

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

FOURTH ANNUAL VOLUME
(1912)

“Thy Word is Truth”

Published at 12 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

“Thou weariest not, most gracious Lord,
Though we may weary grow ;
In season, the sustaining word
Thou giv’st our hearts to know.”

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Scripture Truth.

MY heart is inditing a good matter : I speak of the things which I have made touching the King : my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Thou art fairer than the children of men : grace is poured into Thy lips : therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever. * * *

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness : therefore God, thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. (Ps. 45. 1, 2, 6, 7.)

* * * * *

The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. (1 TIM. 6. 14-16.)

|| "Wouldst thou know My glory, beloved ?

Know Me, the great I AM ?

First must thine eyes behold Me

The slain and the stricken Lamb.

|| Wouldst thou know the wisdom and wonder

Of God's everlasting plan ?

Behold on the cross of dishonour

A cursed and a dying Man."

The Person and Glories of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In presenting an enlarged issue of "Scripture Truth," entirely devoted to papers upon the glories of our Lord Jesus, our prayer is that we may be led into a deeper communion with the Father, concerning Him who is all His delight ; and that our affections towards Christ may be so quickened that we may desire to behold more steadfastly and constantly His glory in its mighty transforming power. This will be a true revival in every believing heart where it is produced, a revival which we have a right to look for at this time when the return of the Bridegroom is imminent.

In our knowledge of Him we are but like children on the margin of a mighty ocean. Yet the little we know of Him has made us love Him, and has filled our hearts with grateful praise, so that even now we own Him as the worthy object of our worship ; but what will it be when we see Him face to face, in the Father's house, where no earth-born cloud and selfish consideration shall intervene between ourselves and Him ? Then :

"For ever our still wondering eyes shall o'er His beauties rove ;
To endless ages we'll adore the riches of His love."

"This is He ;"

(H. P. BARKER).

or, Christ as the Delight of the Heart of God.

MUST it not have been a special and peculiar delight to the heart of God to utter those three words, "This is he," in the ears of Samuel, thus calling attention to the man whom He had chosen as His anointed? For we cannot doubt that David, in 1 Samuel 16., is a picture of Him who, though David's Son, was David's Lord, and that in pointing him out as the man of His choice, God had in His mind that blessed and glorious One whom, in days that were yet to come, He would present to men as the object of His supreme delight and love.

Samuel's choice would have fallen upon Eliab, as he looked on his countenance and the height of his stature. He had to learn that while men naturally judge by outward appearance, God looks upon the heart.

Think for a moment what was in the heart of the Lord Jesus when God looked upon Him on earth. Think of His untiring devotedness to God's will, finding His very meat in the doing of it (John 4. 34). Think of His obedience, His dependence, His entire confidence in God. All these things which should characterize man in his relations with God were found to perfection in Christ.

What must it have been to God to behold for the first time in the world's history a Man who, amid reproach and suffering, perfectly answered to His every thought as to what man should be? Well might He rend asunder the very heavens to testify of His delight in Him!

But there is something else to be observed.

Not only did the LORD find pleasure in looking upon David's *heart*, but there was also that which was attractive outwardly. He was "of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to."

So with the Lord Jesus. Not only did God see in His *heart* that which gave Him unspeakable delight, but in all that was outward, that men could take account of—His words, His acts, His whole life on earth, His pathway of service and suffering—all was fragrant and beautiful in the eyes of God.

And God invites us to view that blessed One from His own standpoint, and to share His delight in Him. In the selfishness of our hearts we are far more ready to view Him from the standpoint of our own need, and to rejoice in His services to us as our Redeemer, our Saviour, our very present help in time of trouble. All this, and more, He assuredly is. But it is good sometimes to lose sight of ourselves, and our need, and to *think God's thoughts* about His beloved Son. This, by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to do.

All through the centuries onwards from David's day prophets were raised up to testify of Christ. To Him they all bore witness (Acts 10. 43). Like a long line of finger-posts they stood, all pointing on to the One who was coming, until the last of the line was reached—John the Baptist (Matt. 11. 13). John was the greatest man, in point of privilege, that had ever lived (Matt. 11. 11). If other prophets had testified of Christ as the coming One, John was able to declare His actual advent, and to repeat the glowing words, uttered in the far-off days to Samuel of David: "THIS IS HE!" (John 1. 30). Immediately follows a twofold testimony to the glory of Him to whom John bore witness:

(1) "*After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me.*"

Here we have what we may call the *given glory* of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has been preferred before all others,

a name given Him that outshines in excellence every other name, a place accorded Him far more exalted than the place filled by the greatest of created beings.

(2) "*He was before me.*"

Here we have the personal intrinsic glory of Him who, though He came into manhood, exhibiting therein all the perfections that were His, was yet infinitely more than man, the everlasting Word, the eternal Son. It was from Godhead's fullest glory that He came. And though He laid aside the majesty and glory that were His, He could not be otherwise than what He ever was, "God, blessed for ever." If He learned obedience (Heb. 5. 8), and trod a pathway of dependence, and displayed all the perfections of man according to God's thoughts, He never ceased to be what He personally was, and to possess the attributes of Deity,

such as omnipotence and omniscience. Down-trodden and spit upon by wicked men, He was none the less Upholder of all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1. 3).

This, Christian readers, is He to whom we belong. This is He who in infinite compassion stooped to suffer and bleed for us. This is He who has set His love upon us without recall! This is He who is engaged on our behalf in mighty, effectual intercession! This is He who will trust no legion of angels to fetch us to glory, but will come for us Himself! This is He who will find His eternal joy in having us with Him, to share His portion, and to dwell with Him in the blissful knowledge of the Father's love.

Let us prostrate ourselves before Him, and with deepest adoration own Him "my Lord and my God."

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 1.

(H. J. VINE).

The Sign, the Stone, and the Sanctuary.

WHO is this to whom the Old Testament from Genesis onwards so constantly points, raising in our hearts the very highest expectations, as it speaks of "*the Woman's Seed*," "*Abraham's Seed*," and "*David's Seed*?" Who is this through whom all the world is to be blessed? What is His name? Has He come? Is He living?

The first chapter of the New Testament answers these questions. There we are introduced to the only One who could be truly called "*the Woman's Seed*"—the promised Son of the Virgin (vers. 21-3). The first verse of the New Testament shows Him to us—"JESUS CHRIST, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." The glorious Fulfiller of the promises has come! The "Yea" and the "Amen" of them all! Yes, He lives! for though He was slain, He could not be holden of death, He rose from the dead and is alive for evermore!

"The Woman's Seed," but—meditate on the divine wonder here—He is also "*Emmanuel*"—"GOD with us." He is "*Abraham's Seed*," but, stupendous fact! He could also say "*Before Abraham was I AM*" (John 8. 38). He is "*David's Seed*," but He is also "*David's Lord*" (Matt. 22. 41-6). Yea, "*Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from among the dead*" saith, "*I am the ROOT*," before David, as well as "*the Offspring*," after David. He is THE FIRST, as well as THE LAST.

In looking at some of the glories of the Lord which are made known to us by the Holy Spirit of God in the Scriptures of truth, we must remind ourselves that the flesh cannot take in or understand these things, but having "*no confidence in the flesh*," it is the glad privilege of those who have the Holy Spirit to rejoice in Christ Jesus and His marvellous excellences. Such

will have no ear for those who detract from His glory, but to all that exalts Him according to the Sacred Writings they will listen gladly. We must remember, however, that when the very best has been said concerning Him there are still eternal depths which are beyond our telling.

If it is the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Him, this is also the right work for the Spirit-filled servant. The Spirit who fills him does not "*speak from Himself*" (John 16. 13), nor does the servant (John 7. 18), or he "*seeks his own glory*," instead of the Saviour's. Those who *originate* theories and ideals out of their own inner consciousness stand condemned before these verses.

Isaiah has been called the royal prophet by some, the evangelical prophet by others. Both are right, for he speaks of the King in His beauty and of good tidings for the poor. He is the royal evangelical prophet. His fields are vast and varied. May it be ours to dig some of the precious metal out of the abundance of his wealthy hills, and to gather some of the brilliant gems with their divinely beauteous colours, which are so plenteous in his rich valleys. For whether we look in "*the depth*" or gaze up at "*the height*," we shall find here the shining glories of Christ Jesus still undimmed by the dust of long centuries. In "*the depth*" of His humiliation as well as in "*the height*" of His majesty His perfections are full of lustre.

These treasures are of abiding and eternal value. "Riches and honour are *with Me*," saith the Lord Jesus, the hidden wisdom of God; "yea, *durable* riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and MY revenue than choice silver. . . . I was set up from everlasting" (Prov. 8. 18-23).

When speaking of these spiritual possessions as "the fields of Isaiah," we may remind ourselves that they are really ours. They belong to the believers of this day, for we read of the

prophets, that when "the Spirit of Christ which was in them . . . testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" it was revealed to them, "that not unto themselves, but *UNTO US* they did minister the things" (1 Peter 1. 11, 12). We are therefore entering upon what is through grace our own God-given property.

The risen Son of God Himself has shown us the royal road to the treasure stores of the Old Testament, for "beginning at Moses and *all the prophets*, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things *concerning Himself*" (Luke 24. 27).

The Sign.

We will join Isaiah "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field" (chap. 7. 3). Ahaz the king of Judah comes there also, and is told to ask "*A SIGN*" of the Lord, and what is most striking is that he is requested to ask it "either *IN THE DEPTH*, or *IN THE HEIGHT* above" (ver. 11). The monarch, however, for some ulterior reason will not do so. Close dealings with God were not congenial to him. Consequently, a marvellous disclosure is made in verse 14. Ahaz, of "*the house of David*," would not ask for the sign "either in *the depth*, or in *the height*." God therefore says, as it were, I will give the sign Myself without your asking! I will give it both in *the depth* and in *the height*; and, as we see from other scriptures, in that very "*house of David*."

Mark, then, the wonderful words: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you *a sign*; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name *IMMANUEL*."

What a vast store of divine wealth is laid open to us here. The Virgin's Son becomes *THE SIGN*, given of God in "*the depth*" and in "*the height*" also. Who but the blessed God, who is infinite in wisdom, could have

thought of or given such a sign? Behold in "*the depth*" of human weakness that wondrous Babe nursed on the Virgin's lap; but even there His name tells us of "*the height*" of His glory—"IMMANUEL," "*GOD with us.*" He is truly the Sign in "*the depth*" and "*the height.*"

THIS SIGN in the depth and height is that which the Holy Spirit of God introduces at the very opening of the New Testament. Here in "*the house of David*" appears the promised Sign!

What a commotion immediately takes place! In the seen and the unseen; among the learned and the unlearned; among the great and the small; among the wicked and the pious! Why?

"Unto us a Child is born!"

The Sign in the depth behold!

The break of the glorious morn

By the prophets long foretold.

See the virgin mother fair

In yon stable, lowly, meek;

And in the manger cradled there,

The Babe whom the shepherds seek.

THE SIGN IN THE DEPTH BEHOLD!

Creation moves at the sight!

Angels cry "Glory to God!"

The star in the heavens shines bright,

To guide wise men on their road;

The faithful behold and sing:

The pious worship the Lord;

They talk of the new-born King,

Come forth to fulfil God's word.

THE SIGN OF ETERNAL LOVE.

Could the New Testament have an opening more striking and glorious? The wisdom which knows not God may see no glory here, but such wisdom is the folly which led "the princes of this age" to crucify the *Lord of Glory*, the "hidden wisdom of God."

The angel of the Lord said, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be *A SIGN* unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2. 10-12).

Again, Simeon, a just and devout man, came by the Spirit into the temple and said to Mary, the virgin mother, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for *A SIGN* which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2. 34-35). Surely this sign in "*the depth*" of sorrow and woe, and yet in "*the height*" of the glory of "*THE CHRIST, THE LORD,*" is worthy of God who is "*the ALL WISE.*" "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the glory of kings is to search out a thing. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable" (Prov. 25. 2, 3). Search the Scriptures! "These are they which testify of *ME,*" said the Son of God! Finding Him, we shall fill our treasures with the finest gold and enrich our store with all manner of precious things.

The Stone.

The truth concerning our Lord Jesus Christ can alone explain satisfactorily the signs and wonders which meet us in chapter 8. And we can only find the truly divine meaning as we are guided by the Holy Spirit, for there is a Stone here over which many have stumbled and fallen (8. 14).

When, however, we are low enough in our own esteem to notice the nature of this Stone, and to behold its virtues with the eye of faith, we shall see that it is full of beauty and splendour and wonderful significance. In "*the depth*" it is set at naught by the Jewish builders! (Acts 4. 11); in "*the height*" it is "become the Head of the corner!" In "*the depth*" it is "a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel!" (ver. 14); in "*the height*" of its glory they shall presently cry with shoutings, "Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4. 7). Happy are those who value this rejected Stone now. Jacob sought rest by putting his weary head on a stone for a *pillow*, and set it up

afterwards and anointed it as a *pillar* at *Bethel*; but the real Stone, provided by God, is the One who gives true and lasting rest to the believer; and He is set up a "living Stone" in connection with whom other living stones are being built up as a spiritual *Bethel*, where worship abounds in truth (1 Peter 2. 4-8).

Peter, when the Holy Spirit inspired him thus to write, had learned the lesson of Matthew 16. 18. It is a pity Rome has not! Jesus Christ is the Stone laid in Zion, not Peter! Jesus Christ is "the elect" and "precious" One! "He that believes on Him shall not be put to shame;" nay, even the infinite preciousness of this marvellous Stone is ours, as Peter says (1 Peter 2. 7): "To you, therefore, which believe is the preciousness." This is indeed bountiful cheer for those who believe, and great encouragement for those who build only in connection with this "Living Stone." But, to those who refuse Him, there comes the warning to the disobedient, "the Stone which the builders cast away as worthless, this is become the head of the corner, and a Stone of stumbling and rock of offence; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they have been appointed."

Difficulties may arise when we take our stand with this rejected Stone, as in this eighth chapter of Isaiah. There are "confederacies," "counsels," and "associations," but these cannot prevail against the truth, for at the end of verse 10 we have *IMMANUEL! God is with us!*

This wonderful Stone has the power of breaking up religious confederacies and dissolving unscriptural organizations. When they are tested by the Lord, the Christ, they will not stand.

We are to sanctify the Lord Himself in our hearts at such times, and have no fear as they have. Peter shows this when, again referring to this chapter; he also tells us that "the Lord of hosts" (ver. 13) is "*the Christ*" (1 Peter 3.

14, 15, N.T.). This is indeed a great discovery, but we will not dwell on it at present.

The Sanctuary.

In verse 14 of our chapter another marvellous truth is laid open before our wondering gaze, the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's "SANCTUARY." "He shall be for a sanctuary."

In regard to the Stone, rejected and cast out in "*the depth*," received and glorified in "*the height*," we may well sing with the Psalmist, "The Stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118. 22-4); but what are we to say as to the "Sanctuary?"

The Epistle to the Hebrews will help us. There the Holy Spirit of God speaks of it, whilst showing the grace and the greatness of Jesus. He "suffered outside the gate" of the centre of earthly religion, that He might set us apart to Himself by His own blood; therefore, leaving behind us the earthly sanctuary and its system, we have come to Jesus (see Heb. 13. 12, 13); and He makes our hearts sing with gladness by making known to us the bountiful grace of our God, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise to Thee" (Heb. 2. 12, 13). Mark, He is not ashamed of us, but presents us in the presence of God along with Himself, saying, "*Behold I and the children which God hath given ME.*" It is these infinitely blessed words, just quoted from Hebrews 2., which are given to us by the Spirit to uncover for us the divine meaning of *the Sign* in Isaiah 8., where the very same words are used in verse 18.

From the context we see that here we are in thought upon the *holy hill*, and

we learn from Hebrews "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (12. 14). Let not the world-borderer or the pleasure-lover think that his sight will be clear enough to behold the perfections of the Lord and the wondrous things that are here to be seen! Let not the man whose mind is clouded with wrong suspicions, and whose eye is evil, think that he can behold them; the vision must first be pure.

Isaiah ("the salvation of the Lord") is in the Sanctuary mount with his children, Shear-jashub ("the remnant shall return") and Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("swift for spoil, hasty for prey"). He stands, as it were, before God, holding each by the hand, and utters those words of such profound meaning, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me!" Now notice carefully what he further says of himself and his own—they are for "signs and wonders!"

In Hebrews 2. we read of the salvation of the Lord—the "great salvation" which was first made known by the Lord Jesus and confirmed by His own, God also bearing witness with "signs and wonders!" It is the same blessed Lord Jesus Christ who, taking us by the hand, as it were, and linking us with Himself in this holy elevation and in this heavenly intimacy as His own, is saying in Hebrews 2. 13, "Behold I and the children which God hath given ME."

We find ourselves in the "sanctuary" truly here; but, thank God, not with fear and dread. Grace that takes us in, sets us at rest and peace in this holy place, with the sense that we are loved with an eternal love, knowing that His one offering has put away for ever that which could hinder our joy. And though we would fain fill our time with a ceaseless flow of worship in the Spirit, yet we may also with restful leisure adoringly admire the holy perfections of Him who said He HIMSELF would be "for a Sanctuary."

Ezekiel 11. 15 will confirm us in this. "The inhabitants of Jerusalem," those who then boasted in the official leadership of God's people, had turned the real Israel away from the place of Jehovah's name and sanctuary. These hard leaders claimed the outward position, but "all the house of Israel wholly" were scattered! Where, then, should they find a sanctuary, seeing they were excluded from the sanctuary of God at Jerusalem by these place-loving leaders, who "devised mischief and gave wicked counsel!" (ver. 2). Hark to the soul-cheering answer in verse 16; The Lord says, "I will be to them as a little Sanctuary."

It is Adonahy-Jehovah who says this. The Supreme Ruler, who is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, is the blessed and unchanging retreat for our hearts, whatever changes may take place in the unsettled concerns of outward profession, or even among the nations of the world. He who is our true Sanctuary makes all things work together for our good. It was His voice that called us to Himself, and He will never fail us. He will soon take us all to share the glory with our Lord Jesus Christ as His co-heirs, but meanwhile He is our "Sanctuary for a little while," as Ezekiel 11. 16 might be read. It is not that He is "a little" Sanctuary, but rather that He is the Sanctuary of all His own "for a little" while, during the time of the scattering. "A little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37); but even now we sing our joyful song to Him:

"Jesus! before Thy face we fall,
Our Lord, our life, our hope, our all;
For we have nowhere else to flee,
No Sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

In Thee we every glory view,
Of safety, strength, and beauty too;
'Tis all our rest and peace to see
Our Sanctuary, Lord, in Thee."

(To be continued.)

Emmanuel.

(J. T. MAWSON).

AS Moses kept the sheep of Jethro, the Midianite, in the back side of the desert, he came to Horeb, the mountain of God, and there he beheld a strange thing. Upon the rugged sides of that notable mountain there burned a bush with fire, but in spite of the fierce flames that enwrapped it, that bush was not consumed. Wonder at this great sight moved Moses to turn aside to discover why this should be, when the voice of God arrested him, and he found that he was in the immediate presence of the great I AM.

Out of that bush God spoke to the man, and told him of salvation for His people—free, great, and full. He revealed Himself as the almighty Deliverer.

The scoffing critic declares that for a bush to burn with fire and not be consumed is a physical impossibility, and so relegates this story, along with many another in Holy Writ, to the realm of legend and myth. But that which moves to ridicule the blind but presumptuous "wise and prudent" of the earth yields the most precious lessons to those who love God and His Word. In that burning bush there was foreshadowed the most extraordinary event that could happen in the history of time.

The flame of fire tells us of God: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 29). And the bush tells us of men, poor, sinful, rebellious men—dry, withered, and useless, by whom no fruit was yielded to God. If God, who is a consuming fire, and who must judge all iniquity, should at any time come down into the midst of the dry and fruitless bush of humanity, and He has a right to do this whenever He pleases, what shall the result be? Why, there can be but one result, we should say, the bush will be consumed. Such is the natural thought

of men, and thence the desire to keep God at a distance. And in this thought we seem to be confirmed as we read the record of Sinai. There at that awesome mount, the same at which Moses had had his first interview with God, the law of God was given, and out from its cloud-crested summit the lightnings flamed forth, and the thunders boomed and rolled, and as God spoke to the people they feared exceedingly and begged that they might not hear that majestic voice again, but that Moses would become a mediator for them.

Yes, it would seem to us, as we contemplate that sight, that men must be consumed if God comes into the midst of them. But such a thought is false, fundamentally and absolutely false, as God's "due time" has proved.

That due time arrived when the virgin daughter of David's royal house brought forth her firstborn Son and "laid Him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn." Here was a sight for the angels of God, a sight that moved the whole multitude of them to rapturous praise, for the name of that Babe was called EM-MANUEL, which, being interpreted, is "God with us." The Babe in Bethlehem's manger was the great antitype of the burning bush. "God was manifest in the flesh and seen of angels." God was in the midst of men and they were not consumed.

But for what purpose was God in the midst of men? There could be only one reason for this great event. If He had desired to send some message of warning, entreaty, or command, a servant like unto the prophets would have served the purpose, for at sundry times and in divers manners He thus addressed the fathers of old. If He had intended to make an example of sinners by executing His righteous judgment

against them for their sins, an angel or two would have sufficed, as in the case of the guilty cities of the plain. But when Emmanuel appears, men and angels must be silent, and stand aside, and every ear must be attentive unto Him, for He comes to reveal the eternal purposes of God, and declare and bring to pass the intentions of divine and infinite love. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3. 17).

If sinners were to be saved God must come down to them to do it, and if God comes down to sinners He must come as their Saviour, His very nature demands this, and His wisdom has found a way by which it can be done, according to the righteousness of the eternal throne. So Emmanuel's name is JESUS. Blessed, precious name! Name of reproach and shame on earth, name of ignominy upon the cross, name above every name in heaven above, name that through endless ages shall thrill a universe with gladness, and blend in harmonious praise the joy of every creature within the limitless bounds of the realm of the Redeemer-God.

"Sweetest Name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Sweetest note on seraph song—
Jesus! JESUS! JESUS!"

Jehovah-Saviour.

The world opened a stable door to receive Him, and thus advertised its

contempt and hatred of Him, but He accepted in an infinite meekness the place they assigned to Him, that He might open out before the eyes of the poorest and the least the priceless treasures of divine compassion and love.

And so He moved through this world "seen of angels;" they rejoiced in that goodness which dwelt in Him: the goodness of God by which He overcomes evil, even though men upon whom it flowed forth did not appreciate it. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, dried the tears upon the widow's cheeks, kissed the children into the kingdom of God, and preached the gospel to the poor. God had visited men, for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19).

This is a great sight for us to turn aside and see, greater than that which Moses saw, as the substance is greater than the shadow. And in the presence of God made known to us, and brought nigh to us in Jesus, our souls can stay without a fear, and not as Moses, who "hid his face and was afraid to look upon God," for "GOD IS LOVE."

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4. 9, 10).

"WE LOVE HIM, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US" (1 John 4. 19).

The Name Above Every Name.

Name of Jesus! dearest Name!
Bread of Heaven, and balm of love,
Oil of gladness, surest claim
To the treasure stores above.

Only Jesus! fairest Name!
Life, and rest, and peace, and bliss;
Jesus, evermore the same,
He is mine, and I am His.

Name of Jesus! highest Name!
Name that earth and heaven adore!
From the heart of God it came,
Leads me to God's heart once more.

Name of Jesus! living tide!
Days of drought for me are past;
How much more than satisfied,
Are the thirsty lips at last!

Let one in his innocence glory,
Another in works he has done—
Thy Blood is my claim and my title,
Beside it, O Lord, I have none.

The Scorned, the Despised, the Rejected,
Thou hast won Thee this heart of mine;
In Thy robes of eternal glory
Thou welcomest me to Thine.

The Greatness of the Son.

(WILLIAM H. WESTCOTT).

In Whom God has Spoken.

Hebrews 1. 1-4.

- 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ;
- 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ;
- 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written in view of the fall of Jerusalem, and the removal of the established form of religion initiated by Jehovah when the people of Israel were delivered from Egypt.

The holy places made with hands—the altar, the sacrifices, the priesthood, the very covenant to which these things were attached, and the law which foreshadowed good things to come—were all passing. In place of the whole system of material things, hallowed by the history of centuries, the Hebrews were called upon to realize the blessedness and glory of the Person who is the antitype of it all.

Instead of the State religion of the day, the temple (which, as a place of worship, was the envy of nations), the hierarchy of priests, the impressive ritual, the charm of instrumental and vocal melody, they were to find themselves outcast, ill-treated, defamed, poor, despised—with *CHRIST. WERE THEY LOSERS?*

The Epistle is the answer. They exchanged the transient thing for what is eternal. Attractions for sight and sense were displaced by the blessed realities of which faith alone can take account in this dispensation. The types were superseded by the antitype. The twilight of the old days gave way before the light of day. The partial communications from God through the prophets of earlier times were more than eclipsed by the full revelation of God's communication in the Son.

The object of much that is written in the Epistle is to set forth the greatness of the person of Christ. We have also therein the greatness of the presence of God as it is now opened up to believers, and the greatness of Christian privilege, whether inside the veil, or among Christians, or outside the camp. But let us consider the first as it is presented to us in the first four verses of the first chapter.

The Son.

It is evident that the Holy Spirit intends to emphasize the fact that the Messiah of the Jew is divine, in contrast with prophets who were not so, though divinely inspired. This is necessary, for in whom could God (who is *God*) speak adequately to reveal Himself save in a divine Person? When the time came for Him to do away with partial revelations of Himself and to fully reveal all that He is, He spoke in the One who is Son. No other was competent ; neither prophet among terrestrial beings, nor angel among celestial beings would have sufficed to bring to light all that is in the heart of God, nor to express all His character, nor to establish God's promises and purposes. The Son was the language in which God spoke. It is not that God spoke merely *by* the Son as He had spoken by the prophets ; it is more justly rendered *in* (the) Son. He was the interpreter of God ; and he who imagines that one of lesser glory than the Son could interpret God does not

know God. Only one who is God could in any adequate sense be God's interpreter of Himself.

His Sevenfold Glory.

In the short compass of two or three verses the writer is empowered by the Holy Ghost to utter seven of His glories. They bring the majesty of the Godhead down into contact with the creature's littleness, the purity of the throne into contact with the creature's sin for its removal. They look out from the present world with all its problems to the righting of all things under Christ. They bring the reader, taught by the Spirit of God, into the holy light of all that God is ; to have his whole being adjusted to God's will under the sway of that glorious Person who has revealed God to him. He is left here for a little while to tread the path of faith, with the knowledge of an Object for his love and adoration so glorious, so attractive, that no suffering can deter him, no material interests divert him, no allurements entice him away. He has seen a light past the brightness of the sun. He knows no object and no joy that he can compare with Christ and communion with Him. His soul humbly and reverently responds to God, thrills with happiness in His presence, loves to be near to Him, to study the language in which He has spoken ; for He has spoken in the Son. The birth, life, ministry, works, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Son of God are all *language* to him, for they interpret to his heart what God is.

Heir of All Things.

After the indication of His glory as Son, this is the first assurance given to our faith, viz. that God has appointed Him heir of all things. He became poor for our sakes, and instead of being accepted by Israel was cut off and had nothing. But His rejection but served for the accomplishment of God's will that He might atone for sin and make the love of God known. Now He has risen, and it is decreed

that all things shall come into His hand. The heavens and the earth are all bequeathed to Christ, the Son. It will be the pleasure of God to see His Beloved in possession of all things. In the present confusion, and amid the blindness brought about by Satan's malignant power, men are toiling to take possession of the earth for themselves. Nation intrigues against nation for the widest possible power on land and sea ; company vies with company for the possession of wealth and influence ; individual competes with individual in the struggle for recognition and ease. All are being swept along in the pursuit of pleasure, fame, riches, honour, power ; but each for himself and none for God. The thought of interference from the Supreme Being is resented ; man wants to evolve himself, to work out his own redemption. There is less and less time for thinking. A feverish haste to be rich, a lust for human learning and research, a mad race for sport and pleasure, control the masses to-day.

But we look ahead. And there, across the future, writ plain and large, is the hope of our hearts—Christ, HEIR OF ALL THINGS. Everything will revert to Christ. *Power* has been perverted to man's own ends ; it will come into Christ's hands for the execution of God's will. *Riches* have been abused by man to the furtherance of unholy plans and carnal lusts ; they come to Christ, for the service of God. All the millionaires' millions, all the wealth of mines, all the resources of the earth will come to Christ, to be administered by Him in accordance with God's will. *Wisdom* will be at His disposal. All the forces of education, though more and more perverted from their right use now, all true scientific knowledge, all the studies of matter and force, all the knowledge that men hope to gain will suddenly come under Christ's control ; and He will not fail to inherit it and to use it all for the glory of God. *Strength*—long used to crush the weak—will be His ; *honour*—long given by

man to his fellow—will be given by God to Christ; *glory*—only stained by corruption and lust in the fallen creature—will be rightly centred in the person of the Lamb once slain; *blessing*—only lost when entrusted to sinful Adam or any of his race—will be put into the hands of the Second Man, the last Adam, where it will never, never fail (Rev. 5. 12).

The future is all filled up with Christ, nothing but Christ. He will supersede everybody, all will be subservient to Him.

Maker of the Worlds.

But if we look into the past eternity, even as we have looked forward, we see the Son's glory resplendent and eternal. The personalities in the Godhead were distinguishable in the ages previous to all time. "By whom [the Son] He [God] made the worlds." This teaches us clearly that in the Godhead glory before all time the Son was distinguishable as Son. This is enough; for if we have Son, we have Father, and if we have Father and Son, we have also Holy Ghost. These are not merely names connected with the revelation made in time, but are subsisting and related glories in the Godhead outside of all time. It served the divine purpose to withhold this as a revelation until Christ came, who fully revealed God; but when the Godhead was fully revealed, and we come to know God, we find Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28. 19). By the eternal Son then, before all ages, God was pleased to make the ages, or worlds. If geological and astronomical science require incalculable ages for the production of the present universe, there is nothing necessarily in conflict with the glory of the Son; this only shifts the point farther back in the mysterious past at which we discover His glories as the Creator of all worlds for God. As to the history of responsible man on the face of the earth, that is a later thing.

Of Christ it is said, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was

not anything made that was made." Whatever there is of beauty or glory in things great or small, in all the wide universe of God, it has derived its shape, its beauty, its lustre, its functions, from Him; and He is greater, more glorious, more beautiful, than all that He has created. "Part of His name divinely stands on every work impressed." Behind all that can be called nature or creation, and earlier than the earliest forms of all matter, there is this glory; accounting for the "all things" that appeal to us now; the worlds piled upon worlds, the ages heaped upon ages. It is the glory of the eternal Son. It fills up the vision of our faith as we gaze backward into eternity.

Upholder of All Things.

Passing for a moment the two glories in between, we reach the middle of the third verse, and find Him to be the One who upholds all things by the word of His power. This spans the time which we call present, arching over from eternity past to eternity to come. It is the third phase of His glory in relation to the created scene through which we are passing. He created all things, made the worlds; He upholds all things now; He shall be heir of all things.

What a vast range of His creatorial power and wisdom does this open up to us. Supposing the law of gravitation to be true not only in the universe that we survey, but everywhere throughout the infinitude of space; granting that the moon revolves around the earth according to that law, the earth round the sun, the sun (possibly) around some "fixed" star in the Pleiades—what then? What holds up the Pleiades? If we go farther afield and in our imagination create some yet more distant or mighty centre around which ten thousand universes roll, it only makes more vast and stupendous the system which demands some fixed point capable of sustaining the whole. The mind of man reels, and is baffled. Faith, guided by inspiration, quietly

points to Christ, the Son, and utters the only possible solution—"He upholds all things by the word of His power."

What is true in things infinitely great is true also in things small. The equipoise maintained between land and water, the exquisite composition of the air that envelops our earth, the rotation of the globe that produces alternating day and night, the orbit it pursues to give us the changing seasons of summer and winter, wet and dry; the evaporation from the water surface of the globe balanced so beautifully with the flow of rivers into the sea; the preservation of the forces in the earth's crust and atmosphere that are so accurately placed as to serve man's needs while leaving room for the play of man's ingenuity; all speak of supreme wisdom and power in the One who directs and upholds the whole fabric.

All things serve His might. Stormy wind fulfils His word. The lightnings obey Him, and say, "Here we are." It was the marvellous truth that Jehovah "upholds all things by the word of His power" (read Job 38.-41.), accompanied by the sense of His grace, that broke Job down. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus (Jehovah-Saviour) of the New, as Isaiah 50. clearly shows. The very beating of our hearts, the expansion and contraction of our lungs are problems that can only be solved by the same wonderful fact, "He upholds all things by the word of His power."

The Brightness of God's Glory.

We come now to something different from simple creatorial majesty in Christ, different from the relations in which He stands with created things. For He is the shining forth of *glory*. All that can be called glory in God shines out in Him. Our Lord wears human form now, and His humanity has served to bring out in the most illuminating way, in the very midst,

too, of human circumstances, all the attributes of God, which, when viewed together, compose glory. Light is the outshining of what is in the sun. But precious as the light is, and pleasant as it is to behold the sun, we might have great difficulty in describing light. So, what is *glory*? Above all, what are the elements in *God's* glory, its constituent parts, so to say? We take a prism, and we allow the light to fall upon it. Instantly that which is diffused so sweetly as *light* becomes broken up into its component parts, and we discover the beauty of the several rays which, when blended, form light. Even so, with reverent hearts may we study Christ in whom the varied rays of God's glory are severally discerned. His character and ways bring before us the exact delineation of God's holiness, righteousness, truth; they utter to us, in an intelligible way, His grace, goodness, longsuffering mercy; they set forth those divine perfections of obedience, dependence, humility, meekness, lowliness, which could be discerned only in circumstances of humiliation. Moreover, in the cross and death of Jesus, we find every ray converging; the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Never was all that God is so seen as in that wonderful moment. All the outgoings of His holy nature against sin were present in infinite degree; and yet every consideration of pity and compassion for the sinner was combined with them. Nor is this all. Raised from the dead, triumphant over death and sin and Satan's power, Jesus has become in heaven the complete expression, the effulgence, of all that God is. What would be to us otherwise unknowable or inexplicable is resolved, and in the face of Jesus—unveiled and glorious—we behold the glory of God. That face speaks to us; it is language that our ransomed hearts can understand. It makes our own will appear loathsome, it makes the world appear a poor selfish system without God, it attracts our affections and expands

our minds, and stirs our energies for God and souls and heaven, as nothing else could. It makes the presence of God our home, and the glory of God our goal in the hope of which we boast.

