loves God, love also his brother." If we do not love in obedience to God, we do not love according to God.

Eternal Retribution.

(H. P. BARKER).

Address given at Edinburgh (Revised).

I PURPOSE to speak on this subject from a scriptural standpoint exclusively, and to give no rein either to imagination or to mere reason. Many, in their denial of eternal retribution, have found the teaching of the Bible too clear and emphatic for them, and have thrown its authority overboard. I shall leave them and their theories alone. For the loyal believer in the Word of God they are of less value than the paper on which they are written.

Others, equally bold in their denials, have sought to confirm their notions from the words of Scripture, and profess allegiance to its authority. But we shall see whether the teaching of the Word of God supports or contradicts their words. May I take it for granted that all who hear me are prepared to bow to the authority of that Word, and to acknowledge it as the final court of appeal?

The Importance of the Subject.

The importance of this subject is greater than might at first appear. The issues involved are far-reaching and serious. I think we shall see that faith in the Deity of Christ and in the efficacy of His atonement is logically inconsistent with a want of faith in eternal punishment. I propose, therefore, briefly to examine some passages of Scripture which affirm that Christ is God indeed, and to show how an atonement of

infinite efficacy, or punishment of *endless* duration, must necessarily result from the work accomplished by a Person of such immeasurable dignity and worth.

"*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1. 1). The "beginning" here spoken of is long antecedent to creation's "beginning" in Genesis 1. And in that "beginning" of the unfathomable past, the eternal Word (who became flesh and dwelt among men) was with God, and was God, distinct in personality and divine in His being.

"*Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever*" (Rom. 9. 5). Here is a most emphatic assertion of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have affirmed that He was divine only in a secondary sense. But this scripture repels the notion. He is "over all, God." He is equal with the Father in Godhead glory and majesty.

"*Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*" (Heb. 1. 1). Notice that the Son, the Lord Jesus, is here addressed as God. If "O God" is a right way of addressing Him, surely there can be no doubt as to His true and essential Deity!

"*This is the true God, and eternal life*" (1 John 5. 20). The context shows that these words refer to the second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ. He

is the eternal life, and through Him alone we live. But He is more: He is the true God, one with the Father. Let us bow down before Him and worship Him. For He is worthy!

We have looked at four clear, unmistakable Scripture statements as to the Deity of Christ. But there are inferences to be drawn, equally conclusive, from other passages. For instance, when the Jews said "Thou art not yet fifty years old!" He answered, "Before Abraham was, I am." He was, indeed, the "I AM" of Old Testament times.

Of course, He is truly and perfectly Man. He *became* a Man. But He never ceased to be what He always was: God over all, blessed for evermore.

The Atonement.

Just as there are all sort of unholy speculations abroad as to the person of Christ, so there are many wild and profane theories as to the nature of His sufferings and death.

Was His a death such as other men have died? Did He die merely as a martyr, sealing His testimony to the truth with His life's blood? Or did He only die in order to show how one should meet death, and thus leave an example for the encouragement of others?

No. There was far more in the Saviour's death than these questions suggest. A glorious epitaph was His, that belongs to no other: "Died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6). He suffered and died in the place of others, making *atonement* for their guilt. During the hours of awful agony when He hung upon the cross, the sins of others were laid upon His head, and the stroke of divine judgment due to those sins fell upon Him. He made expiation by His blood, He gave His life a ransom for many (Mark 10. 45).

No mere man could accomplish such a work, nor endure such a load, nor die such a death. Nor could the death of a mere man have the efficacy that the Saviour's death possesses. It is the infinite greatness of His person that gives infinite efficacy to His atonement. Deny the Deity of Christ, and you deny the truth of the atonement. The one logically follows the other.

Now, if the Deity of Christ be denied, and the value of His atoning work be impugned, the truth of eternal retribution must also be flung overboard. On the other hand, if the true Deity of Christ be maintained, and the infinite efficacy of His atonement be upheld, then eternal retribution is seen to be the necessary consequence for those who refuse eternal salvation.

Sin is Infinite.

The question of sin is one of *infinite* seriousness. It can only be settled in a way satisfactory to God, by an atonement of *infinite* value. Such an atonement could only be made by a person of *infinite* greatness. The result of such an atonement, made by such a person, must be blessing of *infinite* character, unspeakable and everlasting, for those who avail themselves of God's offer of forgiveness. But for those who reject, and continue in sin and rebellion, the consequences must be *eternal*. Infinite sin can only be met by an atonement of infinite worth or by punishment as unspeakable and eternal as the rejected blessing.

Very probably an objection may here be raised. I may be asked: "Why do you speak of *sin* as 'infinite?' Can *finite* men commit sins of *infinite* gravity? Our life is but a vapour that passes away, our capacities are limited; how can we possibly commit sins that are infinite in their consequences?"

My reply is that sin must not be measured by the rank or capacity of the one that commits it. Its seriousness must be measured by the dignity of *the person against whom it is committed*.

A blow on the cheek, given to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, would have more serious result for the offender than a blow on the cheek given to some bare-footed street arab in the slums. But a similar offence, committed against His Majesty the King, would be attended with more serious consequences still. The greater the person against whom the offence is committed, the more dire are the consequences to the offender. The seriousness of the offence increases in proportion to the dignity of the person offended. If, therefore, an offence is committed against a person of *infinite* dignity and greatness, such an offence

becomes one of infinite magnitude, and must have infinite consequences for the offender. We are hardly in a position to judge of the heinousness of sin in God's sight. Our consciences have become more or less blunted, and our spiritual sensibilities dulled. We do not occupy a standpoint from which sin can be regarded in all its terribleness. But we may learn from Scripture something of its awful gravity in the sight of God. A single sin not only deprived Adam and Eve of their place of innocent delight in Eden, but brought death into the world (Rom. 5. 12). A single sin shut Moses out of the promised land. God help us to realize in deeper measure the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

The Testimony of the Scriptures.

Now let us take up our Bibles, and turn to a few passages that speak clearly and emphatically on the subject. If we confine ourselves on this occasion to the New Testament, it is not because we undervalue the Old. But in the New Testament we find ourselves in the light of the *full* revelation of God. The whole truth is there declared.

Turn first to Matthew 25. 41: "*Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*" Here we find that the doom of unrepentant men is identical with that of the devil himself. That doom is described more fully in another passage: "*The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*" (Rev. 20. 10). There are people who shrug their shoulders when we speak of Satan. They say there is no such being, that a mere personification of sin is meant. But how could the personification of an abstract principle be "tormented day and night, for ever and ever?" Depend upon it, Satan is a real person; and his doom will be real, and terrible beyond all conception. The words are awful in their absolute simplicity—"tormented . . . for ever and ever." And *that*, notice, is the penalty to which those on the left hand of the judge (Matt. 25. 41) are sentenced. Do not evade the point by saying that the language is figurative. It is as plain as words could possibly be.

Then look at the last verse of the same

chapter: "*These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*"

The force of this passage has been felt, and objectors have tried to take the edge off by one device or another. They have said, for instance, that "everlasting" does not really mean "everlasting." They quote the Greek, the language in which the New Testament was originally written, and say that the word translated "everlasting" means something else. It is easy enough to talk about Greek to people who know nothing of it. The fact is, however, that, though put to other uses, this is just the word that *is* used when a writer wants to describe that which is truly eternal. There is no other word so suitable for the purpose. In classical Greek this very word is used *in contrast* with that which is temporary and which comes to an end. Moreover, it is the same word which in the last clause of the verse is rendered "eternal." "Everlasting punishment" and "life eternal" are, according to this scripture, clearly of equal duration. The same Greek adjective is used for both.

When this is pointed out, the objectors sometimes say that "everlasting punishment" does not mean "everlasting punishing." Try that argument on a boy who has done wrong, and whose master is going to give him a good chastisement. Tell him that chastisement does not mean chastising, in an active sense. Or try it on a criminal, sentenced to a term of fifteen years' imprisonment. Tell him that imprisonment does not mean imprisoning. There will be little comfort in your words for either boy or man! It is not by arguments of that kind that the truth can be overthrown!

"*It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*" (Mark 9. 43, 44).

The unquenchable fire and the undying worm of this passage speak loudly of the eternal retribution that awaits the wicked. I know that the question has been raised as to how unquenchable fire and eternal existence can be reconciled. Would not existence be ended by the fire, since it is unquenchable? Not by any

means. The power of God must not be forgotten. We read in the Old Testament of a bush that "burned with fire" and yet was not consumed. It was a marvel to Moses how such a thing could be. "I will now turn aside," said he, "and see this great sight, *why* the bush is not burnt." The answer to his "why" was *the power of God*.

In like manner, the power of God will maintain the existence of those to whom He has given never-dying souls, and who have wickedly refused His love and blessing. "Unquenchable fire," figurative of eternal retribution, will be their merited lot.

I pass over the Gospel by Luke. You may wonder that I do not turn to the picture in chapter 16., of the rich man in hell asking for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. I hardly think, however, that eternal punishment is there set forth. It is rather the state of a lost soul after death, when in the disembodied condition. The word used for "hell" in Luke 16. 23 is "hades," the unseen world, the state of the soul without the body. In Mark 9. 43 the word is different. There it is "Gehenna," and refers to the eternal lake of fire.

When an unrepentant sinner dies his soul does not become unconscious, but, according to Luke 16., goes to hades, where there is consciousness, also memory, and torment. But that is not final. The day will come when death and hades will deliver up the dead that are therein. Death will give up the bodies, and hades the souls. Then will be enacted the dread judgment scene before the great white throne. But the wicked will not be given back to death and Hades, for these will be cast into the lake of fire. That is, I suppose, that death and Hades will be finally abolished, and give place to that which is eternal, the lake of fire.

"*He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John 3. 36).

Broadly speaking, those who deny eternal punishment may be classed under two heads:

(1) *Universalists*, who believe that finally all men will be blessed, whether they die in their sins or not.

(2) *Annihilationists*, who believe that

the impenitent and rebellious will finally cease to exist.

This passage in John 3. exposes the error of both schools of thought. Can one *who shall not see life* ultimately see it? It does not say that the unbeliever will be kept waiting a long while before he sees life, or that he shall first see a period of misery, and then, finally, see life. On the contrary, the statement is absolute: such an one *shall not see life*.

Further, how can one who shall not see life cease to exist, if the wrath of God *abides on him*? He must be there, if it is to *abide* on him, surely.

It is impossible to touch on every passage, but read this one: "*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*" (2 Thess. 1. 7-9). Surely these words can only have one meaning for the unsophisticated believer in the Scriptures! Yet they have been laid hold of by objectors, who tell us that "everlasting destruction" means destruction in the sense of ceasing to exist for all eternity. So say the Annihilationists. But the words "destroy" and "destruction," as used in Scripture, do not mean this at all. They imply disaster, ruin, retribution, loss, doom; but not ceasing to exist. Many instances might be given, but a few will suffice.

"O Israel, thou hast *destroyed* thyself" (Hosea 13. 9). This cannot mean that Israel ceased to exist, but that the nation had brought awful disaster upon itself. "I am against thee . . . saith the Lord, which *destroyest* all the earth" (Jer. 51. 25). The oppressions of the Chaldean tyrant are the subject, but who would be insane enough to affirm that in destroying all the earth he caused a cessation of its existence? He brought disaster upon it, and that is what is meant.

"They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in *destruction* and perdition" (1 Tim. 6. 9). Here the same Greek word is used as in 2 Thessalonians 2. 9. The meaning is that

the pursuit of riches involves men often times in irretrievable disaster. It does not mean that they cease to exist.

The Lord Jesus, through His death, *destroyed* the devil (Heb 2:14). Not that He put an end to Satan's existence, for he, like a roaring lion, still walks about. But He destroyed him in the sense of utterly defeating him, and crushing his power over those whom he held in bondage.

"Everlasting destruction," therefore, means not the cessation of existence, but eternal ruin, and banishment from the presence of the Lord.

"It is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb 6:4-6).

One may ask, What has this passage to do with our subject? Simply this, that if in this bright gospel day, with God's world-wide offer of pardon ringing in their ears, there are some whom it is *impossible* to renew to repentance, it is a strange notion that when they pass out of this present life there will be conditions under which it becomes *possible*. If the hearts of such could possibly be reached, and won, surely it would be amid the favouring circumstances of the present life, rather than amid the gloom of the future. We may be sure that their own sufferings will not accomplish for them what the sufferings of Christ have not effected. If it is impossible *now* to renew them to repentance, it will be impossible for all eternity.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev 22:11). This verse refers to the very end of time, and the beginning of the eternal state. It is much to the point, for it shows that eternal retribution will be meted out to men, not only because of their sins, but also because of the unchangeability of their character. He that is filthy will remain so. If one passes into eternity an unjust and filthy sinner, he will continue such throughout those endless ages that know no change. *Change* will have been left behind for ever. Eternity irrevocably fixes the destiny

and character of every man. "He that is unjust" will not be cleansed from his sin by the fires of hell, if he would not be purged by the blood of Christ.

The scriptures to which I have called your attention by no means exhaust the subject. Other passages, in abundance, may be quoted in confirmation and explanation. But to the devout believer, one word from God will be as authoritative as a hundred, and enough has been referred to to show what the teaching of the Bible upon this matter is.

A God of Love.

It may seem mysterious that a God of infinite love can punish the wicked for ever and ever. But we must remember that we can have no conception of the enormity of sin as viewed by God. Do we not know Him well enough to trust Him fully? Are we not sure that there can be no incongruity between His love and His righteousness?

An innocent child hears that her father, a judge, has condemned to death a man who has committed some horrible outrage and murder. Her pity is aroused, she will not at first believe that her kind, loving, gentle father could do such a thing.

"Father," she says, "you are not going to have that poor man hung, are you?"

"My child," replies the father, "cannot you trust me to do what is right?"

"Yes, father, indeed I can," says the little maiden.

"Then," says her father, "one day you will understand how it is that I have to send that man to the gallows."

In the same way, if we fully trust God, that He will do right, we shall allow no doubts of His goodness and love to arise in our minds, nor shall we refuse to credit His Word when it speaks of what may seem to us inconsistent with that love. And the day will come when we shall *fully* understand what may seem incomprehensible now.

Whatever exercise or difficulty we seek to escape from, through unrighteousness or unbelief, is sure to overtake us eventu-

ally. We may escape from it for a moment, but our escape is, after all, the sure road to it.

Notes of Bible Readings.—No. 6.

(H. J. VINE).

The Hope.—Romans 8. 15-30.

GOD'S children are passing through this world of sin and suffering, sorrow and death, to His home in glory. They are unknown by the world around, as we read in 1 John 3. 1-2: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God: therefore the world knoweth us NOT, because it knew Him not. Beloved, *now* are we the children of God." *As such* they are unknown, though they are known well enough in other respects, and should be such in conduct as to be esteemed by those that are without, but the secret of their family relationship is not known to the world. They are like a royal family hastening through a hostile country where those who meet them know not their origin. Thus the family of God are passing through this world. All around them are the children of the devil and the children of the flesh; and if it were not for the providential ordering of God they would soon be got rid of; but in this very world they have also the present consciousness of the Father's love and the blessed hope of soon seeing and being like the Saviour for ever. ALL believers are the children of God, and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. There is but ONE FAMILY, though many believers do not understand this great fact, and so are not governed by it.

Whilst pressing forward to the glory of God, we have not a spirit of bondage, for the Spirit that is given to us of God is a spirit of adoption. Under law there was bondage, but we have received a spirit of adoption, so that in liberty and love we address God as Father. The spirit of bondage which characterizes some to-day is not of God. Holy reverence is another matter, and will not be lacking where God is truly known.

Nobody under law called God "Father." The most pious in Israel would not have thought of looking up to God and calling Him "Father," as we do to-day. But *now* God has wrought in such wise to bring us into His presence in perfect liberty, in the

relationship of children, His perfect love having cast out all fear.

Question. *Is there a definite moment when a person becomes a child of God?*

Yes. When one, hearing the gospel, believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as his own personal Saviour, he then becomes one of the family of God.

Question. *We are also spoken of as sons of God. How do we become sons, and is there any difference in the expressions?*

Galatians 3. 26 tells us—"by faith in Christ Jesus." Children are viewed in connection with love and birth. John always speaks of "children." Sonship is connected with glory and dignity and position. Paul speaks more of that. "Children" are "begotten" in John; "sons" are by "adoption" in Paul. Doubtless sons are children, and children are sons; but we must learn the meaning of these different expressions in Scripture if we are to walk intelligently and acceptably before God our Father.

Question. *Can we break that relationship into which we have been put?*

Never—because we are begotten of God. You cannot alter your birth, even if you would. The believer has had two births, a natural one and a spiritual one. He was born after the flesh first, and then he was born after the Spirit. The Spirit that is given him is a *spirit* of adoption. You remember Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses—an Israelite adopted into the royal family of Egypt! She could not, however, put into Moses a *spirit* of adoption, therefore when he became a man he broke it all off. Now, God not only adopted us in His rich grace as His sons, with all the rights, dignity, and glory connected therewith, as the royal family of heaven, but He gave us the very "*spirit of adoption*," so that we are *vitality* (not only positionally) linked up with His Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God's Son is sent forth into our hearts, whereby we cry "Abba, Father" (Gal 4 6) What grace! What love!

Question *In what position does an unconverted man stand before God?*

He stands before God as a guilty sinner. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. Until they have come to the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted Him as their own personal Saviour, they are exposed to the judgment of God, for all have sinned and come short of His glory.