The Image of His Person.

More correctly, "the expression of His substance, or Being." Who are we, that we can sit down and ponder the Deity, the Supreme Being? What material have we on the basis of which we may draw conclusions as to the infinite and eternal God?

The mind of man craves for some representation of the being he worships. From the degraded savage who tries to represent the supernatural forces around him by amulets and charms, to the idolater who invests his carved or molten image with divine powers, or the devotee who vainly prostrates himself before crucifix or images of saints, all betray this instinct for a tangible representation of the object of worship. Christ is the Image of God. An image of Christ is therefore absurd, and a negation of all that He is; for if He be the Image of God, why require an image of *Him*? God as God is invisible. He fills heaven and earth, and no finite creature could take account of so glorious a Being whose time is eternity, whose dimension is space, whose being is Spirit. There was every necessity why *He* should be adequately represented to our ken. But who among created beings could be the embodiment of the Uncreate? Our marvel is that all that God is in His own being is adequately set forth in Christ. There was no deficiency in Him; He brought down here the entire fullness of the Godhead—setting it forth without flaw from the stable of Bethlehem, the waters of Jordan, and the synagogue of Nazareth, right on to the grave of Lazarus, the garden of Gethsemane, the cross of Golgotha, the emptied tomb, and the throne of glory. There is no one else capable of compassing

in his own person all the majesty and the nature of God. Jesus is the Son; there is, therefore, no disparity between Him and God; in Him was most perfectly expressed every element in the divine nature. Renewed by grace, we draw near to our Saviour with unshod feet, and gaze into His face; and in Him is the absolute, complete, final revelation of God. Never, in any religion or philosophy before, has it been written "GOD IS LOVE." But the truth is out now—in Jesus. God's nature is disclosed, set before men and celestial beings, revealed in the Man who is also, and *must* be, eternal Son.

The Sin-Purger.

Now, think what it must be if such an One take up the sin question. I do not say *for us*, though of necessity we come into the matter by reason of our sins. But supposing such an One come down, unaided and unasked, *for reasons of His own*, to apply all His infinite resources of wisdom and power and love to the sin question, what must be the result for Himself first, and then for those who believe upon Him? Being the adequate representation of God, the Son knew all God's unsullied holiness and inviolable purity, all the claims of His throne, all His wrath against and judgment upon sin. Being very God in His own essential nature and being, though become Man for the accomplishment of all God's will, He knew all that sin is in its varied forms, and in all its ramifications in the history of this world and in the nature of fallen man. He alone of all in the vast universe was capable of understanding all the activities and glories of the divine nature, and withal the gravity of sin. Moved by unutterable love, and jealous for the majesty of the supreme Being, the Son, in human form, sinless and pure, went and made purification of sins at Calvary, dying to remove them, dying to overthrow them, dying to vindicate God against them, dying to reveal God in

His grandest glories at the moment of His putting them away. That *I*, believing in Jesus, benefit by it goes without saying. My sin has been unearthed, weighed in divine scales, repudiated, broken, judged, execrated, damned in His death; the wrath of God has found it out, fallen upon it, burnt it up, made an end of my sins (and me also, in a judicial sense)—but in the death of the One who died for me. But it was not only a question of me. He did this for Himself, from Himself, by Himself. He took it up as a matter in which His own glory was involved, and for His own sake made purification of sins. All the perfection of His person was thrown into the work He did; and the sins have been perfectly atoned for, purged, as only a Divine Person could have done it. I am benefited infinitely indeed, for I stand in the presence of a glory that has removed all my sins, and has declared itself infinitely, but in such a way as to be more than friendly to me. My God is the best Friend I have; and I know Him, for He is fully revealed in the One who has put my sins away.

The Sitter at God's Right Hand.

This is the seventh glory of this all-glorious Person. Would it not have been a grief to us had the Lord in some way been deprived of His right to sit there? Could His contact with our sin, His undergoing the judgment of God and death for us, have resulted

in some loss of dignity, some diminution of glory, how our hearts (ever grateful to Him indeed) would have chided us for eternity, and have been filled with distress, to think of it. But this is not so. So completely has sin been judged, so entirely has God been glorified as to it, that the Son—now wearing man's form to be the Image of God for ever—has gone back to the height from whence He came, taking a place by so much better than the angels as He hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they. So absolutely has His divine right and glory remained through all the story of incarnation and sin-bearing that in this passage—when correctly rendered—His session at God's right hand is not represented as *God* raising Him, but rather that in virtue of the unstained glory of His own Person He took the place that ever belonged to Him in all the ineffable glory of the Majesty on High. But He is now seated there as Man, ever the Son, but now Son in human form. There is a Man upon the throne of God; and that Man, the Son, who put my sins away.

May God fill our hearts with worship as we think of Him. May He also teach that even if for His sake and in His service we become poor, despised, isolated, outcast, stripped of all the accessories of consecrated temple, etc., we are—in having Christ—more than well off indeed.

The Glory of God, and Jesus.

Oh! what were the glory without Thee,
Thou Son of the Father's delight?
Thyself—not the radiance about Thee—
We own as the star of this night.

That radiance is bright and most glorious;
The diadems over Thy brow
Are many!—oh, Saviour victorious!—
But only one Object art Thou.

Then publish glad tidings of glory;
But oh! 'tis the glory of Christ;
And there, blessed Lord, we adore Thee,
Though worthy to hide in the dust.

Enough, Lord! Yet still we are craving
To know more the depth and the height
In Jesus-Jehovah a-saving,
The Fount of our rest and delight.

The Moral Glory of Christ.

The light of God shines at times before us, leaving us, as we may have power, to discern it, to enjoy it, to use it, to follow it. It does not so much challenge us or exact from us; but, as I said, it shines before us, that we may reflect it, if we have grace. We see it doing its work after this manner in the early church at Jerusalem. The light of God there *exacted* nothing. It shone brightly and powerfully; but that was all. Peter spoke the language of that light when he said to Ananias, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" It had made no demands upon Ananias; it simply shone in its beauty beside him, or before him, that he might walk in it according to his measure. And such, in a great sense, is the moral glory of the Lord Jesus. Our

first duty to that light is to learn from it *what He is*. We are not to begin by anxiously and painfully measuring ourselves by it, but by calmly and happily and thankfully learning Him in all His perfect moral humanity. And surely this glory is departed! There is no living image of it here. We have its *record* in the evangelists, but not its *reflection* anywhere.

We are to know Him, as it were, by *memory*; and memory has no capacity to weave fictions; memory can only turn over living truthful pages. And thus we know Him for His own eternity. In an eminent sense, the disciples knew Him *personally*. It was His person, His presence, Himself, that was their attraction. And if one may speak for others, it is more of this we need.

The Attractiveness of the Lord Jesus.

What attractiveness there must have been in our Lord for any eye or heart that had been opened by the Spirit! This is witnessed to us by the apostles. They knew but little about Him *doctrinally*, and they got nothing by remaining with Him—I mean nothing in this world. Their condition in the world was anything but improved by their walking with Him; and it cannot be said that they availed themselves of His miraculous power. Indeed, they questioned it rather than used it. And yet they clung to Him. They did not com-

pany with Him because they eyed Him as the full and ready storehouse of all provision for them. On no one occasion, I believe I may say, did they use the power that was in Him for themselves. And yet, there they were with Him—troubled when He talked of leaving, and found weeping when they thought they had indeed lost Him.

Surely, we may again say, What attractiveness there must have been in Him, for any eye or heart that had been opened by the Spirit, or drawn by the Father!

His Ways with His Disciples.

The Lord was never "overcome of evil," but was ever "overcoming evil with good"—the evil that was in His disciples with the good that was in Himself. Vanity, ill-temper, indifference about others and carefulness about themselves, ignorance after painstaking to instruct, were of the things in them which He had to suffer continually. His walk with them, in its way and measure, was a day of provocation, as the forty years in the wilderness had been. Israel again tempted the Lord, I may say, but

again proved Him. Blessed to tell it; they *provoked* Him, but by this they *proved* Him. He suffered, but He took it patiently. He never gave them up. He warned and taught, rebuked and condemned them, but never gave them up. Nay; at the end of their walk together He is nearer to them than ever.

"Still sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimm'd my sight,
When pass'd, Eternal Lover,
Toward me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright."

"Thou art the Same."

(EDWARD CROSS).

"Attāh hū."

THE proposal to begin the year with a special number of "Scripture Truth" devoted to the glories of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the bright hope of His coming as the Bridegroom to take up the inheritance, and fill with joy the hearts of His waiting people, is assuredly a happy inspiration. May it receive its crown in quickening all our souls in simpler faith and more fervent love, as we learn more of Him who fills the mind of God with purpose, and will fill the universe with bliss. But how vast the subject is, and how inadequate will be the best desires to set forth the glories of His name, "which is exalted above all blessing and praise!" (Neh. 9. 5). It is in this spirit the Apostle gives utterance to his feelings when he says, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9. 15). The purport of the passage is the "gift of God" in contrast to the thankofferings of the Corinthians; but what must have been the feelings of his mind in the contemplation of it, when he calls the gift "unspeakable!"

The effect too of the contemplation of Christ will be to establish our hearts in confidence and peace, knowing that all things work for good, under His guiding hand, "to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose." Even "the wrath of man shall praise Him," and "out of the eater shall come forth meat;" and what seems now confusion will subserve His purpose, until the vast universe will be vocal with His praise. This will be rendered to Him, as might be said, in two *clefts*, in one of which He is the object, and in one the subject. Part is addressed to Him, "Worthy art Thou;" and part about Him, "Worthy is He" (Rev. 5.). This indeed is but the expansion of the text which, at the

head of this article, we are considering: "Attāh hū"—"Thou [art] He," or, "Thou [art] the same" (Ps. 102. 27); and we may do well to try in the first place to understand the plain meaning of the words themselves.

Attāh=the 2nd pers. sing. of the Hebrew pronoun *thou*.

hū=the 3rd pers. *he*; and as used sometimes with emphasis, *he himself, the same*, e.g. "the Levite himself" (Num. 18. 22), "the Lord Himself" (Isa. 7. 14), *et al.* It is sometimes joined to the 1st pers. pronoun, as Isaiah 43. 10, "... and understand that I am HE," and again (ver. 25), "I, even I, am HE that blotteth out, etc.," I am that one, the same, the very one; and sometimes it is joined to the 2nd pers. pronoun, as Psalm 102. 27, "Thou [art] HE"—the same.

Used in this way with a pronoun, it becomes the predicate, and forms a clause of itself, e.g. "I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am HE" (Isa. 41. 4). Thus the expression has come to be, not exactly a name of God (*Gesenius*), as setting forth His qualities, but a designation (*Fuerst*) to express His personality; and in that way to mean "God Himself" as the One to whom the mind refers as filling it up. You knock at a door; the woman of the house opens it; without preamble you inquire, "How is he?" She understands at once; you mean her sick husband or her child. He is the one and all-absorbing thought to her mind. "He" could mean none else, and thus God claims by right to be not less to His people, to fill their hearts, to be their HE; and through Christ it will be so; for in the vast universe HE will be "all in all." In this way He renders testimony to Himself: "See now that

it is I, I HE, and there is no god with Me" (Deut. 32. 39). Moses has finished his long life of marvellous ministry, unique in the annals of history, working miracles of might and deliverance for Israel from the bondage of Egypt, by land and sea, by wisdom and resource, against dangers from without and difficulties from within, by patience and by power, in teaching and in warning; and now in his closing words he foretells that the people will "utterly corrupt" themselves (chap. 31. 29) and worship gods that are "no-gods" (chap. 32. 21). Jehovah was their God, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they were to have none other gods before Him; not a graven image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth (Deut. 5. 7, 8). These are all the creatures of His hand, they are made for His pleasure, and in due course they too will say, "Attāh hū" (Rev. 4. and 5.), even as Israel ought to have owned it then.

In other scriptures in Isaiah also He testifies of Himself thus, in condemnation of the idolatry into which Israel had fallen. Besides Isaiah 41. 4 and 43. 10, 25, already quoted, we find in Isaiah 43. 13, "Before the day was, I am HE; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand;" and again (Isa. 48. 12), "Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, My called; I am HE; I am the first, I also am the last;" and again (Isa. 51. 12), "I, even I, am HE that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man . . . made as grass?" In Jeremiah 5. 12 we read, on the other hand, "They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not HE;" rather "HE is not;" "HE, non-est;" there is nothing in Him.

Elisha owns Him as the well-known wonder-working God of Elijah, his predecessor, when he smote the waters of Jordan with his mantle, and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah, even HE?" for so the words should be

read (2 Kings 2. 14); and, similarly, David (2 Sam. 7. 28), "And now, O Lord God, Thou art HE, and Thy words are true;" and later on (Ps. 44. 4), "Thou art HE, my King, O God."

But most touching is the confession of Nehemiah (chap. 9. 6, 7), and, as it would appear, intentional in its fullness, as a makeweight against the weakness and poverty of the remnant in their tatterdemalion state, with a history of folly and disobedience behind them, a condition of feebleness around them, and a future of judgment for their sins, increasing and unrepented of, before them, as he reiterates and enlarges on the unfathomable and unchangeable personality of Him who, in His "great kindness" and "manifold mercies" (vers. 17, 19), had not forsaken them. "Stand up," he says, "and bless the Lord your God, for ever and ever; and blessed be Thy glorious name, which is above all blessing and praise"—"Thou [art] HE—Attāh hū—Jehovah, Thou alone," the great Creator (ver. 6); "Thou [art] HE—Attāh hū—Jehovah, the God who didst choose Abram"—the God of covenant grace and glory (Acts 7. 2), and of long-suffering patience with His proud and disobedient people (ver. 16, etc.).

This, again, is the expression of Psalm 102. 27, "Thou art the same"—Attāh hū—the address of the Spirit to the afflicted One, when He was in "trouble," identified with a people who were suffering under the governmental hand of God, "because of Thine indignation and Thy wrath, for Thou hast lifted Me up, and cast Me down." He was lifted up, so that the power of death was dissipated before Him (John 11. 43, 44), and there was no prevailing against Him, for "the world was gone after Him" (John 12. 19); He was cast down, so that the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered, and "all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matt. 26. 31, 56).

But Mary, the Magdalene, did not forsake Him. There was but one HE

for her, in the whole compass of her thought, as her desolate heart hovered hopelessly around the grave where she, with the other women, had watched them as they laid there the dead body of her murdered Lord. Thrice it is recorded of her (Matt. 27. 61; Mark 15. 47; Luke 23. 55). The men had gone away.

In John 20. she is "early at the sepulchre," and finding the stone taken away from the sepulchre, she runs in eager haste, and tells Peter, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid HIM." The two disciples come and see, and go away again to their own home. But Mary stands without at the sepulchre, weeping; and looking into the sepulchre, she sees two angels in white—the livery of victory (*cf.* Rev. 19. 11, 14). They ask her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replies in a manner curt and prepossessed—what did they know about HIM?—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid HIM." Quickly she turns her back on them—for what attraction have they for her?—and as she turns she sees Jesus, but she knows not that it is Jesus. He repeats the question and

asks further, "Whom seekest Thou?" Thinking Him to be the gardener she says, "Sir, if thou hast borne HIM hence, tell me where thou hast laid HIM, and I will take HIM away."

The Shepherd calls His sheep by name; "Mar-ia" He says: expressive of all the bitter sorrow He had passed through for her (Matt. 26. 38; Isa. 53. 11). *Mar*, *Mara* = sad, sorrowful, bitter (Exod. 15. 23; Ruth 1. 20). She utters at once the cry of joy in her native Hebrew tongue, "Rabboni," which is to say, "My Master."

To the angels she speaks of Him as "my Lord;" to the disciples she speaks of Him as "the Lord;" theirs, ours, as well as hers (*cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 2).

In Hebrews 1. 12 the divine glory of "the Son" illumines the expression in Psalm 102. 27. HE is the glorious Person to whom the psalm refers, in whose eternal Being the truth of it is fulfilled; and, lest there should be any question if the substance of it lies beyond our ken, we read in Hebrews 13. 8 that Jesus Christ is that very One "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

May HE fill our hearts as HE filled the heart of Mary.

His Grace.

Our blessed Lord did good, and lent, hoping for nothing again. He gave, and His left hand did not know what His right hand was doing. Never in one single instance, as I believe, did He claim either the person or the service of those whom He restored and delivered. He never made the deliverance He wrought a title to service. Jesus loved, and healed, and saved, looking for nothing again. He would not let Legion, the Gadarene, be with Him. The child at the foot of the mount He delivered back to his father. The daughter of Jairus He left in the bosom of her family. The widow's son at Nain He restored to his mother. He claims none of them. Does Christ give in order that He may receive again? Does He not (perfect

Master!) illustrate His own principle—"Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again?" The nature of grace is to impart to others, not to enrich itself; and He came, that in Him and His ways it might shine in all the exceeding riches and glory that belong to it. He found servants in this world; but He did not first heal them, and then claim them. He called them, and endowed them. They were the fruit of the energy of His Spirit, and of affections kindled in hearts constrained by His love. And sending them forth, He said to them, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Surely there is something beyond human conception in the delineation of such a character.

The Heart's Desire.

(J. BOYLE).

LORD JESUS, blest Son of the Father, as nearing
 The end of our pilgrimage, weary and worn,
 Thy footfall on cloud-land we long to be hearing,
 We long to behold Thee, Bright Star of the Morn.
 As the wayfarer lone upon bleak pathless mountains
 Looks earnestly eastward for signals of day ;
 As the thirsty soul, desert-bound, faints for the fountains,
 To drive from his heart the hot fever away :
 So lift we our eyes to the blue dome above us,
 Where saw Thy disciples their Lord disappear ;
 So faint we to see Thee who loved and will love us,
 In life as in death, in the glory as here.
 It may be that weak is our warmest affection,
 That the glitter of earth has bedazzled the eye ;
 It may be in much there's been sorry defection,
 That our ways to our words oft have given the lie.
 As the compass subjected to counter attraction,
 For the moment may seem to the pole-star untrue ;
 So the world with suggestions of soul-satisfaction
 May have caused us to swerve from the prospect in view.
 But in spite of our moments of sad oscillation,
 Our woeful consent to the world and its ways,
 Our wretched retreat before hostile invasion,
 Our blindness amid this religious maze—
 We love Thee—have loved Thee—have longed to behold Thee
 Since the moment we heard of Thine excellent name.
 How dear Thou art to us, how oft we have told Thee,
 Our hearts with Thy holy affections aflame.
 Not yet have we seen Thee ; Thy fame we have heard it,
 The fight Thou hast fought and the field Thou hast won ;
 Thy reproach, we have borne it ; Thy shame we have shared it—
 Our richest inheritance under the sun.
 We, the fruit of Thy soul's all unspeakable sorrow,
 For whom in the dungeon of death Thou hast lain,
 Look longingly upward for tokens of morrow,
 And ceaselessly cry for Thy coming again.
 No home in this waste have we found since we knew Thee,
 Since first fell Thy heavenly voice on our ear—
 Since we tasted Thy grace thought-surpassing, which drew Thee
 To walk through the valley of death with us here.
 Belov'd of our souls ! Well-belov'd of the Father !
 Omnipotent Saviour, Redeemer, and Guide,
 O come, and from waste and from wilderness gather
 Thy loved ones for whom Thou hast suffered and died.
 O come with Thy shout, Lord, triumphant, victorious,
 With the voice of archangel and trumpet of God ;
 Call us hence to those halls of light, radiant, glorious,
 That home of our hearts, love's eternal abode.

The Word—The Son.

(H. D. R. JAMESON).

John 1. 1-4, 14, 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 anything made that was made.

4 In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.

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.

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.

EVERY name or title of Christ sets forth some ray or rays of His glory, for each depends upon what He Himself is. What even have been spoken of as His official titles, as "Lord" and "Christ"—that which He has been "made" in resurrection—depend really upon what He Himself is. Such titles bring before us not merely the official glories connected with these offices, but, behind that, the moral glory in virtue of which no other place could be given Him than that of supreme exaltation and rule as God's Anointed.

Again, as Servant of the divine pleasure, as the good Shepherd of the flock, as Saviour, what clusters of moral glories shine before us, what lowliness and meekness, what a wealth of infinite compassion and of redeeming love ! Many names and titles are needed to bring out into evidence before us the full-orbed splendour of His glory.

But besides such titles as those just referred to there are others which denote His *essential* glory—WHO He is, rather than *what* He is—the majesty and the infinity of His Being as absolutely in Deity as in the unity of the Godhead. Of such an order are the exalted names we are here to consider—The Word—the Son.

Both of these are titles standing in relation to eternity. There are designations of our Lord which possess their significance because of what has taken place in time. For instance, the name Jesus, signifying Jehovah-Saviour, is the name given to Him by divine command at His birth in time. It

is not a name which would possess any significance in eternity past "before His works of old." So, too, Son of Man is His title as having become Man ; Son of David as having come into the line of royalty ; the true Vine as taking the place of bearing fruit here for God ; the last Adam as becoming the Head of a new race. But the titles the Word and the Son are different from these in that they designate His glorious Person in the eternity of His Being, in what He was before anything was made that was made.

These two names, the Word and the Son, stand related the one to the other not only in the passage we are particularly to dwell on in John 1., but also in Hebrews 1., where the *speaking* of God is said to be "in Son" (ver. 3). Both titles are designations of our Lord as in the unity of the Godhead ; but the aspect of the former is *outwards*—towards the whole vast universe, when by that Word the universe comes into being ; whereas the aspect of the latter is *inwards*, and denotes relationship within the Godhead itself.

"The Word."

He of whom the Apostle speaks in verse 17 as "Jesus Christ" is the Word, the Logos. There are two different nouns used in the Greek of the New Testament, viz. *Logos* and *Rhema*, and both of these are translated by our English noun "word." But there is a shade of difference in the meaning of the two words which is important. *Rhema* is the word in the sense of the *utterance itself*, whereas *Logos* embraces

not only the utterance but also the thought lying behind the utterance.* It is the fuller word *Logos* which occurs here in John 1., and embraces the thought of Wisdom as presented in Proverbs 8.—“The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.” Christ is the divine *Logos*; in Him the Godhead is in self-expression. The divine mind, so to say, becomes effulgent in Him.

Majestic in their simplicity are the opening words of John's Gospel—“*In the beginning was the Word.*” Not here *from* “the beginning,” as though beginning to be at some fixed moment of time, but “*in* the beginning.” Go back as far as the mind of man can conceive into the dim recesses of the eternal past, conjure up the vast expanse of the bygone ages of eternity, and call the farthestmost point then present to the mind “the beginning,” and then know that *in* that beginning, no matter how far back that be conceived, He *was*. It is the simplest and strongest possible affirmation of the eternity of the Being of the Word. He is the eternal “I am.”

“*And the Word was with God.*” The Word is not merely an *aspect* of God (though in Him it is that the Godhead is in self-expression), but is a distinct *Person* in the unity of the Godhead; hence the Spirit can speak of Him as “*with God.*”

“*And the Word was God.*” He Himself is God. There is no qualification; in the fullest and most absolute sense He is God.†

But the Spirit is jealous to guard at every point the glory of Him who, having since come into the place of

humiliation, is for that reason open to misrepresentation and derogation; and hence a fourth statement is immediately added, lest any, whilst admitting the eternity of His Being, His distinct personality and His Deity, should yet think of Him as having been only in essence, so to say, in the Deity in the eternal ages, and to have received distinct personality as the Word at some given time when He was begotten or proceeded forth from God. To explicitly negative any such thought it is at once affirmed, “The same was in the beginning with God.” In that beginning, no matter how farsoever back that be conceived, He *was* in the distinction of His eternal personality *with* God.

“*All things were made by Him.*” He Himself is the Increate Creator, for all that is made received its being through Him, “and without Him was not anything made that was made.” And what a view this gives us of all that has come into being at His Word! He, the *Logos*, is the setting forth of the divine mind, and hence all that came into being at His Word is the shining out of some rays of the divine glory. The creation is in this way an expression of the mind of God; it is descriptive in its measure of Him: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork” (Ps. 19.).

The creation sprang into being at His Word, and is itself, as I have said, an expression, within its limits, of what He Himself is; and hence what Psalm 19. and Romans 10. speak of as “their words” and “their sound,” which are ever going out. Who can say how widely that sound may not have been heard by individuals amidst

* A very clear illustration of the difference may be found in Matthew 12. 36—“every idle word:” this is *rhema*; “by thy words:” this is *logos*. Accountability is in respect of every utterance; but condemnation and justification at the hand of Him who judges in righteousness is in respect not of every utterance, which might or might not convey the speaker's true meaning, but is in respect of the thought and intent of the heart as disclosed in a man's *logos*.

† It has been objected that the article is wanting in the Greek before “God” in this clause. Here, however, is but another instance of the beautiful accuracy of Scripture, as is pointed out by the late J. N. Darby in his book “On the Greek Article.” In it he says as to this passage, “Were it *ho Theos*, it would exclude from Deity the Father and the Spirit, and confine the unity of the Deity to the Word.”

the darkness of heathendom and beyond all gospel testimony? The reaching of the conscience of man is ever by the Word, and that Word is not bound. Its sound is in all the earth.

No word of God can ever fail of its effect (Isa. 55. 11), and hence even the material heaven and earth, though marred by sin, do not, in the issue, absolutely cease to be. Though as to their present form they "pass away" (Matt. 24. 35; 2 Peter 3. 10), nevertheless they are not, so to say, annihilated, but they shall be "*changed*" (Heb. 1. 12). So, too, man called into being by that Word, even though he has since become a sinner, is not, when brought into blessing, brought to naught and recreated without the maintenance of a link of identity: instead he is "changed." The *man* is "born again" by the Word (1 Peter 1. 23); *he* is renewed in the spirit of his mind (Eph. 4. 23, N.T.); his *mind* is renewed (Rom. 12. 2): his *heart* is purified (Acts 15. 9); in the moral constitution of his being he is transformed (2 Cor. 3. 18); and, finally, his *body* is "changed" (1 Cor. 15. 51; Phil. 3. 21). God is never defeated; what He doeth it shall be for ever (Eccles. 3. 14); His Word shall stand for ever (Isa. 40. 8).

But what an interest does this lend to all that is about us. All has come into being at His Word—all has received being through the Logos: and so, had we but eyes to see, in all that He has made there shine out the divine thoughts! Himself has interpreted much to us—the thoughts of God unfolded in the *seed*, its burial and subsequent life in reproductive multiplication; the wind that bloweth where it listeth; the light of day; the lilies of the field; the hen and her brood; the eagle swift to the scene of judgment; the eye in the body; the sheep in their flocks; the fountains of water; and a thousand other things, all eloquent in one form or other of the divine mind. And when we think of the vastness of the created universe, the multiplicity

of its living organisms, and the countless wonders beneath our eyes on every hand, not to speak of the marvels unfolded by the telescope and microscope: and remember that all that sprang into being and took shape at His Word, and is in its every part in some way descriptive of the divine thoughts, the visualization of these thoughts before us, what plenitude we feel is here; what a wealth of resource in the WORD.

"*In Him was life.*" Here we pass from what was made *by* Him to that which is *in* Him. He could say "*I am* the resurrection and the life." Life is one of the many things which altogether elude definition—no words known to us can explain it—but, whatever it is, that marvellous energy of being resides essentially in the Word. Do we behold it in the created sphere, it has been given by Him; do we know it in the realm of the spiritual, it is as having heard the quickening voice of the Son of God.

But that which was in Him had its moral bearing, and that bearing particularly on *one* order of intelligent beings in the universe, men; for "the life was the light of *men*."

This leads us up to the historic manifestation of the Word amongst men, and, passing by for the moment the intervening verses which deal with effects of the outshining of the Light in the midst of the moral darkness of this world, we come in verse 14 to the *moment* of that manifestation: "The Word was made flesh" or, as, more correctly, it should be translated, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth." This is the incarnation. We have not in John the *birth* of Jesus, as in Matthew and Luke; we have not here Sonship as begotten in time; it is *incarnation*—the same glorious One who, ever in ages past was "with God" and "was God," *became*, what He was not before, "flesh." He "whose goings forth are from of old, from the days of eternity"

(Micah 5. 2, N.T.), He who in the beginning "*was*" in time "*became*;" He who was *with God* dwelt "*among us*;" He who was *God* became *flesh*.

Dwell on the stupendous fact of it: that the One who is the Logos, in whose Person the Godhead is in self-expression, at whose word the created sphere sprang into being as voicing out the divine thoughts, and by the simple utterance (*rhema*) of whose power all things are upheld, "*became*," at a fixed and long-foreordained moment of time, "*flesh*" and "*dwelt among us*," or as literally it is, "*tabernacled among us*," the fulfilment in wondrous fact of that which was shadowed in the innermost shrine of the sanctuary of old—the sacred ark of acacia wood and gold wherein was contained the revelation of the mind of God, and whereon from between the overshadowing wings of the Cherubim on either end of the mercy-seat there shone the Shekinah glory of the very presence of God.

"The Son."

It is at this point that we come to the link between the two titles—the Word and the Son; for the moment that the Word became incarnate a glory was brought into visibility, was brought within the ken of man, which till then had been hidden within the Godhead. The glory revealed was the glory of the Word—"His glory." It was not a glory which just began to be at the incarnation, it was the glory—observe it carefully—of One who, as we have learnt, was eternal in His Being, and hence a glory which, though manifested here in time, was itself an eternal glory, one which never had a beginning; and that glory beheld by the disciples was, we are told, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," or rather, to give it more literally, "a glory as of an only begotten with a Father" (N.T.). They beheld the glory of a Son, an Only-begotten, or Only-one, with a Father, in the perfect communion of divine affections.

It was the revelation of God in the highest possible way, in that which eternally subsists within the Godhead; and hence it is that in verse 18 we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (*i.e.* God).

The Word is not spoken of as the Word of the Father, though the Son could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He is "The Word of God" (Rev. 19. 13), the unfolding of the *Godhead* whether in grace, as in John 1., or in judgment, as in Revelation 19. So, too, He is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1.). He is the effulgence of the divine glory and "the exact expression," not exactly of His *Person* (for God is revealed as a *Trinity* of Persons in absolute Oneness), but "of His substance" (Heb. 1. 3, N.T.). He is in this way the living delineation of all that God is. So, too, in John 1. when the Word became flesh the glory revealed and thereby brought within the ken of man was the glory of an only begotten *with a Father*: the emphasis is on the personal glory of the Word revealed as the Son, but inasmuch as revealed as an only One *with a Father* it was in effect the revelation of the Godhead in the communion of those divine affections which ever subsist in the eternal Spirit. When God is thus revealed we come not to the conception of some majestic Being who in the fathomless depths of a past eternity abode alone without any object for His affections until Himself called into being creatures who could respond to those affections, but we are given to behold within the Deity itself a perfect communion of divine affections between the Persons of the Sacred Trinity: Three, yet ever in the most absolute way One. How blessed to contemplate! and how needed if we are to rise to the height of the divine thought for us in the present enjoyment of eternal life in the very same communion of divine affections, realized in association with the Son of God.

“The Son” and “the Son of God.”

In verses 14 and 18 it is “the Son” who comes before us—not exactly “the Son of God” but “the Son.” “The Son” is, as we have seen, a title standing in relation to eternity, and though applied to Himself by His own lips on many occasions when here in humiliation—for He was ever the same glorious Person in time as He was in eternity past—yet in itself it is a title distinguishing Him as in the Godhead: a title *within* the Godhead. The title “Son of God” is different in that it distinctively presents Him in relation *to* the Godhead. The difference is of the greatest importance if thoughts derogatory to the essential glory of the eternal Son are to be met and answered.

“The Son” is never spoken of as begotten in the sense of the word as we use it to-day. He never began to be—He is from everlasting to everlasting. He stands within the Godhead in eternal relation to the Father as Son. But as “Son of God” He *is*, in certain connections, spoken of as “begotten.” It is a title given to Him as born in time, of a virgin and by the overshadowing of the Highest, and “therefore” He should be called “Son of the Highest,” “Son of God” (Luke 1. 32–35). It was the fulfilment of Psalm 2.—“Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee;” *this day*, *i.e.* in time. Psalm 2., besides being quoted in Hebrews 1., is quoted in Acts 13. as fulfilment of the promises to the fathers, a fulfilment in that God raised up Jesus. Note carefully that the word “again” does not rightly appear in this passage: it is not resurrection that is spoken of, but God raising up to Israel a Deliverer in the same sense as in verse 22 we read, “He raised up David to be their king.” In John He is presented as Son of God in a rather different way. In that Gospel the title views Him in incarnation—not exactly as “born” in time, and yet Son of God. But as the name Son of God is not that which is specially here to engage our attention, I do not pursue that further than to

say that I judge some light is thrown on the aspect presented in chapter 10. 36, and Psalm 82. 6, bearing in mind that John presents One not *to* whom the Word of God came, but who Himself *is* the Word.

“Only begotten.”

But to return to the name “the Son:” it is true that we read, “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.” Yet this is not “begotten” in the sense of generation. It *could* not be, for we have seen that the Word is eternal in the distinction of His Being, and that His glory (the glory of that eternal One) is that of Sonship, an Only-one with a Father, and hence that His Sonship is eternal, without beginning.

But what, then, does “only begotten” mean? Westcott, commenting on this word *monogenes*, says, “The thought in the original is centred in the persona Being of the Son, and not in His generation.” It occurs, in Hebrews 11. 17, of Isaac. Isaac was not, in the sense of the English word, the only begotten of Abraham, who had other sons; but his place in his father’s affections was unique, it was a place all by itself, he was to Abraham as an “only one.” But the Septuagint version of the Psalms makes clear what was an understood use of the word in the Greek language, *i.e.* it denoted *what was unique*, what was *the object of intense solicitude*. So in Psalms 22. 20, 35. 17, where our Lord is prophetically referred to as calling on God to deliver His *soul* from the “power of the dog,” the word in our version “darling,” or, as in the margin, “only one,” is rendered in the Septuagint *monogenes*, which *literally* means “only begotten,” but its use here clearly shows that it was commonly used where no thought of generation could possibly enter. So too Psalm 25. 16, where “desolate” is rendered *monogenes*, *i.e.* one in a place unique to Himself. The sense, then, of *monogenes* in the expression “the only begotten Son” is rather

the "*only*" Son, the One unique in the affections of the Father.

In Eternity to Come.

The name Son is thus revealed as subsisting throughout eternity past, and His glory as such as a glory He had along with the Father in the glory of Deity and in the circumstances of glory proper to Deity "before the world was" (John 17. 5). In humiliation He took the place in which He could say, "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do" (John 15. 19); and hence the Father's care to commit to Him in incarnation all that which should secure to Him the honour which was ever His due equally with the Father, for incarnation in no wise derogated from what He Himself was, ever God over all, blessed for evermore.

On the verge of eternity yet to come we meet again with the title in 1 Corinthians 15. 28—"Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." At first sight this might seem to argue some degree of inferiority in respect of the Son, but the context makes clear that what is in view is the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, the rule of the Son as having become incarnate, a rule on the behalf of God, which shall issue in the removal of all opposition, of every opposing element. When this end is reached the necessity of rule in this distinct personal sense will have passed away, and in result *God* will be all in all, *i.e.* no Person of the sacred Trinity will be in distinction as ruling: GOD—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—will be all pervading: all objectively and in all subjectively. But whilst ever in Deity yet the Son has become man, a place He occupies eternally, and hence His place *as incarnate* will ever be, in the perfection so glorious in Him, that of subjection, that GOD may be all in all.

"Even as."

It is important to keep all this clear, inasmuch as whilst the constant effort of the enemy is to belittle in some way the glory of the person of Christ, the deep desire of the Father is "that all men should honour the Son, **EVEN AS** they honour the Father"—in every particular, in every aspect, in all respects, fully and without qualification, "**EVEN AS** they honour the Father" (John 5. 23). Be it ours ever to bow the knee in adoration before Him. He has brought to us the blessed revelation of all that God is—as the Word He has made Him known in all the infinite grace and love of His heart, a revelation completed only amidst the darkness of Calvary, where redeeming love shone out in all its splendour, and, atonement being completed, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. As Son, too, He has declared the Father's name.

But there are glories connected with this exalted Person which are unknowable by the creature—as in Deity He dwells in light unapproachable, "whose Being none can know." "*No man knoweth the Son but the Father.*" And when He is revealed as the Word of God He has, besides that character which is public—"on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords"—also that which is unknowable: "a name written that no man knew but He Himself." And yet this One, the infinity and majesty of whose Being is so transcendently above us, is JESUS, whom we call our Saviour and "*our Lord*"—"to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever."

"Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son;
God manifest, God seen and heard,
The heaven's beloved One;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow."

‘My Lord and My God.’

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE Unitarian objects to this exclamation being advanced as evidence of the Deity of our Lord. He contends that Thomas was an admiring enthusiast, and an Eastern withal, having a tendency towards the picturesque and the exaggerated in his speech, and that on this occasion he was betrayed by his feelings into saying what was outside the truth.

That this is an ill-considered conclusion is evident from the insight into the character of Thomas which the brief record of him in the Scriptures gives us. That his affection for his Master was not less than that of the other disciples is proved in John 11. 16, but that he was not of an hysterical or credulous nature is equally proved by John 20. 25. When his brethren—and there were ten of them—declared to him that they had seen the Lord, he met them with obstinate unbelief, and looked upon them as a band of visionaries. His cold, hard reason kept a tight rein upon his fervour, and his answer to their glad news might have been framed upon the lips of a modern rationalist. “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I WILL NOT BELIEVE.”

As to faith and training he was a Jew, believing in one all-transcendent God, and to address a mere man as God would have been in his eyes a most heinous sin, a sin of which a devout Jew would be morally incapable. For proof of this take the case of Daniel, who chose to face the lions rather than perform an act which would, by inference, ascribe an attribute of deity to a man. It was not the impulsive Peter, but this man, naturally stubborn and unimaginative, and religiously a stern monotheist, who was convinced as to who his Master really was, and his confes-

sion of the truth of this drew forth no rebuke. Instead, his faith was confirmed by the Lord's reply: “Because thou hast seen **THOU HAST BELIEVED.**”

It is remarkable that the Spirit of God has placed it on record that homage was offered by men to both Peter and Paul, and that they both immediately and vehemently restrained it. “Stand up; I myself also am a man,” was Peter's command to Cornelius when that centurion prostrated himself at his feet (Acts 10. 26). And when the people of Lystra brought sacrifices to offer to Barnabas and Paul, they, Barnabas and Paul, “rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, *Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you*” (Acts 14. 11-15). These were true men, and they would not permit any to think that they were more than men, nor would they, even for a moment, accept adoration, which was God's alone. From these incidents in the lives of His servants we are taught by inference that Jesus was God when He accepted the adoration of Thomas; if not, what was He? Let the objectors supply the answer.

There is another incident in the Acts of the Apostles that might be well cited by way of contrast in this connection. “And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon. . . . And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, *It is the voice of a God, and not of a man.* **AND IMMEDIATELY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SMOTE HIM**, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten with worms, and gave up the ghost” (Acts 12. 20-23). In his presumptuous and impious pride he accepted the

adoration of the people, and immediately he was stricken by the stroke of a just and jealous God, his glory fled away, and he went down to the grave a loathsome mass of putrefaction. But Jesus, whom Thomas worshipped, was carried up into heaven, for we read that He led out His disciples "as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. **AND THEY WORSHIPPED HIM**, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy : and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24. 50-53).

It is John, who had been restrained from worshipping an angel (Rev. 22. 8-9), who records the meeting of Thomas with his Master, and what a meeting it must have been.

It seems as though it was for Thomas alone, for twice did his Lord address him by name. He discovered that the thoughts of his heart were not hidden from Him, and the wounds which he beheld in that incorruptible flesh were to him mute witnesses to the fact that He was the One who had

power to lay down His life and take it again. The scales fell from his eyes, his heart lost its faithlessness, the glory of the Only Begotten was no longer veiled from him, and as his soul was drawn out of the winter of his unbelief, he voiced the worship of his brethren in those true and memorable words, "**MY LORD AND MY GOD.**"

While in the gathering on the resurrection day we have given to us a picture of the relationship in which Christians stand to their Lord and to His Father and God, this second meeting is typical of the time, still to come, when the Lord will show Himself to the remnant of His people Israel, and when they shall say to Him, "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" (Zech. 13. 6). And as they look upon Him they, as did Thomas, will recognize Him, and will cry, "Lo, this is our GOD ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us : this is the LORD ; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25. 9). They will believe when they see Him, but "**BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED.**"

"He Suffered being Tempted."

Temptation was a reality to the Lord. He felt most keenly and painfully the weight and the pressure of the test. His soul was full of love for Israel, and eager to gather children of Jerusalem. The *broad* road, easy and attractive to all but Him, who was ever perfect, would have led to immediate recognition and reception by Israel. The way of humility and obedience, of faith and suffering was *narrow* to Jesus also. He *felt* hunger, reproach, and hatred. Satan was permitted to test Christ's most sensitive heart with the most penetrating and painful trial.

When His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, His soul was shrinking from the awful cup of Golgotha ; and to strengthen Him in this most real, and to us unfathomable con-

flict, an angel from heaven appeared unto Him.

The world was also a temptation to Him ; the spirit of it was enmity against Him, and came into collision with Him every moment. His own brethren said, "Why do you not go up to the feast and show yourself?" His own disciples said, "Far be it from Thee to suffer, Lord." But He saw Satan in all this, and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Not for a single moment did He yield—erect He stood. But, nevertheless, and by this very perfection of His victory, He felt every moment all the burden of the weight. If He had given in that very moment the pressure would have been relieved. Because He remained without sin, He *suffered* being tempted.

The Headship of Christ.

(JAMES BOYD).

AS regards the disciples of the Lord two things were to result from the presence of the Spirit with and in them. One was, He would bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said to them during His sojourn upon earth; another was, He would glorify Christ, for He would take of His and show it to them (John 14. 26; 16. 14). He would lead them into the truth of all that had been said to them by their Lord and Teacher as they followed Him in His lonely pathway through a hostile world, and which they had neither been able to understand nor retain; and He would enable them to receive all the wonderful things which, until redemption was accomplished and the Spirit given to them, they were unable to bear (John 16. 12). These things we have in the Word of truth, so that we expect no further revelation; and we have also the Holy Spirit to lead us into the understanding of them, and to keep them ever fresh in our memories.

Nothing *new* can be *true*, and nothing *true* can be *new*. That which was used by the Spirit of God to convert sinners at the very beginning of this dispensation, and that which was used of God to build them up on their most holy faith when they were converted, is the same thing that converts souls and builds them up to-day, and that is *Christ*. The preaching is the preaching of Christ, and the teaching is the teaching of Christ (Rom. 16. 25; Acts 28. 31). All that came to light in Him down here, and all that is set forth in Him glorified, is that which is ministered to saints or preached to sinners by the power of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The preaching may be very imperfect, and converts may be little in the benefit of that which they have heard; the building up of saints may be greatly neglected, and even bad material may be largely mingled with that which is of God;

but that which is of real value, and that which will stand the fire of persecution, must be Christ: everything else will come to nothing.

Through Him everything received being, and everything subsists in His power. This was true of Him as the eternal Son with the Father, but having taken humanity into union with Deity it can be, and is, said of the glorified Man Christ Jesus. But now that He has become a Man, the place which He has as supreme in the universe is said to have been given Him (Eph. 1. 22). He is now said to have received everything from the Father: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3. 35). His becoming Man has not altered His status, looked at as eternal Son in the Deity. This is both unaltered and unalterable. But in becoming Man He took a place inferior to God. It was not an unreal place He assumed in incarnation. It was a very real place He took as a servant to the Godhead, and He took it in order that the eternal counsel of these divine Persons might be fulfilled. It was no make-believe position and form He assumed, but He was as truly a servant as ever a creature was, and as truly a man as was any man upon earth.

Hence He speaks of every power that He exercised when here below as given Him of the Father, and the exercise of that power He declares was in obedience to the will of the Father. He was here, He tells us, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6. 38). He was here absolutely devoted to the will of the Father. This took in the laying down of His life; but going to the death of the cross He says: "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do" (John 14. 31). Having taken the place and form of a servant, He was the *perfect* Servant, ever seeking the glory

of the One who sent Him, and that not only without murmuring and complaining about the trials of the path marked out for Him, and the persecuting environment in which He found Himself, but in admiration of the Father's gracious ways in a world of sorrow and sinful men.

Self-will and failure, miserable failure, come to light in the greatest and most devoted servants of God, but in Jesus there is no failure ; no pride of heart, no self-seeking, no will contrary to God, no finding fault with the ways of God, no grasping at Divinity ; His Father is always greater than He, it is the Father's heart He is here to gratify, He is the Servant, knowing nothing but what is told Him, doing nothing but that which He is commanded, going nowhere but to the place to which He is directed, saying nothing but what the Father gives Him to say ; raising no question as to where the path marked out for Him would lead, nor shrinking from the storm of persecution raised against Him on account of the words given Him to speak. He gave His back to the smiters, and withdrew not His face from them that plucked off the hair ; the shame, the ignominy, the reproach, the scorn, the spitting, the brutal blow—He suffered all uncomplainingly. When reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself unto Him that judges righteously ; taking up His lonely, lowly path to the cross saying, " Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Then we have the answer of God to all this in His exaltation and session in the place of power and authority, and in that name given to Him at which every knee of heavenly, earthly, and infernal things must bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 9-11). This Man is Lord of all, and Head over all things in the universe of God. He has gone back to the place from which He came, but He has gone there as the Man that has

glorified God. He says : " I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and go to the Father " (John 16. 28). It is a Man who has gone back into the place from which He who was in the form of God made the first move earthward. He has gone back as the One who glorified the Father in life and in death ; amid the plaudits of the multitude, the treachery and malice of their leaders, the betrayal of Judas, the faithlessness of the other disciples, and the forsaking of God. As man He is entitled, because of His glorifying God, to the position He has now at the right hand of God in the heavenly places—" far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come . . . all things under His feet and . . . Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all " (Eph. i. 21-23). He is Sustainer, Nourisher, Director, Governor, in the whole universe, which was, when He was in the form of God, the work of His hands.

In the world to come there will not be a thing in the whole creation of God that will not be gathered together under His headship. The things in the heavens as well as the things on the earth. Every intelligent being in the universe will be dependent upon a Man for everything that concerns happiness. It is in this way, I do not doubt, He will fill all things. If every intelligent being is directed by Christ, and only moves as directed by that glorious Head, then it will be Christ that, in some measure, will be reproduced by that intelligence. No doubt there will be differences in the various families which will be gathered under the name of the Father, but as everything must be subject to Christ, and move only at His commandment, some feature of Christ must be exhibited by each several intelligence. He has gone down into the lower parts of the earth, and now He has gone up far above all

heavens ; in this way He has spanned the universe, but it is in order that He may fill all things. I do not doubt He will fill all things with the glory of redemption, and that really is the love of God ; but that love has all come to light in Himself, and just as He fills all things so all things will be filled with redemption's glory.

What a wonderful day it will be in which we shall see all things gathered under His blessed headship ! Nothing out of harmony with the divine mind. Everything attuned to give forth the praises of God, and the whole creation led in its praises by Him who sings in the midst of the assembly. "No jarring note shall there discordant sound." But this will be at the close of the thousand years of His reign. During His reign He will be occupied with putting all things under His feet. And this is distinguished from His headship over all things. In Ephesians 1. we have first of all His resurrection from the dead and His session at the right hand of God—"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Next we have—"and hath put all things under His feet." All this is, I think, taken in in Philippians 2. 9-11. But "gave Him to be Head over all things" does not convey the same thought to the mind as "put all things under His feet." The latter is connected with the kingdom and with the subjugation of rebellious wills to Himself : "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." When this is done, and He has put down all rule, authority, and power, "then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all and in all." The kingdom and everything connected with it will be given up, but headship is not said to be given up at all. In the day when God shall be all in all the personal glory of Christ as man remains, as well as His pre-eminence in everything, and

also, I do not doubt, His headship over all things.

But He is said to be "Head over all things *to the church*." He is not spoken of as Head *over* the church, but *to* it. And then it is said to be "His body." He is Head to the church as a man's head is to his body, and as a husband is head to his wife : for both figures are used (Eph. 5. 23). Of Adam God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone : I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2.). Out of a rib taken from the side of Adam God builded a woman and brought her to the man, and of her he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." So the church is really evolved from Christ. He "loved the church and gave Himself for it," and from the fullness which is in Him she is builded to be His everlasting companion, and the sharer of His glory and of all that is His. The church is also the body of which He is the Head.

But it is with Christ as Head I desire to occupy the reader, and not with His body and His bride, though it is impossible to speak of the One without in some measure touching upon the other. In Colossians we have the glory and greatness of the Head brought before us. He is spoken of there as "the Son of His [the Father's] love ;" the One "in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins : who is the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature : for 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, and for Him : and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead ; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." He is the Creator and Upholder of all

things, and He is pre-eminent in the whole universe, which is His own creation.

And this is the One who is Head of the body. *Over* everything else, but *of* the body the living and glorious Head, from whom the body derives, and from whom it has all its nourishment, and from whom it "increases with the increase of God" (Col. 2. 19). In the Head resides all the fullness of the God-head: hence the fountain of our supply is unlimited. Outside of Him we have nothing, and nothing do we need, for the wealth of blessing that resides in the Head is inexhaustible.

From this risen glorified Head comes the power to gather out from among the Jews and Gentiles those that are to be members of His body, and to give them their place in that body, and to minister to all everything that is needful—"till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we . . . speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4.).

This is all with relation to the *body*. The *bride* comes in in chapter 5., and there we are told that He loved the church and gave Himself for it. Here it is not so much the power of Him who went into the lower parts of the earth, led captivity captive, and is gone up far above all heavens, that He may fill all things, but in this place it is the *love* of the Head that is brought to light—that self-sacrificing love that led Him to give Himself for His beloved object, in order that He might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Thus in power and love our living and exalted Head occupies Himself with us, and will occupy Himself with us until that day when He shall present His church to Himself in the sight of the universe, when every intelligent being shall learn how He loved her and gave Himself for her. May we be kept close to our heavenly Head, and may we draw out of His fullness everything we need to sustain us and build us up, until that day in which He will see in His glorified assembly the fruit of the travail of His soul.

There is just one other aspect of His headship which I would briefly notice before I conclude this paper. I refer to what we have in 1 Corinthians 11. There, in order to regulate the attitude that women should assume in their approach to God, the Apostle unfolds the order established by God on the basis of redemption, between Himself and those who reflect His glory in creation. He tells us the Head of every man is Christ; that is, man in contrast with woman, for man is her head. The head of the woman is the man, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. Woman therefore must have her head covered in her approach to God. Her true head is man, who is visibly present, hence she covers up her own head; and this on account of the angels, who are witnesses of the order of creation, now that redemption has been accomplished. It is only in the house of God that this order can be looked for, but it really is God's order in creation. In this scripture Christ is seen in relation to each man individually; He is set as Head of *every man*. Hence every man should be subject to Him.

What a blessed thing it is to have such a glorious Head to direct, control, nourish, and sustain us in our pilgrimage here below; and to whom we may ever turn for all the wisdom and grace that we need, and who loves us beyond all our thought. He gave Himself for us when we were utterly regardless of the grace that caused Him to stoop to

take up such unworthy objects. And now that He is in glory at the right hand of God He makes intercession for us, and soon He will come again to receive us to Himself, that He may have us as His companions throughout eternity. He will be our Fountain of supply then as He is now, for we shall

never be independent of Him, and He will nourish us then in all the power of that love which came to light in His death for us—that love whose depth and fullness no creature can fathom; yet now we are given to know the love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge.

“By the Grace of God He tasted Death.”

Between Jesus, as He was in Himself, and death there subsisted no connection. He was without sin, without spot or blemish. He never transgressed the law. In Him Satan could find nothing. Death had no personal or direct relation to Him. The Lord Jesus, as far as His humanity was concerned, was free from the power of death. No power could kill Him. “No man taketh My life from Me; but I lay it down of Myself.” The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was different from that of every other man; it was the free, voluntary, spontaneous act and energy of His will in obedience to His Father’s command. *He tasted death as the consequence of sin*, though He knew no sin in Himself personally; but He, as the perfect, pure, and spotless Son of God, had an infinite appreciation of the evil of sin in its loathsomeness, in its cruelty, in its apostasy from God, in its contrariety to the will of the Holy One. He saw the true nature of sin Godwards and manwards; upwards to the throne of holiness and downwards to the bottomless abyss; in its depths, in its everlasting consequences did He perceive it.

He tasted death as the penalty of the transgression of God’s law. In His heart the law was written as upon the tables of the covenant. He delighted in it, not as something external to Him, but as something that lived within Him, the very music and rhythm of His soul. He was made under the law and now He was made a curse for us.

Satan has the power of death. He came into contact with the prince and the power of darkness, whose right it was to insist upon the handwriting of ordinances, which is against the transgressors, and who can fix the sting of death by applying it with the strength of law (1 Cor. 15. 56).

And last of all, and most fearful of all, *He tasted death as the expression of*

the wrath of God. The just displeasure and indignation of God against sin made itself felt in death. Death is being forsaken of God; it is the withdrawal of God’s favour and strength. Death is to be left without God. The Lord Jesus came into contact with death as the wrath of God. He tasted death with full and perfect consciousness. Therefore He said, at the end of those three mysterious hours during which the sun lost his light, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” With fullness of faith He continued to cling to God; for in all this He acknowledged the truth, the righteousness, and the faithfulness of God, and called Him, “My God.”

Thus did He who was life itself come into contact with death; thus did He who was holiness itself come into contact with sin; and thus His love to God and man were displayed in all their infinite perfection. Thus He satisfied holiness, justice, and truth, and thus He took away the sting of death as the penalty of sin and the strength of Satan.

He did not die, as it were, in a moment of enthusiasm, as many a warrior has lost his life courageously. But, laying down His life, He came into contact with the whole sting of death; measured its length and breadth and intensity, the power of Satan, the condemnation of the law, and the wrath of God against sin.

And it was of the grace of God that He tasted death for every man; this is often set before us in Scripture, lest we should imagine that Jesus loved us more than God loves us, or that the Father did not love Him with the same intense love at the very moment when, as our Substitute, He had to cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” In the expiatory death of Jesus all the attributes of God are in sweetest harmony, and grace shines brightly through them all.

The Declarations of God as to the Person of Christ.

(F. B. HOLB).

ON only two occasions has the voice of THE FATHER been actually heard by men. In Old Testament days, before the truth of the Trinity stood clearly revealed, we do frequently get God speaking face to face with men, as with Moses, for example. With the advent of Christ, however, everything is changed. At His baptism the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—stood forth in a clear light, and the Father's voice was heard saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1. 11). This was a personal declaration to the Son.

The second occasion was at the Transfiguration, when the same voice was not only heard, but evidently addressed itself to men, saying, "This is My beloved Son : hear Him" (Mark 9. 7).

There was a third occasion when the Father's voice was uttered to the Son in the hearing of men (see John 12. 28), but apparently it was only heard as a peal of thunder by them.

All this is strikingly in keeping with the fact declared in Hebrews 1. 2, that the Son has become the spokesman of the Godhead, being Himself more than a spokesman, since He is Himself that which He expresses. The Father therefore first expresses His personal delight in Him, and then declares that delight to men, adding the significant words, "Hear Him." From that time onward it is the Son who speaks, and we listen to Him.

But though these are the only occasions when man is permitted to hear the Father's voice speaking of or to the Son, we are permitted to read in the Scriptures words which are a prophetic declaration of the thoughts of God the Father towards the Son. It is even as though they were directly addressed to Him.

Wonderful words such as these stand out by themselves and have a unique place, just as the prayer of the blessed Lord recorded in John 17. can be compared to no other. Nothing can exceed the privilege of being allowed to hear the Son addressing the Father, or the Father addressing the Son.

In the early chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we have the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ so strikingly emphasized in contrast to all who went before, we find five distinct utterances from God the Father to the Son quoted from the Old Testament. They are all found in the Messianic psalms, and are here grouped together by the Spirit of God like a constellation of shining stars declaring the glory of JESUS.

Let us briefly consider them :

At His Birth.

1. "*For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?*" (Heb. 1. 5).

This is a quotation from Psalm 2. which contemplates the raging and opposition of men which will precede the glorious appearing of the Christ, when He will be set as King upon God's holy hill of Zion. In verse 7 Messiah speaks, declaring the divine decree concerning Himself.

This decree is not only quoted by the Spirit in Hebrews 1. 5, as above, but is also quoted in Acts 13. 33, when Paul was preaching in the synagogue at Antioch. This latter quotation fixes for us the bearing of the decree. It is connected with the way God took to fulfil the promises made to the fathers, viz. by the *raising up* of Jesus. (The word "again" should not be in this verse, see R.V. or N.T.)

God had "raised up" many a prophet in bygone days, as Hebrews 1. tells us,

but the raising up of Christ was an act distinct from all else. He was born of a woman indeed, but let us never forget that the power of the Holy Ghost was so intimately concerned with His "raising up" that it is written "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

Here is a ray of light concerning His glory. It is as "the Son"—the second Person of the Trinity, as we speak—that God has spoken, revealing Himself to us, but to do it He became Man. But having thus humbled Himself to become the great spokesman of the Godhead there is risk of His own proper glory being obscured, and hence the decree is published, and we are permitted to hear the utterance of God the Father to Him spoken, as it were, at the very moment of His birth. The Man Christ Jesus is *the Son of God*.

As He Enters Millennial Glory.

2. "*But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows*" (Heb. 1. 8, 9).

Psalm 45. is now laid under contribution by the Spirit of God, and we travel in thought into millennial scenes.

That psalm is a song of triumph in which the godly celebrate the entrance of Messiah upon His kingdom of glory. The verses quoted by the Spirit of God in Hebrews 1. are its climax.

In verse 1 Messiah is "the King."

In verse 2 He is full of grace, blessed of God, and transcending in all moral perfections the children of men.

In verses 3, 4, and 5 He is seen in majesty and power, executing judgment, "because of truth and meekness and righteousness."

All this is good and moves the heart of the Psalmist until he overflows in ready praise.

But verses 6 and 7 are the voice of God, addressed to Messiah Himself. We should have hardly known this were it not for Hebrews 1. 8. It is even as if the Father Himself interrupts the praise of the Psalmist. Good as that was, it is not enough. We are in spirit suddenly lifted as on the wings of an eagle, up and up and up, until, piercing the highest cloud strata, the light of the sun bursts undimmed upon our vision. Messiah *is* God. He is so saluted of God the Father! His throne is for ever, His sceptre is right.

In that millennial day Messiah, who is God, will take the throne and wield the sceptre, but not as unidentified with the lowly path He trod, owning God as His God. He loved righteousness unto death. He hated wickedness unto death—and that death, the death of the cross; and therefore He sits on the throne, anointed by His God with the oil of gladness above His companions. This is morally right. One great "Amen" will fill the world on that day.

In these quotations in Hebrews 1., then, we step from the utterance of God the Father to the Son at His birth as Son of God in time to this utterance at the moment of millennial glory—from the *beginning* of God's ways in connection with Christ to their *consummation*. We sometimes sing:

"Son of Man, His incarnation
Opened first the tale of grace,
Son of God, in new creation,
Leader of a chosen race.
Well may glory
Crown Him in the ordered place!"

But the beginning and the end could not be thus happily brought together were there not a middle link. This, in Hebrews 1. the Spirit of God hastens to supply.

In View of Death.

3. "*And [He saith], Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as*

doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1. 10-12.)

There is the middle link! Between incarnation and millennial glory there lay the cross and all that it involved, and hence the Spirit of God with divine skill extracts these matchless verses from Psalm 102. and enshrines them here.

Psalm 102. is "a prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." In it we have supplied to us by the spirit of prophecy the very utterance of the soul of Jesus when He knelt in Gethsemane's garden contemplating the cross.

From the beginning down to the middle of verse 24 we have Messiah's voice. He pours out His sorrows into Jehovah's ear; He had been lifted up as the promised Messiah, and cast down that He might bear the judgment and the curse (ver. 10). His holy mind travels on to the days of glory yet in store for Zion, and the gathering together of the people at last in peace and blessing; and yet He, the Holy One of God, weakened in strength, and shortened in days. Feeling all these things in perfection, His cry—His strong crying and tears, as Hebrews 5. 7 puts it—is, "O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days."

Then Jehovah speaks—though again we should not have known it but for Hebrews 1. 8 and 10. In that great crisis, the supremest of all in Messiah's history, He is saluted by Jehovah as "the Father of eternity" (Isa. 9. 6, N.T.).

Higher and higher yet we soar. The Jesus who has endeared Himself to our hearts by dying is declared to be the Creator, the Sustainer, and the ultimate Finisher of all things. He is THE SAME. Here we reach—so it seems to the writer—a point beyond which it is impossible to go. The *mind* fails, and spiritual affections alone come to the rescue. When we can no further investigate we can worship.

Is it not most fitting that these exquisite words should be the utterance of God the Father to the Son in *the hour of death*? When Jesus had in self-denying love abased Himself to the lowest point, that just then He should be saluted by that which gives expression to the highest point of His glory.

Jesus, then, received this wonderful declaration of His glory just before He entered that tremendous hour when

"... desolate but undismayed,
With wearied frame and thorn-crowned head,
He, God-forsaken, man-betrayed,
Went up for us to Calvary,
And dying there in grief and shame,
He saved us—blessed be His Name!"

In Resurrection.

4. "*But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?*" (Heb. 1. 13).

After death, resurrection and exaltation. What else could possibly follow the death of such an One as we have seen Jesus to be? And so the Spirit of God next selects these words from Psalm 110.

These are the words which Jehovah said unto David's Lord, words which completely puzzled the Pharisees (see Matt. 22. 41-46), because they involved something of the glory of His person which they were determined not to admit. David saluted this distant descendant of his as his Lord because He is Son of God as well as Son of David.

God not only raised up Jesus from the dead, but gave Him glory, and that as seated at His right hand, the place connected with power and administration. This reference is particularly connected with the present moment. It defines Christ's present position while waiting for the kingdom in power when Jehovah will send the rod of His strength out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies, exalted by His willing people.

To-day, however, He is rejected, and it is as the rejected yet risen One that

these words are addressed to Him, expressing the divine satisfaction in Him. As the result of the way in which He glorified God in death, He is glorified in God, and that immediately (see John 13. 32).

Four times over, exclusive of this quotation from Psalm 110., do we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews of Christ being seated at the right hand of God.

In chapter 1. 3 we read He "set Himself down [N.T.] on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Here this exalted position evidently stands connected with the *exceeding greatness of His person*.

Chapter 8. 1. He is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." This is as High Priest. He is there in virtue of the *exceeding dignity of His office*.

Chapter 10. 12. He "offered one sacrifice for sins" and "for ever," i.e. "as a perpetual thing" He "sat down on the right hand of God"—the place is His because of the *exceeding perfection of His work*.

Chapter 12. 2. He has "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Here, as the context plainly shows, it is because of the *exceeding moral glory of the whole path He trod* as the Author and Finisher of faith.

Is there not ample reason here for this utterance of Psalm 110., the like of which was never uttered to angels? Indeed there is.

As Received into Glory.

5. "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 5. 6). This utterance is clearly connected with the foregoing in Psalm 110., and in Hebrews 5. it is with equal distinctness linked on with the utterance in Psalm 2. Christ did not elevate Himself into the high priestly office, but He who said to Him "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," He who saluted Him as His Son in incarnation, has lifted Him up to glory as Lord in

resurrection, and has inducted Him as an eternal Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Here we reach that which has an application to ourselves. Each previous utterance has been purely personal to Christ Himself in its bearing. As Priest after the order of Melchisedec He is the great Sustainer of everything for God. It is quite evident that He is at present exercising that priesthood after the pattern of Aaron (see chaps. 2. 17, 18; 4. 9-16), yet He is not of Aaron's order. That was a changeable priesthood connected with a material and visible order of things. He is unchangeable, eternal, outside man's genealogies and time-reckonings, and therefore Melchisedec, the mysterious king-priest of Abraham's day, has become the type of His order.

Such an One as this has become our great High Priest. We are entitled to read into the "Thou" of this verse all the wealth of power and love and glory we have previously contemplated, and say "THOU art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Can we wonder that presently the Spirit of God should add, "Wherefore HE is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them?" (7. 25).

This last quotation of the five stands out from the others also in that it is connected with an oath. Hebrews 7. 20-22 refers to this, and the inference drawn is that it signalizes the immense superiority of the new covenant. A "better testament" has been established. By dying Jesus became "surety" for it, and now living in resurrection He sustains as Priest both the covenant and those who are under it. In regard to Himself personally no oath could possibly be needed, but here it is His official position that is in question. A position upon which depends the *sustaining* of all the redeemed in life and blessing. Here an oath is most appropriate. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent."

"*Will not repent.*" Thanks, then, be to God, no disaster shall ever overtake that new covenant or those who are under it. We shall be carried through into God's eternal day of REST. We may safely sing :

"Peace, perfect peace, the future all unknown.
Jesus we know, and *He is on the throne.*"

Does it not seem, then, that we are permitted to hear the utterances of God the Father to the Son in the great moments of crisis which He met with in consequence of His having stooped

in lowly grace to become the Mediator ?

1. At His birth.
2. As He enters into His millennial glory.
3. In full view of death.
4. In resurrection.
5. As received up into glory.

The first gives us the first step in this wonderful story. The second the consummation of the work in the mediatorial kingdom. The last three give us the necessary steps to its accomplishment.

"The Word Became Flesh."

This seems a wonderful contrast. The Word, eternal, all-perfect, all-glorious, who was with God in the beginning, and was God, He became flesh. "The flesh" shows the weakness of which the Lord Jesus Christ became a partaker. When the people saw Him, they did not notice in His outward appearance anything superhuman, glorious, or free from earthly weakness and dependence. He was hungry and thirsty; overcome with fatigue, He slept. Do not think of Him as merely *appearing* as a man, or as being a man only in body, but as man in spirit, soul, and body. He exercised faith; He

read the Scriptures for His own guidance and encouragement; He prayed the whole night, especially when He had some great and important work to do. He sighed when He saw the man who was dumb; tears fell from His eyes at the grave of Lazarus; He was sometimes glad and "rejoiced in spirit," and sometimes angry and indignant when He beheld the hypocrisy of the Jews. His supplications were with strong crying and tears; His soul was exceedingly sorrowful; He was sorely pressed and agonized in Gethsemane. "*He suffered being tempted.*"

A Stranger Here.

It has been well said of the Lord Jesus that "He was the most gracious and accessible of men." We observe in His ways a tenderness and a kindness never seen in man, yet we always feel that He was "a Stranger." How true this is! He was "a Stranger here"—a Stranger as far as *revolted man* was filling the place, but intimately near as far as *misery* or *need demanded Him*. The distance He took, and the intimacy He expressed, were perfect. He did more than look on the misery that was around Him, He entered into it with a sympathy that was all His own; and He did more than refuse the pollution that was around Him—He kept the very distance of holiness itself from every touch or stain of it.

His holiness made Him an utter Stranger in such a polluted world; His grace kept Him ever active in such a needy and afflicted world. And this sets

off His life, I may say, in great moral glory; that though forced, by the quality of the scene around Him, to be a lonely One, yet He was drawn forth by the need and sorrow of it to be the active One.

His relationship to the world, when He was here, exhibits this. He was at once a Conqueror, a Sufferer, and a Benefactor. What moral glories shine in such an assemblage! He overcame the world, refusing all its attractions and offers; He suffered from it, witnessing for God against its whole course and spirit; He blessed it, dispensing His love and power continually, returning good for evil. Its temptations only made Him a Conqueror; its pollutions and enmities only a Sufferer; its miseries only a Benefactor. What a combination! What moral glories shine in each other's company there!

The Bridegroom.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom” (John 3. 29).

THE Bridegroom's possession of the bride is absolute and exclusive, for the relationship is inviolate, none may interfere.

Other ideas may present themselves, those of fitness and affection, but this is the chief. The bride is the absolute and inalienable property and possession of the bridegroom. And such possession carries its own peculiar joy to his heart. He sees in her an helpmeet for himself, his counterpart, his intelligent and loving co-partner who can not only share his joys and sorrows, but who feels that they are her own. Union produces identification, there is perfect community of interest, there is full reciprocity of wish and action, and that on account of the existing union between the two.