Question *Why are believers called "heirs" here?*

Because we have not yet entered upon the inheritance. We are living in this world as heirs of God and Christ's joint heirs, and we are going on to possess with Him the inheritance which is His by right, and ours with Him according to the eternal purpose and grace of God. The knowledge of this will greatly affect our walk and ways. These are the "things to come" that the Holy Spirit brings before us. Is the hope of sharing the glory with Christ burning bright within our hearts? Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for. It fills the heart with great joy to think that for the everlasting pleasure of our blessed God we are going to be with and like the One who bled and died for us on Calvary's cross.

Scripture points on constantly and consistently to that time, and hope has a wonderful effect in moving and purifying us. We need to see to it that we be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

The children of God *suffer with Christ now* in that we are still waiting for the inheritance, as it says in the seventeenth verse "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

But while we suffer *with Him*, we may be filled with all joy and peace in believing, while we abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Question *Why are the creatures mentioned in this connection?*

They likewise long for the time when they shall be set free from the bondage of corruption and share the coming glorious liberty. They anxiously look on

for the revelation of the sons of God. The creatures will not exactly share the glory, but the "liberty of the glory of the children of God." *Instinctively* they long for that time. Believers are to look on to it *intelligently*, in communion with God, understanding what He is doing.

The Old Testament greatly helps us as to the earthly side of the glory, and also as figurative of the heavenly.

Turn to Isaiah 11 6-9:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for THE EARTH SHALL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA."

The Lord will take the dominion (Ps 8) as well as the kingdom. The earth will then be filled with joy, peace, and righteousness, and the knowledge and glory of the Lord shall flow over the earth, and He shall reign supreme, KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. Instead of the present groaning, the world will then be vocal with the praises of the blessed Lord. What a glorious display it will be of the triumph of good over evil in the very place where He suffered and was crucified! He will then bring in publicly the "powers of the world to come," which He used when here in humiliation in a limited way. They will obtain generally then. It is sad to see earnest Christians, every now and then, turned aside from growing in the knowledge of God to try to obtain these "powers of the coming age" now. They were seen when the Lord and the apostles were here, but they belong properly to the age to come. Satan urges professing Christians on to imitate them in so called "faith-healing" and "tongues." It should be remembered that these "powers" witnessed to the presence and power of the Messiah, but *He has been rejected*, and meanwhile, until He returns in power and glory, the church, His body and bride, is being

formed by the Holy Spirit. When these "powers" are public we shall be in heavenly glory with Christ, over the earth, not on it, and all the blessing for the earth will flow from Christ Jesus. "Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be, When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

Question. *We are told that in that day everything will be put under man instead of angels. How does it come about?*

Jacob saw a ladder set up on earth reaching to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. The Lord Jesus came into the world of the seed of Abraham and of the seed of David. He should have been received by His people, but He was rejected by Israel. He then took the place of the Son of Man. He suffered and died, and set up the ladder on earth through His wonderful work on the cross which reached to heaven. The Lord as Son of Man takes the place of Jacob's ladder, and hereafter it shall be seen as He said: "The angels of God ascending and descending [not descending and ascending] on the Son of Man." God will have earth and heaven in beautiful and blessed communion, but this will be by the Son of Man, not exactly Son of David. Son of Man is His wider title, it takes in the vast universal dominion, when His name shall be excellent in all the earth (Ps. 8). The administration will then be directly under man, not angels.

Question. *Do not believers groan also as they await that day, not only the creature?*

Yes; read verses 22 and 23. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but we ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit."

There is the groaning of the whole creation, and we who by the Spirit are linked with the new creation groan also, as still having a link with the old creation by our bodies. But we groan in communion with God as we look around to-day and see and feel the ruin that has come in through sin.

But even now we are SAVED in hope (rightly translated it is not "by" hope, but *in* hope), and that hope is given to

cheer the hearts of those who know that heaven is their everlasting home. The hope is called the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil, where the Lord Jesus has entered in before us. There is no doubt as to it. He is there, and all is therefore secure. It is a "sure and certain hope."

In 1 Timothy 1. 1 we read of "Christ Jesus our hope" (N.T.). We need to watch. Many are giving up the hope. Christ Jesus is our hope. There is a great deal connected with that, but we really have no hope apart from Himself. HE HIMSELF IS OUR HOPE.

"O bright and blessed hope, when shall it be
That we His face long loved revealed shall see,
O when without a cloud His features trace,
Whose faithful love so long we've known in
grace."

Patience and prayer also characterize the children of God as they go on to the full result in glory of God's purpose, when we shall see Him as the Firstborn among the many brethren (vers. 25-28). We hope and expect in patience. We pray; but often "we do not know what to pray for as we ought." But the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. He joins His help to our weaknesses and intercedes for us according to God. Mark the cheering and beautiful contrast the Spirit here gives us:

"We do not know what to pray for as we ought . . . BUT we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

We are called according to His purpose, which will soon be fulfilled, and even now everything in the world to-day is working together for the good of those who have been called by the gospel. God has a definite purpose before Him, and He is working all things in accordance with that purpose, and nothing in the universe can hinder Him from carrying it out to its glorious completion. He works all things according to the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory.

Question. *Are "purpose" and "predestination" the same?*

No. "Predestination" is according to "purpose," but it is a distinct thing. "Foreknowledge" also is distinct.

“ Whom He did *foreknow*, He also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.”

We were *called* according to *purpose*, and as *foreknown* of God. He has *predestinated* us to be like His Son, but mark, it is that *HE* might be pre-eminent—the Firstborn in that happy circle in heavenly glory—“ **FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN.**”

The purpose of God centres in His beloved Son

Then is added, “ Whom He did predestinate, them He also called [that is the effectual call of God in the gospel]. And whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also *glorified*” It is to be noticed it does not say “ *sanctified*,” for the glory is looked on to here in this section of Scripture as still future.

Question *It has been said that we are already glorified. Is there any ground for saying that?*

No. It seems that some must have extreme and dangerous things to keep them going, or they get down and dull. The sober truth is not enough for them. We are certainly not actually glorified yet: we are in bodies of humiliation.

In the mind of God everything is seen in its blessed completeness, according to His wonderful purpose of love, as here stated in verse 30, and we shall know it soon in its perfectness actually in the glory with His beloved Son. It is ours to realize by faith as we hasten on to the day of its full and final display. It is a golden chain designed in grace, beauty, and perfection, embracing the past, present, and future! Every link is formed by divine love! “ *Predestinated* ” — “ *called* ” — “ *justified* ” — “ *glorified!* ” It is one chain, and, thank God, not one precious link can be broken, for each and all alike are of Himself entirely, formed for our blessing and for His own good pleasure. To Him be the praise and glory, now and throughout the coming ages. Amen.

The Last Psalm.

(J WILSON SMITH)

“Praise ye the Lord.”

1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary
praise him in the firmament of his power

2 Praise him for his mighty acts. praise him according to his excellent greatness

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet. praise him with the psaltery and harp

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance. praise him with stinged instruments and organs

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals. praise him upon the high sounding cymbals

6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

THE long voyage is over, and the harbour is reached, the roar of the storm gives place to the music of the haven. We have gained the end, the victory, the song.

Praise, and only praise, resounds on every hand. The voice of the enemy is silenced and his power is broken. The murmur of the wilderness is heard no more, its weary discords, its sobs, its pains, its sorrows, have given place to the glad “Hallelujah” of God’s presence. Every heart is happy, and every mouth is filled with song. We

are reminded of the parable of Luke 15, and the glad home where is received the once prodigal, its satisfaction and its music, only here the scope is wider. It is Israel replaced in its own land, in the joy of the kingdom, and in the presence of the King. The long night is over, the nation has received double for all its sins; its warfare is accomplished, its iniquity is pardoned; it is the time of its “comfort” And what more befitting than such a song! What more comely than that instruments of music, the sweetest, the

clearest, the loudest, should be employed to celebrate the praise of Jehovah?

There is now "no evil occurrent." The Lord is king, and His name is one, and His subjects are blessed. "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." They give heartfelt expression to their joy. In the six short verses of our beautiful closing psalm we have praise thirteen times. And what music! What harmony!

The heavenly sanctuary is invoked to sing praise to God (ver. 1); not a voice in those glorious courts on high may be silent. They have their own exquisite song to sing in the glories of the Father's house, and in the knowledge of Father, Son, and Spirit fully revealed.

Then, again, "the firmament of His power" must reverberate with His praise. Not a being amid all these

higher principalities but shall swell the chorus of His praise; while they who can sound trumpet, or psaltery, or harp, or timbrel, or pipe, or stringed instruments, or organs, or loud cymbals, or high sounding cymbals, shall also praise the Lord! Lovely orchestra, indeed, when each instrument of music emits in perfect and willing harmony the rightful praises of the Lord!

How glad the choristers, how sweet the song! But, in order to ensure the universality of the song, and to gather into its joy every intelligent being, the call is made: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." Breath, the breath of life, the faintest ability to articulate anything, let such, and all such, praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

What a conclusion! "Still praising" as ages roll. Happy service now and for ever on the part of the ransomed of the Lord.

A Song of Those who are Alive to God.

"The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day" (Isa. 38.).
"Hath quickened us" (Eph. 2.).

JESUS, Lord, to Thee we raise
 Songs of deep thanksgiving;
 Thee we worship, Thee we praise,
 As amongst "the living."
 All to Thee, O Lord, we owe,
 At Thy feet we gladly bow.

Praise the grave can never sing,
 Death ne'er celebrate Thee;
 But Thy living saints can bring
 Songs which never weary.
 Quickened out of death are they,
 Now to sing Thy praise alway.

Down to death, O Lord, Thy love
 Led Thee to redeem us;
 Love and sorrow far above
 All our thoughts and praises:
 Yet adoringly we see
 All our burden borne by Thee.

Risen Lord! we hail Thee now,
 Placed in brightest glory;
 Crowns are on Thy worthy brow,
 All must bow before Thee.
 Oh, what songs of endless praise
 All Thy ransomed saints shall raise.

J. Revell.

If thou hast a Christ in thine eye, a cross on thy shoulder, a world under thy feet, and a heaven in thine heart, thou art a happy man.

JOHN 8. The law is useful as a weapon, but it is one that has no handle; for if I, a man in the flesh, take it to use against others, it pierces

me through quite as much as those against whom I wield it.

Prayer will never compensate for neglected action; it leads to action—seeks light and strength for action. But if I use not the light I already possess, no amount of prayer will obtain more for me.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 11.

Miracles of Our Lord.

NARRATED IN THREE GOSPELS.

	Matt.	Mark	Luke
Stilling the storm . . .	viii	iv	viii
Healing of "Legion" . .	viii	v	viii
Healing daughter of Jairus . . .	ix	v	viii
Healing woman with issue of blood . . .	ix	v	viii
Healing man sick of palsy . . .	ix	ii	v
Healing leper . . .	viii	i	v
Healing Peter's wife's mother . . .	viii	i	iv
Healing withered hand .	xii	iii	vi
Feeding the five thousand . . .	xi	vi	ix
Healing child pos- sessed by demon . . .	xvii	ix	ix
Healing Bartimæus . . .	xx	x	xviii

NARRATED IN TWO GOSPELS.

	Matt.	Mark	Luke
Healing the Syrophœ- nician's daughter . . .	xv	vii	
Feeding the four thousand . . .	xv	viii	
Cursing the barren fig- tree	xxi	xi	
Healing Centurion's ser- vant	viii		vii
Healing the blind and dumb demoniac . . .	xii		xi
Healing the demoniac in Synagogue		i	iv

NARRATED IN ONE GOSPEL ONLY.

Healing two blind men . . .	Matt. ix	} Draught of fishes Luke v			
Healing a dumb demoniac . .	Matt. ix		} Raising widow's son from death Luke vii		
Money in mouth of fish . . .	Matt. xvii			} Healing woman with infirmity Healing man with dropsy . . . Healing ten lepers Healing ear of Malchus	
Healing deaf and dumb man .	Mark vii				} Luke xiii
Healing a blind man	Mark viii				
		} Luke xvii			
			} Luke xxii		

A MIRACLE is an act of super-human power, whether wrought by God in goodness, or by the malevolence of Satan, either mediately or immediately. It is effected apart from what are called the "laws of nature." A law of nature is simply that the same cause, operating in the same circumstances, produces the same result; but, in a miracle, there is the intervention of a new cause, and consequently with a new result.

Admit superhuman power, and all difficulty vanishes. "With God," we read, "nothing shall be impossible"—"no thing," neither "the Virgin-birth," nor the resurrection of the dead!

"Miracles, wonders, and signs" are at times placed together in Scripture, and the one word is variously translated "miracle" or "sign." A miracle is a sign. It is an evidence of such power as should attract attention.

Thus, the sun and moon are spoken of as signs in Genesis 1. They were to be "for signs, for seasons, for days, and years." They clearly betoken the eternal

power and Godhead of the Creator (Rom. 1. 20), and call, universally, for His recognition as such (see Ps. 19.). By them, by creation as a whole, man is left without excuse. He should at least own his Creator.

Turning to the miracles of our Lord, wrought chiefly in the earlier stage of His ministry, they appear before us as the beneficent proofs of the presence of God in grace. They were assuredly designed to win that confidence in Him which, alas! had been destroyed by sin.

The leaves of a fig-tree were used to hide the nakedness of sin. The only miracle not of mercy was the cursing the fig-tree. All the "signs" were of goodness and pity. God was here. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." But in vain. Every attestation that grace could show, whether by word or work, was disdained; acts of divine mercy witnessed by many or by few, words of heavenly wisdom and love: all failed to regain the confidence of man. He was hopelessly alienated from God. Hence the need of the

atoning death of Christ. He was "made sin for us."

Omit the fig-tree, and learn that every act of superhuman power exerted by the Lord was one of mercy shown to misery and healing for every woe, and you will admit that such grace calls for grateful adoration, confidence, and love.

These are such "works that no other man did" (John 15. 24). They stand alone. Simon Magus might bewitch by sorcery; the man of sin may, under Satan, exert works of destructive power; the Lord Jesus wielded a hand of tender but almighty pity.

Had the reader or writer been in the case of the leper or of the palsied man, and had he felt the kind touch of this gracious Healer who removed effectively, freely, and without relapse the foul and fearful plague of years or of life; had he received from the dead his only son, or the tender daughter who had been torn from his embrace; had he witnessed the treasures of the sea responding to their Creator's call, or the first fish caught carrying in its mouth the exact amount to pay a tax; had he noted how easily, how unostentatiously, and with what pure consideration for the good of others—the feeding, for instance, of hungry multitudes who, but for this supply, would "faint in the way"—could he but place them, in their perfect moral beauty, in contrast with the juggleries of the impostor, or the mere but terrible self-advertisement of Satan in his awful works of destruction and hate; could he read in these acts of miraculous mercy the direct interposition of God on earth in undoing the works of the devil, liberating his captives, and healing those whom he had oppressed; let him do this, and he will admire and adore and bless the Benefactor. He will find fresh cause to esteem the Founder of the wonderful and divine system of Christianity "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing . . . witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" (Heb. 2. 3-4). He will learn that that system was stamped, at its very inception, by deliverance from every kind of thrall—disease and death and demon; the dire and overmastering

foes of humanity—all fled before the face and at the word of the Son of God on earth.

His works witnessed to a love that was equal to the power which effected them. They bore the divine stamp.

And what was their result? Did they affect man spiritually? They appealed powerfully to his senses—his intellect and mind—but did they by themselves reach his conscience? No! It may safely be said that a miracle, *per se*, accomplishes nothing in the conscience. In order that the Lord should commit Himself to any one it is absolutely necessary that the new birth should take place. Apart from that the kingdom of God cannot be seen (John 2. 23). For this, thank God, no miracle, no phenomenon is necessary. It is the gentle work of His Spirit, and is, at the same time, a miracle. Every saint is a miracle of grace. But it was, without doubt, the sight of Christ's miraculous power that led Nicodemus to make further inquiry and to learn such words as He who wrought the works alone could utter.

May we learn the meaning of the miracles of our Lord, and, still further, may we, like Mary, hear and value His words! (J.W.S.)

The Stilling of the Storm.

In MATTHEW this miracle is recorded among a number of incidents and miracles in chapters 8.-9. as *testimony* to the character and extent of the power of the Christ, which is thus seen to reach the varied needs of man in relief and blessing.

In MARK 4. the incidents of the miracle are given in greater detail, and occupy, as also in LUKE, a place in the Gospel subsequent to the separation of a remnant from the unbelieving nations in MARK 4. 11 and LUKE 8. 10. This placing of the miracle, which is probably historically in order, leads us to look for some special instruction for the remnant who were in faith attached to Christ. Accordingly they are represented crossing "to the other side," opposed by winds and waves raised by the invisible forces active in this world. At first there is no intervention on the part of Him with whom the power is. Herein is the trial of faith. The key to the account in MARK, the Gospel for the servant (*cf.*

Rev. 1. 1), is in the words, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

In LUKE the grace and sympathy of the Son of Man towards His companions is characteristic; it is noted here "they were in jeopardy;" on their behalf "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (Ps. 108. 29). On this point I may quote the following words: "What is shown in Luke especially is grace, divine power acting in the kindness and goodness of a Man filled with charity. It is not, as in John, a divine Person so much as a divine character; and that in the perfect sympathy of a Man. What shows this (as the case of the widow of Nain, Simon, and the woman that was a sinner) is constantly found in Luke, and not the other Gospels. It is grace in and towards man."