Now, Christ is presented, amid other relations, as the Bridegroom, and the church—not the individual saint—is spoken of as His bride, His wife. Given to Him of the Father, purchased by His precious blood, and the object of His special affection, she is His peculiar property, and belongs to Him alone. She is, *par excellence*, “His own.” He loves her to the end. As in the case of ordinary marriage a man shall leave his father and mother, the otherwise strongest of links, and shall cleave unto his wife. For this is the original institution as ordained by the Creator, and intended by Him to be maintained in all the sacredness of the tie. It is under His authority as Creator, and is to be disregarded at the peril of the offender. He shall “cleave unto his wife.” This was the divine decree in the brief day of innocence, when discord was unknown; it is the decree of God to-day, when sin, alas! has created such a host of difficulties, but when, at the same time, grace is well able to make the tie as strong and tender as at first. Oh! how admirably

does Christ make good His part in this mystic union? How true and tender, how patient and faithful is He!

Now, as to the reality of this relationship let us look first at Matthew 22. There we read of a certain King who made a marriage for His Son, and who sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding. This is, no doubt, the gospel-call. The servants are sent out to invite to a wedding. They share in the joy of the King and of His Son. They are in that exquisite secret. They have before them not only the happiness of the guests, but they have the gladness of the Bridegroom. He is a poor evangelist (it may be said in passing) who has only the good of the sinner before him. To have that is well, but to have the joy of Christ in His coming nuptial-day is far better. Let us realize the value of souls increasingly, but let us also have that day clearly in view, and think of the pleasure that the Son shall have when He shall survey His fair and glorious bride “unblemished in His sight.” This is a wondrous stimulus to the servant in his oft-weary labour, viz. that he can beget such joy to his Lord. The grand objective of the gospel should fill his heart with its infinite gratification to Christ.

Then in Matthew 25. we have the “midnight cry” which awakens all the sleepers, wise and foolish alike, and leads, consequently, to the definite and final separation of the two companies from each other. That cry is, “Behold the Bridegroom.” It implies His advent no doubt, but attention is drawn, not so much to that, as to Himself—the one commanding theme of the Spirit of God.

Of the bride nothing is said here, for all interest centres in the Bridegroom, and it is the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whatsoever character

or glory, that produces the greatest effect and leaves the deepest impression.

Elsewhere it is, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" or only, "Behold the Lamb of God;" or again, "Behold the Man." Here it is, "Behold the Bridegroom!" And at length He comes, and they that are ready go in with Him to the marriage—to the moment of His joy—and the door is shut. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Now let us learn from 2 Corinthians 11. the sanctifying power of this truth: "I am jealous over you," says the Apostle Paul, "with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

This beautiful simile is in keeping with all that has preceded. Paul had the grand design of the gospel before him—the marriage of the King's Son. His consuming desire was to present the church all pure and chaste, detached in heart and life from the snares of Satan and the power of evil, to Christ, as to "one husband." He laboured for fidelity on her part to the rightful claims of this one Husband, that she might respond, in all her ways, creditably to such a relationship. Could any appeal be more affecting? He saw the seductions around, and he pleaded for the exercise of those sacred affections which should ever burn in the bosom of the faithful bride, and express themselves in her conduct.

Then Ephesians 5. 27-32 gives us the result in the presentation to Himself of that church which Christ not only gave Himself for, but which He also sanctified and cleansed, with such infinite patience all her journey through that she is seen at last "glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." It is the bride that is here depicted.

She is seen to be the product of the work of Christ from the cross right on to the day of presentation. To Him she owes all her beauty.

We pass on to Revelation 19. 7-8-9, to "the marriage of the Lamb"—the consummation of all! "His wife," we read, "hath made herself ready; and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." She is credited with such, and is granted thus to be arrayed—pure and bright, and made ready for the nuptial day. The joy on each side is complete.

Then a thousand years pass away, and she is seen in the figure of a city (Rev. 20. 10-24), descending out of heaven from God, but still prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Time leaves no scar; the wrinkle, once effaced, never returns; the bridal beauty remains. The city is resplendent, the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Defilement is excluded forevermore. Glorious prospect!

Arise, Thou bright Morning Star, bright Herald of the day, and touch the chord which will cause "the Spirit and the bride" to say, in deep and rich union, "Come" to Thyself, the longed-for heavenly Bridegroom—Thou "conspicuous among myriads"—Thou "altogether lovely" who hast won the affections of these myriads by a love which, for them, has passed through death's dark waters and sin's heavy judgment, and which lives on to-day and for ever; nor shall it rest until Thy blood-bought bride is with thee in eternal glory. Again, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

"From the dateless timeless periods,
He has loved us without cause,
And for all His blood-bought myriads
His is love that knows no pause.
Matchless Lover!
Changeless as the eternal laws."

Soon shall come the rest eternal—
Where Thou art Thy saints shall be;
Girt with vigour fresh and vernal,
Meet companions, Lord, for Thee;

There in robes of purest whiteness,
With Thy name upon their brow,
They shall see Thy glorious brightness,
Filled with joy in worship bow.

In the Servant's Place.

(THOMAS OLIVER).

Isaiah 50. 2-11.

2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

4 The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

5 The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

7 For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.

9 Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

10 Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

WE may well ponder over this remarkable chapter. It tells of Jehovah-Jesus the Saviour at His *first advent* into this world. *God manifested in flesh*. It is written of the virgin mother of Jesus: "Behold, a [or the] virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, *God with us*" (Matt. I. 23)

But "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John I. 11). The language of our chapter in the second verse is, "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?" It was for this the Jews, as a nation, were rejected, set aside, "until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11. 25). He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and yet, as the second and third verses plainly indicate, He disposed of the heavens and the earth at His pleasure.

Here then, according to Isaiah 40. 28, we are in the presence of "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding."

In verse 4 this glorious Person, our precious Saviour and Lord, is seen taking the servant's place of lowliness, dependence, and humiliation—morn- ing by morning listening to the voice

of the Lord God, receiving daily instruction for His pathway, the perfect expression of what a man should be for God upon earth. For, "Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors" (Prov. 8. 34).

This verse shows us, too, the place that the weary and the heavy laden had and *have* in the heart of our Lord—"for He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And how it opens to us that what was in His heart was exactly what was in the heart of God His Father. The fourth chapter of John's Gospel and the story of the weary-hearted sinner at Sychar's well discloses all this. "And He must needs go through Samaria" (John 4. 4).

Surely this came from the habit of His soul as seen in the verse we have been considering. Then notice the devoted love, both to God and to this poor lost one, of Him who said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," and again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4. 32, 34).

How those words, "*that ye know not of*," must have caused the disciples feelings of shame. Brethren in Christ, what searchings of heart should be ours, who, with fuller light, seem to enter so feebly into the untiring compassions of our Saviour God.

Verses 5-7 leave no doubt as to who

is speaking in this chapter in Isaiah, "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." How our hearts are drawn to our Saviour. He had received a commandment to die. His own words in John 10. 17, 18 are: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." *And so He presses on.*

In Luke 12. 50 we read, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—proving how ready He was to die, that is, He could not rest until God had been *fully* glorified, Satan defeated, and the ground laid in His atoning sacrifice, for His beloved ransomed saints, in all ages, to be put, in grace which reigns through righteousness, in a place, not only of everlasting security, but of untold favour before God.

Now to this *we* are brought in verses 8 and 9, for as another has written, "Here with the help of the New Testament we find, in the most striking

manner, the Christian's place. *It is the place of Christ Himself.* That which Christ says here, the Apostle adopts and puts into the mouth of the believer (Rom. 8. 33, 34). He is identified with Jesus in His position before God. What, then, shall we say to all these sacred wonders? Let us exalt His name; celebrate His triumphs; proclaim His glory. Yea, let us live unto Him who died for us and rose again.

Verse 10 is full of encouragement, not only for the believing remnant in the day yet future, but for us Christians in this day of salvation, when the Holy Spirit of God is amongst us and within us, bearing witness to us of Jesus, our great Priest, at the right hand of God. "Able also to save them to the uttermost [or completely] that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 25).

On the other hand, verse 11 witnesses of the terrible doom of those who lean to their own understanding, and do not make the written Word of the living God, and it only, a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path; they will lie down in sorrow, and "eat of the fruit of their own way" (Prov. 1. 31).

The Joyful Sound.

O that the Name may be sounded
Afar over earth and sea,
Till the dead awaken and praise Thee,
And the dumb lips sing to Thee!
Sound forth as a song of triumph,
Wherever man's foot has trod,
The despised, the derided message,
The foolishness of God.
Jesus, dishonoured and dying,
A felon on either side,
Jesus, the song of the drunkards,
Jesus the Crucified!

Name of God's tender comfort,
Name of His glorious power,
Name that is song and sweetness,
The strong, everlasting tower.
Jesus the Lamb accepted—
Jesus the Priest on His throne—
Jesus the King who is coming—
Jesus, Thy Name alone.

Luke 24. 47.
John 5. 25.
Isaiah 35. 6.
Exodus 15.
Colossians 1. 23.
1 Corinthians 1. 23.
1 Corinthians 1. 25.
Hebrews 12. 2.
Luke 23. 33.
Psalms 69. 12.
2 Corinthians 13. 4.

Philippians 2. 10.
1 Peter 2. 7.
Proverbs 18. 10.
Revelations 5. 6.
Hebrews 5. 10.
Revelations 19. 16.
Acts 4. 12.

Christ Entering His Glory.

(J. T. MAWSON).

Luke 24.

The Lord Jesus appears, in this chapter, as the risen Lord and Leader of His disciples, gathering them and binding them together in one object and purpose, and instructing them as to the divine plan of campaign for the carrying of the grace of God to earth's remotest bounds.

"He is Risen."

THE fact of the actual bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is of the greatest possible importance. The salvation of the souls of men, the vindication of His own glorious person, and the supremacy of the everlasting God are all involved in it. If Christ be not raised, actually and bodily raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. If Christ be not raised, actually and bodily raised, He is not what He said He was, and His life and words on earth are a cruel deception. If Christ be not raised, actually and bodily raised, God has met with defeat, His throne has been sapped at the very base of it, the devil has triumphed, and evil is almighty in the universe.

If Christ be not raised, God's gracious intentions with regard to the blessing of men have been frustrated, heaven shall never celebrate the greatness of God's salvation, no song shall ever roll over the fields of glory, the Father's house shall be sad and silent for ever. The earth shall remain a desert where no fragrant rose can blossom, and a deluge of darkness more direful and disastrous than that flood which smote the world in Noah's day shall roll over the whole race of men in an everlasting mastery.

If, then, everything depends upon the resurrection of our Lord, and it does, for so we are taught in the Scriptures of Truth, it is good for us that we may travel in thought and faith with those who, on the first day of the week, sought the sepulchre where they had laid Him; it is good for us to look into that empty rock-hewn tomb and to hear angelic voices exclaim, "Why

seek ye the living amongst the dead? He is not here, HE IS RISEN." Thank God! And the fact is placed outside the region of question; the Scriptures, the five hundred and over of brethren and Saul of Tarsus who saw Him alive after He was risen, and the happy millions of ransomed men and women who have staked their all for time and eternity upon Christ, and who have sung their song of triumph in the very presence of death, all unite to bear witness to His victory over death; and His own words are to us the crowning of the testimony, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last; I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18).

Let those who deny the fact produce their witnesses, and bring their proofs to the test, or for ever cease to trouble us with their profane and vain babblings.

He Must be Supreme.

The Lord appears in Luke's Gospel on a great mission. He called it in His first recorded words "My Father's business" (chap. 2. 49). It was "to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins . . . to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (chap. 1. 77-79). So His first utterance in public service was "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor" (chap. 4. 18). And throughout the Gospel the opposition to Him was always because He would unswervingly pursue His Father's busi-

ness. So they murmured because He did *eat and drink with publicans and sinners* (chap. 5. 30); they said with scorn that He was "*a friend of publicans and sinners*" (chap. 7. 34); they murmured again, saying, "*This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them*" (chap. 15. 2). And yet again, "*That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner*" (chap. 19. 7). But the Son of Man had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and their murmurings did not hinder Him in this, though death and resurrection lay in the path of its accomplishment.

It was necessary, according to the divine plan of campaign, that others, His own disciples, not only those eleven whom He met on this resurrection day, but all His disciples throughout the succeeding centuries down even to this day, should bear a part in this wonderful mission of making known this grace to the ends of the earth, and in this resurrection chapter the Lord is seen instructing His disciples as to this and adjusting their thoughts to the new conditions.

These disciples, however, were faithless, dispirited, and sad. Strange that it should have been so, for that first Lord's day was the most glorious of all the days that God had made. But the Lord drew near and went with them, and the more we scrutinize His ways with them as He quietly and irresistibly takes the place of supremacy in their lives, the more glorious does He appear to us.

Their confidence in Him had received a rude shock, and yet they loved Him, and were sadly reciting the doings of the past week when "*He drew near and went with them.*" He drew near in more senses than one; there was no sudden display of power and splendour to fill them with awe, but the exercise of that compassion that fills His heart for the ignorant. He came close to them in their sorrow and woe in all that gentleness that had always marked His dealings with them. They were the

bruised reed and the smoking flax, which He would not break nor quench. They were broken of heart and sore of spirit, and needed the balm of the great Physician, and He was there to tenderly point out the sickness and to apply the remedy. Such is He who is the Master of all His servants, and thus does He prepare them to take up His service with boldness and joy.

Their fundamental mistake had been, that, in their innermost thought, they had made Him secondary to Israel. This is disclosed in their woeful complaint, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed ISRAEL." They had hoped that He would have broken the foreign yoke and made their nation free and glorious in the earth, and if He had done this how great He would have been in their eyes; but, instead, they had seen Him nailed to a malefactor's gibbet. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth."

He had died, and His death was the grave of all their hopes. They reasoned as men, that since He had died all must be lost, for death is the end of all the glory of man; his thoughts and purposes lie shattered and broken beside his mortal clay. But Jesus was risen again, and resurrection is the power of God, it is God's new beginning and His glory, His thoughts and purposes are all established by it, established in Christ, where disaster can never overtake them, for "He dieth no more."

Happy are they who, by the grace of God, can transfer their hopes from that race of man which lies under the dread and sentence of death, and centre them in Christ, the Second Man, the last Adam, who has risen above the power of death, the life-giving Head of a new race.

We marvel at the folly and faithlessness of these disciples, and yet we are often taken in the same snare, for do we not often make the Lord secondary

in some selfish way to our blessing, our comfort, our soul's prosperity, our success in service, or our cause? We have to learn, as they had, that He must be glorious, no matter how others fare, that He must in all things have the pre-eminence, and everything must be secondary to Him.

They had not believed *all* that the prophets had spoken. They had had their favourite texts, and those texts spoke of the great power of the Messiah, power that should crush their foes and make them the head of the nations; these they read and cherished and loved, but those that spoke of His sorrows, His acquaintance with grief, humiliation, rejection, and death they had neither understood nor believed. With great patience He expounded the Scriptures to them, showing them the things written therein concerning HIMSELF, and how that He ought to suffer these things and enter into His glory. He showed them these things until their eyes began to perceive hitherto unthought-of glories in Him, and their hearts glowed within them at the sight of them.

In the council chamber of eternity it was planned that He should have His glory as the Head and Centre of a universe of blessing founded upon redemption, a universe to which men from all nations were necessary, and by the path of suffering He was tested, and in it His fitness for that place was proved. Every test brought out this fitness in clearer light until the final test—THE CROSS.

Every human perfection disclosed its fragrance in His suffering: His absolute and unquestioning obedience to the will of God throughout all the way that that will led Him, His meekness, dependence, self-abnegation, everything, in fact, that man ought to be according to the thought of God He was and that right onward and into death.

In Him also, the lonely and forsaken Man upon the cross, there appeared in

full revelation every attribute of God. No ray of light from without pierced the awful gloom that enshrouded Him as the sin-bearer, but from out of that darkness there shone a glory that shall fill eternity. "All divine attributes were harmonized there—wisdom, holiness, mercy, justice, power, and truth"—and above all and through all the very nature of God, which is love, was declared triumphantly in the very place and hour where His justice demanded that sin should be judged to the uttermost.

Wonderful Saviour! It is along that path of unspeakable suffering that He has entered His glory. But the glory He has entered has added no glory to Him, for He was *all glorious* as He trod that downward pathway of sorrow and shame, He is not, nor can He be, more glorious than He was when He bowed His thorn-crowned head in death.

If He is now exalted to the Father's right hand it is because that place alone in the wide universe is worthy to receive Him. The diamond has been put in the golden setting, He has gone to His own place. Crowns of immortal lustre shall shine resplendent upon His sacred brow, but that brow is worthy of them, nor would they fit another.

As He expounded these things to them, thoughts of Israel must have faded from their minds, and He must have arisen to the supreme place in their thoughts, so that when at last their eyes are opened to know Him they no longer do their own will, nor think of their own interests nor comfort, but that same hour of the night they arise and return to Jerusalem. They did His will, though no command had been expressed; instinctively they knew what He would have them do. HIS LORDSHIP WAS COMPLETE. But His lordship was exercised in perfect grace, and they did His will under the compulsion of love; no other service is acceptable to Him.

Is it so in our lives? Are we like them, or like Saul of Tarsus, who, when the glory of the Lord shone upon him, cried, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" Apart from such complete submission we are short of His intention for us, and so far are useless in His great designs for the blessing of men. He must be supreme. In all things He must have the pre-eminence.

He is the Leader of His Servants.

The disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem on that day talking of two things—His resurrection, which was the declaration of His *power*; and His appearance to Simon, which was the manifestation of His *grace*—when JESUS HIMSELF stood in the midst of them. He stood there as their Lord and Leader, to direct them as to the world-wide mission upon which they were to go, a different view of things entirely to that presented by John; and in them were represented all His servants who shall serve Him until that mission is completed.

He greeted them with that blessed salutation, PEACE! for theirs was to be a mission of peace, and if they were to prosecute it aright they must be filled with and kept in peace.

With a quiet and matchless dignity He convinces them as to the reality of His resurrection, assures them that it is Himself and none other who stands before them, and opens their understanding as to the teaching of all Scripture concerning Himself. It was this teaching as to Himself that was to prepare them for the mission and to maintain them in peace in it. Out of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms He showed them God's plan and His glory. He showed them that He was the fulfilment of every word that God had uttered whether in promise or prophecy. Their fears, then, that everything they had hoped for was lost, were altogether groundless, for in Him, their risen Lord, everything that God had purposed was secured.

And further, though it was not then declared to them, they afterwards learnt that in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and that they were complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power. All the resources of God were in Him for them, and there was not a power in the universe that could intercept those resources.

Brethren in Christ, are we conscious that our Lord is such a glorious Lord, Centre, Leader, and Head for His servants? Those who are in the knowledge of this will fear no foe, for all the foes are defeated, as His resurrection is witness, they will dread no lack for all the mighty fullness of God is at their disposal in Him.

His presence in the midst of those disciples made them one, one in heart, object, and purpose; for what place could divergent views and selfish aspirations find in the presence of their glorious risen Lord? As they looked upon Him, bearing in His body the wounds of the cross, wounds received in His devotion to them, a tide of love to Him must have surged through every heart, and each would instinctively drop into his divinely appointed place with regard to Himself and each other.

Oh! that we all may see Him in His glory, love, and all-sufficiency; that selfish strife and ignoble pride may cease and perish amongst the servants of the Lord, and that there may be, by the grace of God, a holy determination to yield to Him the supreme place, not only in our individual lives, but as the Centre and Leader of His servants.

In the Great Outer Circle.

Having assumed His rightful place amongst them and opened their understanding that they might have a right knowledge as to Himself and the new circumstances in which they saw Him, He turned their eyes to the great outer circle of "all nations" and said unto

them, "*Thus it is written.*" Let that sentence impress us as it must have impressed them, and mark the place that THE SCRIPTURES hold in this chapter: first as to His own personal glory, it was "*All that the prophets had spoken;*" then in the sacred circle of His beloved servants it was, "*All things must be fulfilled, which were spoken in Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me.*" And now in connection with the whole world it is "*Thus it is written.*" There can be no right understanding of any relationship which we may have with the Lord apart from the Scriptures, nor can we rightly act in any sphere with Him apart from the guidance of the Scriptures. They have all-authority; they cannot be broken; the sufferings of Christ were for their fulfilment, and equally for their fulfilling must the grace of God be made known amongst all nations.

And further, mark the place that THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST occupy in this chapter. First, as to His own personal glory, "*Ought not Christ to have suffered?*" Then, in the sacred circle of His servants, "*He showed them His hands and His feet.*" Lastly, in this wide circle of all the world, "*Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again the third day.*"

There is no sphere in which we may move with Him on this hither side of the glory in which we may forget His sufferings and death, and on the other side when at home in the glory of God He will still be the Lamb that was slain. The value of the Scriptures is that they keep Him constantly before us, for they unfold to us "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

How wonderfully interwoven are these great things: the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, the sufferings of Christ, His resurrection and glory, and the grace of God to all nations. Let no rude hand attempt to tear them asunder, or destroy any one

of these divine verities, for if one could be spoiled the whole fabric would be marred.

But what place have the Scriptures and the sufferings of Christ with those who profess to be carrying out this blessed mission in these days? The question needs to be asked, for neither can be popular in the world that knows not God, and the popular taste, alas! is often consulted rather than the will of God.

The preaching of Christ crucified strikes at the root of all the pride of men; it means that he, in spite of all his boasted progress, must abase himself at the feet of the One who hung upon a gibbet, that only by this means can he be in right relations with God.

It means that in spite of all his culture, religion, learning, and power, he is a sinner under the power of death, the judgment of God, for "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12). It means that Christ, the holy and the true, upon whom alone death had no claim, went down into it as the judgment of God, and that only thus could it be removed.

This preaching is to the Jew (the religionist) a stumbling-block, and to the Greek (the philosopher) foolishness; nevertheless it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. And how wonderful it is to us who believe, and how great our joy when we see Him, who went into death for us, raised again from the dead. He has sustained the judgment, has passed through the deep waters, "He divided the sea whose waves roared" and has made the depths a way for His ransomed to pass over—the Lord of Hosts is His name. How great indeed is His glory in God's salvation.

"*Christ died for our sins . . . was buried and rose again from the dead.*" These are the great facts that have to be heralded in every habitation of man, and these facts are *according to the Scriptures*. And these facts are to be

heralded that men may know that in consequence of them a way has been opened by which they may return to God, and returning have all their sins remitted. And these priceless blessings have to be offered *in His name*; that is, His servants are to do it on His behalf, as His representatives, His ambassadors, backed by His authority, and, as He told them, endued with the power which He would send them from above. Then "He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them, and it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN."

His work was finished, and the glory of God claimed Him, and their rap-

tured eyes followed Him into that shekinah cloud. He is in that glory still; Stephen saw Him there, Saul of Tarsus saw Him there, and we by faith may also see Him there: "JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR" (Heb. 2. 9).

God grant to us, in His limitless grace, that our eyes and souls may be filled with His glory, and that to serve Him in the spreading of the gospel, which is concerning Him raised from the dead, may be accounted by us an unspeakable honour. Then shall we diligently pursue it in the power of the Holy Spirit until we see Him in His Father's house.

His Glories and His Humilities.

We see glories and humilities in our Redeemer; we do indeed, for we need each.

The One who sat on the well in Sychar is He who now sits on high in heaven. He that ascended is He that descended. Dignities and condescensions are with Him; a seat at the right hand of God,

and yet a-stooping to wash the feet of His saints here. What a combination! No abatement of His honours, though suiting Himself to our poverty: nothing wanting that can serve us, though glorious, and stainless, and complete in Himself.

Come.

(J. BOYD).

COME, then, all-glorious Saviour!
Thy day bring swiftly nigh,
With foot that doth for fleetness
The winds of heaven defy.

Let it outstrip and distance
The wild gazelle, deride
The hart upon the mountains—
Come, Bridegroom, for Thy Bride.

Come! End the night of weeping,
Bring in eternal day;
Come, Thou bright Star of Morning!
For this Thy people pray.

"I am . . . the bright and morning Star. . . . Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."—Revelation 22. 16, 20.

"Thy House" and His Dwelling.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"To-day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19. 5).

"Master . . . where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see."

WHILE visiting an afflicted Christian some time ago we were given a word of counsel, which was this: "In sending out the magazine, do not forget the needs of the invalids who are deprived of the help of Christian fellowship and public ministry." Our friend told us that such are often greatly tried and needed much comfort, and this we can well believe.

Let all such rejoice that, though they are deprived of many privileges that others enjoy, they may still have uninterrupted communion with the Lord, for of Him it is written: "THE LORD HEARETH THE POOR, AND DESPISETH NOT HIS PRISONERS" (Ps. 69. 33). Let them take the affliction or sorrow from Him who orders everything in His infinite wisdom and love, and account themselves as "His prisoners," and they too "will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving" (ver. 30): for how praiseworthy indeed is that compassion that takes notice of each of His saints, and that according to their individual needs. All this is included in that grace which first sought and saved us, and is most beautifully expressed in the Lord's words to Zacchæus: "To-day I must abide at thy house." This was not said for the chief of the tax-gatherers alone, but for you and us also; it is the way the grace of the Lord compels Him to take towards *all* whom He has sought and saved, and so it can be said that salvation has come to all who are His: salvation not from the penalty of sin merely: from hell-fire at last, but for every day of the journey to the homeland, for He Himself is salvation to us, and He is an everyday Saviour, who will never leave us nor forsake us.

What a comfort lies here for all about whom the storms of trouble

sweep! The Lord is with them, and every sorrow may be laid at His feet and every difficulty told to Him. That life which appears to have the least sorrow has its difficulties and burdens, and none of us have sufficient wisdom or strength to deal with these. But He is sufficient for little trials and for big, and so precious are we to Him that He will never abandon us. Only let it be realized that the grace of God brought Him down to us, not only to save us, but *to abide with us*, and that He is ever by our side to support and succour us and to sympathize with us, and it will change the aspect of every sorrow and produce the song where the sigh has been. It is the realization of His presence that can lead the saint of God to say, "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.). And if "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13. 5, 6).

But let it be observed that the Lord did not merely say to Zacchæus, "I must abide with *thee*," but "*at thy house*." A place was to be found for Him in the home circle, so that not only the individual needs and difficulties, but those of the household might also be brought to His notice; for He is not indifferent to those things that lie at the hearts of His own.

And further, beyond all the need for grace and mercy that arises in the lives of His people as they pass through trial of various sorts, there is the need of their hearts. He is a living, bright reality, to fill the heart and close it to all but Himself, that He may be supreme in every sense.

We believe that the contemplation of the tender interest of the Lord in this regard will be of great benefit, not merely to the suffering and sorrowful amongst the saints of God, but to all ; and it will lead, where godly exercise is produced by it, to the turning away from everything incongruous to that gracious presence.

* * * *

But the grace revealed in the Gospel of Luke, which finds a kind of climax in the Lord's going to the dwelling of the sinful tax-gatherer, is not the end of His thought for us. It is a means to an end ; the end is disclosed in the Gospel of John. There we learn that He delights to introduce us to *His dwelling*, and desires that we should be absorbed in the things that are precious to His heart.

It must have gratified the Lord to see those two disciples following Him, and to hear their answer to His question, "What seek ye?" It was not their need that made them go after Him, but Himself, as their answer "Master, wheredweldest Thou?" proved. The only response that divine love could give to such a desire was, "Come and see." "And they abode with Him that day" (chap. 1. 39). In that lovely incident at the opening of the Gospel there is given to us an illustration of Christianity as it is revealed in John.

His dwelling-place is the bosom of the Father (ver. 18) ; He dwells in the Father's love and in all that that love affords, and His disciples are called to share that dwelling with Him, for He makes them one with Himself in this place of divine blessing. They are His brethren, and to them

"He gives not as the world, but shares
All He possesses with His loved co-heirs."

LIFE belongs to this place, for He has said, "*Because I live, ye shall live also*" (chap. 14. 19). This is eternal life, the life that belongs to the Christian position and relationship.

PEACE belongs to it also, for He has said, "*My peace I give unto you*"

(chap. 14. 27). This peace is one that no circumstances, however favourable, could yield—it is peace that belongs to the world of divine love.

JOY belongs to it, for He has said, "*That My joy might remain in you*" (chap. 15. 11). It is a joy that springs from the knowledge of and abiding in the thoughts and words of the Father's counsels, and as the "*friends*" of the Well-Beloved these things are made known to us that we might abide in them and do them.

GLORY belongs to this position and relationship, for He said in prayer to His Father, "*The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them*" (chap. 17. 22). It is a distinction outside and above the highest that could be gained in the world, it is the dignity that belongs to the sons of God.

Let us not shrink from entering, in the energy of faith, upon the enjoyment of this most blessed place and relationship, the dwelling of the Lord, for it is ours ; nor are we strangers in it, for love removes all sense of strangeness from the heart : "Perfect love casts out fear," and we are loved with a great love, as we learn from the Lord's own words : "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me" (chap. 16. 27) ; and "*Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me*" (chap. 17. 23).

Let none suppose that we must actually enter heaven before this can be. It is true that that is our destiny, for the Lord has gone into the Father's house to prepare an abode for us there, and in that innermost dwelling of divine love we shall have our place with Him. But now and here we may begin to know the joy of those intimacies that we shall know without any distance or cloud in the swiftly coming day of glory.

* * * *

It is good to learn what He can be to us in our circumstances, but it is a great epoch in our spiritual experience when we begin to realize what we are

to Him, and a still greater when we begin to discover what He is to the Father, and the Father to Him, and are able to say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1. 3). It is into this that He longs to lead us, and He

pours His grace upon us that we may be free in spirit from all burdens and worries to enter into this.

The subject is an attractive one. Limitations of space forbid us to pursue it, but we commend it to the prayerful contemplation of all.

Come, Lord Jesus.

(WM. MAGOWAN).

COME, Lord, in Thy greatness and glory,
Thy face we are longing to see ;
Abolish death's empire so hoary,
Bid sin from the universe flee ;
Oh, still the sad cry of creation,
Which earnestly longs to be free.

Oh, come as the Star of the morning
Dispelling the gloom of the night !
The distant horizon adorning
With rays of ineffable light ;
Oh, come that Thy loved ones may meet Thee
In courts of supernal delight.

Come, Saviour, complete the salvation
For which we have waited so long ;
Accomplish our full expectation,
Turn sorrow and sighing to song ;
We wait to behold Thee exalted,
The Head of the heavenly throng.

To see Thee, and praise Thee for ever,
When ended the wilderness race,
And nothing can enter to sever
Or dim the deep sense of Thy grace,
But ever through ages eternal
To live in the light of Thy face.

But while we await Thee, O Saviour,
Amid the dim shadows of night,
May our loving and loyal behaviour
Declare that in Thee we delight,
Till hope reach its goal in the *glory*,
And faith its fruition in *sight*.

“On His Head were Many Crowns.” (H. D. R. JAMESON).

An Outline of Many Glories.

THERE is a story told which runs, as far as memory serves, as follows :

During a Scripture lesson the teacher asked the children to write upon their slates as many of the names and titles of our Lord Jesus Christ as they could.

Looking over the slates afterwards, he found some contained but few of our Lord's titles. But there was one slate which was filled from top to bottom. It was the slate of a quiet, happy little girl. She had written first the name “Jesus,” following on with “Lord,” “Christ,” “Son of God,” “Son of Man,” and a long list of our Lord's glorious names and titles. Then underneath them all: “AND HE IS MY OWN DEAR SAVIOUR.”

This happy child knew what many a scholarly theologian does not know. But how poor and ultimately useless is all knowledge unless there is personal knowledge, this heart-acquaintance with Him as the Saviour, whose atoning blood cleanses from every sin. It is in the spirit of the child that we shall rightly appreciate our Saviour's greatness and glory.

Approaching our theme, then, in just such a spirit, it may be helpful to bring into short compass a survey of some of the principal names and titles setting forth the manifold glories of Christ, without attempting to unfold their meaning save in the briefest outline.

What is of God differs from what is of man in this respect, that all is beautiful and perfect whether examined in detail—as when one bends to examine a flower—or whether a wider view be taken—as when one beholds from an eminence a fine landscape. To adapt the figure, it is the wide

outlook, a *general* survey, which is contemplated in the remarks following, that the mind may in it travel at one view over a wide range of the many glories of Christ.

* * * *

As to His Deity, God salutes Him as GOD in Hebrews i. 8. Man addresses Him, without rebuke, as GOD in John 20. 28. The Holy Spirit in Romans 9. 5 describes Him as “GOD over all, blessed for ever ;” and He Himself, in John 8. 58, claims to be the I AM.

As to His personality, His titles in relation to eternity are the WORD and the SON. The WORD as the One in whom the Godhead is in self-expression ; whilst the SON is His personal title within the Godhead as in eternal relation to the Father.

As to His humanity, He Himself speaks of Himself as “A MAN that hath told you the truth” (John 8. 40), and the inspired Apostle in 1 Timothy 2. designates Him “The MAN Christ Jesus.”

As having proceeded forth from God, He is SON OF GOD : which also is His title as born of the Virgin by the overshadowing of the Highest, and as thus coming into the world. He was EMMANUEL—“God with us.” He is the long-foretold “SEED of the woman” (Gen. 2. 15).

As coming after the flesh into the royal line of David, He is SON OF DAVID ; whilst as truly Man His title is SON OF MAN. As SON OF DAVID He stands in relation to Israel, and all the promises linked with Israel and David's house. SON OF MAN is the title of His wider glory as set in supremacy over all the works of God's hands (Ps. 8.).

But, again, His humanity was unique. He is the **SECOND MAN** who is out of heaven (1 Cor. 15. 47). All that characterized Him morally was from heaven. He derived nothing characteristically from Mary by His birth in time. He is not Man after the order of the "first man." He is the **SECOND MAN** of a totally new order, heavenly, "out of heaven." When here on earth He could speak of Himself as "the **SON OF MAN** which is in heaven."

In resurrection He has been made both **LORD** and **CHRIST**. As **CHRIST** He is the Anointed. Man of a new order anointed of God as according to His pleasure, and the One from whom all derive in blessing. As **LORD** He is administrator of the vast resources of God as Joseph was in his day lord over all the land of Egypt, the administrator of all the plenty laid up in Pharaoh's storehouses.