The Deliverance of the Demoniacs of Gadara.

The account of this miracle occurs in MATTHEW 8. 28 *et seq.*, an important witness to the power of the kingdom reaching Satan's hosts and dispossessing them of their victims. Two men are named here as *witnesses* of this power, further evidence of the purpose of these two chapters. The incidents of the miracle are accordingly given with much brevity.

In MARK and LUKE only one is mentioned; probably he was the spokesman, and exhibited the marks of a work of divine grace *in* him. The miracle is placed after the testimony to the Christ has been rendered and refused, and, as shown in the parable of the Sower, the Lord has taken another attitude with regard to Israel. This position indicates special instruction for the separated remnant, and accordingly we find the moral circumstances much more emphasized than in MATTHEW. While the first

Gospel only carries the narrative as far as the Lord's expulsion from the country, sad evidence of a further work of Satan's agency, Mark and Luke tell of the work of grace in the soul of the man so wondrously set free, attaching him in affection to his Deliverer; blessed illustration of that love which was found in Paul at the end of his course (Phil. 1. 23).

The Healing of the Woman with an Issue of Blood and the Healing of Jairus's Daughter.

These two miracles stand in the same relation to one another in all three Gospels. The account is given, as usual, with much brevity in MATTHEW; some precious touches, indicative of the grace of Jesus, are given in MARK and LUKE.

In MATTHEW it is found in chapter 9., part of the testimony, as we have seen, to the power of the kingdom exercised by the Lord, and showing how that power goes even into the region of death. The word of address to the dead maiden (to Him she was but asleep), "Talitha cumi," is omitted in MATTHEW. He would draw our attention to the wonder of the act, not so much to the character manifested in doing it.

The same is true as to the healing of the woman by the way. MATTHEW gives no account of the remarkable words found in LUKE, "I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me," nor of the thought and desire of Christ that the woman should know the Blesser and not steal away with the blessing, Himself unknown. Both in this case and in that of the demoniac of Gadara the terrible nature of the affliction is more fully given in MARK than in LUKE. God would have His servants take full account of the state of those to whom He ministers, a consideration which should keep from the levity of manner too often manifested in ministry. (C.E.H.W.)

The Love of Christ.

To know the love of Christ is the consummation of all blessing—the very crown of Christianity.

God would have each one of our hearts to find its glory—its satisfaction

and its joy—in the knowledge of that love.

The greatest endowment and the highest distinction of the church is that she is the subject of—she is enriched by—that precious love.

Some Old Testament Studies (No. 5). (A. J. POLLOCK).

Abraham—or the Call of God.

TEN generations ran their course from Shem to Abram. This number possesses in Scripture the significance of testing as we have already seen. *Ten* generations, from Adam to Noah, sufficed to utterly prove that "*every imagination of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually,*" and God cleared the earth in righteous indignation by the flood.

Again *ten* generations ran their course. The first thing Noah did in the post-diluvian world was to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. The Lord smelled a sweet savour, and said in His heart that He would not again curse the ground for man's sake, as He did at the fall, nor smite every living thing as He did at the flood. Why was this? The burnt offerings brought Christ before God. It is in Christ that all blessings lie.

So when the *ten* generations had fully tested man again, and man had again utterly failed, God would not again bring in a flood of waters, but began a new principle of acting altogether.

* * * *

What was this new principle of acting? I venture to say that it has been Satan's great object to obscure it. If every Christian saw it, and acted upon it, it would mean for the church of God the mightiest revival since the days of Pentecost. But if we cannot hope for that, the individual Christian who sees and acts upon it will hold in his heart and hand the key of God's way for him in practical detail through this world.

What, then, is this principle, never hinted at in the first two thousand years of the world's history, and which has ever since characterized God's dealings in blessing man.

It is that of SEPARATION *in answer to the call of God.*

* * * *

Abraham was the *first* person to be called out—to be the subject of the call of God in that way.

Going down the stream of time we find this developed in Israel—his descendants—becoming a *called* nation, *separated* from the surrounding nations, and all blessing for man publicly flowing in that *called* channel.

And coming down to the present time, the church of God is called out, for the Greek word for church, *ecclesia*, means *the called out ones*.

And it is just this Satan endeavours to obscure, and round which he will dispute every inch of advance we make.

* * * *

It is interesting to note in passing that it is as relating to Abraham the numeral *ten* is *first* mentioned in Scripture. It was after Abraham had dwelt *ten* years in Canaan that his faith broke down, and he endeavoured to gain the fulfilment of God's promise that in his seed should the earth be blessed, by taking Hagar, the Egyptian, to wife (Gen. 16. 3). The next instance is equally suggestive. In Genesis 18. 32 he left off pleading with the Lord to spare Sodom when his prayers reached the point, "*Peradventure TEN [righteous persons] shall be found there.*"

* * * *

Space forbids that Abraham's history in connection with the call of God should be dealt with exhaustively or in detail. But a few points are important to note.

I. HIS CALL PROVED THE DOOM OF THE WORLD. A famous politician years

ago gave currency to a sparkling epigram, "The House of Lords must be either ended or mended." If it were determined to *end* it, one could only marvel at any one seeking to *mend* it. It were a useless task.

So with this world. God is going to *end* it. There will yet be a new heaven and a new earth. The present earth and the present heaven will yet flee from the face of Him who sits upon the throne. The Apostle Peter, in startling and graphic language, describes how "*the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*" He then asks with vehemence, "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the day of God*" (2 Peter 3. 10-12).

God would not call a man *out* of the world if HE were trying to improve it? To call Abraham was a proof of the doom of the world. Why should the Christian seek to improve what God is going to end?

* * * *

2. HIS CALL DETERMINED ABRAHAM'S ATTITUDE TO HIS COUNTRY, KINDRED, AND RELATIVES. "*The Lord . . . said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house*" (Gen. 12. 1).

The language was vigorous and forcible. "*Get thee out.*" Has anything similar to this ever taken place in your history? I don't mean physically and geographically, as it meant in the case of Abram, but morally.

(a) *He had to leave his country.* If Christians understood the moral application of this, they could not be politicians. The Lord's words in prayer to His Father are plain, and should be acted upon in simplicity and faith, "*They [His people] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*"

This world is doomed. Man is

away from God, His whole politics—whether they be governed by one set of ideas or another—are radically false. Christ is rejected. God and His principles are ignored. There never was a more fundamentally false or more mischievous statement than that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Government that comes from *below* comes in reality from the abyss of hell. Governments to be righteous must come from *above*, higher than the Commons, or the Lords, or the King—*from GOD Himself*. Till then everything must get out of gear more and more. The Christian's part, according to God and Scripture, is to abstain from these things. To act otherwise is to impair practically their whole Christian position, and weaken their power to be a *true* blessing in this world. Was Abraham or Lot better able to be a blessing—Abraham living in separation on the plain of Mamre, or Lot resident in Sodom? We all know the answer.

(b) *He had to leave his kindred.* This comes closer home. It covered a pretty wide field in the days of the patriarchs, when Abram was contemporaneous with Shem, who came through the flood, and who lived to know his descendants to seven and eight generations. But God's command came closer still.

(c) *He had to leave his father's house.* This is where Abram, alas! failed, and got nothing but sorrow for his pains. He allowed his *father* apparently to take the lead. He led him half-way, and detained him from following on to God's full purpose for him till death removed his influence. Moreover, Abram took his nephew Lot with him, and he proved nothing but trouble and sorrow to him.

And here we must guard a point. Abraham was called to actually leave his father's house. Christians are not necessarily called to leave their relatives when they are converted. They are called to be affectionate, dutiful, and humble in their relations to those near and dear to them. But

they are called *morally* to leave their father's house ; in other words, to live apart in spirit and ways from the worldliness, the aims and objects and maxims that go to make up worldliness, which they may find in the nearest and dearest relative, even if it be a father or a mother, a husband, a wife or a child.

To act wisely, tactfully, graciously, withal faithfully and in separation in such circumstances needs great grace and patience. The ultimate object should be surely the *eternal* blessing of those we love in the ties of nature.

3. HIS CALL DETERMINES HIS PATH AS THAT OF A STRANGER AND A PILGRIM. For surely if God called Abraham *out* it was because He called him *to* something better. Just in the same way if God said to Israel, "*I will bring you OUT,*" He did not stop there, but continued, "*And I will bring you IN unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob*" (Exod. 6. 6, 8). So in this dispensation the Apostle Paul could write in 2 Thessalonians 2. 14, God "*called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Don't talk about what you have

given up for the Lord ! You will be no loser by a long way in obeying His call. You may leave your nest in a forest of death-doomed trees, as Samuel Rutherford quaintly puts it, but if you gain *eternal glory*, talk about your gains, and not your losses.

What prospect did Lot give up when he left Sodom ? Only the prospect of being burned up. And what prospect do we give up when we become strangers and pilgrims ?

But what a glorious prospect is ours ! What a future ! How it shines gloriously upon the firmament of hope ! We are *strangers*, because we belong to another place—*pilgrims*, because we are journeying thither.

Where do we belong ? To heaven. If our citizenship in this doomed world has ceased, though we live in this world, and must be duly subject to the powers that be, have we lost anything, when we can say in exchange, "*Our conversation [citizenship, R.V.] is in heaven*" (Phil. 3. 20) ? Nay, we are infinite gainers, especially as we recollect all this goes into and throughout eternity. May we rise to the height of our calling, and be true to it.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

The Hundred and Forty and Four Thousand (Rev. 7. and 14.).

G.S.B. inquires

As to whether the same company is in view in these two passages, or whether one is Jewish and the other Gentile.

When we find numbers or times and seasons given in Scripture we are on Jewish ground. This is so, we believe, in this case, and we judge that the two passages refer to the same company viewed from a different standpoint. In chapter 7. the hundred and forty and four thousand of the tribes of the children of Israel are presented as sealed by the angel of God *before* the great tribulation. In chapter 14. they are presented

as *having passed* through that tribulation, for they stand in the place of victory with the Lamb in the royal mount Sion. They are the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb from the earth.

It is instructive to see that in chapter 14. this company is found to justify God in the sovereign mercy that sealed them in chapter 7., for they stand "without fault before the throne of God." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ?" As to their conduct in the midst of the great trial, *they bore the name of the Lamb and of His Father in their foreheads*, (N.T.) *i.e.* they stood as identified with and were public witnesses to that name, in contrast to those who bore the

name of the Beast in hand and forehead (chap. 13. 16).

They "*were not defiled with women,*" *i.e.* they had kept themselves pure from the seductive and defiling influences that had surrounded them. They "*are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,*" *i.e.* they had been faithful to Him irrespective of the consequences to themselves.

Observe that God is not spoken of as *their* Father, but *His* Father, and they are not presented as standing in the *Father's house*, but before the *throne of God*. Only the saints of this church period have this blessed relationship and place as theirs as being associated with the Lord Jesus Christ (see John 14. 1-3 ; 20. 17). The church is not in view here ; it is heavenly, and will have been raptured to its own place before the events here predicted take place.

"Say not in thine heart" (Rom. 10. 6-8.).

An inquirer desires an explanation of this passage.

The quotation is from Deuteronomy 30., and comes in there after Moses had portrayed in vivid language the utter failure of Israel on the ground of responsibility under law. Thus neither Israel nor any other could gain righteousness by a law which they had broken. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (ver. 5). Having failed utterly to gain that righteousness, they had not to begin to take counsel with themselves, and to say in their hearts, Who shall bring a Saviour to us ? They had not to say, Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down to us ? He had already come. Nor had they to say, Who shall descend into the depths to bring up Christ from the dead ? He had been raised. He is not inaccessible in either way, He is not "far off" (Deut. 30. 11) : He is nigh, He is present to faith ; and so they had but to listen to and believe the "word of faith," the gospel, which proclaimed to them that these wonderful things had taken place. Christ had come down, even to death, for them, and God had raised Him from the dead. The way of blessing was by confessing that this was He, their only

hope, believing that God had raised Him from the dead. This means abandoning all hope of salvation or righteousness on the ground of the works of men and accepting a way of righteousness and salvation which is outside of man and entirely of God.

"As many as be perfect."

G.S.B. inquires as to the meaning of the passage :

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3. 15, 16).

Being "perfect" here does not mean sinless, but perfect as to the object before the soul. It is singleness of eye and purpose, as set forth in the Apostle Paul in verses 7-14. With him Christ was supreme, though he had not yet reached full conformity to Christ in glory, and so states that in that sense he was not already perfected (ver. 12).

But all who were "perfect" in the sense of the passage before us, who had Christ before them as their commanding Object, had not attained to the same measure of knowledge of Him, and in consequence might not all think exactly alike on every question ; but if their hearts were truly after Christ, God would reveal to them all that was inconsistent with that after which they were pursuing. Meanwhile in the measure to which they had already attained they were to press on in the same path, the same rule and purpose was to govern them. The exhortation is one much needed in these days.

Musical Instruments in Gospel Services.

A.J.T. asks :

"Are there any scriptural objections to using an instrument, such as a harmonium, to help the singing in gospel meetings, especially open air?"

There is no word, that we know of, in the New Testament that either sanctions or forbids the use of musical instruments in gospel meetings. It is a question which each servant must be fully persuaded about for himself. Will the in-

roduction of music be pleasing to the Master whom he serves? Will it further the gospel and the work of God in the souls of those who attend the meetings?

We must remember, however, that the work of God is a *spiritual* work, wrought by the Spirit of God, though, in grace, He works His works through His people; but the weapons that He puts into their hands are not carnal, "but powerful according to God" (2 Cor. 10. 4, N.T.). The great need of all who serve the Lord in the gospel is not more music or better singing in their meetings (though slovenly and lazy singing on the part of Christians is a disgrace), but greater faith in the *gospel* in all its simple yet mighty grandeur, for *it* is the power of God unto salvation. And along with this is needed a more holy separation from all that would unfit them from being "vessels unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2. 21).

"He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit" (Gal. 3. 5).

J.G. The passage refers to the gift to the Galatian saints of the Spirit of God with attendant blessings. It was God who gave the Spirit to them and wrought miracles amongst them through the mediate ministry of His servants, and it was not on the ground of any works of law, but consequent upon their faith in the gospel. Having received the Spirit on the report of faith, it was a senseless procedure on their part to imagine that they could be perfected by that which recognized the flesh, *i.e.* the law. Having begun by faith and the Spirit—for thus they were introduced into Christianity—they must now live by faith and walk in the Spirit. The flesh had met its condemnation in the cross of Christ. We judge that there is no thought here of the ministry of gifts by the Spirit, as in 1 Corinthians 12., but the simple fact of the Spirit being ministered to them at the beginning.

Ordinances.

(C. H. MACKINTOSH).

AND God spake unto Noah, saying, "Go forth of the ark." The same God that had said, "Make thee an ark," and "Come thou into the ark," now says, "Go forth of the ark." "And Noah went forth . . . and builded an altar unto the Lord." All is simple obedience. There is the obedience of faith and the worship of faith; both go together. The altar is erected, where just before all had been a scene of death and judgment. The ark had borne Noah and his family safely over the waters of judgment. It had carried him from the old into the new world, where he now takes his place as a worshipper. And, be it observed, it was "unto the Lord" he erected his altar. Superstition would have worshipped the ark, as being the means of salvation. It is ever the tendency of the heart to displace God by His ordinances. Now, the ark was a very marked and manifest ordinance; but Noah's faith passed beyond the ark to the God of the ark, and hence, when he stepped out of it, instead of casting back a lingering look at it, or regarding it as an object of worship or veneration, he built an altar

unto the Lord, and worshipped Him; and the ark is never heard of again.

This teaches us a very simple, but at the same time a very seasonable lesson. The moment the heart lets slip the reality of God Himself, there is no placing a limit to its declension; it is on the highway to the grossest forms of idolatry.

In the judgment of faith an ordinance is only valuable as it conveys God in living power to the soul; that is so long as faith can enjoy Christ therein, according to His own appointment. Beyond this it is worth just nothing; and if it in the smallest degree comes between the heart and His precious work and His glorious Person, it ceases to be an ordinance of God, and becomes an instrument of the devil.

In the judgment of superstition the ordinance is everything, and God is shut out; and the name of God is only made use of to exalt the ordinance, and give it a deep hold of the human heart, and a mighty influence over the human mind.

Hope.

(JAMES BOYD).

THIS world is passing ; soon 'twill all be o'er.
 The circumstances of this present life
 Are all forgotten once the eternal door
 Is reached, and man is done with selfish strife.

Therefore let us be governed by the goal ;
 Not influenced by things that have an end.
 Our faith be to the saving of the soul ;
 To God's decree our stubborn natures bend.

Thus shall we realize that rest of heart
 Found by the Saviour in His pathway here,
 With whom in heaven is our eternal part,
 Where glory crowns that stainless, deathless sphere.

"The Cult of the Holy Spirit."

(H. P. BARKER)

DURING recent years increasing emphasis has been laid upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Surely this is, *prima facie*, a cause for sincere rejoicing. Too often has the presence of that divine Comforter, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, been ignored. Too often has the arm of flesh been depended on, and His power been treated as a negligible quantity.

Ever since His coming on the day of Pentecost He has continued to indwell every believer and to carry on the gracious work for which He came. He is the true Vicar of Christ on earth, and maintains His interests here in the face of the combined hostility of man and Satan.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of all this. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost that gives character to the present day of grace. Apart from Him there can be no joy, no blessing, no growth, no testimony. How earnestly, then, should we seek to obey the injunction, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4. 30).

It is most noticeable, however, that Scripture never presents the Holy Spirit as One to whom testimony is to be borne, or to whom prayer and worship are to be addressed. It is by His power that all true testimony is borne ; we pray in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20), and worship by the Spirit of God (Phil. 3. 3, R.V.), but He Himself, properly speaking, is the Object of neither testimony nor worship.

In desiring to give the Holy Spirit His due place, has not this been lost sight of? Otherwise, what mean these fervent appeals to Him of which we frequently hear, these exhortations to seek His presence, these pleadings with Him for power?

Christ crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again—is the true subject of testimony. When He is preached, and the results of His sacrificial work, the efficacy of His precious blood, the import of His triumphant resurrection are set forth, not only are souls saved, but they become robust with healthy spiritual life, being formed and built up by the ministry of these great truths.

On the other hand, where the work of the Spirit *in* us takes the place of the work of Christ *for* us; where sinners are urged to "bend to the Spirit" instead of being directed to believe in Christ, the results generally prove more or less superficial. The "converts," crippled like Mephibosheth from the start, become creatures of moods and feelings, and the whole course of their subsequent life is a series of ups and downs.

But a greater danger still threatens those who neglect the plain teaching of Scripture as to this. It is pointed out by Sir R. Anderson in his remarkable booklet *Spirit Manifestations and the Gift of Tongues*. We quote from pp. 22, 23:—

"If, then, the supreme purpose of God is the exaltation of Christ, that in all things HE may have the pre-eminence, the startling question suggests itself, whether the disasters which sometimes befall the best of men when they take up the cult of the Holy Spirit may not be due to the fact that this is a departure from the line of that divine purpose. The Holy Spirit is 'the power *behind* the throne.' 'He shall not speak from Himself,' the Lord declared (John 16. 13, R.V.). His mission is to reveal Christ. In proportion, therefore, as mind and heart are fixed on Christ we may count on the Spirit's presence and power; but if we make the Holy Ghost Himself the Object of our aspirations and our worship, some false spirit may counterfeit the true and take us for a prey.

"Nor should we forget the exhortation, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly

in all wisdom.' Those who turn aside to the cult of the Holy Spirit use the Bible merely as a book of texts, and the temptation of our Lord might warn us of the subtilty of the Evil One in handling texts. Charlotte Elizabeth tells us how she escaped from Irvingism. She almost yielded to the overwhelming spiritual power of the movement, but she shut herself up and read the New Testament through, from cover to cover, and thus the spell was broken."

These are weighty words, and we shall do well to give heed to them. The days of gross materialism are passing, and men on all sides are invoking superhuman influences. The adherents of Spiritualism are to be numbered by hundreds of thousands. There is a distinct revival of demoniacal activity, as predicted in 1 Timothy 4. 1. But Satan still knows how to transform himself into an angel of light and his servants into ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11. 14, 15). By this means he entraps those who would shrink from avowed Spiritualism. They imagine that they are yielding themselves to the power of the Holy Ghost, and have no thought of getting under the influence of some demon or "seducing spirit." In this way are the unwary and the uninstructed caught in the snare.

Our safety lies in cleaving to the Lord, and to the sure Word of the living God. Only thus shall we be kept from the paths of the destroyer.

The Master's Presence.

Close to the Colosseum there stands the ruin of the ancient fountain and bath called the Meta Sudans. Here came gladiators who escaped with life from the struggles of the amphitheatre; covered with blood, and begrimed with sweat and dust from the arena, they plunged into the bath, and felt delicious refreshment.

Such a bath of refreshment to the servant of the Lord is communion with the Master when the service is done. Wearied in body and spirit, in danger of depression or perhaps elation, it is

good to hear Him say, "*Come ye yourselves apart and rest a while.*"

In His own company, who knows our every frailty, and rightly appreciates all our service, and loves the servant better than the service he renders, our souls are toned, our vision, so apt to be blurred in the stress of conflict, is cleared, things are put in right perspective. And refreshed and strengthened, we are ready again to go forth at His bidding, to serve Him more acceptably and successfully than before.

Jesus Shewing Himself to His Disciples. (J. T. MAWSON).

"On this wise shewed He Himself" (John 21. 1).

THE Lord had already shewed Himself to His disciples as risen from the dead. He had called their attention to His hands and His side. They had looked upon those wounds that He had borne for them, and they had handled Him and seen that it was Himself and none other. The sight of Him had gladdened their hearts, and though they did not then understand all that His resurrection involved, it must have relieved them from many a fear and misgiving. His appearance in their midst meant that His work, the work of redemption, was indeed finished, and accepted by God, as meeting every claim of eternal truth. It meant that they would never again need to tremble before any foe, for He was greater than them all. It meant much more, which John 20. unfolds, but which time and space will not allow us to dwell upon at this time.

But "after these things Jesus shewed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias." And they needed just such a sight of Him as He then gave them. So also do we.

* * * *

Simon Peter was a man of action; his was that nature that cannot bear to be still and wait; if his Master gave him no command he would act upon his own initiative, and being such a man he exercised an influence upon others. So that when he proposed to go a-fishing his companions fell in with his plans; "*and that night they caught nothing.*"

In that incident there lies a lesson for us; it teaches us—and may we learn the lesson—that to take our directions from men, or to follow our fellows, however good and zealous they may be, leads to fruitless toil, empty nets, and bitter disappointment. The Lord is our Lord, and He must direct us, and

He will not give His glory to another. May we recognize this and act accordingly.

As the red dawn chased the night-mists across the sea their Lord stood on the shore. Who shall tell with what tenderness He looked upon them, hungry, weary, and dispirited as they were! He had looked upon them all through that night of toil, had watched over them with an unspeakable love, for they were "His own," and the love He bore them could not change, and now had come the moment when He would shew Himself to them.

Not at first did they recognize Him, not until He proved who He was by commanding the fish of the sea to come to their net. Then spake out that disciple whom Jesus loved, saying, "IT IS THE LORD."

And so they came to land and found "*a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*" What a shewing of Himself to them was this! How it revealed His care for them! They were cold, and He knew it; they were hungry, and He thought of it; they were tired with their toil, and He sympathized with them in their weariness; and His own hand had provided the fire to warm them, and the fish and bread to feed them. Matchless revelation of Himself! He, their Lord and Master, rejoiced to minister unto them; He, death's conqueror, and creation's Lord as He had proved Himself to be, was not indifferent to their bodily necessities, He cared for their smallest need.

Time spent in meditation upon the wonderful manner in which He shewed Himself to them will not be wasted, for here is a revelation of His tender interest in His own, and He is just the same to-day as then, the same to us as He was to those Galilean fishermen.

By His care for them He taught them the kind of Master He was, that they might follow Him whole-heartedly without fear, and do His bidding without question, and not follow each other, nor waste their time and energy in fruitless toil.

Afterwards, when they had rested and dined as His guests, He directed them as to their service. They were to follow Him, and His lambs and sheep were to be their care.

It is our privilege also as the days go by to follow and serve Him undistractedly. And this shewing of Himself as careful for the needs of His own is that we should be without anxious selfish care, that delivered from self-

thought we should have Himself and His interests ever paramount in heart and life. It is His desire that we should so serve Him, with an ever-increasing consciousness of His unceasing solicitude for us.

* * * *

It may be that you are a backslider. You have sought for joy of heart apart from Him, and though you have toiled all night for this you have taken nothing. Oh ! that you would lift your eyes from your fruitless fishing, and behold Him standing near to you, standing near with rest and food for you, standing near to restore your tired heart to Himself. Will you not turn to Him again, and turn at once, and so end the night of weary toil at His blessed feet ?

Notes of Bible Readings.—No. 7.

(H. J. VINE).

God for Us.—Romans 8. 31-39.

IT is important to let the fact that *God is for us* get firmly hold of us. He is for the believer in every way, never against him. The love of God for us is brought out most strikingly in these wonderful words: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" How can we then question as believers God's love for us? Has He not fully proved His love by giving the very best that love could give to make us His own for ever? What good thing will He withhold from us now?

Notice carefully the two words "*with Him*" in the verse quoted. Some seem as if they would like to have the "all things" without Him, but God gives His saints all things freely "with" His Son. God has shown the great love He has for us, now at the present time, by what He did in the past, when He gave His own Son for us.

Question. *But does not the question, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"*

refer to His calling, justifying, and glorifying us?

It does, and also to His predestination mentioned in earlier verses, but His love was *before* and *behind* and *in* it all, and the section ends by saying that nothing shall separate us from the *love of God*. We are the children of God, a heavenly family, travelling through the world to the glory where Christ is, and everything that is for our benefit by the way God will grant us "*WITH HIM*." God is for us! He never fails His own! **GOD IS LOVE!**

Question. *The effect of recognizing that would be that we should walk with God, would it not?*

It would. Abraham was not only the object of God's constant care, but he *walked with God*. God truly looked after Enoch, but Enoch *walked with God*. God looked after Lot, and saw that he was not destroyed in the fiery judgment of the wicked, but *Lot did not walk with God*. Caleb and Joshua knew that God was

for them, and so walked with Him in His thought for all Israel.

There is a great deal involved in *walking with God* to-day. He is working for the glory of His Son. The blessed God loves His Son. "The Father's full delight is centred in the Son," and that is where He would have our hearts to find their only centre. Questions are often raised as to *whom the Lord is with*. He never forsakes one of His own! The great question is—Who is *walking with Him*? God did not leave Jacob, but Abraham *walked with God*!

Question. *Are there not several important questions raised in these verses and answered in a way to show how entirely God is for the believer?*

Yes, look at verse 33: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It might be said that we are like those who were with David during his time of suffering in the cave of Adullam; they were a distressed and troubled lot, but David virtually said, "They belong to me." We belong to the Son of God, and here God says, as it were, "Now you belong to Me, who is going to lay anything to your charge?" God Himself raises this question, and then goes on immediately to say, "It is God that justifies." He has cleared us from every charge that could be brought against us on account of our guilt, and He has done it righteously and in such wise as to set us in His presence perfectly clear of all charge, just as though we had never sinned at all. No accusation can be brought against us. God has justified us. Election is with God, that is His side. Our side is that we came to Him in our need as poor sinners and obtained salvation. Then, belonging to the assembly of God, which is taken up according to God's eternal purpose, we are in the circle of God's election. We can only learn these things inside by the Holy Spirit.

Question. *What is meant by making our election sure?*

That is a very important exhortation in 2 Peter 1. 10. Whilst it shows that we are elect, yet it lays upon us the responsibility to be diligent as regards the knowledge of the Saviour—to have virtue in our faith, and knowledge in our virtue, etc.

We must not rest satisfied simply with being justified and saved, but pursue that which is pleasing to God, since we are His by His own calling and election. Thus it is made sure to ourselves consciously.

Some are often perplexed and troubled as to whether they are of the elect even after they have received the gospel which says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." God's salvation is according to His purpose (2 Tim. 1. 9). We must remember that the verse in 2 Peter 1. does not tell us to make the "calling and election" *ours*, for it is God who elects and calls. We make it *sure* by being diligent.

Question. *What about the next question—“Who is he that condemneth?”*

How can those be condemned for whom Christ died and rose again? As the Scripture goes on to show, "It is Christ that died," but He has not only died for us, He has been raised again for our justification. The first thing for us is His *death*, the second is His *resurrection*, and the third is His *exaltation* to the place of power at the right hand of God, where He is making intercession *for us*. God is *for us*! Christ is *for us*! The Spirit is for us (ver. 26)! Who can be against us?

Question. *Is there not a difference between supplication, prayer, and intercession?*

Yes. Intercession involves intimacy, and in the place of intimacy on high the blessed Lord intercedes for us. In verse 26 we have the intercession of the Holy Spirit for us down here. In verse 34 we have the intercession of Christ for us up there. How well cared for are those who love God. We have *supplication, prayer, and intercession* in Scripture. They are put together in 1 Timothy 2. 1, but they are all distinct, and it is only one on terms of intimacy that can intercede properly. The saints are invited to be intercessors. Oh that we rose to our privilege!

It is like a second conversion when we wake up to the fact that the Saviour, who loves us and died for us on the cross, is a real living Man at the right hand of God, still serving us. He ever liveth to make

intercession for us. He is our High Priest before God and our Advocate with the Father. There is the *finished work* which He accomplished on the cross, and the *unfinished work* which He is carrying out for us now in the glory. It is the soul that rests on the first that enjoys the good of the second.

Question. *Does the next question refer to difficulties in the path of testimony—as we pass through these—“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”*

Yes, they are outward trials. But if His love for us has taken Him *into death*; if His love for us is unchanged in *resurrection*; if His love for us keeps Him serving us *at the right hand of God* day by day, who can separate us from that love?

The trials are here sevenfold: “Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword.” Amid all these things (not by being taken out of them) the faithful believer can say, “Nay, *in all these things* we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

Alexander the Great was a conqueror, but a man who is only a conqueror is not a very happy man, he gets joy *for a time*, but he is only a conqueror, no more.

If we have not this outward persecution to-day, in the same way, we should not therefore be careless, for we have to meet the wiles of Satan. We need still to abide in the love of Christ, and be prayerful and watchful.

Question. *As to the seven things just mentioned they are more outward, but the next are unseen, are they not?*

Yes, the ten things mentioned in verse 38 have that character. They cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The seven were as to the love of Christ: these are as to the love of God. The Apostle says, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Notice particularly that it is “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Some try to put this love of

God in the providential circle. It is in a Person, who is now at God’s right hand, who has redeemed us by His blood.

The first thing mentioned is “death,” but the love of God took Christ there for us. Where was that love expressed?—“God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Then death cannot separate us from His love, for Christ has been into death for us.

Question. *Is not this Paul’s persuasion? He says, “I am persuaded.”*

Yes; but it is about us all, for he says nothing shall separate “us”—not “me.” It takes all in. The next thing is “life.” Life cannot separate, for Christ Jesus our Lord is now in life and God’s love is in Him. Nor “angels, nor principalities, nor powers”—none of these things can separate us, for Christ is exalted above and over all—“nor things present, nor things to come, nor height”—for the love of God in Christ is in the height—“nor depth”—Christ has been into the depths. Whichever way you look, there is not a single thing that exists now, or ever shall, that can separate us from the love of God. Look into death—God’s love has been there! Look at life—God’s love *is* there! Look at all the vast range of angels, principalities, and powers—the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord is above all! Look at the present things, look at the future things, look up into the height, look down into the depth, the love of God is *beyond, above*, and has been in Christ *beneath* all! Look at any other creature, if there is another anywhere to be found—still the Word says: “Nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!”

Question. *That is good persuasion to have, is it not?*

Yes, the very best. This chapter begins with “no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*,” and ends with *no separation* from the love of God *in Christ Jesus* (we are in Him and the love is in Him): and in the middle of the chapter “all things work together for good.” GOD IS FOR US.

“Is There Not a Cause?”

(ARTHUR CUTTING).

THE question is often asked, “Why the dearth of conversions in our gospel meetings?”

While in no way desirous of diverting attention from so serious a question or the exercises it should awaken, I would like to raise another of equal gravity, and one that should arouse exercises equally deep.

Why is it that, in spite of all the ministry of the truth which Christians hear and read, the practical and manifest results are so small?

Is personal holiness and fidelity to Christ more manifest? Is holy energy and zeal in His service more ardent and evident? Are Christians brighter, more consistent and devoted in their lives in consequence of such ministry? What shall the answer be?

These are serious questions, and yet surely every bit of true ministry is aimed at the realization of these things, and if they are not realized, do we not do well to seriously ask the question, *Why?*

“Why is it,” asks a correspondent, “that there seemed more for God in our lives when we *knew less?*” Solemn question!

Surely it is not the divine intention that our devotion to Christ and usefulness in service should be inversely proportioned to the amount of our knowledge! Anyway, this question furnishes food for reflection, and should give as much cause for exercise amongst saints and servants of God as the dearth of genuine conversions should do to the evangelist.

Is one of the reasons for this state of things to be found in James 4. 2—“*Ye have not, because ye ask not?*”

In meetings for prayer for the gospel we ask that God might graciously give

us very *manifest blessing* as the result of the preaching—that is, blessing that shall be distinctly evidenced by the altered lives of the hearers.

Do we not need to pray just as earnestly and fervently that saints of God may be equally affected by the ministry of the truth to them?

Surely the divine object of all true Spirit-given ministry—whether in the gospel or “in the word and doctrine”—is the positive, *apparent*, and abiding blessing of those to whom it is ministered—apparent and abiding not in speech only, but in the production of Christ-like spirit and walk.

Paul’s desire for young Timothy was that he should “give attendance to reading,” and “meditate upon these things,” not merely for the sake of gaining increased scriptural knowledge, but “that *thy profiting may appear to all*” (1 Tim. 4. 13-15).

If with the superabundance of such ministry as there is to-day the results are not more manifest, we do well to examine ourselves as to the wherefore of it, saying each one for himself, “*Lord, is it I?*”

Paul, writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 6. 12-13), says, “*Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own souls. . . . Be ye . . . enlarged.*”

He then points out to them that which is calculated to account for the straitening and hinder true enlargement by showing certain links which, if maintained, would be bound to hinder their spiritual progress, and finally adds, “*Be ye separate.*”

In order to detect some of the causes that lie at the bottom of this serious obstruction to the work of God in us I would suggest that Luke 8. 4-21 may help us in some measure.