JESUS is His personal name as born here in time, but a name with a blessed significance, "Jehovah-Saviour," Jehovah Himself come to be the Saviour of His people. It is the name which is above every name, the music of which will for ever charm the souls of His redeemed.

The names **JESUS** and **CHRIST** are found compounded as a frequent designation; but He was made Christ in resurrection—only then was He fully in the place of the Anointed from whom all could derive in blessing—and so the reverse of the words **JESUS CHRIST**, *i.e.* **CHRIST JESUS**, is never found until we reach the Acts. With Christ in resurrection we find the designation again and again "**CHRIST JESUS**."

On the behalf of God He was here as the perfect **SERVANT**. "Behold My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased" (Matt. 12. 18). He was the Servant of the divine pleasure, the One here, not to do His own will,

but the will of Him that sent Him. He was the "**LAMB OF GOD** that taketh away the sin of the world," the One here wholly for the glory of God. It is the title of sacrifice. At infinite cost to Himself He removed all that dishonoured God. He is the **IMAGE** of the invisible God, the full representation of God in His universe.

Where every other had in greater or less degree failed in the place of witness He ever abode the "faithful and true **WITNESS**." Where others had lived for themselves He lived on the behalf of God: He was the **TRUE VINE**, ever bringing forth fruit (John 15. 1). He is **KING OF KINGS**, and **LORD OF LORDS** (Rev. 19.), soon to wield universal sway, a rule not confined to earth or to heaven, but extending throughout the far-stretching dominions of God. He is the **GOVERNOR** (Matt. 2.), on whose shoulder is the government (Isa. 9. 6).

For us He is first of all **SAVIOUR**—precious name!—the One who came at whatever cost to Himself to redeem and save the lost. Indeed, Saviour is His name in relation to the wide world. He is Saviour of the world. To men too He stood in relation as **SERVANT**, for "Man acquired Me as bond-slave from My youth" (Zech. 13. 5, N.T.). His love made Him the Servant of all about Him here. Next, to His own He is **SHEPHERD**—"the *good* Shepherd" who giveth His life for the sheep (John 10. 11); in resurrection might the *great* Shepherd of the sheep, whom God has brought again from the dead (Heb. 13. 20); in present grace the *chief* Shepherd over all those under-shepherds who are now in communion with His mind in caring for His sheep (1 Peter 5. 4).

He is the **APOSTLE** of our confession as the One in whom all is presented from God to us; and He is the **HIGH PRIEST** of our confession as the One in whom we enter in, and by whom we draw nigh to God. He is Priest in regard to our necessities in passing

through the wilderness, able to sympathize with us in all our infirmities ; and as such " He ever liveth to make intercession." It is the present service of His love for those with whom His eyes and His heart ever abide. Godward too He is Priest after another character as " MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY." His Priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec, but fashioned after the pattern of Aaron.

He is the one MEDIATOR between God and men, the One co-equal with God on the one hand, and in the truest possible way, on the other, " the Man Christ Jesus." He is the long-looked-for DAYS-MAN for whom Job longed in his day.

He is the LEADER of our salvation as the One who is the source of it all to us ; and, looked at as many sons passing through this world to glory, He is our FORERUNNER, and as such has entered in. He is AUTHOR and FINISHER OF FAITH, for every trait of faith is seen in Him ; He has trodden the whole path : faith finds its full exemplification in Him.

In relation to " His own " corporately HE IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH which is His body. As Head of a new race, He is the LAST ADAM. Not as Adam was a living soul, but a quickening or life-giving Spirit. He is the DOOR into all blessing (John 10.). He is the WAY to the Father (John 14.) ; and He is in the most absolute sense " THE TRUTH"—the truth as to God, the truth as to man, the truth as to all things comes into evidence in His presence.

If any man sin we have an ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (1 John 2. 1). In every circumstance, at all times, He is on our behalf.

He is the LIVING BREAD come down from heaven, which if a man eat thereof he shall live for ever : He not only gives life, but that which is presented in His own person sustains it. He is

our HOPE, and His title in that respect is the BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR. He is also the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, for as the created sun bathes the earth in its warmth and light and is the source of all fertility, life, and activity in the globe, so when Christ appears, arising as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings, He will bring in day in its fullest sense ; but before the day dawns the Morning Star appears—Christ appearing to rapture His own. It is in this character for which we look for Him as the BRIDEGROOM. He loves His own as Saviour, but He loves them too with an altogether different character of love as the Bridegroom, and as such He is waiting with ardent affection for the day when, with a shout, He will rise from His seat and call His own to be for ever with Himself.

In relation to creation He is first of all the Source of all things in that He created them ; in the final issue He is HEIR OF ALL THINGS ; and in the meantime He is the Sustainer of all things, for He upholds all by the utterance of His power. He thus takes the place of absolute priority in creation as FIRST-BORN OF EVERY CREATURE. In the realm of blessing, brought in in consequence of His death, He is FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD. There too He is the BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD, the outset of all things new. As to the hosts of unseen powers He is HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER. Finally, in the reconciled universe, He will be HEAD OVER ALL THINGS, for He is the great Centre in whom, according to the mystery of God's will, all will be headed up.

As to what God is doing in the world to-day, the structure He is building soon to be displayed in glory, Christ is the FOUNDATION, and He is also the chief CORNER STONE. He is the LIVING STONE, the SON OF THE LIVING GOD, the One in whom is that mar-

vellous energy of life against which the gates of hades cannot prevail.

As to His character He is the HOLY ONE OF GOD (John 6. 69, N.T.), and again He is "THE RIGHTEOUS." He is the LION of the tribe of Judah, as the One in whom centre majesty, might, and dominion—thoughts commonly connected in their measure with the lion as the king of beasts.

As to the eternity of His Being He is the ALPHA "whose goings forth were from of old, from the days of eternity;" and He is the OMEGA: the FIRST and the LAST, the BEGINNING and the END. He is the "FATHER OF ETERNITY." In Him abide essentially those marvellous energies whose nature none can really understand—

light and life. He could say, "I am the LIGHT OF THE WORLD," on the one hand, and, on the other, "I am THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE." He is this in His own person. Amidst the moral darkness of this world, and with death on every hand, what a comfort that this is so! His love "passeth knowledge."

The Father calls Him "My Beloved;" the Spirit designates Him "The Beloved;" and surely we who form His bride may fitly apply to the One, some of whose many glories we have surveyed in the titles just brought before us, the words in which the bride in the Canticles concludes her description of her beloved: "HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY: THIS IS MY BELOVED."

"God hath Spoken."

A living God must speak. The god of philosophers is a silent god, for he hath neither life nor affection; but our God, who created the heavens and the earth, who is, and who is love, He must speak. Even in creation God uttered His thoughts, and when He made man as the consummation of that work, it was for this purpose, that man should hear Him and love Him, that he should rejoice in His light and in His life.

When sin entered the world silence ensued on man's side; he became afraid of God, and the melody of praise and prayer ceased; then was a revelation from God and of God a greater necessity than ever.

And God hath spoken: in olden times unto the fathers by the prophets; fully and perfectly unto us by His Son. But what a contrast! The prophets were many; the Son is one. The prophets

were servants; the Son is Lord. The prophets were temporary; the Son abideth for ever. The prophets imperfect; the Son is perfect even as God is perfect. The prophets were sinful; the Son is not only absolutely pure, but able also to purify those who are full of sin and pollution. The prophets pointed to the future and said, He is coming; the Son points to Himself and says, "Here am I." The speaking through the prophets was imperfect and fragmentary, no saying of theirs could stand alone; it had always to be supplemented. Every saying showed some aspect of the truth, some portion of the treasure, without which we should be poor; but now the time of fragmentary, imperfect, and temporary revelation is past. God speaks to us now in a more glorious way, and the revelation is complete and final, for He has spoken to us in the Son.

"The way that He shall choose" (Ps. 25. 12).

O Lord, we do not understand
As yet the fullness of Thy ways;
But, pilgrims to Immanuel's land,
At every step we'd sing Thy praise.

The path is often lost to sight,
But faith in darkness still can see;
We know Thy choice is ever right,
And gladly leave our way to Thee.

L. G. Kumm.

"A Saviour, Jesus."

(J. WILSON SMITH).

ONE of the most resplendent crowns which shall rest on the head of our Lord Jesus Christ is that of Saviour. Beside His name none other is given under heaven whereby men must be saved (Acts 4. 12), and so we read: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3. 18). The refusal of His name is fatal. We may well thank God for that name as we remember how that He "so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16). May we lay hold of the fact that the heart of God the Father is the fountain-head of the river of saving grace; thence it flows in measureless fullness over a world alienated from God, so that all and any who are conscious of their lost condition may, by faith in His Son, become the recipients, here and now, of all that grace can give—possessors of everlasting life! But this grace must reach us on grounds of absolute righteousness. The throne itself would be outraged were its just claims not perfectly met and satisfied; and seeing that this could never be accomplished by the creature already powerless and guilty, it must be rendered by One fully competent to do so. Him we find in the Son of God! He is the divinely provided ransom. God Himself has provided a lamb for a burnt-offering. Here, then, we start. This is our foundation; it is solid and sure, and clean outside all that is of man. We can freely speak of a Saviour-God! He loved and He gave, and the given One came willingly to do all that was charged upon Him. But if this should be on the side of God, what is there on that of man? There is, alas! only the sin that necessitated grace so boundless.

Sin? Yes. And what is sin? Its nature is questioned to-day. It is vainly explained away; but none the less it remains in its undiminished virulence and universality. Neither has philosophy, nor civilization, nor education, nor science, nor any human device that the clever brain of man has invented, removed sin from the heart, or its dire consequence of death, and the grave, and the judgment beyond, from the race of fallen, guilty men. There it is, as patent and potent to-day as ever; so that he who denies it is blind, or worse.

Let us get on to this bed-rock truth, else salvation means nothing and a Saviour is a mere sentiment.

God declares that "all the world is guilty before Him" (Rom. 3. 19), that it "lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5. 19), and that "Satan deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12. 9). The cross was its moral judgment (John 12. 31). So much for the mass; but, personally, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The power and poison of sin are rampant in every department of life, in every sphere and circle and bosom. These vast cemeteries bear mighty witness. "Death has passed on all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12).

What, then, is sin? It may be seen in a thousand aggravated and sickening forms, from murder to a thought of foolishness (Mark 7. 21, 22); but notice, "the movement of a heart in opposition to the will of God is sin." Who can escape here?

Hence the Lord said to certain accusers, "Let him that is *without sin* first cast a stone at her" (John 8. 7). Needless to say, no hand dare cast a stone. Every man was guilty of some sin; none was, nor is, nor can be "*without sin*."

The crying need of the day is a true

sense of sin, and therefore of humiliation and repentance before God. Always so, but perhaps more truly now than ever; and if so, woe to those who minimize the gravity of sin and its certain and eternal judgment.

This clears the way for God's salvation. And what is that? Nay, who is that? It is Christ Himself! "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation," said Simcon as he held the infant Redeemer in his arms.

Never can that salvation be understood until it is seen to be embodied in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, as dead, and risen, and glorified.

His death was necessary for expiation, and His blood alone, but fully, can cleanse from sin.

His resurrection from the dead was also necessary as proof of the work of atonement done and no more sacrifice required. By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10. 14).

And His ascension was necessary, that He might send down the Holy Spirit to give effect to His work and seal for eternal blessing the souls of all who believe. Oh, lay hold of the deep meaning of the words "*one offering*." Let that offering stand before your eye in its absolute all-sufficiency. Think who it was that was offered! Remember the cup He drank and the curse He bore! Ponder the love that led Him into such fathomless depths! View Him as the sinless Son of Man who obeyed to the letter, and who alone glorified God where all else had failed! Smite your breast as you behold the sight of Calvary! Learn the love of Christ that passeth knowledge! See the whole awful question of your sins and sin, your guilt and state, settled in His death, so that you, delivered from every thrall and fear, at cost so infinite, might love Him in return, and serve and follow and worship Him, until, by His side, you see the crown of your salvation on His glorious brow for ever.

A Perfect Workman and a Perfect Work. (H. NUNNERLEY.)

Colossians.

THE gospel declared in the Scriptures is the good news of God "concerning His Son Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1. 3). The perfection of the person of the Son of God is therefore a matter of primary and supreme importance. To tarnish in the smallest degree His pure and unspotted humanity, or to question in any way His Deity, is to rob Christ of His glory and sap the foundations of Christianity. In the things of this life, if a work is to be well done, an efficient workman must be procured to do it. Even so in divine things, it is the glory of Christ's person which clothes with such dignity His work.

In the Epistle to the Colossians is a wonderful presentation of the varied excellences of Christ. The inspired Apostle speaks of Him first as the Son of the Father's love, and then declares that He is the

"Image of the Invisible God."

Creation witnessed that there was a God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." The Cherubim with their flaming sword, the flood with its sweeping judgment, told that this God was not indifferent to the ways, words, and actions of His creatures. The law with its holy claims,

the sword and government, all proclaimed divine interest in men: but neither judgment, government, nor law REVEALED Him. Until the dawn of that eventful morn when Bethlehem's shepherds heard those heavenly notes, "Glory to God in the highest," God, as He truly is, was not manifested.

"All the fulness of the Godhead" dwelt in Jesus: God was there to be seen in that blessed Man who was sealed with the Holy Ghost on coming out of Jordan. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." All that Christ was, said, and did, fully, perfectly set God forth, imaged Him, before the eyes of men. Their blind eyes failed to perceive the glory veiled in the Nazarene, but faith discerned it and bowed in worship at His feet.

"Firstborn of every creature."

But He was not only God manifest in flesh, but a perfect Man, greater than the most exalted of created beings, and coming into His creation He must take it in the rank of firstborn of every creature.

Firstborn signifies priority of position and dignity. When *He* appeared on the scene, every one else must sink into nothingness as compared with Him. Solomon was not David's eldest son, yet he is spoken of as "firstborn" (Ps. 89. 27), *i.e.* he was to take first rank; so Christ must "in all things . . . have the pre-eminence," for never had been seen among human or angelic beings one so great and glorious as the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. In the inscrutable person of Jesus, "the carpenter" of Nazareth (Mark 6. 3), we see the Creator of the ends of the earth. As a man He was absolutely perfect in all His ways: His nature was holy, "that HOLY thing which shall be born of Thee," He not only "did no sin," but was wholly incapable of it: He "knew no sin." He was the "perfect man" spoken of

by James, "who offended not in word." His works too were perfect—"Many good works have I shewed you from My Father."

"By Him all things were created."

In eternity before this world was called into existence—HE WAS—the uncreated, self-existent, eternal God. All beings celestial and terrestrial owe their existence to Him, He is the Creator who grows not weary nor faints. Earthly and heavenly beings witness to the creative power of Him who once lay as the Babe in Bethlehem's manger.

Thrones, dominions, principalities yet await their Lord and Creator, for all things are FOR HIM; and the worlds will one day see every dignity bestowed upon Him, for all things are to be gathered together and placed in His hand as their rightful Lord.

Again, not only were all things created *by* Him, and *for* Him, but

"By Him all things consist."

The air we breathe, the sun that shines, the refreshing rain and dew from heaven are given and continued by Him whom man once crucified between two malefactors. All created things are upheld by the word of His power. Let Him but utter the word and the present things will cease, the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. The men who blaspheme His holy name forget that their breath is in His hand, and their continuance in life depends absolutely on His pleasure.

This is "the Man Christ Jesus," and yet the One who, according to eternal counsel, "came" to do the will of God in a body "prepared" for Him. Where shall we find a more perfect and glorious Saviour? I do not ask what your creed is, but I do ask whether the imperishable, immovable foundation of the adorable person and work of the Son of God is the rock

on which you rest. Can you say with one of old, "We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God?" If so, then you are privileged to possess and enjoy all the blessings which have flowed from the perfect work of this perfect Workman.

To bring out His exceeding greatness I would point out now the marvellous effects produced in those sinners of the Gentiles at Colosse.

We get two portraits of them. One is in chapter 1. and the others in chapters 2. and 3. Nothing could be more opposite than those two pictures. One gives us their ways and conduct as sinners, the other their position and blessing as saints.

In Colossians 3. 5 we read: "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: **IN THE WHICH YE ALSO WALKED SOME TIME, WHEN YE LIVED IN THEM.**" Then chapter 2. 13: "YOU, BEING DEAD IN YOUR SINS." This is the dark portrait which the Spirit of God has given of those sinners at Colosse before the good news of God reached them: appalling picture—"living" in their sins. Lost, helpless, undone, "dead" in their sins, divine power alone could give them spiritual life.

In chapter 1. 12 Paul raises an exultant note of praise, and gives God thanks that these selfsame people were now perfectly fit to step into heaven, and absolutely delivered, not only from darkness, but from the authority of darkness. Nay, more: every sin of which they had been guilty, forgiven, and they themselves reconciled to God; able to look up into heaven and enjoy unruffled peace.

Was it by any wonderful work on their part, any reformation or improvement in morals and conduct by which this mighty change was effected? This

translation from the terrible condition of chapter 3. to the blessed and glorious position of chapter 1. Nothing of the kind. Three little words in chapter 1. 4 explain the secret of this marvellous result, the pivot on which their spiritual history turned the mighty lever that had lifted them out of the thick, gross darkness of heathenism, into the full blaze of the light of Christianity. The three words are, "**FAITH IN CHRIST.**"

Look down the glorious list of blessings contained in chapter 1.—made meet for heaven, perfectly fitted to tread those bright courts above, in the full blaze of radiant unsullied light, through "**FAITH IN CHRIST.**"

Plucked as a brand from the burning, snatched from the terrible sway of the kingdom of darkness, and introduced into the liberty, joy, and blessedness of the kingdom of the Son of His love, through "**FAITH IN CHRIST.**"

No longer trembling beneath the load of unforgiven sins, but forgiven, cleansed from every stain: the whole history of deepest dyed crime and wickedness for ever obliterated by that precious blood once shed upon the cross, through "**FAITH IN CHRIST.**"

The secret of their blessing is contained in those three words, and all who truly trust Christ are privileged to say, "I am delivered from hell, made meet for heaven." Why? Because the Workman is both humanly and divinely perfect, and as a consequence His work is also perfect; I have only to trust *Him* and rest in *it*.

Such, then, is Christ. We have considered Him in some of the glories of His person and in the exceeding efficacy of His finished work, the full manifestation of whose glorious results awaits another day, when, as the Reconciler of all things, He will appear in millennial glory, and afterwards introduce an eternal rest, which will owe all the blessedness of its state to that perfect work.

“This Same Jesus.”

Time made no change in the Lord. Kindred instances of grace and character in Him, before and after His resurrection, give us possession of this truth, which is of such importance to us. We know what He is this moment, and what He will be for ever, from what He has already been—in character as in nature—in relationship to us as well as in Himself—“the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

The very mention of this is blessed. Sometimes we may be grieved at changes, sometimes we may desire them. In different ways we all prove the fickle, uncertain nature of that which constitutes human life. Not only circumstances, which are changeful to a proverb, but associations, friendships, affections, characters continually undergo variations which surprise and sadden us. We are hurried from stage to stage of life; but unchilled affections and unsullied principles are rarely borne along with us, either in ourselves or our companions. But Jesus was the same after His resurrection as He had been before, though late events had put Him and His disciples at a greater distance than companions had ever known, or could ever know. *They* had betrayed their unfaithful hearts, forsaking Him and fleeing in the hour of His weakness and need; while *He* for their sakes had gone through death—such a death as never could have been borne by another, as would have crushed the creature itself. *They* were still but poor feeble Galileans—*He* had all power in heaven and on earth given into His hand.

But these things worked no change; “nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,” as the Apostle speaks, could do that. Love defies them all, and He returns to them the Jesus whom they had known before.

In John 3. He led a slow-hearted Rabbi into the light and way of truth, bearing with him in all patient grace. And thus did He again in Luke 24., after that He was risen, with the two slow-hearted ones who were finding their way home to Emmaus.

In Mark 4. He allayed the fears of His people ere He rebuked their unbelief. He said to the winds and the waves, “Peace, be still,” before He said to the disciples, “How is it that ye have no faith?” And thus did He, as the risen One, in John 21.

The risen Jesus who appeared to Mary Magdalene, the Evangelist takes care to tell us, was He who in other days had cast seven devils out of her—and she herself knew the voice that then called her by her name, as a voice that her ear had long been familiar with. What identity between the humbled and the risen One, the Healer of sinners and the Lord of the world to come! How all tell us that, in character as in divine personal glory, He that descended is the same also that ascended.

John, too, in company with his risen Lord, is recognized as the one who had leaned on His bosom at the supper. “I am *Jesus*,” was the answer from the ascended place, the very highest place in heaven, the right hand of the throne of the Majesty there, when Saul of Tarsus demanded, “Who art Thou, Lord?” (Acts 9.). And all this is so individual and personal in its application to us. It is our own very selves that are interested in this. Peter, for himself, knows his Master, the same to him before and after the resurrection.

Full, indeed, of strong consolation is all this. This is Jesus our Lord, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

“All Things were Made by Him.”

The whole visible world is a large Bible, full of parables, allegories, and doctrines. They were written before there were men to read them, in order that, after man’s creation, he might immediately begin to learn to spell;

as you have seen a schoolmaster write on the blackboard before the children assembled, so as not to lose any time, but to be able to begin his instructions at once (*Alban Stolz*).

Bible Study.—2 John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

7 For 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.

8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 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.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

THE object of the First Epistle is the setting forth the truth; the object here is the maintenance of it. It was a woman who first opened the door to the seduction of the serpent; it is a woman here, the elect lady, to whom with her children the Apostle addresses himself with much earnestness to keep the door fast closed against the "many deceivers" who would rob them of their inheritance in Christ, by falsifying the Christ in whom the inheritance is. Paul says that "the serpent deceived Eve" (2 Cor. 11. 3; 1 Tim. 2. 14). But while Genesis 3. relates that story, and the fall of man therein, John lets us into the further knowledge that the great purpose of the "old serpent" was not simply his opposition to Adam's race, but his deadly hatred to "the woman's Seed." It is that which shows him up in his true character as the "anti-Christ." But this carries us further back still.

In the creative purpose of God He said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Gen. 1. 26); in "image" representing, and in "likeness" corresponding, in manifested form, to God. He was thus to be set forth by man as He could not be by angels, or creature of other kind. The affections, feelings, relationships in divine love, that inhere in the heart of God were to be set forth in the light, in this creature of His predilection, according to the outgoings of His own nature, the impulses of His own being. Moreover, there was due the vindication of that nature and of His glory before the intelligences of the universe, in answer to the slanderous enmity

of this evil spirit, which, lifted up in pride (1 Tim. 3. 6), had revolted against His authority, and seduced others into the same ruin into which he himself had fallen (Matt. 12. 24; Jude 6). Hence his attack on man through the sentimental side of his prepossessions divorced from his judgment; for, in accomplishing his ruin, he was further frustrating the work of God.

But Christ is the true "image of the invisible God," the "Son of His love" (Col. 1. 13-15); and in Him God in the glory of His being, and the Father in the fullness of His grace, will be publicly set forth for the homage of adoring worlds. Then shall His name be fully known and the universe be filled with His praise.

"Bright scenes beyond our creature ken,
Lit up with light divine,
Where God in Christ by all is seen,
And all in glory shine."

This, then, explains the meaning of the word "anti-Christ," a word peculiar to John and found only in his writings (1 John 2. 18, 22; 4. 3; 2 John 7). "This is the deceiver and the antichrist." He is the deceiver of man, the opposer of Christ. He is not called the opposer of man, for man does not oppose him—he has succumbed to his seduction. He is not called the deceiver of Christ, for Christ is not deceived by him. But he is the *anti*-Christ, the opposer of Christ, because of his revolt against God, his opposition to all that is of Him. And this sets the subject of the epistle in a very serious light. To be wrong here is to be wrong wholly. The object of the de

ceiver is to falsify Christ ; for as " the doctrine of the Christ " involves all the truth of God, and " he who abides in it has both the Father and the Son," so, on the other hand, " he that steps outside of this, and abides not in it," has not God at all in any true sense. The antichrist opposes Him.

" What think ye of Christ is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme ;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him."

This elect lady, with her children, together with her elect sister and her children, present a very interesting group, who in their social position, as well as by their piety, were prominent in the Christian circle known to and watched over by the Apostle John. Yet not without some solicitude on his part, lest they should be deceived by the many false teachers that were " gone out into the world," and seduced from the simplicity of the faith of Christ (*cf.* 2 Cor. 11. 3). Not that there was any immediate ground for anxiety, exactly ; but there was every reason for the warning and exhortation that he now gives them. He had visited this family, and while he rejoiced greatly at finding some of the children walking in the truth, others of them were apparently not so decided ; and on his return he writes to them this letter, exhorting them to be firm in the refusal of all fellowship with any who did not bring " the doctrine of the Christ."

Three words which he uses in this Epistle are to be specially noted—love, truth, and commandments.

1. Love. John has often been called the apostle of love. But for him it is " love in truth ;" love characterized by the truth. From the visit which he had paid to this " lady," it would seem that he found her in danger of too easy intercourse, socially or religiously, or both, with those who were already actively undermining the foundations of the faith. It is a common cry that separation from such means lack of love. So far from that, he beseeches her to continue in the old commandment—" that we {love {one another ;" and then he proceeds to define what love is. " Love in truth," love according to God, is " that we walk after His commandments." It is not instinct, nor sentiment ; still less is it party spirit. It is not called into activity by the im-

pulses of nature, however right after their own kind such impulses may be ; nor does it ignore or contradict them in their proper sphere. To be " without natural affection " is a very evil thing (Rom. 1. 31 ; 2 Tim. 3. 2). But the Apostle says, " This is love, that ye walk after His commandments ; and this is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."

2. Truth. This is a word much used by John, as righteousness is frequent in Paul's writings. Righteousness=what is as it ought to be, normal. Truth=what is as it pretends, or claims to be, conformable. The truth of a thing is its unveiled reality, what it is in itself essentially, corresponding to its *appearance* ; as righteousness corresponds to its *requirements*. The former expresses what it is to the eye of God ; the latter, what it is according to God. Both words answer to the derivatives of the Hebrew word " Amēn," which implies firmness, reliableness, durability, including not only veracity in word, but stability in deed (*Cremer*).

Christ is the truth, as representing God (John 14. 6): " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ;" and, again, personally, when asked, " Who art Thou ?" He replied, " I am absolutely what I said unto you " (John 8. 25), *i.e.* relatively and absolutely He is the truth. Then " the Spirit is the truth " (1 John 5. 6), *i.e.* in Christianity we have subjectively the counterpart by the Spirit of what we have objectively in Christ, and it is this that gives it its character, its stability, its force.

In one form or another the word occurs ninety-three times in John's writings. It is in every way the opposite to what is false, the lie, that which does not correspond to its pretensions, and which has neither stability nor endurance.

" Magna est veritas et prævalebit."

3. Commandments. No writer insists more definitely on the value and sufficiency of faith in Christ than does the Apostle John. So much so, that his statements are not infrequently perverted into mere credence, a natural mental process and nothing more. But, nevertheless, he uses the word " commandment " more than twice as often as any other

writer in the N.T. ; and his whole line of ministry might be practically summarized in the one sentence : " If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them " (John 13. 17). The object of the gospel is not to set us free *from* God, but to set us free *for* Him, that we might keep His commandments and do His will, even as the Lord Himself has given us the example (John 14. 31 ; 15. 10). Accordingly we must not be afraid of the word " commandment." Because " we are not in the flesh," " not under law," it does not mean that we are lawless. Paul makes this quite clear when he says, " To those without law, as without law, (not as without law to God, but legitimately subject to Christ,) in order that I might gain those without law " (1 Cor. 9. 21). It is plain that what is not done by the command of God is but the product of self-will. Jesus would not eat to satisfy His hunger without the Word of God (Luke 4. 4). And it is written to us again, and the characteristic principle of all Christian living is involved in it, " Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to the glory of God " (1 Cor. 10. 31 ; Col. 3. 17). It is obedience to the command that tests the will, and an action, right in itself, would be wrong if not done in the spirit of obedience.

Verse 7.

The aggressive action of the evil spirit at work is shown by the fact that, as the best authorities read, " many deceivers have gone out into the world " to propagate this false doctrine. It will be headed up by and by in one individual, as Paul styles him, " the man of sin," who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God," the anti-God ; here defined by the Apostle John : " This is the deceiver and the anti-Christ."

Verse 8.

If they allowed themselves to be carried away by this evil doctrine the apostles would lose the reward of their labours. In the same spirit the Lord prays for His disciples and commits them into the keeping of the Father's hands. One only He had lost—the son of perdition—"that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17.).

Verse 9.

" Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of the Christ." *παραβαίνω* = to go by the side of—not in the right way. Hence to transgress, to deviate from the course laid down, to act in a manner incompatible with the truth, *i.e.* with " the doctrine of the Christ."

Some read here *προάγων*, in which case it should be rendered, " Whosoever goes forward, and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ, has not God." " This is what is called development ; he does not abide in what was from the beginning," (Note *in loco*, N.T., J.N.D.)

To class the Lord in the category of the worthies of this world, even to put Him at the top, would be a dishonour to Him as real, if not as flagrant, as to place Him at the bottom. To call a sovereign a brass coin, whether of greater or of less value, would be alike debasing to the precious metal. " Jesus Christ coming in flesh " is Jesus Christ so come ; and of none else could such a statement be predicated. We were not there before, to come. He came, the sent One of the Father, in the full truth of humanity ; born of a virgin ; born by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit ; born that holy Thing, to be called " Son of God ; " born as none else ever was born, as none will ever be. He therefore takes rank by Himself alone ; and, despite the glory of His person, yea, because of it ; despite the mighty powers intrinsic to Himself ; despite the moral glory of a life such as only

" God in man could show,"

He was alone, and would have remained alone, had He not, as the corn of wheat, *died*, that so He might bring many sons to glory (John 12. 24 ; Heb. 2. 10).

This is the great test, " Jesus Christ coming in flesh ; " not the fact of His coming, but the Person thus come. This was the crucial and sanctifying question that separated the disciples from the whole world, religious and secular. Jesus asks them, " Whom say men that I, the Son of Man, am ? " The answers of all were excellent, so far as human excellence could go ; but they were all false. The knowledge of who Jesus is is not within the powers of the natural mind ; and when Peter confessed Him in the truth of His unique and divine parentage, Jesus

answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16. 17).

Moreover, on this ground He was to build His church, to establish the kingdom, and to declare the Father's name. See, then, how much is involved in "the doctrine of the Christ," in the confession of who He is; all the glory of God the Father, divine grace and eternal life; all His heavenly purposes in the church for the ages to come; all His wisdom, power, and majesty in the kingdom; all, everything from the highest to the lowest, from the individual to the widest range, for the heavens and for the earth, for time and for eternity, all depends on "the doctrine of the Christ," on the confession of "Jesus Christ coming in flesh."

No wonder, then, that the Apostle was solicitous as regards this "elect lady and her children," though they were so far walking in the truth, that they should continue to do so, and have no parley, not in the slightest degree, with any anti-Christian spirit that would compromise or contradict it. And how interesting and instructive it is, too, to see that the maintenance of this all-important position is not here left to the dignitaries and the authority of the church—alas! where are they?—but to the spiritual affections and the faithfulness of a Christian woman and her children.

Verse 10.

She is instructed: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, as he comes, nor bid him success, as he goes," for to show fellowship with him in any degree would be to show fellowship with his evil deeds.

Verse 12.

This was enough until he should renew his visits to the beloved family; and, trusting to find them faithful to the Lord, he adds, "that our joy may be full."

Verse 13.

"The children of thy elect sister greet thee."

"It may be well to add here that nothing can be less of the Spirit of God than to apply to minor differences of a disciplinary sort the rigour which is an absolute duty where it is a question of the true Christ or a false. Such a mistake is turned by the great enemy to the scattering of those whom Christ died to gather together in one. Even doctrine in general, unless fundamental, is not a scriptural ground for so extreme a course. Still less is it due to a difference about the institution of Christianity, whether baptism or the Lord's Supper. But the doctrine of the Christ does claim the allegiance of every saint; and he who undermines His person is to be discarded, not only publicly, but from private recognition at all cost" (*W. Kelly*).

"Have Faith in God."

IS the living God worth trusting? Does Omnipotence deserve that you should lean upon it? Does Immutability justify you in depending upon it? Why, if I were to bring here the best man born, whose name should be to you the synonym for virtue, and if I were to advise that you should trust your lives with him, I must speak with bated breath, for who shall trust in man? Ay, and if there stood here Gabriel, the angelic messenger of God, and he should tell us that he would zealously defend us, I might hesitate ere I said to you, "O sons of men, rest in angelic strength, and rely on seraphic zeal!" But when I speak of the Father, the Incarnate Son,

the Ever-blessed Spirit, who shall venture to hint a limit to our trust in God? What logician shall accuse us of folly in confiding in the divine Trinity?

The man who believes in God, and believes in Christ, and believes in the Holy Ghost, will stay himself upon the Lord alone. He will not wish to be solitary or singular, yet will he by himself contend for his Master; and when he has most human helps, he will sedulously endeavour still to wait only upon God. God alone is sufficient for us. Then let our confidence in Him be simple, and ourselves free from all carnal confidence.

Responsibility in Service.

IT seems like distrust in oneself, and deep lowliness of spirit, to shrink from heavy responsibility, but all we need to inquire is, Has God imposed that responsibility? If so, He will be with us in sustaining it; and having Him with us, we can sustain anything. With Him the weight of a mountain is nothing; without Him the weight of a feather is overwhelming.

If a man, in the vanity of his mind, thrust himself forward, and take a burden upon his shoulders which God never intended him to bear, and therefore never fitted him to bear, we may expect to see him crushed beneath the weight; but if God lays it upon him He will qualify and strengthen him to carry it.

It is never the fruit of humility to depart from a divinely appointed post. On the contrary, the deepest humility will express itself by remaining there in simple dependence upon God.

It is a sure evidence of being occupied with *self* when we shrink from service on the ground of inability. God does not call us unto service on the ground of our own ability, but of His own.

God will not force people to abide in a place of honour if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there. Thus it

was with Moses. He complained of the burden, and the burden was speedily removed, but with it the high honour of being allowed to carry it.

The man who shrinks from responsibility on the ground of his own feebleness is in great danger of calling into question the fullness and sufficiency of God's resources.