It is evident on reading these verses that the sowing of the Word of the kingdom is in view of three results at least.

1. FRUIT-BEARING toward God—“Having heard the Word . . . *bring forth fruit* with patience” (ver. 15).

2. LIGHT-BEARING towards the world—“That they . . . *may see the light*” (ver. 16).

3. CHRIST-LIKENESS—“My brethren . . . *hear the Word of God, and do it,*” *i.e.* they bear His moral features (ver. 21).

This means, of course, that the result of the genuine reception of the Word will be the reproduction of the life of Christ in His people, both in regard to His own moral graces and also in His fruitfulness to God and testimony to the world.

This will call forth the determined opposition of Satan and his allies. He will seek to prevent such an end being reached now, as he did when these features shone in all their resplendent beauty and perfection in Christ Himself.

The first hindrance we are definitely told is SATAN himself (ver. 12).

The heart being under the influence of the father of lies is absolutely unexercised and indifferent to the truth. There being no sense of need, no preparedness of heart, the seed of the Word falls and lies—not long—for “then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts,” and the result for God or man is nil. True, these are the unregenerate, but the practical hindrances are in principle the same for the saint, and hence we do well to let ourselves be *tested* by the truth here unfolded. Have our hearts become in any measure like this?

It is a matter for very serious reflection that we may go to meetings and leave them again, take up written ministry and put it down again, and

be absolutely unaffected for good in any way. If I am in that condition, although a Christian, I am a wayside hearer in *character*.

Lack of exercise in *heart* and *conscience* is the first great hindrance in this parable. It is true we see people on entering a meeting bow their head in the attitude of prayer—but what do they say? Often we have been curious enough to wish we could hear what they say. Is it the earnest breathing of an exercised heart saying, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord,” or, “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth,” or, “Search me, O Lord, and know mine heart; try me and know my ways?”—or is it only a few formal words they are uttering, or, indeed, *are they saying anything at all?* If the latter, then their action is but a ritualistic posture and imposture, and of no more value in the eyes of Heaven than the crossing with holy water by a papist.

The second hindrance is THE FLESH—not coarse immoral flesh, but religious and intellectual flesh—the lust of the *mind*.

There may be a joyful mental acceptance of the truth with nodding head, approving smile, or even a loud response, and yet the conscience and heart be altogether unreached. An admiring intellect does not by any means involve an exercised heart. It is one thing to accept the truth, it is another to adopt it. Some one has said, “If I get hold of the truth, I shall endeavour to make the truth suit me; but if the truth *gets hold of me* it makes *me* suit it.” Practical Christianity does not consist in what we know but in what we show.

An interested, intelligent mind capable of taking in the meaning of terms may enjoy hearing the truth clearly, simply, and forcibly put, may thus “anon with joy receive the word,” catch the phraseology in which it is ministered, pass their friendly criticism on it and repeat it like a phonograph, and yet the heart be unreached,

unjudged, and unrepentant, and their life altogether unaltered. Such trafficking with the truth of God is a most dangerous and conscience-hardening weapon in the enemy's hands. It is one thing to be religiously educated in the *terms* of the truth, but another thing to adopt the truth expressed by those terms in the power of the Spirit.

"The time of temptation"—testing—for all such surely comes, and then it is surprising to observe the facility with which all is let go again! Every truth of Christianity carries with it the cross, and that the flesh shrinks from. Truth that is held in power is truth that will be held at personal cost if needs be, and that is the truth that "effectually worketh in them that believe" (1 Thess. 2. 13).

The third great hindrance is THE WORLD—a professed acceptance of the truth, but *no break* with the world! Its cares, riches, pleasures, and lusts of other things (ver. 14; Mark 4. 19) are the thorns which choke and make unfruitful the word ministered.

It matters not whether it is the world on its material side—earth with its cares and riches—or its moral side—lust and pride—it has ever been a successful weapon in the enemy's hand for robbing us of blessing and God of glory. Friendship with the world is enmity with God—"Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4. 4). "Be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6. 17).

The Spirit of Truth by whom all truth is effectually ministered to us is here, sent by the Father and the Son, and demonstrates this world's guilt and doom (John 16. 8).

"All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father" (1 John 2. 16); and Christ "gave Himself . . . that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1. 4); He has said, "The world hated Me" (John 15. 18); and, "Now have they both

seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15. 23-4).

Therefore how could I maintain old worldly links without appearing to frustrate the object of Christ's death and thereby forfeit the support and smile of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

To endeavour to illustrate my meaning, let us stand beside yon canal. How can this approaching boat travelling along that low level proceed on its way beyond this point where the level of the canal is so suddenly raised so many feet?

You say: "Engineering skill has made that a simple matter. Boats are raised by this lock arrangement from the lower to the higher level." But how is this done? You begin to give the various steps in the procedure. You observe *first* the boat must be placed in the lock. You inform us the *next step* is to open the sluice-gates and the water will commence to rush in from the higher level and immediately we shall observe the boat begin to rise.

Would you be surprised if we expressed a doubt about such a result being possible?

Protesting, you might say, "I've seen it done many times!" With apologies we beg leave to contradict you and say *you have never seen it once!* But here comes the boat! Let us carefully watch the operation ourselves. Notice:

- (1) The boat is run into the lock;
- (2) *The lock gates are closely shut behind*—and then
- (3) The sluice-gates are opened and the boat begins to ascend to the height whence the water comes.

What was the omission you made, and why was it fatal to the raising of the boat?

You left the lock gates *open behind*, and thus every drop of water that would come down from above would as quickly run out behind, and the boat would not be advanced a foot.

Do you see the application of this figure? I wonder if it has any bearing on your own case? How many Christians there are who are leaving, it may be secretly, a back door open to the world, and in spite of all the flood of heavenly ministry that reaches them they are not raised one inch spiritually towards the source of all ministry. Does not Hebrews 2. 1 (margin) suggest and warn us of such a danger? "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should run out as leaking vessels." Oh that we might maintain through His grace *a clean-cut from this world and a whole heart for Christ.*

The Lord's own significant exhortation in Luke 8. 18 seems to be a fitting summing up of the whole burden of the parable—"Take heed *how* ye hear!" Do not the salient points of the parable itself supply us with some answer to that serious and anxious question—Why such feeble outward results from such abundance of ministry amongst God's people?

May the Lord beget and maintain within us a true-hearted concern about these things, so that every bit of ministry we may be privileged to receive may accomplish that which He pleases and prosper in the thing whereunto He sends it (Isa. 55. 11).

On Winning Souls.

"He had compassion . . . and went to him" (Luke 10. 33-34).

THERE was a shipwreck, some years ago, off the Tuscan coast. The Tuscan coastguard in reporting the lamentable affair to his Government said: "Notwithstanding that I lent the crew on board the ship every assistance possible by *means of my speaking-trumpet*, I regret to say that a number of dead bodies were washed upon the shore next morning." Very wonderful, was it not? And yet this is the kind of assistance which many, who profess to have faith and to serve the Lord, give the people. They have yielded them the assistance of rhetoric, flowers of speech and poetical quotations, and yet men persisted in impenitence. There has been no real care, no earnest love for souls. The sermon was preached; but the people were not prayed for in secret, they were not wept over, they were not hunted for as men hunt for precious things. There was no sacrifice in the service; perhaps the preacher shone in his grandiloquence, but souls were not reached and saved. It was the help of the speaking-trumpet, and nothing else.

Not by such means as this did our Lord and Master rescue souls from Satan's power and their dire condition. His heart was filled with compassion, and that compassion carried Him to where they were. And to us, His servants, He has said, "*Go thou and do likewise.*"

The gospel preached at the street corner or upon the village green will probably be more effective in blessing men than twenty sermons *delivered* behind closed doors. And to seek out souls in their homes, to lovingly discover their difficulties and trials, to win their confidence, and make them feel that you love them for Christ's sake, that is the way to destroy their prejudice against the Word, and to make a way for it to reach their hearts. This is labour and it means sacrifice, but those who love the Lord will find a keen delight in presenting their bodies as living sacrifices to God, they will desire to be abundant in good works. May we, through God's grace, be of this latter sort and never be satisfied with mere speaking-trumpet service.

Bible Study.—Epistle of John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

I John 5.

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God : and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments : and his commandments are not grievous!

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood : and these three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us :

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death : I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin : and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not ; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

THIS concluding chapter may be broadly divided into—

1. The victory of the divine life over the world (vers. 1-5) ;

2. The testimony as to how Jesus came that we might have it (vers. 6-13) ; and

3. Our boldness towards God, and the understanding of our relations with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ (vers. 14-21).

The first section carries on from the previous chapter.

Verse 1.

And at once the question is settled for us, " Who is my brother ? " Every one believing that Jesus is the Christ is in the family of God : and every one loving Him that has begotten, loves him also who is begotten of Him. That which forms this all-embracing link of love is the divine nature, which is common to all the family. If we look at each other after the flesh, there will be much diversity of feeling, difference of judgment, antagonism of aim, and all the opposition

that the movements of the flesh can produce ; for, " that which is born of the flesh is flesh ; " but that which is begotten of God has the imprint and characteristics of His Spirit. Consequently, although you may have to refuse the ways of your brother, and fellowship with him in those ways, nevertheless your heart will ever love him as your brother still.

Verse 2.

And by this we know (*γινώσκωμεν* = we have been taught to know it, not subjective knowledge in which we might be deceived) that we love the children of God, *i.e.* that our love is of God, divine love, pure and holy, and not fancied love, notional and influenced by personal, private, or party feelings, when we love God, as the source whence our love flows, and keep His commandments. This is of vast importance.

Verse 3.

For indeed the love of God is not our saying we love Him, or connecting it with any traditional or party line of conduct—in that way many deceive themselves—

but, in keeping His commandments ; and to the new man His commandments are not grievous. How many false notions of love would that correct ! It would preserve the heart from being contracted to the pronouncement of its own shibboleth ; it would preserve the feet from wandering in forbidden paths. " I have refrained my feet," says the Psalmist, " from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word " (Ps. 119. 101).

Verse 4.

Now the great hindrance is the world And how deceptive it is ! If what is natural in us is in movement, we shall be assuredly led astray. The divine nature alone is incorruptible, can alone resist the evil.

Here the statement is put in an abstract way : " Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world." The perfect tense presents the being so begotten, not as merely a fact accomplished in the past, but as continuing in its character up to the present, so that as the world continues in its opposition to all that is of God, the divine life in the believer renders him a continual overcomer.

And this is the victory that overcomes the world, " the faith " that is ours, *i.e.* the objective substance of the faith ; the world has no such creed ; and it is called " the faith " because it is to be held " in faith."

Verse 5.

Who is the overcomer but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God ? Note it well. He is divine : " a man," surely (John 1. 30 ; 1 Tim. 2. 5), but the " Son of God ;" and while He is this by the miracle of His birth (Luke 1. 35), John emphasizes the fact that, in a way peculiar and personal to Himself, He is " the only begotten Son of God " (John 3. 18), " Son of the Father " (2 John 3).

He who believes in Him overcomes the world : " He that *believeth not* is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God " (John. 3. 18).

No child of Adam, as such, could overcome the world. They have all gone to make up the world ; they are all of it, and have been overcome by it, carried away in the current of it. Jesus has come

into it in the power of an incorruptible divine nature, and overcome it. Hence the overcomer now is he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God ; for the divine life in Jesus, and given to us by the Spirit, as issuing from the same divine source, retains the character of the source, and overcomes the world in its turn in us, even as He overcame it (John 16. 33).

Verses 6-13.

We now come to this most important section, containing the kernel of the whole Epistle, the testimony of God to His Son Jesus Christ, to the way He came into the world, and to the great end for which He came, even to give eternal life to those who believe in Him.

And first as to the scripture itself. It is enough to say that verse 7 is rejected, as an interpolation, by practically all authorities. The words to be omitted are from " in heaven " (ver. 7) to " in earth " (ver. 8). And the text should read thus, from verse 6—" And it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is the truth. For they that bear witness are three : the Spirit, and the water, and the blood ; and the three agree in one."

The importance of this passage is of the greatest. It sets forth the character of His coming and the power of it. He came through (*διὰ*), by the means or instrumentality of, water and blood, as characterizing the way in which He came ; and He came, not in the power, or virtue of (*ἐν*) water only, but in the power of the water and the blood. To the historic fact of His so coming John 19. 34 bears witness ; and the propitiatory aspect of His death, witnessed in the blood, precedes the subjective moral cleansing represented in the water. Both alike, expiation and purification, what meets the rights of God and the need of man, flow from the death of Christ upon the cross. The order in the Gospel, " blood and water," is in accordance with the revelation that comes down from God to man ; the order in the Epistle, water and blood, with the experience and faith of the soul as it rises up to God.

" Not by water only "—note it well—" but by water and blood." As the priests entered into the sanctuary, the laver at which they washed betokened to them

the holiness of God. This was the *way* of their approach to Him; while the blood of the sacrifices set forth His righteousness as the *ground* of their approach. Israel was called to worship the Lord, and will do it in a coming day, in the beauty of holiness, in the glory of the sanctuary (Ps. 96. 9). By the faith of Christ we are let into the light of it now, and we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10. 19-22). Moral cleansing and purification is surely necessary, but it does not suffice alone.

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, for the Spirit is the truth." In John 14. 6 Jesus is "the truth." But He has gone on high, and the Spirit has come from Him; and now "the Spirit is the truth." This is a reciprocal proposition, and the statement is absolute. And thus "the truth" itself bears witness to the truth. Other witnesses are the truth in parts. The Spirit is "the truth" itself.

Verse 8.

For the witness of the truth must necessarily agree with every witness to the truth; and so the witness of the Spirit agrees with the twofold aspect of the death of Christ, Godward and manward, and enforces both, that in this way, *viz.* through the *death* of Jesus, God has given to us eternal life.

Verse 9.

Now, reasoning from the lower to the higher, he says, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, which He has witnessed concerning His Son." The emphasis is made still more emphatic in some manuscripts, which read, "for He has witnessed——"

Verse 10.

Moreover, not only is this witness rendered to us that we should believe it from without, but the Spirit is also a witness *in us*, giving us the conscious apprehension that this life is in the Son. It is not in anywise "potentially" in us naturally; it is not "immanent in Adam's race;" the virtue of it is lost in such a thought. And, as showing the exceptional importance of this truth,

he uses exceptionally strong language; "He that believeth not God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son."

Verses 11, 12.

And the witness is this, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life: he that has not the Son of God has not life at all, in the sense in which the Apostle is here speaking. This life is in nowise "immanent" in man. The believer has it because he has Christ; he has it in him because he has Christ in him. Christ is the life, and the life is in Christ; but, and take note of this—"Verily, verily I say unto you, Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man, and drunk His blood, ye have *no life in yourselves*" (John 6. 53).

Of old the serpent belied the word of God as to the certainty of death in disobedience (Gen. 3.); now he belies the record of God as to eternal life in His Son.

How serious all this is, and prophetic of the evil doctrines promulgated so widely to-day by professing Christian ministers, is shown by the utterances of the "New Theology." There it is stated that every man is a "manifestation of the eternal Christ," that every man is a "potential Christ," that "Jesus is divine, and so are we;" and therefore in so far as eternal life would be the professed subject of its teachings, every man has eternal life "potentially" in himself, *i.e.* without the Son—belying thereby the record of God which says, "he that has not the Son of God has not life." The pagans, we are told, have their Christs, but the "Christian Christ has survived and absorbed all the devotion formerly given to the pagan Christs." Why? "Because Christianity has not only a living Christ, but a living Jesus." That is the whole system of this "New Theology," and any hope of life it offers is dependent on the continuity of *life in Jesus*; the Scripture here makes it dependent on His *death*. But if man is a "potential Christ," *i.e.* if he has the germ of all the properties of eternal life in himself, we may indeed say with the Apostle Paul, in combating an allied heresy in another place, "then has Christ died for nothing" (Gal. 2. 21).

Verse 13.

The object of the Gospel, as we have seen before, is "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in His name" (John 20. 31). The object of the Epistle is "that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe on the name of the Son of God." The latter part of the verse, "and that ye may believe," etc., is an unauthorized and meaningless addition.

The name of a thing is the sum total of the qualities by which it is known. "He called their name Adam" (Gen. 5. 2). That is just what they were; that, and no more. His name is called Jesus—Emmanuel—Son of God (Matt. 1.; Luke 1.). This is what He is, and includes all.

"That ye may know that ye have eternal life" is subjective, conscious knowledge (*εἰδῆτε*). He has taken special care elsewhere, as we have seen, to guard the objective testimony to, and the knowledge of these great truths from the interference and corruption of mysticism. Now that the Spirit Himself is introduced, who is with us and in us (John 14. 17), he can freely turn to the subjective consciousness produced thereby of the possession of eternal life. Without this consciousness, the soul would greatly lack the furniture and force of vital truth. Analogously, we find Wisdom saying of her words, "My son, let them not depart from thine eyes," objectively, "keep them in the midst of thine heart," subjectively; "for they are life to those that find them," outside, "and health to all their flesh," inside (Prov. 4. 21, 22).

Verses 14–21.

Here begins the closing section of the Epistle; and, in the truth of all that has gone before, we could not fail to have confidence in God. We, who were "strangers," are now brought *nigh*. Nay, God Himself has come *nigh* unto us in Jesus; He has proved His love; He has not withheld His Son; He has given unto us eternal life in Him; He has won our confidence; He has reversed the whole position of Genesis 3.; and we know that in all that we ask Him, that is "according to His will," He lends His ear and hears. And, if the Almighty God, our Father, lends His ear—we know the rest.