Where the Holy Ghost is working, one instrument is as good as seventy; and where He is not working, seventy are of no more value than one. It all depends upon the energy of the Holy Ghost. With Him one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him seventy men can do nothing.

If God honour a man by giving him a great deal of work to do, let him rejoice therein, and not murmur; for if he murmur he can very speedily lose his honour. God is at no loss for instruments.

Pray for a patient, humble, self-emptying, devoted heart; a heart ready to serve in company, ready to serve alone; a heart so filled with love to Christ that it will find its joy, its chief joy, in serving Him, let the sphere or character of the service be what it may.

**"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"
(Heb. 13. 8).**

Time takes much from us. Day after day and year after year the world grows poorer for us all. Time plays upon the very soul itself, and we change and are not what we were. But the love of Christ knows not the touch of time, nor is the eternal God older to-day than He was yesterday.

These remain what they were, yesterday, and to-day, and shall be for ever. I care not through how many years you watch the waning of life's energies, Christ remains and will remain. Oh, lay hold upon that; it is eternal. Link your lives to that which will not pass away with the passing of the years.

The Coming Great World-Teacher.

(H. P. BARKER).

"Even him, whose coming is . . . with all power" (2 Thess. 2. 9).

"Him ye will receive" (John 5. 43).

THE approaching advent of a great World-Teacher is announced, and a society actually has now been formed, the "Order of the Star in the East," to prepare the world for the event. "This order," says Mrs. Annie Besant, one of its leading adherents, "has been founded to draw together those who . . . believe in the near coming of a great spiritual Teacher for the helping of the world. It is thought that its members may . . . do something to prepare public opinion for his coming and to create an atmosphere of welcome and of reverence."

So he is coming at last, this Teacher of the world, this long-looked-for Leader of men! The world is beginning to feel its need of him. It was no mere voice in the wilderness, when the cry was raised in the columns of the *Daily Mail*: "We want a MAN." Robert Blatchford was speaking in the name of thousands when he gave expression to the desire. There had been enough talk, enough of schemes and projects, something needed to be *done*, and the call was for a MAN who should do it.

No doubt the MAN, long desired and expected, will appear. And the day of his advent is probably close at hand.

What will be his mission? Dr. Horton, a London Congregationalist minister, shall tell us. In his booklet "Mrs. Besant's Prophecy," he quotes her with approval as declaring "that in the near future another great World-Teacher will appear, and that he will be able to gather together in one the numberless religions of mankind, to bring together in one the scattered and divided races of mankind, to institute an epoch of peace and goodwill among

men, and to establish a veritable family of God." Dr. Horton thinks that this coming Personage can be none other than "the One whom *we Christians* know as Christ." We shall examine this statement in due course, and shall see how far Dr. Horton is entitled to use the words "we Christians," as including himself, or to assume to speak in the name of Christianity. He is far more competent to be the mouth-piece of Christianity's persistent antagonist, "the advanced scholarship of our time, the criticism of the New Testament," which declares, says he, "that the main teaching of Christ was this apocalyptic return."

Mrs. Besant fears that if the expected World-Teacher should come *as a poor man* he will not be received. We think we can reassure her as to this. The coming Leader will not appear as a poor man. And his reception will be an all but unanimous one.

The members of the order referred to above wear a certain badge as a distinguishing mark, and are pledged to do all their work in the name of the coming Teacher. We have no doubt the society will enjoy rapid expansion on these lines, and that by and by every one, small and great, rich and poor, will carry the badge, or mark, either in their hand or on their forehead. And all commercial transactions, all buying and selling, will be carried out under the auspices of the august name.

"We regard it as our special duty," says the order's declaration of principles, "to try and reverence greatness in whomsoever shown." They will have no difficulty in recognizing the superhuman greatness of the coming Leader. His influence will be world-wide. Miracles will be easily

performed by him. As God, he will sit in his temple and be worshipped. There can be no doubt as to his greatness!

* * * *

Let us now turn to the Scriptures, to learn from them some additional facts concerning the expected Teacher.

1. *His advent will be the direct outcome of Satan's work* (2 Thess. 2. 9). Satan is the accepted god (2 Cor. 4. 4) and prince (John 14. 30) of this world. He has from time to time secured certain men as his special tools. He entered into Judas (John 13. 27). He filled the heart of Ananias (Acts 5. 3). He had his synagogue in Smyrna and his throne in Pergamos (Rev. 3. 9, 13). In these instances he appears as the great enemy of Christ and Christianity. But the climax of his work, the masterpiece of his skill, will be found in the one that is to come. The devil will give his power, his throne, and his authority to the great imperial ruler of the coming days (Rev. 13. 2), but it is the spiritual leader, the World-Teacher of Mrs. Besant's hopes, that will actually wield all this immense satanic power (ver. 12).

2. *His name is, not Christ, but Antichrist* (1 John 2. 18), and in character he is "the man of sin," "that Wicked [one]" (2 Thess. 2. 3, 8). As in Christ every heavenly grace, every perfection is to be seen, so in Antichrist incarnate wickedness will be found. Not that it will necessarily show itself in debauchery and vice. It will take the form of inveterate and malignant opposition to everything that bears the name of God (ver. 4). No doubt such watchwords as peace, goodwill, unity, brotherhood, love will drop from his lips; no doubt his speech will be plausible, his words honeyed, his promises fair. But all this will be nothing but "the deceivableness of unrighteousness." Of course, there will be those who are prominent in his cause. There will be the Hortons and the Besants, to preach sermons in his honour, and enlist adherents to wear

his badge and do everything in his name. But they, like the rank and file, will be *deceived*.

3. *He will be almost universally received*. Those who put up the bolts and bars of their heart's door against Christ will open their arms to Antichrist (John 5. 43). All, with few exceptions, will come under his influence (Rev. 13. 12-17). The exchanges, the markets, all sources of production, the supply of the necessities of life, will be under his control. What then will become of those who decline to join in the universal pæan of praise? They will be thrust aside, slaughtered. Blessed will they be! (Rev. 14. 13). They will be known in heaven as having "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (15. 2). And they will live and reign with Christ a thousand years (20. 4).

4. *His fate will be a fearful one*. Mrs. Besant fears that unless men's hearts are prepared for his appearing, the coming Personage will not be able to remain long in the world. She is right. His career will be a short one, not through lack of preparation, however, but by the judgment of God. Exposed at length as a false prophet, the great World-Teacher will be hurled from the place of his unprecedented and superhuman power. The apocalyptic vision describes this cutting short of his career. "The beast was taken, and with him *the false prophet* that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire" (Rev. 19. 20). The immediate cause of the great Leader's downfall will be an event to which Mrs. Besant and Dr. Horton seem quite oblivious, namely, *the coming of the Lord Jesus 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 " (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8). By the breath of His mouth, and the brightness of His coming, the Satan-inspired World-Teacher will be utterly overthrown (2. 8). Then shall MAN'S DAY (1 Cor. 4. 3, marg.), with its vaunted progress, its defiance of God, its theosophy, new theology, and Christless religion, be for ever ended, and the DAY OF CHRIST (2 Thess. 2. 2) will have come.

What rest of heart to contemplate that blessed One who is coming to purge the world of wicked men and their wickedness, and to fill it with what is according to God. How different is He from that other, that "Lord of Love" whom Mrs. Besant expects. She and her fellow-members of the "Order of the Star of the East" are willing, they say, to have "some, at least, of the shafts that would otherwise be aimed at him" fall on their willing breasts. But He for whom *we Christians* (in contrast to those for whom Dr. Horton speaks) look, is He upon whom the shafts fell in our stead. We, by our sins, were exposed to God's righteous judgment. He, in His deep love, bared His bosom to the stroke, and bore upon the cross the penalty

due to us. A thousand praises to His blessed and peerless name.

When He comes to reign, having first caught up His loved ones to Himself (John 14. 3) and fashioned us in His own likeness (Phil. 3. 21), we for whom He gave His life will come with Him, to share the glory of His triumph. If the power of Antichrist will be superhuman, the power of Christ is *divine*, and is "able to subdue all things unto Himself."

The World-Teacher and his false prophet having been cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19, 20), Christ and His saints will take the earth and reign for a thousand years. Then shall the glowing prophecies of olden time be fulfilled. Then shall men beat their swords into ploughshares and learn war no more (Isa. 2. 4).

Finally, when time gives place to eternity, the bride of Christ will take her place in the new creation, God's tabernacle among men. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And all the former things, the works of Satan and the great World-Teacher, shall have passed away.

NOTE.—As evidence of the energy with which the minds of men are seeking this great Leader, of whom Mrs. Besant speaks, we might state that we are informed in the *Theosophist* that it is believed that he has already selected the body in which he is to reveal himself. That the body (that of a Hindu youth) is the object of much attention, as it is now inhabited by the soul of Alcyon, who has passed through thirty lives. The youth "has passed his first initiation by the help of Mercury." How forcibly, in the presence of such statements as this and those quoted in the foregoing paper, are we reminded of the solemn words: "*Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*" (2 Thess. 2. 10, 11).

"God . . . giveth songs in the night" (Job 25. 10).

There is a story of a German baron who stretched wires from tower to tower of his castle, to make a great æolian harp. Then he waited and listened to hear the music from it. For a time the air was still and no sound was heard. . . . At length came the stern winter winds, strong and storm-like in their forces. Then the wires

gave forth majestic music which was heard far and near. There are human lives that never in the calm of quiet days yield the music that is in them. . . . It is only when the storms of adversity blow upon them that they cry unto the Lord, and proving His divine help, give forth notes of sweet praise.

Grace.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

THERE are certain portions of Holy Scripture in which the Spirit of God draws us from the consideration of man in his words and ways, and even from the manner in which the blessed God is pleased to meet our need in grace, to contemplate the amazing fullness of the Father's thoughts—the mind of an infinite love—which, while resting in perfect complacency on the Son, embraces also His saints. He would, moreover, have us know that nothing less than a full conformity to His Son will satisfy His love to us.

In Ephesians 1. the calling of God is unfolded, that we should be "holy and without blame before Him in love." The following verse adds the relationship in which He sets us according to His good pleasure. With what joy do our souls recognize in these terms an accurate description of Christ. Looking at ourselves, who could say "That is what I am?" Nevertheless, nothing short of this calling will suit the thoughts of divine love for all the children of God.

"All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored."

In Christ also there is the witness and demonstration of a power which, having already placed Him above all heavens and every name that is named, and subjected all things to Him in purpose, has also given Him to be Head to His saints, a new creation, His body. This power which has overcome every enemy and obstacle is now operating towards us to give us the present *consciousness* of oneness with Him. Nor is the future unthought of, for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will display us as an eternal witness of what divine power and wisdom can effect according to the purpose of an infinite love. How will the exceeding riches of His grace be expressed when the saints are seen in eternal ages in the likeness of His Son? The glory of His grace is known as we enter, in the beloved One, into the reality of the calling; "the riches of His grace" are displayed in the righteous basis, being laid in His blood (1. 7); but the exceeding riches of His grace are unfolded in the unspeakable glory of being with and like Christ for ever (2. 7).

Around us woe's downtrodden victims lie;
Our help and sympathy with tears they claim;
And sinners, day by day, in darkness die,
Who scarce have heard the loving SAVIOUR'S name.

And we are called to cheer the fainting soul,
Each feeble lamb with careful hand to guide,
To point the sick to Him, whose word makes whole,
To lead the penitent to JESU'S side.

Be ours to choose the path of lowly love
And patient work our meek Redeemer trod:
Are we provoked?—it all is known above,
And we may bear what is endured by GOD.

Lord, speak the word, and bid our wrangling cease,
That we may give our days to work and prayer;
Oh! grant from heaven a dawning of that peace
Which they enjoy who love and serve Thee there.

T. B. Pollock.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 2.

(H. J. VINE).

The Light and the Fivefold Name.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from thenceforth for ever and ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9. 6, 7).

BEFORE reaching the great light of chapter 9. we have to pass through dark and dismal regions. What is it that has produced this distressful "*trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish?*" It is the direct outcome of turning away from the true God and sinking into spiritualism (ch. 8. 19), socialism and infidelity (ver. 21). Denying right authority, they fret themselves and curse their king and their God. But a great light appears (9. 2). The darkness begins to pass away, but even as late as this day it has not entirely passed. It is passing, for the true light already shines! But who is this "great Light" whose brilliant beams shine with such beauty and brightness upon them "that dwell in the land of the shadow of death?" (ver. 2). In the fourth chapter of the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ, after defeating Satan, went forth to publicly preach, "Repent: for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh." Then "the Light of the world" was seen in the shining of Jesus. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matt. 4. 16).

Those who believe on Him have been delivered from darkness and from the authority of darkness, and now rejoice in the light. It shines in the world for all, but those who believe on Him are "in the light." By believing in the light we become sons of the light. The mere ecclesiastic says, "All the light is *in the church*." The Scriptures say the light is "*in the world*" and for the world, for those in darkness. Believers are in the light, and they shine *publicly* in that light now as the light

of the world; but selfish error claims "*a light*" shut inside the assembly, which men must "come in to see," thus robbing it of its evangelical character and producing miserable self-occupation and strife.

The true, undimmed light of the full revelation of God in grace shines in Jesus, and there can be no such thing as "fresh light" or "new light." The Apostle John met presumptuous claims of this nature when he wrote: "The darkness is passing, and the true light already shines. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in the darkness until now" (1 John 2. 8, 9). The true Light, our blessed and adorable Saviour, the Son of God, cannot be advanced upon. The assembly shines as she abides in Him. We are light only in the Lord.

Soon He will arise in majesty, as the last chapter of the Old Testament tells us, giving the righteous virtues and healing benefits of His blessed beams, as we read "the Sun of Righteousness" shall "arise with healing in His wings." The rising of the Sun will be glorious indeed, and it shall set no more. Then also "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13. 43).

And now, as already in the light, we give thanks unto the Father who has put us there, free from the authority of darkness, and our hearts are at liberty to take in some measure of the rich unfoldings of the Spirit of Truth in verses 6 and 7. And as He enables us to apprehend these things let us grate-

fully thank our God for the gracious strengthening of His Spirit, by whom we have ability to understand *the truth* as it is seen in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In these verses the throne of David, the glory of the government, its peace, its judgment and righteousness, are brought into view, and over it all, in surpassing and indescribable beauty and majesty, is the One who carries the government on His shoulder. Inscrutable and immutable as is the glory of His gracious and glorious person, yet we are encouraged to draw near, for though the Sign towers up to "*the height*" of impenetrableness, yet how tenderly is this introduced. He is the "*Child born*" and the "*Son given.*" Wonderful Child! Wonderful Son! We would bow and worship before Thee as the wise men of old!

The "name" given is fivefold: it describes His glory in connection with His gracious government "upon the throne of David."

Let no one say this is only kingdom truth. It is truth concerning the glory of the One who is the assembly's heavenly Bridegroom. Truly it is the earthly part of the kingdom which is in view, but it is the immeasurable glory of the Person of the One who is high over all which is shown us here. And though our hopes are especially heavenly, yet the true bride is interested with deep affection in the glory of her Bridegroom. Speaking to her directly at the end of Revelation, He says, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star" (ver. 16). She answers along with the Spirit, "Come."

"WONDERFUL" is the first word in the spelling of this fivefold name of the God-given Sign. No word could be more suitable, for the more we know of Him the more full of wonder we see Him to be. The Pharisees, who watched His speech that they might confound Him, were utterly confounded themselves when they stood in the presence of

"David's Son," the Messiah, the Christ, who was also "David's Lord" (Matt. 22. 41-6). Truly He is called "*Wonderful.*" "COUNSELLOR." He will be the Source of all counsel for those who share the government and its benefits in that day. All counsel that is good has already proceeded from Him, for He it is who has said, "Counsel is Mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Prov. 8, 14-16). Divinely suitable it is, indeed, that He should be called "*Counsellor.*"

But we are filled with holy reverence as we gaze at the central word of this unparalleled name—name of the Sign in "*the depth*" and in "*the height,*" name of the "*Child born,*" cradled in the manger, name of the "*Son given.*"

"MIGHTY GOD!" He is the "mighty El." The title "El" here for God is singular. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 14.—"most high El, possessor of heaven and earth." El signifies the strong One, the First. "God is One," and the attributes of God are generally connected with this singular name El. Blessed indeed it is that He is made known to our praising hearts in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father's love, for He is "image of the invisible God." He is the uncreated Son, "because by Him were created all things" (Col. 1. 15, 16). Rightly and most suitably therefore is He called "*mighty God.*"

And now we are told something which outstrips all thought. And truly it must be so when the name of such an One is told to us.

"FATHER OF ETERNITY!" Who can think "eternity?" Who can grasp *infinity*? None but the eternal God! But though eternity is an infinite conception, it is not greater than Him of whom the inspired writer here speaks, the "*Son given,*" for He is said to be the *Father* of eternity. It is beyond thought! We, however,

believe it ; and more, we believe that our Lord, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is He, as the Holy Spirit tells us ; and we rejoice in His greatness and glory ; yea, we rejoice that though we are enabled to apprehend much through divine grace, yet, I say, we rejoice that it still surpasses our comprehension. "He is before all things, and things subsist together by Him." This is said of the Son.

Favoured Israel may delight to call their King and their God the Father of the nation, in the time of the glory in the age to come, but they are to be reminded that He who reigns is "*Father of the eternal age.*"

After such a description of His name, calling for the very greatest energy of thought, we enter, as it were, a quiet harbour of rest in the last word, "**PRINCE OF PEACE!!**" Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. "No end" to the peace which others enjoy through His rule presently, but He Himself is *the Prince* of it, the Head, the Chief. He is "*the Prince* of the kings of the earth." There is none above or beyond Him. This is King David's greater Son! This is the true Solomon ("*Peaceable*") of Psalm 72. In the time of His government we read : "The mountains shall bring *peace* to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. . . . He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish ; and *abundance of peace* so long as the moon endureth. . . . All nations shall call Him blessed. . . . Blessed be His glorious name for ever : and let the whole earth be filled with His glory ; Amen, and Amen."

What a title of beauty and blessing, finishing the divine spelling of the fivefold name ! It is the crown, the sparkling diadem, which worthily ornaments this majestic monument of golden glory : "**Prince of Peace!**" What a desirable ending to such a list ! Again we are reminded of Colossians 1. There we are told

that *He made peace* by the blood of His cross. *He made peace!* He in whom the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. And by Him all things shall one day be reconciled in peaceful gladness to that fullness which dwells in Him. How blessed is the portion of those who are even "*now*" reconciled before that day of universal reconciliation !

Never could a sign be given equal to this, reaching from a Babe in the manger to the infinite height of the mighty God.

(iii) **MIGHTY EL :**

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| (ii) Counsellor : | (iv) Father of Eternity : |
| (i) Wonderful : | (v) Prince of Peace : |

(Isa. 9. 6.)

"A Child born : A Son given."

"Call His Name

JESUS."

(Matt. 1. 21.)

"The government shall be upon His shoulder." Happy day to come for the world ! He will prosper where the politicians and rulers fail so sadly now. "*On His shoulder*" the government will be safe. But Luke 15. tells us that the sheep—the lost sinner that He seeks and finds—has both "*shoulders*" for his security. One shoulder will do for the government of the earth, but nothing less than both for the sheep He loves so well, and whose home-bringing gives His loving heart such joy, deep and divine. We may well thank God for such a Saviour, known and trusted before the kingdom of glory comes.

Having had the holy privilege of beholding the great sight of this part of Isaiah, the central "*SIGN*" which God has given, the whole vein of true wealth running through this part of the book lies open before us. We have seen Him in "*the depth*" as well as in "*the height*" of His personal glory ; also in the splendour of His official kingdom glory, and this is the key which discloses to us what would otherwise be secret still.

(To be continued.)

Repentance.

(EDWARD CROSS).

μετάνοια = change of mind, afterthought, to think differently after reflection—the contrast of forethought. *νοῦς* = the mind, the organ or faculty for the apprehension of the truth, the understanding—not the ability to think, but the organ of thought and sentiment; or, by an easy and not uncommon transition, the thoughts objectively present before any one, his judgment, view on any matters. Repentance is accordingly directly connected with the mind, thought, reflection, understanding, judgment according to truth, the knowledge acquired by mental exercise, and what is involved therein. It is not merely the forsaking of an evil path—the dread of consequences might produce that—but a change of judgment and apprehension concerning it. It is the result of an action of the mind, not of the feelings merely, though the feelings may set in movement the exercises that lead on to repentance. “Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation.” Sorrow is connected with the feelings, but the mind is deeper than the feelings. They change, but the mind is part of the man himself; it abides, does not change, though we speak metaphorically of a “change of mind.” The feelings are connected with what is introspective and subjective; the mind is capable of objective thought. Joy, sorrow, and such-like are feelings aroused by something in relation to self. They are motions of the soul, subjective and feminine. The mind, which is connected with the spirit, and is the highest masculine part of man, treats of things absolutely, as they are in themselves. There is then a godly sorrow that “worketh repentance;” and there is a sorrow that does not, a sorrow that “worketh death” (2 Cor. 7. 10.) The judgment of sin, according to God, is in the former: regret or remorse only is in the latter.

There is another word translated repentance in the A.V.—*μεταμέλομαι* (see

Matt. 21. 29, 32; 27. 3; 2 Cor. 7. 8; Heb. 7. 21)—which means to produce after-care, regret, remorse, as in the case of Judas; but it does not seem to involve the same action of the “mind;” but rather of the feelings, and it is not said, as is said of repentance, *μετάνοια*, to be directed “Godward” (Acts 20. 21).

Repentance, then, is the reflective judgment passed upon sin in the light of God, and on self as connected with it—the doer of it. It is not a change of judgment as to God, but a change of judgment as to what sin is in His sight, and of self along with it. And so the prodigal says, “I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Here all the afterthought and the blame are about himself and what he has done, and the standard of his judgment is according to what heaven is and in his father’s sight. That is true repentance; the fruit of grace bringing him to the just judgment of himself, and working in him sufficient faith to come home, and find that faith fulfilled beyond his fondest expectation.

This repentance, first preached by the Baptist (Luke 3.) and afterwards insisted on by the Lord (Luke 13.), is now portrayed in this inimitable picture (Luke 15.), which has furnished ever since an inexhaustible fund of unfailing wealth to set forth the grace that produces repentance and the exercises of soul that start from the first dawning of fearful faith, until it rests in the joy of the Father’s kiss and the delight of the Father’s welcome home.

This repentance may or may not be produced or accompanied by the knowledge of the gospel; but in itself it is always “toward God,” and ever justifies Him, as it condemns self. So David—“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified

when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Ps. 51. 4); and so, again, the dying thief—"We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23. 41).

But if repentance is the judgment of self according to God, it necessarily

deepens as we learn more of God and of self. But from the beginning its character is the same in kind, differing only in degree, as we become better acquainted with things as they really are in the truth of them. It is the first step on the road of true conversion; it deepens all the way along as we grow in the knowledge of God.

"Be of Good Cheer."

(A. E. WALKER).

FOUR times these blessed words came forth from the lips of the Lord, and on each occasion they were addressed to men in distress or danger.

(1) *His Pardoning grace.*

He addressed the helpless and hopeless man taken with a palsy and said, "*Son, be of good cheer; THY SINS BE FORGIVEN THEE*" (Matt. 9. 2).

The thoughts of the sinner were turned away from the burden that oppressed him to the pardoning grace in the One who spoke the words, and having his attention thus turned to Christ, he was able, as hearing His word of gracious command, to rise up in a new power and walk to his own house.

This sets before us the first contact between the Saviour and the sinner, when pardoning grace is first known.

(2) *His peace-giving presence.*

The disciples were in trouble on the sea, the boat was tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Then above the noise of the waves they heard His voice saying, "*Be of good cheer; It is I. Be not afraid*" (Matt. 14. 27). The storm was not immediately quelled, but they might have quietness of heart, because He was there, and His power was greater than the storm.

This sets before us the peace-giving presence of the Lord when His people are beset with distressing circumstances (see Heb. 13. 5, 6).

(3) *His victory over the world.*

He was leaving His disciples behind in a world that would hate them because they loved Him, and in that world they were to have tribulation. But He says to

them, "*Be of good cheer; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD*" (John 16. 33).

They had no need to be downcast, for that tribulation would not separate them from Him, and in Him they would have peace. He was their portion. He trod a lonely path to gain the victory for them. Now we may follow in His victorious steps.

Here is set before us the Lord as our portion, a leader outside and above the world through which we journey and in which we witness for Him.

(4) *His Grace and Resources as Master of His servants.*

Paul, the servant of the Lord, was in prison, after having been almost "pulled in pieces" by those to whom he had witnessed for Christ. He was passing through tribulation, but in the night the Lord stood by him to cheer and strengthen him, saying, "*Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, SO MUST THOU BEAR WITNESS AT ROME ALSO*" (Acts 23. 11).

The Lord was by him to sustain him, and indeed He did so in such a blessed way that Paul could in turn address these same words to others in distress: "*Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: FOR I BELIEVE GOD, that it shall be even as it was told me*" (Acts 27. 25).

The Lord understood His servant and set a right value on his devotedness and upheld him in it. And He is the same to-day, and by His grace and resources can enable us also to speak a word in season to him that is weary (Isa. 50. 4). But we can only speak words of true cheer to others as we experience the cheer that He gives to His servants.

The Will of God.

(JAMES GREEN).

THE knowledge of the will of God is a subject of all importance to mankind. It is the great factor which gives life and meaning to all things, and provides the only reasonable solution of the many problems with which human life is beset. Nothing but the knowledge of that will can direct the soul through the tangled maze of evil and distress, the mystery of sin and death which here besets it within and around. The knowledge of the Creator's will is the wisdom that the creature needs. "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. . . . Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears" (Job 28. 12-22).

Now let us mark well the answer in verse 23: "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof."

If men are left to themselves they must ever remain in the ignorance that is natural to their fallen, sinful condition, and the will of the Creator must remain a secret to them. A revelation is necessary. God must reveal Himself and His will, for nothing but this can give stability and certainty to the anxious traveller to eternity.

But is such a revelation possible? To say no is to say that God is not God, it would be to place a limit on His almighty power. To say that

because man in his weakness is unable to comprehend God or of himself to discover His will, that therefore God is unable to make Himself known to man, is very poor reasoning indeed, and it is false reasoning also, for God has proved from the beginning that it is His desire and His purpose that men should know the good pleasure of His will, and from the distant ages of eternity there comes to us a voice, the only one breaking the silence of that mysterious past: "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Ps. 40. 7, 8). Short and simple the sentence, but throwing a flood of light on the purpose of God before all worlds.

From the first chapter of the Gospel of John we learn that the One who was to come from the region of the unknown into the ages of time is none other than He whose name is the WORD. He was in the beginning with God. He is God. No creature could reveal God. He alone by whom all things were made, who was before all things, and by whom all things consist, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, is able to do this, and by Him has the character of the will of God been displayed, not only in word, but in deed.

That the will of God is security for the blessing of the creature was one of the earliest thoughts that the Lord brought before His disciples. Seated on the mount of beatitudes, He set forth the order and blessing of the kingdom of God, the sphere in which God is supreme, and instilling the desire for that realm of joy into the hearts of His hearers, He taught them to pray for it in the words: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,"

When this prayer is fully answered, then shall perfect happiness be secured ; then shall sorrow and sighing flee away ;

“ Then the wide earth, in glad response
To the bright world above,
Shall sing in rapturous strains of joy,
In memory of Thy love.”

He set the will of God before them as the very acme of joy, the beginning and end of all prayer, a wish that He would have springing up in the soul as its chief desire, in which no shadow of resignation as men speak should have place ; for in resignation there is always the element of regret, a bowing to a will which cannot be resisted, but a wish that it was otherwise. Not so is that will done in heaven, it is the great joy of all there, and when it is done gladly, heartily, delightedly, submissively, and fully on earth after that heavenly pattern, then shall perfect blessing be accomplished ; in other words, in the will of the Creator is found the only perfect happiness for the creature.

It was here in a world of sorrow, sin, and death that the Lord Jesus bore witness to this great fact, as He trod His lowly pathway through it. Here for the first time, in the midst of a world where every man thought his own will the best and that he could do better for himself than God could do for him, was to be seen the spectacle of a Man whose delight was to do the will of God and to finish His work ; whose meat was to do that will ; who willed only to do it. Perfect as man He could say, “ Not My will, but Thine, be done.” To meditate on that wondrous pathway, to mark its unsullied brightness, is to breathe the very air of heaven. Before the gaze of angels, principalities, and powers, the will of God was done on earth as it is done in heaven, by a man, and that Man “ The Son.” No wonder that the heavens were thrice rent above Him, that the Father might declare His approbation of the doer of His will.

The path of that will was a rough one for His blessed feet, the thorn and the brier were there, and the contradiction of sinners against Himself abounded, for men in their pride and self-sufficiency, loving darkness rather than light, saw no beauty that they should desire Him ; but He turned not back from the path, though the end of it was the death of Calvary's cross. A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He must be in a world that hated God ; yet from His heart there went up as sweet incense to the Father the joy of doing His will, for in every sorrow His heart abode in the perfect blessedness of the will of God. But the hour of final testing was yet to come, and as with reverence we follow amidst the shadows of Gethsemane, when the sorrows of death were pressing on His holy soul, unhesitatingly, unfalteringly, the words come from His lips, “ O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me : ” the expression of the extreme agony of His soul in anticipation of the cup that He was about to drink. “ Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt ” (Matt. 26. 39) : the expression of His absolute dependence and determination to do the will of God, cost what it might in the doing of it. Well He knew that perfect blessing must be the final result, and so for the joy that was set before Him, He could endure the cross and despise the shame.

But on that cross of shame a fresh light was cast upon the will of God ; there God, whom man had ever regarded as hard and exacting, demanding for Himself, reaping where He had not sown, and gathering where He had not strawed, this God, whom man had ever regarded as his enemy, was seen in the height of His love—so loving the world as to give His only begotten Son to bear the judgment and wrath due to sin, in accordance with the holiness of His throne, so that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That

which the blood of bulls and of goats could never do, viz. "take away sins," Christ there did by the sacrifice of Himself. There in darkness and death was fulfilled that which He had set Himself to do, when in the distance of the eternal past He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." There He took away the first, the gifts and sacrifices which "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb. 9. 9), that He might establish the second, "the will of God," "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. 10. 10).

What a revelation the cross is of the heart of God towards His rebellious creature man; willing his blessing at no less a cost to Himself than the deliverance of His own beloved Son in that solemn hour, not only to bear sins, but to be made sin, that that question being once and for ever settled, the flood-gates of His love in blessing might be opened, and the unsullied righteousness of His throne maintained, and that finally around Himself ransomed myriads might be gathered, who should proclaim His praise and find their eternal joy in God their Saviour. Happy the souls who can already say, "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5. 11, marg.).

In this way then the will of God has been declared in the life and death of His beloved Son, the mighty, immutable foundation has been laid, on which the superstructure of grace is to be built; but the wondrous tale of what it is God's will to do for those whose God-given faith rests upon the finished work of Christ has yet to be unfolded.

What a scene of desolation is before the eye of God at the close of that day of days! Jerusalem, the city of solemnities, keeping holiday; the magnificence of Imperial Rome as splendid as ever; affairs religious, political, and

social everywhere prosperous; but the Son of God in the grave! To the gaze of God there was nothing but moral death to be seen. One had died for all and all are dead; the end of the age had come, and every hope that there was anything in man that could be educated for God had vanished. Man had rejected the only One that could save him, his only hope. But God is not inactive, and on the third day Christ was raised up from the dead.

Christ is risen, and by the side of an empty tomb He stands, to tell to a heart that had been the subject of His delivering grace the message that contains in itself the announcement of the full blessing it is the will of God to give.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20. 17).

The fullness of this waited to be unfolded until He took His place on high and gave the Holy Ghost, by whom, as associated with "The Son of God" in the place of sonship, we cry, "Abba, Father," and are fled into the depths of God in which the eternal counsels of His will are hid—the purposes of His love for Christ, the Man whom He delights to honour.

The exceeding greatness of the power of God had wrought, in raising Christ from the dead and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies far above every name (Eph. 1. 20, 21). He had gone down into death for the glory of God until there was nothing below Him, and God has exalted Him in life until everything is beneath Him. Here is the great foundation for the accomplishment in all its precious detail of the will of God.

(To be continued.)

The Pathway of Christ.

He was *in* the confusion, but not *of* it, as He was in the world, but not *of* it. He met all sorts of people, in all sorts of conditions, heaps upon heaps, where all should have been compact together ; but He held His even, narrow, unsoiled, and undistracted way through it all.

All His moral beauty becomes a pattern to us. But then we see Him stand in God's relationship to evil also, and that is a place which, of course, we never could fill. He touched the leper, and He touched the bier, and yet He was undefiled. He had God's relationship to sin. He knew good and evil, but was in divine supremacy over it ; knowing such things as God knows them. Had He been other than He was, these touches of the bier and of the leper would have defiled Him. He must have been put outside the camp, and gone through the cleansing which the law prescribed. But nothing of this kind do we see in Him. He was not an unclean Jew ; He was not merely undefiled, He was undefilable ; and yet, such was the mystery of His person, such the perfection of the manhood in company with the Godhead in Him, that the temptation was as real in Him as was the undefilableness.

Every step, word, and action carried with it a ray of moral glory ; and the eye

of God had more to fill it in the life of Jesus, than it would have had in an eternity of Adam's innocency. It was in the midst of our moral ruin Jesus walked ; and from such a region as that He has sent up to the throne on high a richer sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour than Eden, and the Adam of Eden, had it continued unsoiled for ever, would or could have rendered.

Life and glory were His by personal right and by moral title. One delights to dwell on such a truth, to repeat it again and again. He never forfeited the Garden of Eden. Truly, indeed, did He walk outside it all His days, or amid the thorns and briers, the sorrows and privations of a ruined world. But this He did in grace. He took such a condition upon Him. He was not, like Adam, like us all, on one side of the cherubim and the flaming sword, and the tree of life and the Garden of Eden on the other. In His history, instead of angels keeping Him outside or beyond the gate, when He had gone through His temptation, they come and minister to Him. For He stood where Adam failed and fell. Therefore, man as He was, verily and simply man, He was this distinguished Man. God was glorified in Him, as in all beside He had been dishonoured.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS.)

Who will Appear at the Great White Throne ?

A.M. inquires

Whether saints and sinners will all alike appear at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20. 11-15), and whether John 5. 28, 29 ; 2 Cor. 5. 10 ; Rev. 11. 18. teach this.

Sinners alone will stand at the great white throne. All who have " died in faith " will have part in the first resurrection, which takes place before the millennial reign of Christ, and these are the " blessed and holy " (Rev. 20. 5, 6). The

" rest of dead " will remain in the grave until the thousand years are finished ; and these are said to be " the dead " even after they are raised ; they do not see life, and they are " judged every man according to their works." The saints shall not come into judgment, according to John 5. 24, for Christ Himself has already been judged for them, and has suffered the penalty of all their sins. The passages quoted do not contradict this. John 5. 28, 29 teaches that the authority to raise the dead and to judge has been vested in the Lord as Son of Man. 2 Corinthians

5. 10 is addressed to Christians, and teaches that they will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, not to be judged, or for the question of sin to be raised, for they are already justified, but to be manifested as to their works, and to receive reward or suffer loss according as those works have been; this manifestation will occur before the reign of Christ, the judgment of Revelation 20. 11 after it. Revelation 11. 17-19 is the celebration of the fact that the world-wide kingdom of the Lord and His Christ has come. Thanks are given to the Lord God Almighty because He has taken His great power, and verse 17 declares how this power will be exercised.

"Our Father . . . Thy kingdom come."

R.V.S. writes as to the prayer universally called "The Lord's Prayer:"

"If an Israelite be permitted to say 'Our Father' (presumably through the 'New Birth'), why does he ask for forgiveness of sins, or forgiveness in proportion to that he metes out to others? And what kingdom does he ask for? Is it 'Our Father's Kingdom,' or the 'Kingdom of Jesus Christ on Earth'?"

In the Sermon on the Mount in which this prayer occurs in Matthew, the Lord unfolds the principles that should govern His disciples, and the character that they should bear during His rejection from earth—for His rejection is evidently in view in the fact that blessedness is connected with persecution from men, that the reward is great in heaven, and also, that the Father's will is not done on earth as in heaven.

In chapter 6. they are seen as in personal relation with the Father in heaven, and it is for His, the Father's kingdom, that they pray: for universal obedience to Him.

This prayer will be answered in a striking measure during the millennial reign of Christ, and fully in the eternal state, when God shall be all in all.

Then as to asking for forgiveness, it must be noticed first that the prayer was given to the disciples, who were not then in the full blessedness of the Christian position with its settled knowledge of full and eternal forgiveness, for this was not revealed until Christ was glorified and the Holy Spirit sent down. Thence the prayer for forgiveness of sins, and

that according to the measure in which this is meted out to others. We upon whom the exceeding riches of God's grace have come are to forgive one another as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us (Eph. 4. 32).

But while all this is true and important to notice, it must yet be observed that the *principles* of the prayer abide true through all the present period; and this will be understood if it be remembered that here it is *government* which is in view, and that it is the *Father* who is addressed. God has forgiven us ALL trespasses (Col. 2. 13), fully, completely, and eternally. And yet, looking at the matter from another standpoint, forgiveness may be needed from time to time: if any sin there is to be confession according to 1 John 1. 9, and *consequent on that* forgiveness is known; this is forgiveness in the governmental sense: it is the Father with His children, not God raising the sin question with His guilty creatures—on that side all is looked at in 1 John as finally settled (see chap. 2. 12). But as we have said, where forgiveness is spoken of in this recurring sense, it is the *Father* who is referred to, and so at once the Apostle goes on to speak of "an Advocate with the *Father*" (chap. 2.). With fuller unfolding of grace we are not exhorted to *pray for* forgiveness, but still this forgiveness is conditional: it is consequent on confession, which brings the soul into right relation with God known as Father; no one can be in this state of soul before Him who is harbouring unforgiving thoughts towards others; none such can enjoy the sense of restoration to the Father's favour; and in this sense it is as true to-day as in any day, that "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

"Kings and Priests."

G.S.B. inquires:

"How are believers now made 'kings and priests unto God and His Father'?" (Rev. 1. 6).

Literally the passage reads—"To Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (see N.T.). That wonderful all-conquering grace has subjugated us so that we are no longer lawless, but "a kingdom" under the sway

of divine love. The added words "priests to His God and Father" define the characteristic privilege of those who compose this kingdom, they are priests; they have direct access to God, known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (*cf.* Exod. 19. 6).

"King of kings and Lord of lords."

G.S.B. inquires further:

"How will they be priests of God and of Christ, and reign with Him? (Rev. 20. 6). Will they reign with Him as kings over the earth, He being King of kings and Lord of lords?"

Revelation 20. 6 refers, as is clear from the passage, to all who have part in the first resurrection. These will be associated *with* Christ in His reign over the earth; having suffered, they shall also reign (2 Tim. 2. 12). But Christ "shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 13), and hence those associated with Him share with Him not only in administration in power downwards, but also in His priestly service upwards. As often in John's writings God and Christ are here brought together in one view. The priests are God's priests and they are the Christ's priests, even as in that day all rule will be in the hands of "our Lord and of His Christ," and the throne of Revelation 22. will be the throne "of God and of the Lamb."

As to the redeemed reigning as kings over the earth, we get the thought in Revelation 5. 10—"made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth." But "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" is an expression presenting the supremacy of Christ in respect of a far wider circle than simply those associated in grace with Him in His rule over the earth. There are kings on the earth, "the kings of the earth" (Rev. 21. 24); there are also dignities, unseen principalities and powers throughout the far-stretching dominions of God; but KING of all that rule, LORD of all that

exercise lordship is He who is shortly to be revealed in this world as the Executor of the judgment of God (Rev. 19. 11-16).

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature."

W.B.:

"Was the knowledge and power of Christ limited according to this passage (Luke 2. 52)? It has been said here that this is so, and I think it is a very serious statement to make."

Luke is the Gospel of the *Manhood*, and hence these words which bring before us the truth and reality of the manhood of Christ. He was at the time spoken of a child, a veritable child here, and as such He grew mentally as well as physically as to bodily stature. True, He was ever "filled with wisdom" (ver. 40), ever perfect in every stage of the proper development of human life from the cradle to full manhood; yet did He pass through each such stage that He might tread the *whole* path of human life here. And when we look at Him thus it is important that we do not cloud the precious truth presented by bringing into the contemplation of Christ in this aspect that which is true of Him in other quite distinct connections. Luke presents the perfect "Man, Christ Jesus."

But though all this is blessedly true, it is a mistake, which we agree is serious indeed, to conclude therefore that the one particular aspect presented in Luke 2. 52 covers the whole truth of the person of Christ. He was not only Man as He is particularly presented in Luke's Gospel, He is also God over all, as in John's Gospel; and as God He is at all times infinite in wisdom and power. It is true in His pathway as Man here He did not draw on His infinite resources as God; this was a part of His perfection. Thus in the temptation He wields no other weapon in meeting Satan than those which may be wielded by the simplest of His saints. Nevertheless He was, and ever is GOD—Almighty in power and Omniscient in wisdom and knowledge.

"Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any other object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the dearest earthly tie."

Notes and Comments.

(EDITORS).

The Lord's Coming.

WE have received from an American correspondent some cuttings from a magazine in which a serious attempt is made to prove that the coming of the Lord Jesus for His church, prior to the revelation of Antichrist, and at any moment, is a delusion and a snare. We publish a paper dealing with this subject in this issue, not in the spirit of controversy, nor as taking up the views of one school of thought against another, but because we feel that so much depends for the saints of God upon a right conception of the truth of this matter.

* * * *

Some may ask why it is that Christians equally zealous for the gospel and devoted to the Lord should have views so divergent on a question of such importance. It is our conviction, and we put it out for the consideration of others, that the reason why many postpone the coming of the Lord until the close of the "great tribulation" is, that the unique place and destiny of the church is not understood. Scriptures which refer to the kingdom on its earthly side, and which contemplate Israel in the two great sections of that nation, in its suffering because of its iniquities and rejection of the Messiah, and also in its final restoration to power and glory in the earth, are applied to the church, with the sad but inevitable result that its heavenly origin, character, and destiny are not rightly grasped.

It is most necessary to "cut in a straight line the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2. 16, N.T.) between the hopes and position of Israel and those of the church, or great confusion of mind as to the teaching of Scripture will result.

* * * *

The peculiar place of the church comes before us in Ephesians 5. 24-33. We learn from this passage that Christ

will present the church to Himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

And in this connection we read of the man and wife: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: *but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*" What an overpowering contemplation is this, a wonderful mystery! The church is one with Christ. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

It is clear that here we have a reference to the creation of Adam and Eve, figure of what was to come. Eve was taken out of Adam; she was "bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh" (Gen. 2. 23), and so a suitable helpmeet for him in the place of dominion which God had decreed for him. This is the great type of Christ and the church; she is of Him and necessary to Him, according to the purpose of God, in that vast inheritance into which He is to come as Heir and universal Ruler; and so she is united to Him. "This is a great mystery," and we need, "according to the riches of His [God's] glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," to "be able to comprehend with all saints" the length, breadth, depth, and height of all that it involves (Eph. 3. 16-18).

* * * *

The marriage of the Lamb takes place *in heaven* before He comes forth as King of kings and Lord of lords to overthrow the power of the beast (Antichrist). And His bride—the church—must bethere with Him for this (Rev. 19.). The mighty power by which He gains the great victory is His alone, but His

bride is associated with Him in it, she is one with Him.

* * * *

When He does appear in His glory to take up the sceptre and to subjugate all evil and bring in the glory of God, His church will be with Him, for "when Christ, who is our life, shall

appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4). And as regards the dead we read, "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4. 14). This of necessity involves a previous rapture of the church, and this is made plain in those scriptures dealt with in the paper which we publish.

"His Brethren talked with Him."

(J. T. MAWSON).

Notes of an Address on Genesis 45. 14, 15.

THE tender yearning of the heart of the Lord Jesus for His own is often illustrated for us in the types of the Old Testament scriptures; and in none does this manifest itself more strikingly than in Joseph's relations with his brethren. He is pre-eminently the man of tears of these olden but divinely given stories, and his tears flowed mainly because of his affectionate longing for his brethren. His dealings with them reached a climax when he, the ruler of a mighty nation, could hold back his pent-up feelings no longer, but cried, amid his tears, "I am Joseph." It must have been an intense moment, and the surprise of that revelation of the truth seemed, if we may read between the lines, to have robbed those eleven men of the power of both speech and action, so that he had to stretch out his hands to them and say, "*Come near unto me, I pray you.*"

Then he took them one by one and wept upon the neck of each of them, and put the kiss of his love upon every cheek. His love flowed out upon them with an irresistible force, sweeping away all their fears, until at last we are told, in the grand simplicity of Biblical language, "*After that his brethren talked with him.*" They were at rest in his presence, their mouths were opened, and they talked to him

in the family tongue—the language of the home-land and the father's house.

It could not have entered into the thoughts of those sons of Jacob that they were the brethren of that great lord of Egypt, into whose hand the mighty Pharaoh had entrusted all his wealth and dominion. They would have been contented to have remained suppliants at his feet, receiving from his bounty that which should keep their souls alive. But this would not have suited him, for he loved them well, and because he loved them he revealed the relationship in which they stood to him and made them at home in it.

* * * *

We are often like Joseph's brethren, contented to receive salvation at the hand of our Lord, to accept His blessings, for these meet our needs, and our needs are often the only things that give us exercise of soul or drive us to the Lord. But as Joseph was not satisfied to meet the needs of his brethren merely, neither will it satisfy the Lord to meet our needs, for He also has a need, the need of an unquenchable love; and love cannot be satisfied apart from the company of, and communion with, the loved ones. Moreover, His loved ones must be

made suitable to Himself, or His love could not *rest* in them. And so there is revealed to us the great fact that we are the brethren of the risen Lord, according to the message which He sent to His disciples by Mary of Magdala on the resurrection morning, "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). But observe, He did not say, "I am your brother," as Joseph did to his brethren, as though He would convey to them the thought that He had come down to their level, but He said "My brethren," and in His words there is revealed the great truth that He lifts us up to His level.

His disciples are His "fellows" or companions, according to Hebrews 1. 9: "God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above *Thy fellows*." We are to be His companions for ever, because, by the grace of God, we are His kindred, as Hebrews 2. 11 unfolds: "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are all of one* : for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." This is an overpowering truth, and something that could never have originated in the thoughts of men; it is altogether of God, and we have to adoringly accept it as the outcome of eternal love. Yes, the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a saved sinner—he is that viewed from one standpoint—but he is also one of the brethren of the risen Lord, who is crowned with glory and honour, and to whom the whole creation of God is made subject. That is the distinction, the glory of the relationship; but deeper than all is the affection of the relationship, and this is included in this act of divine sovereignty, for His Father is our Father, His God our God.

It is the privilege of the brethren of Christ to enjoy the communion of love with Him at all times, but there are also special occasions, and amongst these occasions the Lord's

Supper holds a unique place. Then, indeed, does He say to us, "*Come near unto Me*." The Lord's Supper brings before us the supreme act of His love; it reminds us that He stooped down into the unfathomed depths of death that He might imprint the kiss of His love upon us; and as we partake of His Supper for a remembrance of Him it is as though He put afresh that kiss on each, and assured us that His love was not exhausted by the great expression of it, and that it has not waned by the lapse of time. Then, as Joseph's brethren talked with him on receiving his kiss, so can we talk with the Lord, for the heart is moved and enlarged by the thought of His love, and our stammering tongues are unloosed to speak His glories.

We read in the Psalms, "Let us talk of all His wondrous works." And that is indeed a privilege, a privilege within the reach of all who know Him, for you will observe that it does not say, "*Let us preach*;" if it did we might feel the exhortation was beyond us; but it says let us talk, talk *about* Him, as the child talks of his father, saying to his playmates, "I wish you knew my father, he is the best in all the world." But here it is not talking *about* Him, but talking *with* Him. He appreciates our talk about Him; but if we only talk about Him and neglect to talk *with* Him, we rob Him of that which His love prizes so highly.

The Lord's desire in this regard is expressed in the figurative language of the Song of Solomon, where the Bridegroom, addressing the bride, says, "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (chap. 2. 14).

As we talk with Him in the blessed freedom and joy that His presence gives we become better acquainted with the language of the Father's house, and He rejoices to show us the Father's things, for these are the things in which, in this wonderful relationship, we have part with Him (John 13. 8).

God Speaking in the Son.

(WILLIAM H. WESTCOTT).

Hebrews 1.

IT is in keeping with the character of this Epistle that there should be an abrupt and complete contact between God and the reader. Its object is to prove that God, in the sovereignty of His Being and in the excellency of His ways, has ordained the removal of all intermediate ranks and offices between Himself and His responsible creature, man. On the one hand, He speaks to us immediately and directly in the One who is the Son; on the other, when that language is received in faith and obedience, the soul—renewed by grace, and perfected by virtue of Christ's one offering of eternal value—is emboldened to enter into God's immediate presence, the Holiest, by the blood of Jesus (chap. 10.).

In all the Epistles save those of John and Hebrews the inspired writers give their names, as authorized vessels of inspiration. They are used by the Holy Ghost to outline the Christian faith and the conduct which is suitable to it; and also to refute what man would fain have introduced into Christianity of tradition or philosophy or sinful living, the product of the human mind or will.

The inspired writer of this Epistle, however, whoever he was, carefully conceals himself; for it is plain from the opening verses that the gist of the communication is God's grace in speaking to us directly without human mediation. In Old Testament times God spoke. The fathers were the recipients of the things communicated. The prophets were the intermediaries of His utterances. In these last days we are the recipients; God is still the speaker. But in place of certain of our own race standing between us and God to receive the communications and pass them on, He puts Himself in immediate contact with us and speaks to us "in the Son."

This attaches a supreme importance to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ; and to His place and His activities in the heavens. Therein God has given to us the highest, greatest, completest interpretation of all that He is; and the fullest unfolding of the blessing which He bestows on the sons whom He is bringing to glory. There is not a movement of the Son, nor a position in which He was found, which does not speak. Its language may not necessarily be articulated in words, but what the Son *is* is itself language from God to us. In Christ God has come near to us, to delineate, in an active, moving Person, His own character, feelings, thoughts, purposes, yea, His own very nature.

Let us consider one or two scenes which will illustrate this. In each of those selected the SON OF GOD is designated, one scene being taken from each of the four Gospels.

His Birth (Luke 1. 35).

"That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the SON OF GOD." We have the birth of a Babe foretold here, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of Mary the Virgin. He is here called Son of God as born in time. Though seen in the weakness of infancy, and so partaking in humanity perfectly, yet is He sinlessly holy; and He does not forfeit His Sonship by accepting human conditions. Had His mother been divine, He had not been human. She was woman, singularly favoured because chosen out of all the virgins of Israel to be the mother of the Lord; yet the more we make of Mary, the less do we make of the divine miracle of this holy birth. The body in which He appeared was *prepared* for Him (Heb. 10.); and in it was He to effectuate all the will of God. It was guarded from every taint of sin in the

Virgin's womb; not by any immaculate conception of the Virgin herself (as affirmed by Rome), which could be supposed to free *her* from taint of sin, but by the power and wisdom of God the Holy Ghost. The fable of the Virgin's immaculate birth, had it been true, would have required the same miracle in *her* parentage and birth which Scripture declares with regard to the Babe in David's royal city.

But what is the language of God in the Babe? What does He intend us to understand by the birth in the stable in Bethlehem, while as yet there was no human speech in the lips of Jesus? What the *angels* saw in it is gathered from their praise. They said, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure in men" (Luke 2. 14). They looked on Him, manifest in flesh, and at once foresaw three results, namely, the glory of God to be made good and secured in a world of sin; the earth to be delivered from the enemy's grasp and brought into righteous blessing; and, finally, the fullest and freest intercourse to be established between God and men, the blessed God being able to find pleasure in men on the ground of what Christ has introduced and inaugurated.

What did it at once imply, however, for *men*? Has it struck the reader that the first utterance out of heaven to men after the birth of Christ was "Fear not?" (Luke 2. 10). Does it not suggest that His advent as a Babe was designed to remove all fear from our hearts, to remove all suspicion from us, to enable us to understand that His disposition towards us after our four thousand years of sin was still friendly, loving, gracious? It is so hard for fallen man to believe anything but the lie that deceived him at the beginning. He cannot accredit the living God against whom he has sinned with any kindly disposition towards him, but supposes Him to be the author of his misfortune, and the vindictive executor of judgment

against his sin, only opening His lips to utter wrath against the sinner. To all such ideas does God give the lie in the birth of the Babe. His language therein is one of accessibility to men. The gulf between the holy Creator and the world that has morally strayed from its orbit is so far bridged over from God's side that there suddenly appears in the midst of men One who is God's Son. But He has come, not to repel, but to attract; not to menace, but to woo; not to command, but to accept the lowliest conditions of poverty, dependence, and weakness.

Thus the veriest or poorest child in whom has dawned the consciousness of sin may realize that the Son of God has been younger than he is, lower than he is, bringing all the might of Omnipotence into swaddling clothes, and all the wealth of God's matchless grace into a stable. Or, again, the oldest sinner, grieving over his years and years of sin, and despairing of mercy, may learn in the light of that marvellous birth—occurring, as it did, after four thousand years of sinning in all ways and under all conditions—that God loves still. For no sinner has yet lived four thousand years in his sin; yet there is the testimony to God's love in Jesus' birth after all that long-drawn story of unnumbered crimes.

Not that the Babe spoke. But His very presence here under such a guise told it out. When Dr. George Grenfell was first exploring on the upper tributaries of the Congo River in his missionary steamer, the natives, who had never seen a steamer before, feared that its pounding machinery and its belching funnel meant war; and they gathered together with weapons of war to oppose the missionary's landing. But seeing that they did not understand the pacific intentions of his heart, the Doctor asked Mrs. Grenfell, who was on board with her infant child, to show herself at the side of the boat with the babe in her arms. This simple action at once disarmed the natives'

fears, and led them to abandon their resistance to his landing ; for no one, they felt, would come to war against them bringing women and babies. Such was the language of the unconscious babe to their minds. Any one can understand such a language. So Bethlehem clearly establishes the desire of God to hold communication with men ; and that, not to crush in judgment, but to attract for blessing. Had He appeared in all the brightness of His *future* manifestation, it would have spelt destruction for those who knew not God (2 Thess. 2. 8).

His Baptism (Matt. 3. 17).

"Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased." Here the Son is discovered and designated in a new position. The forerunner John, sent of God, had appealed to the nation of Israel, calling upon them to repent, as the kingdom of heaven was at hand. His teaching clearly emphasized the fact that this was to be of a spiritual nature, so that the mere external relations with the people of God were unavailing ; to have any vital interest in the coming Christ, men must repent and confess their sins. The mass of the Jews boasted in their natural descent from Abraham, and were represented in the Pharisees and Sadducees who came and heard him. But the test was not, "Are you a Jew ?" It was "good fruit," proceeding from a sincere repentance before God. The Roman axe was already laid at the root of the Jewish trees, ready for its work. If the nation did not repent, the axe would fell the trees, and the fire would follow the axe. Nevertheless, God would preserve the true remnant ; the wheat would be garnered ; all who did repent would be saved. The unrepentant ones were the chaff who would be burnt up with unquenchable fire.

The consequence of his mission was that the nation as a whole stood on the

one side, with temple, sacrifices, ritual, priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, scribes, and unrepentant Jews of all kinds ; on the other a heterogeneous number, drawn from all classes, who had only one thing in common ; they were *sinner*s, sinners confessed, sinners encouraged to hope only because God is the God of salvation. Their confession, moreover, was not a secret they were openly marked off as a repentant minority by their baptism, publicly administered by John in the river of Jordan.

To this repentant company, ostensibly guilty, but truly repentant and confessing their need of a Saviour, apprehending in some degree the spiritual requirement of God's kingdom, and made conscious by His holiness of their sin, came the Messiah, the Son of God. Entitled indeed to the homage of all, from the highest to the lowest, He passed by the masses who felt no need of a Saviour from sin, who looked only for a political leader or an ethical teacher. He came to where John was baptizing ; and though discerned by him, and though having no sins to confess, insisted on being baptized and so publicly identifying Himself with the repentant band.

What is the language of this act ? What does it speak to our hearts and minds of the intentions and thoughts of God ? Does it not proclaim as loudly as though it were written across the sky the fact that Christ's mission was not to call the righteous, but sinners ? Does it not show us that the Physician's journey was not for those that were whole, but for the sick ? It encourages the man that is most conscious of his sinful estate, who is most burdened in conscience by reason of his guilt, for it is God's *language* to assure him that it was *his* case the Saviour came to undertake.

Nor is this all. As though to add an emphasis impossible of contradiction, it was when this action of Jesus, the Son of God, proclaimed His

taking up of the cause of these confessed sinners, that the Holy Ghost descended like a dove and alighted upon Him, and a voice from heaven—the Father's voice—said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He *might* have said it at any time. It pleased the Godhead, however, that this most glorious manifestation of the activities and pleasure of the Triune God should be reserved for the moment when the Son openly espoused the

cause of the confessed sinner. It tells us in ringing accents that God willeth not the death of the sinner, and that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. It proves to us that when the Son publicly identified Himself with the sinner's cause, Father and Holy Ghost were swift to give public demonstration also of their supreme delight and absolute complacency in that course.

(To be continued).

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 3.

(H. J. VINE).

The King: the Root Shoot.

THE first part of Isaiah embraces chapters 1. to 39. The second, chapters 40. to 66. Christ as THE SIGN is the key that unlocks the treasure-store of the first part; Christ as THE SERVANT is the key that opens the second. Though the thought of the Sign in the depth and in the height runs all through Isaiah, indeed all through the Bible, the personal and official glory of our Lord Jesus Christ are prominent in the first part; in the second it is His moral glory which is most prominent, and this largely accounts for the difference between the two parts, where there is, nevertheless, much similarity.

The first part of Isaiah divides into four distinct sections, as we shall see; the second into three.

In the first section (1-12) we find that the Lord begins by dealing with His people's sins. It is because of Him, the coming King, that His people's sins, though they be as scarlet and red like crimson, shall be as white as snow, and as wool (chap. 1. 18). He will straighten out that which they have perverted, when He rules. He will restore Zion's judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning: afterward she shall be called, "The

city of *righteousness*, the *faithful city*" (ver. 26).

In chapter 2. it is declared that the nations shall be ruled in righteousness, and the effect will be peace; "Neither shall they learn war any more" (ver. 4). The Prince of Peace shall then be over all. "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (ver. 17), for all the wicked shall be overthrown, when, in the glory of His majesty, "He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (ver. 21). Jerusalem shall then become the metropolis, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (ver. 3).

We learn that in that day "the Branch of the Lord" (chap. 4. 2), or rather the SPROUT "out of the stock of Jesse," shall be beautiful and glorious. This is none other than Christ, and He shall bear the glory and make the fruit of the earth to be for excellency and comely ornament to His own in that day (chap. 4. 2).

Had we not known something of the personal glory of our Lord, we should not have been prepared for the great and fiery majesty which is revealed as His in chapter 6. in such holy splendour.

Isaiah, after describing what He had seen, says, "Mine eyes have seen **THE KING**" (ver. 5); and it shall yet *actually* be that "the whole earth is full of His glory" (ver. 3). And lest any doubt should remain as to whose glory is here spoken of, the Holy Spirit of God has told us in John 12. 37-41 that Isaiah spake of Jesus, concluding, "These things said Esaias, when he saw **HIS GLORY**, and spake of **HIM**." Surely we may sing with joy as His greatness grows upon our souls:

"My Lord, my Life, my Rest, my Shield,
My Rock, my Food, My Light;
Each thought of Thee doth constant yield
Unchanging, fresh delight."

Power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing are rightly His.

* * * *

Passing over the chapters we have dwelt upon in former papers, we now come to the close of this section. In the end of chapter 10., and at the commencement of chapter 11., we stand in a spot where once the mightiest trees flourished in governmental greatness. They are cut down now.

We see just a stock left in chapter 11. 1—"the stock of Jesse." Sinful Israel, that once had mighty rulers, who were great in the earth as the cedar trees, has been brought down to this.

It was necessary that it should be so too, that all the pride of man might be abased, and that the **SIGN** might appear first in "*the depth*." He is here seen "the Sprout" coming out of "*the roots*." He could scarcely be called a "Branch" here, for a branch does not come up from the roots. He came up from "*the depth*." He is the "Root Shoot," in Hebrew the *Nézer*. It is from this word, not from the town of Nazareth, that He was, in the first instance, called "a *Nazarene*" (see Matt. 2. 23). This lowly "Shoot" grows out of Jesse's roots!

But what heights of glory rest upon this lowly One (vers. 2-8), eventually resulting in the earth being "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (ver. 9). To this Sign, or "Ensign," all "in that day" shall seek, and His rest shall be glory (ver. 10). Would to God that more sought Him truly and sincerely now!

With what a suitable burst of praise this section closes: "**THE LORD IS . . . MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG**" (12. 2). "**SING UNTO THE LORD; FOR HE HATH DONE EXCELLENT THINGS: THIS IS KNOWN IN ALL THE EARTH**" (12. 5).

(End of Section 1.)

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John 20. 21).

Behave yourselves, Christian brethren, for you bear a great name and are sent on a great mission. Do not disgrace the holy and gracious name of our Lord. It was shameful of Sheridan, when he was picked up drunk in the gutter, to give his name to the constable as "Wilberforce." It is ten thousand times more shameful for brethren to be harsh in their feelings and words and dealings with one another, to bring division and trouble into the church of God, and to so act in the name of the Lord. It is a cruel

sin when they so far forget the name by which they are called that they stoop to backbiting and evil-speaking of one another. It is a heinous wrong when Christians become selfish, worldly, pleasure-loving, and money-grasping, and consequently indifferent to the salvation of souls, the prosperity of their fellow-believers, and the glory of their Lord. May God forgive us if in any way we have been guilty in these respects, and give to us grace to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

Bible Study.—3 John.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

MUCH learned labour has been expended on the two epistles, 2 and 3 John, in the endeavour to fix their authorship, the time and place where they were written, the persons to whom they were addressed, and those whose names are mentioned in them. But as most of it is mere conjecture, the matter rests at the finish pretty much where it began, and will apparently remain there still; so we must, as regards these matters, be content to accept the general verdict of the church as handed down to us. Tradition points to their having been written at Ephesus, and probably after the Apocalypse, *i.e.* after the return of the Apostle from his exile in Patmos, so that they, with the Epistle of Jude, would thus be the latest writings that have been added to, and have so completed the canon of Scripture.

There is much difference of opinion as to who "the elect lady" was; whether *kyria*, lady, is a title or a name, and whether she was an individual, or represents symbolically the church; who Gaius was, whether one of those of that name mentioned elsewhere (Acts 19. 29; 1 Cor. 1. 14 *et al.*) or still another; who Demetrius was, possibly he of Acts 19., now converted to take sides with the truth he there opposed; and who Diotrephes was, that figures so prominently in this Epistle. We know nothing more of him, save that his name betokens probably a man of rank, meaning, as it does, a "foster-child of Zeus," one cared for and nurtured by him, and thus possibly accounting in part for his violent and self-assertive spirit.

But the fact that all these things are left in *nubibus*, and that in these Epistles we emerge from the concrete establishment of doctrine and dogma into the more current circumstances, the daily flux, if one might so say, of ordinary events, founded rather on the instinct of settled conviction, than occupied with the formation of Christian judgment, would tend to show us that their true interest lies, not in their local, temporal, or personal allusions, but in the cultivation of those feelings which, like the synovial oil, lubricates the whole economy of Christian life.

As 2 John is addressed to a Christian lady and her children, urging her to close her house against any who brought false doctrine about Christ, 3 John is written to a man, in commendation of his hospitality and open-handedness towards such as were carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to those who had not got them. Each is as necessary as the other, and the balance of truth is between them both. It would not do to be loose as regards "the doctrine of Christ;" to miss that would be to lose all; it would not do to be fettered as to the spread of the gospel; to fail in this would be to stop up the spring and have nothing. And thus the canon of Scripture sums up and preserves all as it closes: 1 John=the exhaustless spring of blessing, even eternal life, in Father, Son, and Spirit; 2 John=the preservation of the channel that brings it to us, "the doctrine of Christ;" 3 John=the spread of the gospel by good men, and their support, despite the opposition of the leaders, or the indifference of the church.

How beautifully balanced are the Scriptures of truth! How many Christians hang fire over the 1st Epistle, and, contenting themselves with the refusal of false doctrine, settle down in that as the *ultima thule* of all that is to be desired, and lose all interest in, or actually oppose, the spread of the gospel, except as sanctioned by themselves! This surely is not of God.

Verse 1.

Here, as in the preceding Epistle, the Apostle's love is characterized as "in [the] truth."

Verse 2.

It is sometimes supposed that Gaius must have been in a delicate state of health. It is not so stated or necessarily implied. But as his soul was prosperous, the Apostle's desire was that his health and circumstances might correspond: "I desire that in all things thou shouldest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." There are not wanting those who would interpret ill-health and adverse circumstances as a sign of divine favour. Divine favour might be, and often is, in spite of them; sometimes even used for correction (Heb. 12. 6); and so the soul would be supported through them, or lifted above them, and thus they would end in blessing; but they are no sign of it. Ill-health often arises from unwisdom, and adverse circumstances from carelessness or sloth, for, in the government of God, "whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." Sin and its sorrows must not be blamed on God. His word begins by promising His people prosperity in His service (*cf.* Deut. 28. 1; 2, 15, 47; 1 Peter 3. 10), etc.; it closes with the desire for its realization. We must also remember that the general character of John's ministry is the coming out of God in blessing to man where he is; wherever that may be; not the proper heavenly purposes of God, as set forth in Paul's ministry.

Verses 3, 4.

As elsewhere, so here, the Apostle's mind dwells in the truth. In the truth he lived; in the truth he would that his children walked. Than this, that they should do so, he had no greater joy.

If your heart and house were open to one who did not bring the truth, would

you be walking in the truth? No. Were your heart and house closed to one who brought the truth, would you be walking in the truth? No. The truth is the whole truth and nothing but the truth. You cannot take up portions of it, such as you like, and refuse the rest. That is not the truth, whether the open side or the close. The New Jerusalem has a wall and gates: it is both exclusive and inclusive. The wall comes first—note it well: it is "great and high;" one, consolidated and closed against all that is evil; then twelve gates, open day and night to all that is good (Rom. 5. 21). One, in the unity of the truth; twelve, in the dispensed administration of it. Such is the holy city, the dwelling-place of God and the Lamb, the saints' eternal home. Thank God that it is so. No evil is there; but all that is good. No Antichrist (2 John), no Diotrephes (3 John). "The glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the lamp of it."

Verse 5.

Gaius had acted faithfully towards the brethren, and the strangers; and the Apostle encourages him to bring them forward "in a manner worthy of God;" for "on account of the name" they had gone forth, taking nothing from "those of the nations," *i.e.* not from the heathen proper, but from believers from among them; *ethnikōn*, not *ethnōn* (see note in N.T.). They would carry the gospel to the nations, free in the fullest sense.

Verse 6.

We therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-helpers with the truth.

Verse 9.

Already we see the state of the assembly, as the mere tool to sanction with its official authority the will of one man. The Apostle had written to the assembly, but Diotrephes would not receive his words. If, indeed, the assembly had any conscience in the matter, it was powerless to voice it. They did not decide. It was decided for them, and they concurred. And as it was in the beginning, so it has been, and so it is. The assembly is under hierarchical rule; so far as the functions proper to it, *it is not*; and individuals are excommunicated, because they are acting before God, according to their consciences in obedience to His word. "There is nothing new under the sun."

Verse 10.

Nevertheless John will deal with his "works and wicked words" when he comes. *But he has not yet come.*

Verse 11.

Meanwhile, his last word to Gaius is; "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He that does good is of God. He that does evil has not seen God."

Verse 12.

Demetrius was apparently the man whose reception Diotrephes was so arbitrarily, and, we would gather, slanderously opposing. John takes his part, and declares him to be a good man, borne witness to by all, even by the truth itself; and John corroborated this testimony. But, notwithstanding, he could not get him recognised in fellow-

ship by the assembly, dominated as it was by Diotrephes.

Then what was to be done? Let Gaius continue his love towards him and other such, and his good offices, and let Demetrius go on with his gospel work.

Verse 13.

Having many things to write about, that was enough. Much writing about such things is not always useful. The enemy would be glad so to occupy the minds of the saints.

Verse 14.