"According to His will:" this governs all on our side. His love, so fully proved, governs all on His.

Verse 16.

How quickly we think of what we want for ourselves! Hear our prayers, individually and congregationally—in private and in public. Alas! So quickly are we found out. How full of "self" they are. Self personally, self collectively, self in party interests. It is there our minds naturally tend, whether for this world, or for the next. The spirit is the same as in the two disciples, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory" (Mark 10. 37). But the Apostle uses at once this liberty of prayer for intercession, even for a sinning brother: just the one we would forget, or say, "he deserves it."

There are cases where, in the government of God, the sin is unto death. He does not say to pray for such. Nor does he define what such cases are. Circumstances, not the act, may determine them (*cf.* Acts 5. 1–10). And this will produce exercise in prayer, for it must be at all times "subject to the will of God."

Verse 17.

All unrighteousness is sin, but it is not always unto death.

Verses 18–20.

Now, to sum up the Epistle and condense practically the teaching that has gone before, there are three things which we know, consciously and subjectively (*οἶδαμεν*).

(1) We know that every one begotten of God does not sin: but he that is in that state, as so begotten, keeps himself, has full command over himself, and the wicked one is powerless to touch him within the armour of the divine life;

(2) We know that we are of God, and the world lies, all of it, helpless in the wicked one; and,

(3) We know, again, three things:

i. That the Son of God has come—great and blessed fact!—and,

ii. That He has given us an understanding—a reflective faculty of knowing (*Cremer*)—that we should know Him that is true ; and,

iii. We are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This one is the true God—the veritable—and eternal life.

“This one,” He (*oûros*)—the nearer, “this here one,” *celwi-ci* is in contrast to “that there one,” *celwi-là*, and very

appropriately sets Him forth as come near to us. The whole expression embodies clearly and succinctly the full truth of the Deity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 21.

Every object the mind of man sets up to worship beside Christ is but an idol ; not the less so that it is not of material substance, but of a subtler kind. “Children,” he says, “guard yourselves from such.”

“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4. 19).

What a source—“God !” What a standard—“His riches in glory !” What a channel—“Christ Jesus !” It is your sweet privilege to place “all your need” over against “His riches,” and lose sight of the former in the presence of the latter.

His exhaustless treasury is thrown open to you, in all the love of His heart ; go and draw upon it, in the artless simplicity of faith, and you will never have occasion to look to a creature stream, or to lean on a creature prop. (C. H. M.)

“Praying always with all prayer” (Eph. 6. 18).

“All prayer” . . . suggests a very large view of the ministry of intercession. There are many kinds of prayer. There is the asking prayer that immediately finds rest and response. There is the seeking prayer that leads to heart-searching and waiting upon the Lord to know His will about it. There is the knocking prayer which presses through barriers and obstacles and treads upon the powers of darkness in the conflict

of faith. . . . There is the prayer of supplication, which literally means “many-*ply*,” the prayer that continues to ask, not because it doubts the answer to its prayer, but because prayer itself is a force and a channel of actual communication from God as well as to God . . . Above all is the ministry of intercession, that is, unselfish prayer, prayer for others, prayer for all saints and all the interests of the Master’s kingdom.

“Golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Rev. 5. 8).

There is an exquisite beauty in this thought that true prayer is fragrance to God. The pleadings and supplications of His people on the earth rise from lowly homes, from sick-rooms, from darkened chambers of grief where loved ones kneel beside their dead, from the “two or

three” gathered in the name of Christ, or from the great congregation, and are wafted up before God, as the breath of flowers is wafted to us in summer days from sweet fields and fragrant gardens. And God smells “a sweet savour.” Prayer is perfume to Him.

A Great Revival.—No. 6.

(W. T. P. WOLSTON).

A "Lifted-up Heart" and its Results.

Notes of Addresses on the Life of King Hezekiah (read Isa. 38., 39.; 2 Chron. 32. 24-33).

HEZEKIAH had been so much an object of God's favour and care and deliverance that, without knowing it, his heart got lifted up, and the Lord, in His tender love and mercy, had to teach him the real value of everything down here. So, suddenly, immediately after the wonderful deliverance from the power of the king of Assyria, he was confronted by another king, more mighty far than the king of Assyria, one that nobody loves to face who does not know God, and that was Death.

He was sick unto death; but, nevertheless, it is clear he hoped to live. But God sent a messenger to him with these words: "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live."

The effect of these words on Hezekiah was very direct. And "Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord" (Isa. 38. 2). In the day when the incursion of Assyria upset all Jerusalem, and when the threat of the king thereof fell upon Hezekiah's ear, he went to the sanctuary, laid the matter before the Lord, and prayed to the Lord. Now, his feet could not carry him to the sanctuary, but he turned his face to the wall and prayed, and wept sore. He did not want to go.

What a contrast to Hezekiah was Stephen? He turned his face to glory, and, so to speak, said, "Lord, I am ready" (Acts 7.).

The difference between Judaism and Christianity—the old dispensation and the new—is very great, even in the way a saint views death. Contrast the difference between Hezekiah's attitude of soul and Paul's in the prospect of death. The latter said: "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are

absent from the Lord. . . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 6-8).

And again he says: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and *to die is gain*. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a *desire to depart*, and to be with Christ; *which is far better*" (Phil. 1. 20-23).

Some one will say, "There are very few saints like Paul." There is no doubt about that. But it is not Paul the Apostle speaking here; it is Paul the saint, Paul the sinner saved by grace, whose heart was sweetly and deeply attached to the One in glory. Death was before him, and, humanly speaking, his life was not worth living, mewed up, as he was, in a Roman prison; but he says, "If you ask me what I desire, it is 'to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.'"

That is the contrast between an Old Testament and a New Testament saint. Hezekiah was a Jew of the old dispensation, and for a Jew to have his life prolonged in this earth was a mark of God's favour; on the other hand, a Christian joys and delights in what is heavenly.

What your experience and mine is in this respect I am not going to say. The whereabouts of our souls as to this each heart knows before God. The true expression of the life of God in our souls now is really the repetition of the ways of Christ while we live

here, and if He fills the heart and the eye, then the longing of the soul is to be with Him.

If you will turn now to the second book of Kings and read chapter 20., you will get a point or two which are not given to you in Isaiah 38. The two chapters are almost identical, but there are a few details in each chapter not found in the other. Isaiah's summary brings out the fruit of grace in Hezekiah's soul. The Spirit of God always loves to note what pleases God. In 2 Kings 20. you get fully the historical facts.

Look at verse 4. You get the grace of the Lord most beautifully there. "And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again and tell Hezekiah." God would not leave Hezekiah long with all that struggle going on in his soul. He had heard Hezekiah's prayer, understood what he wanted. So He says to Isaiah: "Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people." What a comfort for the king at that moment to get this word. The Lord still owned him as the captain of His people. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up into the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered" (2 Kings 20. 5-7).

This is beautiful. It is not only, "You shall recover, but I have got My eye upon this city and this kingdom, and I will take care of this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake."

God falls back, you see, upon His own promise and faithfulness.

The calming effect of that message

upon Hezekiah's soul surely must have been wonderful, yet he wanted further assurance, and said: "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that He hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz" (vers. 8-11).

God had caused the sun to stand still in Joshua's day, and now he caused it to go back ten degrees. Of course the learned infidel will scoffingly ask, "How could that be?" I do not know, and you do not know. But it is a fact. The great object of God with us is that we bring Himself in. God is omnipotent. Bring the omnipotent One in, and the difficulties disappear.

Practically speaking, it was resurrection that Hezekiah had to learn. And that is what you and I have to learn. God would have us to know Him as the God of resurrection, One who has raised from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ. He has also quickened us out of death and brought our souls into association with Christ in resurrection life; and the next thing is this—so completely does that blessed One fill your heart that, if you are brought to face death, in the power of the Holy Ghost you will be able to say what Paul said.

In Isaiah 38. we have the writing of Hezekiah consequent upon his recovery. From it we learn the exercises through which his soul passed, and how he breaks out into worship because of God's goodness to him. This was pleasing to the Lord, for what God designed and desired was to bring him nearer to Himself.

This illustrates the truth: "My Father is the Husbandman. Every

branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15. 1, 2). His praiseful spirit was a deep proof of the work of God's Spirit in Hezekiah's soul, and thus he brought forth fruit.

The story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery is summed up in one verse in 2 Chronicles 32. 24. And then we read: "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for *his heart was lifted up*: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem" (ver. 25).

The remarkable deliverance of the Lord in relation to the Assyrians, the thought of how devoted he had been, and the effect upon all the people round about, lifted up Hezekiah's heart, because "he was magnified in the sight of all nations" (2 Chron. 32. 23). He was looked up to. Here was the danger to him, and to us also. The more we are looked up to by others, the more danger of the heart being, as it is put here, "uplifted." Because it leads, oftentimes, to what is not real. To our thinking more of our reputation with men than the condition of our souls before God. Hezekiah's heart was uplifted—"Therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem." Evidently God let him learn what was in his heart—"Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." He betook himself again to the presence of the Lord and there humbled himself. There is a difference between being humbled and being humble. If you are humble you get into God's presence, and you get a deeper enjoyment of His love, and a fuller revelation of Himself to your soul, and you walk with Him. You could not walk with God unless you were humble, because He knoweth the proud afar off, but He says, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble

spirit" (Isa. 57. 15). The effect of walking with God must always keep the soul lowly. But if we are not humble it will be necessary for God to humble us by our faults, failures, breakdowns, that we may learn what we are.

The result of Hezekiah humbling himself is thus stated: "So that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah" (vers. 26). And the next thing, we are told, is this: "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him." Isaiah 39. tells us that they brought a sympathetic letter, consequent upon his recovery. But they wanted to get to the bottom of the curious sign done in the land, and Hezekiah was deceived by them. He did not turn to God on this occasion, because there was no apparent danger, and "God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart" (vers. 31).

To me these words are intensely solemn. The most devoted person, the most pious person will fall if God leave him. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." "God left him, to try him, that he might know *all that was in his heart*" is a pregnant statement, but he learnt a lesson that was of very deep moral value to him.

Observe, these ambassadors came up from Babylon. Babylon stands for the world, and there is nothing more dangerous than the world. That which brought in sorrow in the days of Joshua was the Babylonish garment and silver which Achan hid in his tent. And now this blessed man of God is tripped up from the same source. "At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered" (Isa. 39. 1). Nature was appealed to. Beware of the world's attention, the world's favour, or anything from the world. The

Christian is a man who is not of the world, he walks through it, but his heart is outside it, and if he allows himself to receive the attentions of the world, he falls.

Hezekiah's test was a very simple one. When he was in great difficulty, he went into the house of the Lord, and spread the letter under the eye of God. When it is a case of his own impending death, he turns to the Lord in prayer. But now he ceased to be prayerful, he did not take the Babylonish letter and present into the presence of the Lord. He says, "This is very nice, they think something of me." He was glad of them. What is the result? In a moment the man who was inflexible when God was with him is overcome by this little bit of attention from the world. Instead of ascribing all the glory of his recovery to the One who sat between the Cherubims, instead of stating all that He was, and declaring the power of His hand, he does not, as far as we can judge, say one single thing about God, but really replies, "See what I have got, and see my treasures, and my goods." All about himself, not a word about the Lord.

Friends, if we, in any way, let the world touch us, we get under its power. It is not a question of where we have to do our daily work, but it is this—if we accept the world's attentions, we have lost our power to be God's witnesses.

The ambassadors went back to Babylon, and in effect said to their king, "The sooner you go up against Jerusalem, the richer you will be, for there are great treasures of gold there." That was their side of it. Then Isaiah came to Hezekiah and said, "What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not

showed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (chap. 39. 3-7).

If you will take the trouble to read the first chapter of Daniel, you will find this remarkable statement fulfilled. Verse 3 of Daniel 1. shows that the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in completest detail, and the princes of the seed royal were eunuchs in the palace of Babylon. No doubt Hezekiah's soul was deeply touched by this, but he says, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days" (ver. 8). That may sound a selfish sort of statement, but I think he had the sense, "God is so good, that in spite of my failure He will not take away the truth and the quietness that I enjoy."

I am sure there is great encouragement in consideration of Hezekiah's history. It will repay your prayerful and careful study. We see the immense importance of dwelling in what belongs to us, and seeking through grace so to walk that, when the enemy comes in a subtle way, we may be prepared. The devil works very largely in these days through subtlety. The roar of the enemy Hezekiah met, but when he came in this beguiling way he was not prepared, and he was overcome.

The Lord keep us with the sense of dependence, and the heart true to Christ, till the moment of His coming. Hezekiah's history, while most encouraging and stimulating, is doubtless placed on record in Scripture as a beacon light to warn us off the hidden rocks of the world's flattering attentions, which affected a man of God in a way its open assault could not.

God our Saviour.—No. 9.

(JAMES BOYD)

In Christ.

“THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” This is the grand and glorious conclusion arrived at by the Holy Spirit, after having traced, for the benefit of the Roman saints, the manner and result of the intervention of God on behalf of His poor creature, who in his natural and responsible condition lay helpless and undone under sin’s cruel slavery, and subject to the infliction of eternal wrath.

In Adam there was nothing but death and condemnation for the creature. The head was fallen, and all the race was of necessity also fallen. Far off from God, ungodly, transgressors, rebels, enemies, children of wrath, are some of the terms employed in the Word of Truth to set before us the terrible nature of our natural condition as in the first and fallen head. In the abominable corruption of the flesh we wallowed, with no confidence in God, suspicious of all His gracious advances on our behalf, preferring darkness to light, hatred to love, curse to blessing, war to peace, earth to heaven, the creature to the Creator, even the oppression of the devil to the sway of infinite and eternal love. We were at a distance from God, and at that distance we were determined at all costs to keep ourselves. We would not seek Him, and should He come out as the seeker after us, every corner of the universe would be ransacked for a hiding-place. If we looked backward dark was the history of the world, dark and deceitful our own personal history, darkness lay upon everything around us, and before us loomed the blackness of darkness for ever. Without God we were miserable, and the thought of God made us ten times more miserable. Our money was given for that which was not bread, and our labour for that which did not satisfy. We snatched

occasionally a momentary pleasure from the indulgence of our carnal appetites, but our seasons of depression were terrific, and the thought of having to meet God and to render account to Him was intolerable. As hell and destruction are never satisfied, and the grave and the barren womb never say, Enough; so was the bottomless pit of our corrupt nature ever demanding fresh novelties supplied from the hell-invented markets of a godless world, and so were we finding that the whole universe would be of itself insufficient to fill one human heart.

What could it be for a soul away from God but unhappiness? No creature is sufficient for himself, nor indeed is the creation itself sufficient for the creature set by God in intelligent relationship with Himself. God alone can suffice for the heart of man; and woe, unutterable woe, must be the portion of those who, having said to God, “Depart from us,” shall be compelled to hear Him in the day of judgment say to them, “*Depart from Me, ye cursed.*” The souls that will not have Him in time need not expect Him to have them in eternity.

This is *man’s day*, a day in which he has lawlessly followed the dictates of his own evil heart, despising the testimonies of God, persecuting and slaying His servants, and murdering His beloved Son, while at the same time embellishing the world with everything that will furnish some little pleasure to him in his forgetfulness of God. But *God’s day* is coming, and in that day all that man trusts in shall be like a spider’s web, blown to atoms by the first blast of His withering wrath, and houseless and homeless he will find himself exposed to the eternal condemnation of his Creator, whose mercy has been so despised.

But for the soul in Christ there is *no* condemnation. The condemnation has been borne by Him in whom I am placed before God. The sins, the sin, the judgment, the death, and the slavery to sin—all are gone, and “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” New relationships, new hopes, new life, new objects, and new power have come to pass in and through Him who is my righteousness, my life, and my salvation before the face of God.

In Him I am *of God* (1 Cor. 1. 30). I derive my new moral, spiritual existence from God: I am born of Him. Nothing of Adam enters into that which is in Christ. They are two different orders of men. One made of dust, the other out of heaven. The cross is the end of my connection with the former—“I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2. 20). There I have been brought to an end judicially. I could not have been *mended*, therefore have I been *ended*. Apart from law I was lawless, under law a transgressor, visited by God in grace in the person of His Son I was a God-hater. Ungodly, a rebel sinner, an enemy of God. Such was the flesh. Such it is, for it is incorrigible. Such was I. Such is the flesh still in me. But I am not in it, thank God. “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you” (Rom. 8. 9). I am of Christ’s order.

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” and not “the law of sin in my members,” is now the principle and power which regulates my conduct on my way to glory. “What the law could not do” God has done; not by mending the old—that could not be done—but by ending for me the whole condition of flesh, and giving me the Holy Spirit to rule, regulate, guide, and empower the inward man, so that I might walk after the Spirit and fulfil the righteous requirement of the law, and thus “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.”

In Christ is *new creation* (2 Cor. 5. 17). There “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new;” new nature, new life, new relationships, new affections. And all these things are *of God*. The man in Christ is of God, and everything connected with him. In Adam is old creation: old, fallen, sinful, defiled, dead, and lost. In Christ is new, and “as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4. 17).

“Of such an one will I glory” (2 Cor. 12. 5). It is well to know that to them that are in Him there is no condemnation; but that does not exhaust all that there is in Christ. We learn this to begin with; but we have in Him an inexhaustible wealth of blessing that will never be all learned while we are upon earth. Who could fathom the bliss of being “holy and without blame before Him in love?” or fully estimate the dignity and delight of being before the Father’s face, as sons along with, and in the likeness of, His Son? We read these words in our Bibles, and we believe them too, but we may well ask ourselves what power they possess over our souls.

Paul boasted of the man “*in Christ*.” He tells the Philippians that if any one thought he had whereof to boast in the flesh, he himself had more. And when he had for a moment decorated himself with these virtues, that the Philippians might get a look at what he was in the flesh, he tears them off, and in utter disgust throws them upon the midden of corrupt fallen humanity, counting them dung that he might have Christ for his gain and be found “*in Him*.” When arraigned as a prisoner before King Agrippa, in the presence of Festus, the chiliarchs and great men of the city, the sense of the dignity of his place in Christ does not for a single instance fade from his heart and mind. Confronted with all the pride and pomp of royalty, the awe of authority, the glitter, glamour, and fascination of a gaudy, voluptuous court, and with a charge of inciting

the populace to riot hanging over his head, he answered the haughty monarch, who, scoffing at his attempt to get at his seared and benumbed conscience, breaks forth into that expression which many have taken to be the language of a soul on the point of surrender to Christ, "Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian," in those words which so forcibly set before us the way in which his soul entered into the infinite wealth of blessing that was his in Christ: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26. 29).

It has often been remarked that he does not say, "Such as I shall be when glorified," but "Such as I am." Dragged out of the temple by the multitude, who sought to murder him, rescued by the military, bound with two chains, almost torn to pieces by Pharisees and Sadducees, once more forcibly taken out of their violent hands by the soldiers, brought before Felix as a "mover of sedition" and "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," and thrown again into prison, where he lay for two years. To be brought in such a state as all this must have reduced him to, into the presence of such magnificence and dazzling splendour as shone that day in the court of King Agrippa, one might have thought his apparently wretched and miserable condition would have so pressed itself upon his spirit that all the enthusiasm produced in him by his new-found faith would have died in his soul. But no. The happiness that was his in Christ, the dignity of his heavenly calling, the favour of God, the knowledge of the Father and the Son, all that God was to him, all that Christ was, the love of God declared in death, the joy of bearing in a small measure the reproach of Christ, of suffering shame, blows, and imprisonments for His name, the privilege of confessing Him before these haughty rulers, as well as before the meanest of

the creatures of God—these sweet and glorious considerations made good to his soul in the power of the divine Spirit exalted him and maintained him upon an elevation as far above the garish circle that surrounded Agrippas as heaven is above earth.

He pitied them. And indeed they were to be pitied. Their rank, their glory, their greatness, the honour paid to them by their inferiors—what availed it all with death at their elbow, and a hopeless eternity looming in front of them? They were now having their "good things" (Luke 16.), and Paul his "evil things," but Paul's evil things were infinitely better than their good things. His evil things were the reproach of Christ, and that was greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Miserable, from a human standpoint, was his lot. His property, his reputation, his distinction in the flesh, his scholastic training, his easy circumstances, his liberty—all were gone, and his life was in peril. What more is needful to be added to make the picture of utter desolation complete? And yet his soul's desire for king and courtier was, that they might come to be as he at that moment was. Marvellous man! How deeply he had entered into the blessedness of the man in Christ.

Another thing I would notice in connection with this subject before bringing this paper to a close. We have the believer in Christ in Romans 8. 1, and the love of God in Christ in the last verse of the same chapter. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, neither is there any separation from the love of God, for that love is there also. In unfathomable grace God has brought us to Himself in Christ, and set us before His face in all the value of that work wrought by Christ, and in all the acceptability of His person. But it is in Christ that the love of God has had its full and blessed expression, and it is in Him also it has found its eternal resting-place. We are where there

is no condemnation, and we are also where there is no separation from the love of God.

May the Lord lead our hearts more truly into the enjoyment of our place

as in Christ, and more constantly into the love of God; and may the petty distinctions of the flesh, in which we would be ever ready to glory, drop out of sight, and our boast be rather of a man "*in Christ.*"

"A Little Maid;" Or, Faithfulness in Obscurity.

(F. B. HOLM).

2 Kings 5. 2-4.

THERE was nothing novel about the history of this little maid. Her lot was common to thousands in those hard cruel days of inter-tribal warfare. Uprooted violently from the midst of home and loved ones by the savage enemies of her country she found herself a humble captive in the house of the conquering general.

"The Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife."

There in few words you have her pitiful story from the pen of the inspired historian. She is not named. Who would expect her to be? A little slave in a foreign land, alone and friendless, one's only wonder would be that in the Book of books she should be mentioned at all.

It was, indeed, through an exclamation that fell from her lips that Naaman first heard of a cure for his leprosy. But even so, that fact would hardly seem to be of sufficient importance to merit such notice.

Yet it *is* noticed, and that in an emphatic way.

"And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel."

Her very words are carefully noted by the Spirit of God. They have an importance beyond that which appears at first sight.

Let us not be surprised at this. Have we not seen in Scripture again and again that it is the insignificant instruments that God uses, the unexpected servants by whom He does great things? And not only this; do we not find oftentimes the rarest qualities and graces expressing themselves in the poorest, the humblest, and most retired of His people?

We certainly do. One of the poets has told us that

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

We may well appropriate these beautiful lines to spiritual things, only remembering that no hidden flower that God cultivates in this desert-world wastes its sweetness. If such are not appreciated by men their sweetness is a joy to the heart of their Father and God.

Just such a flower as that was the little captive maid.

Quietly consider her story and see if three most excellent virtues do not lie enwrapped in it.

I. She was possessed with **THE MOST SUBLIME CONFIDENCE IN GOD.**

Without any misgiving she announces a fact: "He would recover him of his leprosy."

How did she know it so positively? Who told her that?

She could not argue from precedent and say that what she had seen done once might be done again. There was no precedent to argue from! The cleansing of a leper was an unknown thing in the land of Israel in those days. For saying this we have the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth He said:

"I tell you of a truth . . . many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4. 25-7).

Here, then, is a very extraordinary thing! A young girl confidently asserts that if her heathen master, who had fought against and ravaged the people of God, will only go to the prophet of the great JEHOVAH, he shall be miraculously delivered from the grip of the most deadly of diseases; yet she can produce no tangible warrant for so asserting, she cannot even cite *one* case of a professed follower of Jehovah being so delivered. Which is it? Preposterous folly or sublime faith?

That must have been the question debated in the ranks of Israel when David descended into the valley of Elah to meet Goliath. The issue of the conflict soon decided the question for them. Men may hoot with derision while faith is calmly marching to her goal. They stand all amazed or shout with applause when her unexpected triumph is won.

So too with the little maid. Her words were amply vindicated in the end. The issue of them was crowned with success. It was not folly, it was faith.

Her faith in God was like a diamond of the finest water. It rested not upon human arguments. It found no sup-

port in human circumstances. It transcended human reason. It just soared aloft with eagle wings to lay hold upon GOD Himself, and there it rested. She evidently believed in the *power* and the *compassions* of God. From that she drew her inspiration, so that, laughing at the impossible, she was able to say, "It shall be done."

2. She manifested THE MOST SUBLIME COURAGE in TESTIMONY.

"Add to your faith virtue [or *courage*]" is an apostolic command (2 Peter 1. 5). This the little maid anticipated and obeyed. To have such confidence in the power and grace of God as to feel sure that, in the teeth of all experience and appearances, He will bless and deliver an enemy if only he seeks Him, is one thing. To boldly and confidently assert one's inward confidence and convictions is quite another.

Put yourself in the shoes of the little maid and think what it meant. In similar circumstances would you not have said:

1. "They have no confidence in Jehovah. My assertions will seem incredible. I shall but be laughed at for my words."

2. "May they not misinterpret my words and my motives? Will they not think it an artful scheme to decoy Naaman in a defenceless condition into the land of Israel that vengeance may be wreaked on him?"

3. "Supposing that for some obscure reason which I do not understand Jehovah is not pleased to cure Naaman, with what anger and rage he will return! How absurd he will look to the public! A great man fooled and sent on a wild-goose chase by a little girl! In such case he will wreak vengeance on me! My life will not be worth ten minutes' purchase! I quite believe God will cure him by His prophet, but— No. It will be more prudent if I hold my tongue."

We could, in fact, have doubtless found many reasons why we should

not take our courage with both hands and boldly declare that which we knew of God. The little maid was proof against such considerations.

What was it that nerved her for such bold witness? The answer seems to lie upon the surface of the scripture.

3. She was moved by THE MOST SUBLIME COMPASSION FOR THE LOST.

The manner and tone of her utterance shows it. Here is Naaman—the hereditary foe of her people, the indirect cause, at least, of her captivity, and the news filters down to her ears that he is a lost man, doomed to a loathsome death. Is she filled with ill-concealed satisfaction? Does she exult at the thought of a miserable end overtaking him? Not at all.

See her stand before her mistress. Note the tear-drop of pity in her eye. How those words spring from the tender fountain of her heart and burst the portals of her lips: "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Coldness and cynicism were absent, warmth and the ring of reality were there!

Lifted above all petty motives of revenge, her compassion was no less sublime than the strength of her confidence in God or the courage with which she witnessed to Him. It was indeed more than sublime. It was positively *divine*. Like David's kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9. 3), her kindness too "was the kindness of God." In words and behaviour she strikingly displayed the good and gracious character of the God she served.

Well done, little maid! In very trying circumstances you performed that most high and holy service of rightly representing Him with whose name you were identified. The greatest of God's servants cannot do more than this.

Your reward is on high. Naaman may have thanked you on his return

or he *may not*. But even if no word nor look of recognition were ever given you by man, you did not "waste your sweetness on the desert air." The fragrance of your words and spirit was fully appreciated by your God, and you will hear from the lips of ANOTHER, Himself the *perfect* Servant, the words "Well done!" in that day.

* * * *

There is an application to the story of the little maid. It does not require great mental acuteness to see it. For himself or herself let each reader make it.

The day in which we live has its own peculiar testings, and, in spite of the thin veneer of Christianity which Christendom carries, never was living faith in God at a lower ebb. Yet God Himself stands revealed to faith in a way in which He did not in Naaman's day.

God perfectly revealed to us in Christ should certainly inspire us with the strongest confidence in Himself. The Holy Spirit given since the day of Pentecost to us as believers should fill us with courage, for "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4); and further, God has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13. 5, 6). Lastly we have been saved that we may be in communion with the mind of the Saviour and display His character before the world; putting on "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies [bowels of *compassion*, N.T.], kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3. 12).

Life's path for many of us may lead into shade and retirement. Let none of us lose heart because of obscurity. In your small corner you may brightly shine for Christ, since

"The God that lived in Naaman's time
Is just the same to-day!"

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 12.

Miracles of Our Lord.

Healing the Leper (Matthew 8., Mark 1., Luke 5.).

THIS is the first miracle recorded by MATTHEW, and in the narrative the prominence given to testimony to Israel is marked, for although report to "any man" is forbidden, it is accompanied by the charge to "show thyself to the priest—for a testimony unto them." The hierarchy, however personally unworthy, had the first claim to hear that Jehovah was present among them as the Healer, apart from any of the conditions attached to that name in Exodus 15. 26.

MARK relates what actually took place as the result of the man doing what he was forbidden to do. The huge concourse of people filled with curiosity really hindered true ministry—an important lesson for the servant of the Lord at the present time. MARK alone tells how the Lord, when touching and healing the leper, "was moved with compassion." LUKE'S account differs little from MATTHEW, but adds that in the midst of the brief and unsolicited popularity which at this time attached to the Lord, He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed.

Peter's Mother-in-law (Matthew 8., Mark 1., Luke 4.).

This incident is very briefly recounted in all three Gospels. Surely for our encouragement MARK mentions that the disciples call the Lord's attention to the sufferer, and in place of merely touching her hand, as in Matthew, He Himself raises her up. MATTHEW testifies to the power at work. MARK shows *the way* of acting. How important for the disciple is the latter! In all accounts the suddenness of true recovery is demonstrated by the fact of her ministering to them. LUKE goes deeper, and shows how the Lord detects under the disease a certain malign influence at work which, taking His stand over her, He rebukes,

Healing of the Palsied Man in Capernaum (Matthew 9., Mark 2., Luke 5.).

The sequence of events and teaching common to all these accounts should be noted. First, as of prime importance, sins are forgiven; second, the reality of the pardon is manifested in the power to walk, both conferred through the word of Jesus. This miracle is succeeded by the call of Matthew or Levi, who receives the word "Follow Me," giving direction for a walk which is further guided by the teaching as to the introduction of the new principles of grace which could not be contained in the old vessels of legal ordinance.

A comparison of the accounts of the miracle itself shows the characteristics of the different writers. MATTHEW'S, the Gospel of the Messiah and of testimony to Israel, gives the facts with little detail to show (evidently a point of great importance) that the authority of the Son of Man extends to forgiveness of sin. In Mark the condition of the sufferer is specially noted—he is so helpless he is borne of four. The inability of the bearers to reach the great Physician, the breaking up of the roof, these and other minor details bring the whole scene vividly before the mind. From this Gospel, too, we learn that all this took place at home *ἐν οἴκῳ*. The Lord had left Nazareth and *dwelt* at Capernaum (*cf.* the scene in Luke 4. and Matt. 4. 13). LUKE'S account differs little from MARK'S, but has some characteristic touches which give a moral force to the description. The sufferer is let down "before Jesus." The effect *in* the man himself is also in place here: "he departed to his house, glorifying God." All attribute glory to God, but how far this was the fruit of a divinely wrought faith may be questioned. The danger of abstract truth, "Who is able to forgive sins but God alone?" without the knowledge of the present action of the Spirit of God is here plainly seen.

Healing the Withered Hand in the Synagogue (Matthew 12., Mark 3., Luke 6.).

This miracle holds an important place in the controversy with the religious leaders in Israel in connection with their wilful rejection of the message and ministry of Jesus. In all cases it follows immediately on the incident of the disciples plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath. MATTHEW shows that in the greatness of His person He was superior to ritualistic order, even that divinely established. In the miracle it is manifested that the power of God present in grace cannot rest in the presence of man's need, even in a Jewish synagogue. The subversion of their religious system has always excited murderous hostility in the minds of the hypocrites.

MATTHEW gives all this in greater detail, suitably to testimony to Israel. MARK adds a point of special interest, giving an insight into the personal feelings of Jesus, "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (*cf.* Eph. 4. 26). LUKE scarcely differs from MARK, though the latter notices the ill-omened alliance of Pharisees and Herodians to remove Him by death—though it was the Sabbath. The lust of murder does not defile the soul in the eyes of the hypocrites like the non-observance of a point of ritual.

The Demoniac Child (Matthew 17., Mark 9., Luke 9.).

For our instruction, doubtless, this scene of diabolical power and malice occurs in every account just after the Transfiguration. The failure of the disciples at the foot of the mountain to utilize the power manifested at the summit is conspicuous, and calls forth the exclamation from the Lord, "O faithless and perverted generation! How long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" It would seem that the disciples in their unbelief (see Matt. 17. 20) are representative of the whole people. The account in Mark is told at much greater length than in Matthew or Luke, the desperate malignity of the evil power dominating its victim being specially mentioned (vers. 18-22). Notice also the additional word, expressive of purpose, "to destroy him," and the last

effort of satanic hatred in presence of its Conqueror. Mark also gives further insight into the mind of the father to whose desponding words "if thou canst" (ver. 22) the Lord's answer is "if thou canst believe." This gracious encouragement brings forth the words: "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

The suitability of all this in the Gospel of instruction for the servant of the Lord is evident.

The Blind Man or Men outside Jericho (Matthew 20., Mark 10., Luke 18.).

This miracle marks a division in the Gospel narrative, serving in all three Gospels as the introduction to the last events of the earthly life of our Lord. Unlike most of the other cases of healing, these men used their recovered sight to follow Jesus, and thus served as a true witness of His grace and power as He journeyed to die. They exhibited a faith which should have been found in Israel, and LUKE adds that "they followed Him, glorifying God." He also mentions the effect on others: "All the people when they saw it gave praise unto God." Blessed illustration of what the path of a saint may be.

MATTHEW mentions two blind men—his is the Gospel of witness to Israel—MARK and LUKE select, we may conclude, the more prominent character for record. To him it is said, "Thy *faith* hath saved thee" or "healed thee"—the word is the same in both cases. A faith it may be noted which, recognizing the person of Christ, overcame all obstacles to reach Him.

Feeding the Five Thousand (Matthew 14., Mark 6., Luke 9.).

This miracle (the only one found in all four Gospels; having its place in John in connection with the teaching of chapter 6.) is found in the synoptics subsequent to the Lord's rejection by the people, as told in Matthew 11. 12, Mark 3., and Luke 7. (see verses 31-34). Following on this in each Gospel we find the parable of the Sower, and then this gracious ministry to the starving multitudes. A precious testimony to divine perseverance in goodness (Zech. 11. 7). From a comparison of the accounts, we learn

that the return of the twelve from their mission coincided with the arrival of the disciples of John bearing tidings of the death of their master (Matt. and Luke). At this point MARK gives a detail peculiar to himself, namely, that the crossing over the sea was at the invitation of Jesus, who said, "Come ye yourselves apart unto a desert place, and rest awhile," for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. In result we find from this Gospel of the perfect servant that the little while of rest was never found. On landing the multitudes were waiting for Him. MARK here gives a beautiful touch: "He was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." He first ministers to them the word of life, and then satisfies their bodily necessities by food given under the blessing of heaven (ver. 41). But little variation is found in the three narrations of the miracle. As usual, MARK has certain details which present the same more vividly to us. The disciples are not aware of the smallness of their resources (38). An apparent discrepancy occurs as to the locality of the miracle between MARK and LUKE. Luke 9, 10 shows how the desert place to which they went after crossing the Sea of Galilee was in the vicinity of Bethsaida. Mark 6, 45 shows that after all was over the disciples returned by sea to Bethsaida. The explanation is that LUKE's Bethsaida is B. Julias, on the north-east of the Lake. MARK's Bethsaida was near Capernaum, (John 6, 17) on the west of the Lake.

C. E. H. W.

MATTHEW—continued from page 313.

Chapter 14. opens with the account of the beheading, under revolting circumstances, of John the Baptist by Herod, whose conscience accused him when he heard the fame of Jesus. John's ministry had closed by his imprisonment before that of the Lord began (4-12); but now he was gone from the scene. The disciples tell Jesus: He felt it, and departed by ship into a desert place; but crowds following on foot, His retirement was soon broken in upon. Jehovah would still meet the need of the poor of the flock. And the faith of His disciples in Him was brought to the test—"Give ye them to eat." This is the character of all that follows from chapters 11., 12., where the breach between Messiah and the

leaders of Israel had taken place, and gives occasion, as we have seen, for the revelation of the deeper glory of His person, that became the basis of other purposes of God, as well as the touchstone of the state of all who came before the Lord. "*Bring them hither to Me*" would recall the resources that remained for faith in His blessed person, and twelve baskets full of the fragments that were over after 5000 men, besides women and children, had been satisfied, indicate how over-abounding all these resources were.

He now compels the disciples to take ship for the other side, and dismissing the Jewish multitude, He goes apart upon the mountain for prayer, but not losing sight of the little storm-tossed craft (as Mark records) in which they had to cross the sea without Him. The sea sets forth the moral character of the world we have to pass through, but "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He will rejoin them in the ship; but ere He does so the new path of faith opens out to us, as set forth in Peter and only given in Matthew.

The Lord presents Himself walking upon the water, in order that one, at least, of His disciples might be attracted to Him to walk as He walked. He was the Son whom none but the Father knew, but who had given them rest in the revelation of the Father (chap. 11.) before they had to face the storm. Two things furnished Peter for a path where no principle of the flesh could avail for a moment: the glory of His person—"If it be THOU bid me come unto Thee," and the authority of His word, "Come." And he left the only known means to man of crossing the deep to go to Jesus. It was a divine path where only divine power could sustain and circumstances were of no account. But the boisterous wind was used, as circumstances often are, to test faith, and Peter, with his eye off the Object of faith, began to sink. The Lord was too near to let him do so; but the difference was great between the joy of walking like the Lord in communion with Him and sustained by His power, and the rebuke of unbelief, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Who can fail to see the bearing of the incident upon the change of the dispensation, the Lord thus educating our hearts for the consequences of following Him in a world that had

rejected Him, and where every contrary wind and wave had to be encountered.

When they were come into the ship they, as the remnant of His people, owning Him as the Son of God, the wind ceased, and they reach the land of Gennesaret, where, in chapter 8,* He had been entreated to depart from them, now to be recognized by the men of the place, with healing power going out from Him even at the touch of the hem of His garment. These things present a perfect picture from the execution of John to Christ's rejoining the believing remnant of His ancient people and being known of the Gentiles, the path of faith in the meantime being revealed to us in the most blessed way.

Chapter 15. goes deeper into the roots of things. When challenged by scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, the Lord shows that their traditional observances made the commandment of God void, and exposes the religion of the flesh. It was hypocrisy. Outward forms were of no avail while the heart was far from God, as Isaiah had forewarned, and the leaders of such a system were but blind leaders of the blind to the ruin of those that trusted in them. So much for man in his religious state. But the multitudes are called to hear that man in his purely natural state is defiled, and that not by anything that goes into his mouth but by all that comes out of it. For all the streams of outward activity do but proceed from the heart, the defiled spring of every defiling thing.

Then in a woman of the parts of Tyre and Sidon—the personification of human pride and hardness of heart, chapter 11. 21, 22—a Canaanite, we have the blessed work and fruit of grace leading her to

take the place of this judgment of man (vers. 1–20) without reserve. For when she had appealed to Him as the Son of David, not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and He had told her, in answer to her cry of distress “ Lord help me,” that “ It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to *currs* ”, (for such is the force of the diminutive used), she says, in effect, “ Yes, Lord, I am a cur, but there is such superabundance upon the Master's table that there is enough for the cur beneath it.” Was He there to deny it? Nay, He came to be the revelation of that overflowing heart of God that could not be pent up within Jewish barriers. When there was no difference between man and man, the heart of all alike corrupt, God must be God in grace to man. And so in the lovely grace in which she took her true place before God in the judgment of herself she reached through to the heart of God. “ O woman, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

Yet the poor and afflicted of Israel were not forsaken, and again, as before in Matthew, a multitude of cases are grouped together of lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others cast down at His feet, who glorify the God of Israel when His power was put forth to heal them. Then, acting of His own motion (ver. 32, comp. 14. 15) in compassion, He feeds them, though the disciples were at as great a loss as ever as to how it was to be done. The *seven* baskets left, after 5000, besides women and children, had been filled, would point to the fullness of spiritual blessing, as before the twelve had spoken of administration in man ; which prepares the way for the next great change of dispensation, to be announced in chapter 16.

J.A.T.

* “ The country of the Gergesenes.” Comp. Mark 5. 1—“ country of the Gadarenes,” and Luke 8. 26—“ country of the Gadarenes . . . over against Galilee.” Here, as in Mark 6. 53–55, it seems to have been part of the same region that got the general name of Gennesaret from the lake, but lying to the east of it.

The Gospel.

The gospel is the revelation of God which comes to us in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The love of God is the source of the gospel, for there would have been no such thing if God had not loved man ; but the first thing in which we need instruction is

righteousness. The gospel is God's answer to Satan, who has darkened man's mind in regard to God, and by that darkness produced the dreadful degradation of man of which Romans 1. speaks. Sin called God's righteousness in question, but His righteousness is now made manifest in the gospel.

Atoning and other Sufferings of the Lord.

WE have received the following letter from Mr. S. D. Gordon, with regard to comments made in our October issue on his teaching, and as we should greatly regret even the appearance of unfairness to him we print it in full:

DEAR FRIEND,—Some one has sent me a copy of "Scripture Truth," October number, in which you make quotations from "Calvary," with some comments. I appreciate much your kindly spirit in thinking that I may not mean to do harm.

The general impression of your article, so far as it refers to the little book, is, that its teachings about the significance of the death of our Lord are erroneous, and so harmful, in that they make *too little* of His sufferings, and further, that they say that *His* sufferings and those that may come to His true followers are of the same kind.

May I venture to suggest this: the quotations you make, *taken out of their connection*, give an inaccurate impression of the teaching of the booklet. I feel quite sure your purpose in this is wholly good, and that you do not mean to do the harm to your readers that these quotations, so disconnected, do.

I am venturing to give here some *additional* quotations, which you can verify, which placed beside those you make, give, I think, a wholly altered impression.

Additional quotations.—1. *Regarding the significance and meaning of our Lord's death*, to wit: "Calvary is God's spelling of sacrifice. . . . Sacrifice here. . . means this—one dying instead of another, . . . the blood of the innocent shed on behalf of the guilty. It means one dying for others who deserved to die. He would die only because of others' sin; of Himself He would not die. . . . One pouring out His life to the last drop of it that other men, with the seeds of death in them, might find life. . . ." (pages 7 and 8).

2. *Regarding the sufferings of Joseph and other O.T. characters cited.*—These are constantly referred to (chap. 1.) as "foreshadowings." *In CONTRAST with these* the sufferings of our Lord are thus referred to:

"Calvary is, in fact, immensely more than Calvary foreshadowed. . . . Calvary in its intensity, its reality, in its personal meaning to all men and races, is immensely more than shadowing or inklings of it in the O.T." (page 27). ". . . None of these suffered as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered. . . . He actually suffered more, infinitely more, and with a deeper significance than any man in that time, or at any time has, or COULD. Calvary means immensely more than any foreshadowing of it could mean" (page 28). "When you came to the fact of Calvary (in contrast with the foreshadowings), the sacrifice, the substitu-

tion of the Old falls away before the marvelous, wonderful sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. The shedding of His blood was for the remission of the sin of all the world; and *He suffered as none other ever did, or COULD.* . . . You forget it all (*i.e.* O.T. foreshadowings) as you come with bared and bowed head into the presence of our Lord Jesus, pouring out His life-blood as a Substitute for the whole race of men" (pages 28, 29).

Now, I humbly venture to think that as a matter of *mere honesty to your readers* this letter of mine, with these additional quotations, should be published in "S.T." in as prominent a place as the article referred to.

It makes one just a bit sore in heart to be thought untrue to the one thing that is the passion of the heart, and the continual teaching of the lips. Yet that is merely personal, and does not matter. But that an inaccurate impression be given to your readers in so vital a matter becomes very serious.

What is referred to as a "glaring misquotation" of John 12. 25 is, of course, not a quotation, but one part of the intermingling of quotation and exposition running throughout the comment on the "Greeks" incident on pages 53-55.

I am constrained to think that you have not had time to read the little book *thoughtfully* and *prayerfully*, and so, QUITE UNINTENTIONALLY, have misrepresented its message.

Sincerely yours, S. D. GORDON.

We were glad to receive the above letter, as evidencing, we believe, a *desire to teach only the truth.*

But immediately on its receipt we wrote Mr. Gordon reminding him that our comments on the teaching contained in his addresses on Calvary had already been before him over a year ago when the articles were first printed in the *Overcomer*, and that in spite of our having then pointed out these things more fully than possible or necessary in "Scripture Truth," he had nevertheless subsequently published the same defective teachings in book form without a single faulty sentence then commented on being revised or added to so that what is of immeasurable importance might be kept clear.

In our letter we said to Mr. Gordon further:

"If you could state in a few clear unequivocal words that you do *not* hold that the sufferings of such as Joseph and others were in the least degree substitutional in the sense in which the atoning sufferings of Christ were substitutional, that you hold, on the other hand, that the sufferings of Christ for sin were wholly unique, not only in their extent, but also in their character as being sufferings judicially inflicted on Him as our Substitute, it would give us pleasure to

print this. Add, if you will, that though you have used the same word 'substitution' in describing the sufferings of Joseph, David, and others as you have done in describing the wholly different sufferings of Christ at Calvary, yet your language was not intended to convey the meaning it does in our eyes. . . .

"We are quite ready to believe that the error pointed out was unintentional on your part—that your glory and boast, as ours, is in that work which stands alone in its solitary and unapproachable majesty—the Atonement. But would you just put this in words, and make clear that you recognize the infinite distance which separates the character of, for instance, Joseph's sufferings *from men* and Christ's atoning sufferings at the *hand of God* for sin?"

To that letter, written a fortnight before the date at which this number goes to press, we have received no reply or acknowledgment.

We live in strange days when the effort of Satan is to pervert the truth whilst retaining its terms. R. J. Campbell, the exponent of modern "new theology," was enthusiastically received by a great company of Christian ministers at Nottingham recently on his affirmation that in his experience "Jesus of Nazareth is inseparable from the eternal Christ." They evidently thought he meant the truth: but he did not. A few days later, preaching at the City Temple, he affirmed, according to a printed account of his address, that "the Word was made flesh in us as well as in Christ," and proceeded to state that the difference between mankind and Christ was "*not one of kind but of degree.*" We do not class Mr. Gordon with R. J. Campbell, but we affirm without hesitation that so far as his booklet goes his teaching as to the atoning work of Christ proceeds in this respect exactly on a line with R. J. Campbell's teaching as to His glorious person. The truth is that in each case the difference is *not* one of degree, it is one of *kind*. Both the person and atoning work of our Lord Jesus were **UNIQUE** in every sense.

We have not space to make comment here in detail, but generally we may say that if the quotations Mr. Gordon now makes from his book were all the teaching there is in that book we should not have had the same occasion to find fault with it. But they do not stand alone. They are intermingled with the statements which we quoted from his teaching in our October issue, which statements give the meaning to be attached to the words used. For instance, above Mr. Gordon quotes him-

If Israel were not sustained by God above the nations, they were led away captive by them; they were either victors or slaves.

So a Christian is always weaker than the world, if he be out of communion, for he has lost the source of his strength;

self as saying "None of these suffered as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered," but his meaning is given in the words that immediately follow: "He had greater suffering *capacity*. He was far more *sensitive* to suffering. The things that would make us suffer would make Him, as a Man, suffer far more, because of the *greater sensitiveness of His spirit.*" That is to say the difference as Mr. Gordon presents it is only one of degree—the same sufferings, but far more deeply felt, and hence wider in their bearing and affect for others than were the "substitutionary" sufferings of those who foreshadowed Him. In a word, Calvary, as the scene of our Lord's atoning sufferings, is presented as if it were a high mountain overtopping a range of low hills. But it is not that. It is absolutely *beyond compare*, being **UNIQUE** in its character, and standing, as we have said, alone in solitary and unapproachable majesty. Who can fail to see the vast chasm which separates suffering judicially inflicted by God for sin and sufferings at the hand merely of men for righteousness?

It is not as if this had not been pointed out to Mr. Gordon. It has. An abundant opportunity has been given him if he really does hold the truth to state it in a few clear words. We trust he yet may.

That Joseph and David in their sufferings were typical of our Lord Jesus in His sufferings at the hands of wicked men and for righteousness' sake we do not question. But they did not suffer substitutionally as bearing the righteous judgment of God, due to sin. The Sinless One alone could do this, and neither Joseph, David, nor any other Old Testament worthy foreshadowed our Lord in this. The only foreshadowings of our Lord in this character were the "burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin."

Nor do we believe that Psalm 22. and Isaiah 53. depict what David and Isaiah suffered in their own lives, for Holy Writ definitely declares that they, the "prophets, have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching *what*, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the *sufferings of Christ*, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1. 10-11).

Never was a word more needed than is that in Jude 3 in these days of easy-going toleration and surrender of the truth: "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye *should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.*"

"Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss."

and is therefore easily baffled by the world, which assails him with all its varied influences.

The Christian must either be above the world, testifying against it for God or he must be the servant of it. There is no neutral place for him.

Saved from Wrath.

J.H. The wrath spoken of in Romans 5. 9 is the wrath to come, the judgment of God against those that obey not the gospel. The Lord Jesus is the One who will execute that judgment (John 5. 22 ; 2 Thess. 1. 7-9 ; Rev. 1. 7). But we know Him as our Saviour, and we are justified by His blood. He Himself bore the wrath of God, which our sins called forth, for us. And if by *His death* we are justified and reconciled to God, much more, seeing that *He lives* in all the value and power of His work and resurrection, will He preserve us from coming wrath. He is "our deliverer from the coming wrath" (1 Thess. 1. 10, N.T.).

Psalm 112. 8.

M.T. These latter psalms have a special reference to Israel, and the promises in them will be fulfilled to the letter to those of that nation whose trust shall be in God during the time of trial that will come upon them, and which is spoken of in Scripture as "the great tribulation."

But there are divine principles in them all, and teaching which is of the greatest importance to us. So here in this psalm the one whose trust is in God shall never be moved : enemies may rise up against

him, even as they rose up against his Master, but he shall not be afraid ; his heart is fixed, the Lord is his hope and trust.

"Until he see his desire upon his enemies" refers to the time when they will persecute him no more ; if he is not afraid while they do persecute, he certainly will not be when they have ceased to do so, as you suggest.

Psalm 119, 147, 148.

M.T. In this beautiful passage of scripture—"I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried : I hoped in Thy Word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may meditate in Thy Word"—the Psalmist declares his love for and continuance in prayer, and meditation on the Word of God. He needed no watchman to call him to early morning prayer, for before the dawn he "cried." Nor did he need the call of the night watchers to rouse him from slumber in order that he might give himself to meditation. Early and late God and His Word were his hope and stay.

The Jews, like the Greeks and Romans, divided the night in military watches, each watch representing the period for which sentinels remained on duty.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. 7. 12).

"Hitherto the LORD hath helped me !"

Every moment, every hour,
Giving light in time of darkness,
Clothing weakness with His power.
Often when the road was lonely,
By my side He softly trod,
Often when the day was gloomy
Came the cheering smile of God.

"Hitherto the LORD hath helped me !"

Then, whate'er the future bring,
Through its boundless, trackless mazes,
He will keep me 'neath His wing.
I can trust Him for the morrow,
For He says : "Be not afraid,
I will certainly be with thee,
Fear not, neither be dismayed."

Christ Everything.

THOU art my shelter, loving Lord,
The bread on which I feed,
My rock with living water stored—
For ever be Thy name adored,
My soul can know no need.

Yea, Thou art *everything* to me,
Star of the morning bright,
Thy love, declared in death I see,
Thy glory and Thy victory
In resurrection might.

Thou hast the Father's name declared,
The Father's love hast shown,
And I Thy heavenly voice have heard,
Thy powerful life-imparting word
My inmost soul hath known.

What is the garish world to me—
Its tinsel and its joys?
Thy glory and Thy grace I see,
My soul is satisfied with Thee,
And earth no more annoys.