Peace be to thee; and mutual salutations to and from the Friends; each one by name. Amid the universal profession the title "Friends" is peculiarly appropriate in such circumstances (*cf.* John 15. 12-17).

The Name Underneath.

(H. P. BARKER).

LONG ago there lived in the land of Egypt an architect of the name of Cnidius. He was employed by the Pharaoh of that day to build a watch-tower to warn mariners from certain dangerous rocks upon the coast.

When the tower was nearly finished Cnidius had his own name engraved on a stone in the wall, and then covered it with plaster. On the outside of the plaster he inscribed in golden letters the name of the Pharaoh.

The cunning architect knew very well that as the years rolled by the waves would wash away the plaster and that then his own name would stand out before the eyes of men, and be handed down to successive generations.

His motive is apparent. Self-love and the desire for fame were uppermost in his heart, though carefully veiled under the disguise of service to his king.

In the balances of the sanctuary motives weigh very heavily. Words and deeds are weighed, but motives, secret desires and intentions, the designs of the heart outweigh them all. And at the judgment-seat of Christ, when our lives

are passed in review under His searching eye, *motives* will be of much account.

"The fire shall try every man's work," and the Lord will take up the question with His servants as to "how much every man had gained by trading." But the question will not only be "*How much?*" but "*Of what sort?*" (1 Cor. 3. 13). The valuation in that day will be made according to quality as well as quantity. And the quality depends on the motives.

It is easy to be zealous of works that are called "good," and to cover our activities with a coat of plaster whereon the name of "Christ" is inscribed in large letters that all may see. But what when the plaster covering is washed off? Whose name will then be seen? Will our own names appear engraved upon the stone that is behind the plaster? In other words, will our actions, our works, our deeds of service be found, "in that day," to have sprung from motives that will obtain the commendation of Christ, or from motives that have "self" as their object?

These are searching questions, and we shall do well to give them a place in our thoughts.

Is Jesus God?

(JAMES BOYD)

IF we think of the Scriptures as a revelation given to us from God who cannot lie, and if we have them as He gave them to us, we cannot give harbourage to the notion that the smallest untruth can be found therein,—or any statement which, taken in its connection, would be calculated to leave a false impression upon the mind of the reader. Were it possible that an honest seeker after light could be deceived by them—were it possible that they could lead the soul who trusted them as the truth of God into darkness and error, they would prove themselves to be but the corrupt production of the fallen mind of man, and valueless as a guide to the knowledge of God. They would bear witness against themselves as not the offspring of One who cannot lie, but of one who was both a liar and a murderer.

And if we think of them as written to the poor and the illiterate and not to the wealthy, the wise, and prudent, we shall not expect them to be full of dark sayings and mysterious theories, couched in great swelling words, to be understood by none but clever and educated minds. The gospel is preached to the poor, and as far as that which relates to the universal testimony of the grace of God is concerned, nothing could be more simple. True, the deep things of God can only be known by those who have the Spirit, but that is not because they are very learned, nor because they require colossal intellects to grasp their meaning, but because they relate to things which lie outside the circle in which the natural mind of man exercises itself.

The Scriptures are the only light we have with regard to the knowledge of God, and we must either take them as they are, or reject them altogether. They speak of all the relationships in which man is placed, whether in Adam or in Christ, and dilate upon the

responsibilities connected with these relationships in such a way that nothing is overlooked, disregarded, or epitomized; and whether we understand the things of which they speak, or whether we do not, the language in which they are set before us cannot be held to be bewildering nor capable of double meaning. In them the trumpet gives no uncertain sound, and there, without a jar, from pipe and harp breaks forth the glorious music of eternal truth (1 Cor. 14. 7, 8).

As far as it is necessary, and indeed as far as it is possible for us to know the One in whom we live and move and have our being, we have Him placed before us in the written Word. If He is not learned there, where can He be learned? Not in the material universe, not in providence, not in the state of this world, for everywhere we turn we are confronted with contradictions; and had we nothing else than these we should be compelled to dwell in darkness and uncertainty. The world is now almost six thousand years old, and though it has made immense progress in the knowledge of the resources of nature, it has made none in the knowledge of God; indeed, it knows less about Him to-day than it did in its infancy (Rom. 1. 21-25).

The history of every testimony committed to man has always been down-grade. The Antediluvian, Noachic, Judaic, and Christian dispensations tell the same tale. Departure from the living God, corruption of His truth, darkness and chaos, followed by the intervention of God in judgment, mark each successive dealing of God with men. Nor will any future dispensation be otherwise. Everything will prosper in the hands of Christ, and during His reign there will be no failure in the government of the world, for everything undertaken by Him will be fulfilled to the glory and praise of God, but that reign, however

beneficent it may be, will not change the hearts of men, for at the close it will be seen that nothing but a leader is necessary to rouse the whole earth into revolt against the authority of the Lord.

There is an innate aversion in the human mind to everything that is of God; though, of course, this solemn fact is known only to those in whom the grace of God has wrought. The truth has been persecuted since the world began, and against Christ, who was the embodiment of that truth, the powers of darkness stirred up, and brought into evidence, that aversion in a way hitherto unknown. From the beginning He was God's testimony, and therefore has He ever been the object of attack. His atoning work, His miraculous birth, His spotless nature, His real manhood, His Deity, His resurrection are openly denied in that which professes His name, and Christendom is at present fast drifting back into heathen darkness. And it is on this account I seek to draw attention to the answer furnished by Scripture to the question at the head of this paper—"Is Jesus God?"

Apart altogether from the answer given by Scripture to this momentous question, one can very easily understand that were one person both God and Man, such an One would be, by the very nature of His being, beyond the understanding of the creature. Indeed, God Himself, apart from incarnation, is beyond our understanding, for the creature never can perfectly comprehend the Creator. It is our privilege and joy to know Him in His nature, so that we can say *God is Love* (1 John 4. 16), and this is the highest knowledge the creature can possess. But as to essential Deity, it is beyond the ken of man. He dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen, nor is able to see (1 Tim. 6. 16). We know Him in the way in which it has pleased Him to declare Himself, and that is in His infinite love; but in His essential

being, and in the mystery of His wondrous existence, we know nothing, can know nothing, and need to know nothing. What He has in His grace caused us to know fills our cup of happiness to overflowing.

But what must be the mystery of incarnate God? One truly Man, born of a woman, advancing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men (Luke 2. 52); omniscient (John 2. 24, 25; Luke 11. 17; John 16. 30), yet limited in knowledge (Mark 13. 32); the Upholder of the universe (Col. 1. 17; Heb. 1. 3), yet in weakness here (John 4. 6); Creator (John 1. 3; Heb. 1. 10), yet taking a place in creation (Col. 1. 15). How could such contradictory attributes be reconciled by the finite mind of man, or by the mind of any creature, whoever he may be? If there is such a Person, He is beyond the comprehension of the creature.

But this is just what the Scriptures assert as regards Jesus: "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27). And though the reference to this text may be ridiculed as but a refuge for an unreasonable dogma, it is nevertheless the teaching of Scripture, and the only conclusion that a reasonable mind can come to regarding such a Person. I doubt very much the capability of the mind of the creature to understand such a mystery, and certainly it is not said to be revealed. The Father is said to be declared, and that in the very passage which tells us that no one knoweth the Son: "Neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." We are never said not to know the Father, for this knowledge is the portion of even the babes in Christ (1 John 2. 13); but though we may come to the full knowledge of the Son of God, so far as He has been revealed (Eph. 4. 13), there are mysteries about His person which are impossible for us to know; hence we have, "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father."

Indeed, were this statement absent from the page of inspiration, our reason would compel us to admit what it asserts, and of ourselves we would come to the conclusion that such a Person was unknowable by the creature. *Seeming* contradictions, which are matters of revelation, we can well believe, but not one of them can we understand. Indeed, it is little that we do know perfectly, possibly nothing at all, for our knowledge of the very simplest things is very limited. But if we know that every question that was between us and a holy and righteous God has been gone into and settled to His satisfaction, and that we have been brought into new and eternal relationships with God in Him who bore the judgment which rested upon us on account of our sins, and if that love of God which was declared in His death has been shed abroad in our hearts, and if we know the Father, and are able to take account of ourselves as the children of God, and confidently look for the coming of Christ to take us to the home He has prepared for us in the Father's house, we shall be very happy; we shall also be very thankful for the revelation He has so graciously given to us, and we shall be careful to approach that revelation with the reverence that springs from the knowledge of the holy character of that love that has made known to us everything that is for our good, and who has also given to us the Holy Spirit, in order that we may be able to enter into the deep things of God, so far as they are revealed.

That Jesus was a Man every true Christian will confess—a real Man—as truly a Man as was Adam or any of his race. A Man with spirit, soul, and body. A Man so like every other man in Judæa that, as He sat by the well of Sychar, the woman who came to draw water took Him to be an ordinary Jew, resting from His journey, and waiting upon some one to come and draw a little water to quench His thirst. But “Thou art My Son; this

day have I begotten Thee,” marks Him off as very different from all other men, as does also “that holy Thing” (Luke 1. 35), and Him “who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5. 21). Still, that “there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *Man* Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2. 5), settles the question of His manhood both in humiliation and also glory.

Personality is a word that has been pressed into this controversy which had been much better left in the dictionary, as it is not found in Scripture. Some speak of Him as “in person *Man*, but *Divine*,” others, as “in person *God*, but in condition *Man*.” I doubt very much if either of these have any definite thought before their minds. The Scriptures tell us that *that Person was God*, and that *that Person was Man*. As to “*human personality*,” “*Divine personality*,” and “*Dual personality*,” it is just the restless, fallen mind of man exercising itself in things beyond its comprehension. What I find in Scripture is that one Person is both God and Man. And that this is no baseless dogma of mine I trust I shall be able, by the grace of God, to show from Scripture.

Nothing could be more plainly stated than the fact of the existence of Jesus previous to incarnation. He says, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world” (John 16. 28); again, “The glory which I had with Thee before the world was;” and, “Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (chap. 17. 5, 24); also, “Before Abraham was, I am” (chap. 8. 58); again in chapter 6. 38, “I came down from heaven;” also verse 62, “What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?” I might quote many other scriptures on the same subject, but any one of these is quite sufficient to prove the existence of Jesus before He was born into this world.

Now what was He before He became

Man? What say the Scriptures as to this? In Philippians 2. the Holy Spirit of God carries us back to the point of departure, when He began that journey of humiliation which ended in the death of the cross. And what was He before He took the initial step upon that downward path? He was "in the form of God." Now, no one who was not God could be in the form of God, for the only other form we know of is that of a servant. A servant should have no will of his own; all his actions proceed from the will of another. But God acts from Himself, from His own will, without reference to another. Authority, dominion, and might belong to Him. The form of God is incompatible with that of a servant; indeed, the word here is *bondslave*. Hence, when in the form of God, the act of emptying Himself and taking the form of a servant is viewed as proceeding from Himself: He "emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form." It could not be otherwise, for He was under no other authority or obligation. This is not true of any creature, for the most exalted creature is by the very fact of his creation a servant, and nothing but a servant. But the moment this glorious Person takes upon Himself the form of a servant obedience characterizes His every act: "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." While in the form of God His every action must proceed from His own will; He could be neither influenced nor controlled by anything external to Himself; but when He became a servant everything is changed. His acts are as consistent with the form of a servant as they were with the form of God. For a creature to leave his first estate is to apostatize, but this the Son did, for to no one was He responsible.

But this emptying of Himself was not in any way the renunciation of Godhead, which could not be, but the giving up of the whole position that appertained to Godhead, and the becoming

a servant to the Godhead for the Godhead's glory. This was not done by the Father, who remains in His eternal status and position unchanged. It is true of the Son only, who came to do the Father's will, and who did it at all cost to Himself. Tested to the very uttermost, His obedience was perfect. He took a servant's form, in order that He might do the will of God; and He did that will so perfectly that, in the judgment of God, no other place than the highest in the universe would be an adequate answer to the work which He accomplished. And this place He has as Man and the Servant of the Godhead.

John also, in the first chapter of his Gospel, carries us back before incarnation, right into eternity itself, that we may behold One who had no beginning, the Word who in the beginning *was*, and was with God, and was God. And God, of course, He must be if He had no beginning. Next, "All things were made by Him." Then we have, "The Word was made flesh." Then John the Baptist's testimony is, "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me." He declares the Father, and baptizes with the Holy Ghost. In chapter 2. He turns the water into wine, and thus manifests forth His glory; speaks of raising up the temple of His body when men have destroyed it; and knows what is in man. Chapter 3.: He "came down from heaven." Chapter 4.: He is omniscient—tells the woman of Samaria all that ever she did. Chapter 5.: He "makes Himself equal with God," and must be honoured even as the Father is honoured. But I need not go over more passages from this Gospel.

In Colossians we have the same statement made as in John 1. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and in 1 John 5. 20 He "is the true God, and eternal life."

But I will come to His *Name*. His

name is Jesus, which means Jehovah the Saviour. And the reason He has been given this name is because "He shall save His people [Jehovah's people] from their sins." He is the object of angelic worship (Heb. 1.). He is addressed as God by God upon the throne. He is the Creator: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

Need I quote more scripture? Surely not. The Word of God presents Him as a Man, a true, real Man, begotten of

God, born of the Virgin, Son of God as begotten in time, and Servant to the Godhead. But the same Word of God presents Him as God over all, Eternal, in the form of God, acting from Himself without respect to any other authority, the Creator, Preserver, eternal Son with the eternal Father. Neither His Godhead nor His Manhood shall ever be given up. From the standpoint of the creature's finite mind innumerable mysteries and apparent contradictions connect themselves with His Person: for "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father." But the believing, subject soul knows very well that in connection with such a Person apparent contradictions must exist, and he is prepared for them: for indeed His person is just like His love, it *surpasses knowledge*.

"Jesus."

(J. BOYD).

WITH Godhead glory veiled in human flesh
 We see Him in this world of sin and death,
 Man among men, born of a virgin, found,
 In infant weakness, drawing sustenance
 Out of His mother's breasts, yet all the hope
 Of that meek lowly heart centred in God.
 And here my soul would pause in wonderment
 And holy contemplation, while the great,
 In haughty pride, go heedless on their ways,
 Nor stay to give a look within that stall,
 Where, laid among the oxen, I behold
 The lowly Babe, the poorest of earth's poor,
 Whose name was erst by angel lips pronounced—
 "Jesus." It is Jehovah come in grace
 To rescue His poor people from their sins.
 To that dear heavenly Stranger would I press
 Nearer and closer, that mine eyes might dwell
 In admiration great upon that scene
 Of the Redeemer's birth, Incarnate God!
 The One through whom all creatures and all worlds
 Being received, and now for the first time
 Beheld by angels, who from radiant spheres
 Hasting to contemplate with wonderment
 The One who gave them being now revealed,
 Awoke the midnight echoes with their song,
 And flooded Bethlehem's plains with heavenly light.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 13.

The Transfiguration.

THIS seems clearly the brightest and most outstanding event in the life of our blessed Lord. In each Gospel it is prefaced by the declaration that among those standing round there were certain who, before death, would see the glory of the kingdom. Matthew 16. 28 says: "The Son of Man coming in His kingdom." Mark 9. 1: "The kingdom of God come with power." Luke 9. 27: simply "the kingdom of God." In every instance this announcement is preceded by Peter's confession and the Lord's teaching concerning His death, and what was involved in that for His followers. The reason for this association is probably to give assurance to the chosen witnesses, that whatever the outward evidences of "weakness and defeat" might be, yet the kingdom and the glory would surely be His in God's due time. It is interesting to notice in this first Gospel, before this sample of the kingdom glory is revealed, the writer unfolds the "new things" (chap. 13. 52) of the kingdom in mystery and the church (chap. 16.), and there gives the scene we are considering, which, according to 2 Peter 1. 19, is the confirmation of the prophecies of the kingdom in the Old Testament. The import of this revelation in Matthew is thus explained, and is specially suited to minister faith to the believers from the Jewish nation, who are also addressed in Peter's Epistle.

In comparing the descriptions of the Transfiguration, it will be noticed that each writer has points peculiar to himself. Thus Matthew tells us the cloud was "bright;" this would evidently preclude its casting a shadow. From this, and from the Septuagint version of Exodus 40. 35, we may learn that the word translated "overshadow" means rather to "envelop" or "surround" them. The importance of this will be seen in Luke's account. Matthew also gives the utterance from the excellent glory more fully: "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him." The fear of the disciples is attributed to the hearing this voice in Matthew, where verse 7 is added, to tell how the Lord

would set them in liberty to enjoy this precious communication of the Father's heart. So the "Hear Him" teaches them that henceforth the Son supersedes both law and prophets: these are not independent witnesses, but testify of Him. Peter's witless remark is thus blessedly rebuked, while he, with ourselves, is instructed.

Mark's account is very similar to Matthew's, but one beautiful touch is added (chap. 9. 8): "They no longer saw any one, but Jesus alone *with themselves*." Precious assurance to His servants from that day till He comes.

The differences in the third Gospel are full of interest and instruction. Those who are taught in the significance of the numerals of Scripture will notice that Matthew and Mark have "after six days;" Luke 9. 28 says "about eight days." This last is significant of a new beginning when man's day is over; hence we find here specially marked the entry of the disciples into the Father's dwelling (the cloud) in its changeless and eternal character. Luke tells us also how the Lord sought the solitude of the mountain as a place of prayer, and it was "as He prayed that the fashion of His countenance became different, and His raiment white and effulgent." The divine glory was claiming that lowly and dependent Man as in every way suited to itself. What we shall become by virtue of redemption, He was intrinsically. There was no disparity. Yet we may be reminded that if in the holy mount the Father proclaims, "This is My Beloved Son," none the less as smitten by Jehovah's sword is He—"the Man that is My Fellow" (Zech. 13. 7).

Profoundly interesting it is to learn here the subject of discourse of Moses and Elijah—"His decease [literally exodus] which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Mindful of their own departure with an unfinished work left behind, there must have been a holy joy as they spoke to Him who, as He died, proclaimed, "It is finished." The Son of Man was

thus glorified, and in that Man the glory of God was eternally secured. On the other hand, we are here acquainted with the state of the disciples, ever unwilling to hear of His death; they are equally unprepared for the revelation of His glory; they are "oppressed with sleep" in the very presence of it. The fear of the disciples is in Luke connected with the fact that such as they (for this is, I suppose, the force of *ἐκείνους*) should

enter the cloud which was just then enfolding them. But the precious utterance of the Father's voice addressing *them* seems like a welcome home to where the love of that Father to that Son is ever manifest—the atmosphere of the sanctuary (see John 17. 24–26). This verse may be compared with Exodus 40. 35 and Hebrews 10. 19. Now we draw near *with boldness* by the blood of Jesus. (C.E.H.W.)

The Priesthood of Christ.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

THE present service of the Lord Jesus for His redeemed is presented to us in a double way—first as our High Priest with God for all that connects with our condition in weakness here; and then as Advocate with the Father in case of sin. The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us His Priesthood; the Epistle of John His place as Advocate.

This present service of Christ as Priest is founded, we find from Hebrews, on the work the Lord Jesus has accomplished on the cross, where for the moment He was both Priest and Victim (chap. 2. 17) — "A merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make *propitiation* [as it is] for the sins of the people." "If He were on earth, He should not be a Priest" (chap. 8. 4) shows that this was not His proper priestly work, which, as in the types, only began on the death of the Victim (with the remarkable exception of the great day of atonement—Lev. 16—when the *high priest* offered the sin-offering). He did not then enter upon the exercise of Priesthood until He took His place on high, where the Epistle steadily keeps Him before our eyes. Chapter 1. 3, in the glory of His person; 8. 1, as to the character and perfection of His Priesthood, displacing that of Aaron; 10. 12, in the perfection of His work, set down uninterruptedly as having nothing more to do with sins, as to which He has perfected our consciences uninter-

ruptedly, and 12. 2, as having reached the goal of the race of faith of which He is Leader and Finisher.

This is important as to the place of Priesthood, because it proves that it has nothing to do with any question of sin, being only taken up on the ground of an eternal redemption that has put away sin for ever for God and the faith of our souls. A merciful and faithful High Priest exercises it for us that we may not sin, sin being looked at as hopeless apostasy in the Epistle. It is too sadly possible that we may sin; nor does the service of the Lord Jesus fail for us in that case. But that is as Advocate with the Father (1 John 2. 1). Priesthood is with God for weakness, which is our only true condition as long as we are here.

It supposes, then, a justified and delivered people, as Israel were, in type, when brought to God through the Red Sea, with the wilderness lying before us, and the rest and glory of God at the end. He who is our Moses, the Leader of our salvation, is conducting us there as the sons of God (chap. 2. 10), whom He has brought to His own ground as set forth in the risen Man Christ Jesus, the Sanctifier and the sanctified all of one, not ashamed to call them His brethren, in the midst of whom He can take His place, to lead us in our song of redemption (Exod. 15.) at the very opening of the

path (ver. 12). The path in which He would sustain us by Priesthood is His own in which He has gone before us, opened out in three great characteristics of it in the Epistle—perfect dependence (“I will put my trust in Him,” ver. 13), obedience, learned by the things He suffered (chap. 5. 8), and faith, of which He is the great prototype (chap. 12. 2).

So much as to the Epistle generally, and the Christian’s place in it will help as to the precious details of the service of Priesthood in which He is ever in love actively engaged for us. And first, “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour the tempted.” With what reality it brings Him before us as having been in our path, to know that He was tempted. At the very opening of His public path in the Gospels He had to meet the temptation of Satan in the wilderness. His perfection is seen in that He *suffered* being tempted. With Him the effect of the presentation of anything contrary to God was only to produce suffering. With us, if not by faith reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin, and walking in the Spirit as the power of the deliverance that Christ has wrought for us, there is the horrible answer of the flesh within to the temptation presented from without. There was none such with Him. He suffered being tempted, and that is the absolute opposite of sinning. He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, as Peter says (chap. 4. 1), exhorting us to arm ourselves with the same mind as Christ. Tempted we shall be; but just at the point in which in weakness we take sides with God against ourselves refusing the evil, the mighty succour of the Lord comes in to our support, lest weakness without support should turn to wilfulness and sin.

In Aaron’s garments of glory and beauty, in type, he bore the names of the Children of Israel, engraved upon the onyx stones on the shoulders of strength, and also upon the breast-

plate of judgment upon his heart. We have the reality of both as we consider the High Priest of our confession. For besides strength to succour, as in chapter 2., chapter 4. brings out the wonderful sympathy of His heart. “We have not an high priest who cannot sympathize” (for this is the literal translation) “with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted like as we, without sin” (or sin apart). I use the word “weaknesses” because there is but one word to express our two English words “weakness” and “infirmity” in Greek. There is no shade of any other meaning than weakness in this passage. The last clause excludes what is sinful. Besides, no Christian would look for the sympathy of the Lord Jesus with what had that character. Weakness is not sinful. Christ was crucified in weakness. We have to be reduced to it, as Paul in 2 Corinthians 12., who glories in it because of the power-strength of Christ made perfect in it. It is in weakness that our path has to be made good for God in the midst of temptations, subject to the assault of the enemy, in the teeth of the opposition of every principle of man and his world; in need of patience in carrying out the will of God, in danger of being wearied and faint in our minds; and through various exercise.

How blessed that there is not a detail of our weakness under every form of trial and testing that Jesus, our great High Priest, the Son of God, who is passed through the heavens, does not enter into, in the perfect sympathy of a human heart on the throne of God, and with all the divine strength of His compassion. So that the throne where He sits becomes a throne of grace where we can come boldly with every phase of need, and obtain mercy and grace for seasonable succour.

But the question may arise, How can one so exalted as the Son of God enter into all the details of His people’s weakness and need down here? The

answer is given us in chapter 5. He *has* been here, and in circumstances of pressure and sorrow such as never fell to the lot of man beside. Not that He *is* in them now. For it is a common mistake that I must be in the same circumstances as another to be able to sympathize. It is not true. If in them myself, I am not so free to enter into those of another. But if I have been in them, and am now out of them, I can fully sympathize with those of another. How infinite the love and grace that brought the Son of God into the path of testing—"who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up . . . strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and was heard for His piety [that is, His meek submission to God]. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." It is Gethsemane that is before us, with all its unfathomable sorrow—the last and most crucial of all the scenes of testing and trial He had to go through, and that fitted Him perfectly for our hearts, to be all we need in our High Priest. Out of His own deep experience of human sorrow and trial we have the consciousness that there is nothing that we have to pass through that He cannot enter into, to sustain us as we seek to walk in the same path of His obedience.

But the truth of Priesthood goes farther. I do not here refer to the order of it as that of Melchizedek, proved to be superior to that of Aaron by so many points of contrast in chapter 7., because the present exercise of it is analogous to Aaron's as having to do with the sanctuary. The Melchizedek priesthood will not be exercised till He comes out in manifested glory, and takes His place as Priest upon His throne. But at the close of chapter 6. He is presented as having entered within the veil, and that as our Forerunner. So that not only have we the immutability of God's counsel confirmed by an oath—

as Abraham—for the fulfilment of promise (and we are just where he was as to the rest and glory of God), but we have a personal guarantee for its fulfilment in the place whither the Forerunner has for us entered, Jesus made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; and this also gives us the sanctuary of God as the refuge and home of our hearts. He has, indeed, first of all secured all that was needed for us in the way of succour and sympathy for the path through the wilderness. But this was our side of things. Now He seeks to conduct our hearts to where He is, to His side of things, in the bright scene of God's presence, so that we be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Nor is He inactive there, for we are still on the way, and love engages Him in His intransmissible Priesthood to be ever occupied with us—"able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (chap. 7. 25). It is thus the dependent life of Christ in us is sustained by the resources of grace and strength that are ministered to us by His priestly intercession and service. Were that exercise of Priesthood to cease for a moment we should soon find out where we were, and how dependent we are upon it. But it is not possible. It says, "He *ever liveth* to make intercession for us," as if He had nothing else to do but to think of and care for us. All our resources thus being derived moment by moment from where Christ is "made higher than the heavens" (7. 26), we are prepared for what I may speak of as the full positive side of Priesthood, which we have from chapter 8. to 10., and which carries us in heart and spirit into the heavenly scenes themselves. For as the Epistle says (8. 1), "of the things which we have spoken this is the sum [or summing up]: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the

Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the . . . true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," of which the tabernacle in this world was but the type and shadow (ver. 5). But if the perfect heavenly sanctuary of God's presence is what is in question now, there is a perfect sacrifice that answers to it (chap. 9. 11-14) and that introduces us there as perfected worshippers having "no more conscience of sins" (chap. 10. 2). It is the witness of the Holy Ghost to the work of the Son of God to make good the counsels of the divine will that gives us this perfect conscience, our sins and iniquities remembered no more.

And now (ver. 19) the Spirit of God summons us to take up our place before God accordingly. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a great Priest [as it is read] over the House of God; let us draw near." Thus once more Christ is presented to us as Priest, where He appears representatively for us in the presence of God (*see* 9. 24), giving us a home link to connect our hearts in the most intimate way with all that is there. The house of God over which He is Priest consists, as we know from chapter 3., of all who are Christ's—"whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Each true Christian, then, has this wondrous place of unhindered access to God in the sanctuary of His own presence. "With a true heart," it is added, "and in full assurance of faith, having our

hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," applying thus typically without further development the two parts of the consecration of the priests. Not only perfect rest of conscience and heart as to all the past in the presence of God through the blood of Christ, but the water of the Word applied to bring us into a nature capable of enjoying, and free to enjoy, that holy presence. We are in truth a consecrated priesthood; but it was not the object of the Epistle to bring out our priesthood, but that of Christ, and so it is left thus in the language of the type.

Nor do I seek to follow out the glorious consequences for us further. Let it suffice that all has been thus prepared for worship, only needing the added truth of the revelation of the Father, as in John 4., for it is to burst forth from full hearts, who, having access to God within the holiest, have gone forth without the camp, from all that was once instituted of God as a religion for men upon earth, to Christ, bearing His reproach (chap. 13. 13).

May it be ours, then, by His grace, to realize more and more, not merely the blessedness of having every need of our way in weakness through a wilderness world met by the Priesthood of Christ, but of becoming more familiar with the sanctuary of which He is the Minister, and the holy occupations of it that He connects us with, and would maintain us in the enjoyment of, by His Priesthood, when first by His work finished on the cross He has given us our title and fitness for the unclouded light of the presence of God.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Ps. 23. 6).

All our yesterdays crowded with tender mercies should be regarded as prophecies and pledges that our to-morrows shall be rich with divine benedictions. Oh, that we might live in that faith! Then there would never

be a dull tone in our voices again. The sum total of our testimony is this: God is good. . . . The Lord write this truth upon our hearts, and make it the faith of our life.

Who will come First : Christ or Antichrist ? (H. P. BARKER).

DURING the last few decades there has been a widespread revival in the church of longing expectation of the speedy fulfilment of the "blessed hope" of the Lord's return. That this is the work of the Holy Ghost we cannot doubt. Led by Him, Christians have turned to their Bibles afresh; familiar passages have become instinct with new force and meaning; cherished notions have given place before the unfolding of the truth; and from far and near the cry echoes, "Behold the Bridegroom!" "Come, Lord Jesus."

But among some who thus look with longing hearts for the promised coming of Christ an idea is gaining currency that Antichrist will first come, and that the church will have to pass through the ordeal of the Great Tribulation. The previous rapture is denied, and the appearing of the Lord in glory is set forth as our *only* hope.

If I examine these views by Scripture, and make the occasion serve for the restatement of the truth, I shall be following apostolic precedent. The Epistles to the Thessalonians, which deal so largely with these matters, were written on this principle. So also the Epistles to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Colossians, the Hebrews.

Controversy is far from being my object. My desire is to state afresh, from a scriptural standpoint, what I believe to be the truth as to the Coming of Christ, the Great Tribulation, the Man of Sin, and the Day of the Lord.

Lying before me I have a pamphlet by Frank H. White, entitled "The Saints' Rest and Rapture: When and for Whom?" How much I would prefer standing shoulder to shoulder with Mr. White, in these days of increasing apostasy, to fight against

the foe, rather than criticize his words! I cannot deny myself the pleasure of emphasizing how much we have in common. Mr. White is no enemy, but a brother beloved. He accepts the Scriptures as the divinely inspired Word of God and owns them as the final court of appeal. While affirming that the Tribulation must precede the removal of the church from the earth, it is none the less true that *the Lord Himself* is the object of his longing desire, as he says on page 10.

But I believe that the doctrine which his pamphlet is written to support will do terrible harm wherever imbibed. With all brotherly love and esteem for Mr. White himself, I shall therefore endeavour to show that his position is untenable, and due to a misinterpretation of Scripture.

On page 28 he gives us a brief summary of his views. It will be well to have these clearly before us. He says:

"There is no such hope revealed in the Scriptures as a previous removal of the church from the scene of her trial and testimony before the Lord is revealed in glory. No deliverance, no rest, and no rapture prior to the public personal manifestation in glory of the Deliverer Himself."

Here we get, in clear, unmistakable words, the position necessarily taken by those who expect the advent of the Antichrist, and the Great Tribulation, while the church is still on earth.

We shall now proceed with our appeal to Scripture. In Matthew 24. the Lord gives His disciples an outline of events which will come to pass "at the end of the age." He foretells a time of great sorrow and suffering. But in doing so He contemplates His disciples *in Judæa* (ver. 16), and speaks of *the sabbath day* (ver. 20). We

naturally conclude that those who live in the days of the fulfilment of this prophecy will be Jewish rather than Christian disciples, and that the Lord is, therefore, addressing His hearers not as representatives of the church, or of Christians, but as representing the godly of Israel in those last days.

Mr. White combats this, however, terming it "The Jewish Remnant Theory." He asks:

"If such disciples were not Christians proper, and so do not properly represent us in Matthew 24., Mark 13., Luke 21., when instructed by the Lord with respect to circumstances that should surround them after His departure and after they should have received the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, when do they represent us, if at all? If we reject our Lord's counsel in the above scriptures, can we consistently claim His comfort in John 13. to 17.? Were not the apostles quite as much Jews by nature and by earthly location when that precious promise fell on their opened ears in John 14. 3, 'I will come again and receive you unto Myself,' as when the same Lord said to the *same company* a few hours before, 'Now learn a parable of the fig tree?'"

Let me say, first, that there is no thought of "rejecting our Lord's counsel" on the part of those who do not agree with Mr. White. That counsel is precious in our eyes, whether addressed to us or to others. It is a question, not of accepting or rejecting, but of rightly divining the Word of Truth. Surely Mr. White does not need to be reminded of the great difference between the Synoptic Gospels and that of John. In John 13. the Lord has in view not "the end of the age," but His departure to the Father (ver. 1). His desire for His loved ones, whom He was leaving behind, was that even while in the world they should have *part with Him* (ver. 8). Part in Him would indeed be theirs in any case. But in order that they might enjoy part *with Him*, in

communion and the knowledge of the Father's things, He would wash their feet, and thus typically cleanse them from things of earth, from anything that would hinder their affections from following Him to the place whither He went. The precious unfoldings of chapters 14. to 17. are thus in view of the *present* period, and, therefore, the Lord again and again spoke of the promised Comforter, who should bring to their remembrance what He had said and guide them into all truth. No great discernment is needed to enable us to see that in these chapters the Lord is addressing His disciples as those who should hereafter occupy the place of *Christians*. It is no question of their personal intelligence or condition. Christianity is in view in these chapters of John, little as they understood it at the time. Accordingly such an outline of future events as we have in the Synoptic Gospels is omitted.

In Matthew 24., on the contrary, the Lord's words have reference not to the present period, but to the end of the age, and He addresses His disciples as representing those who should be in Judæa, and who would find the sabbath day an obstacle to flight, and who would see the abomination set up in the holy place, and whose bright hope was to be the coming of the Lord as *Son of Man*. It is easily perceived that we are on different ground here from that of John 13.-17., and we see no difficulty in understanding that Matthew's Gospel (the Gospel of the Kingdom) gives us in chapter 24. 3-41 what pertains to a godly Jewish remnant (whose existence is proved by many a prophetic scripture) at the end of the age, while John's Gospel gives us what pertains more particularly to Christians at the present time.

We affirm, then, that in Matthew 24. 3-41 we breathe an atmosphere that is characteristically Jewish, and that the "Great Tribulation" of verse 21 is what is elsewhere spoken of as

"the time of *Jacob's* trouble" (Jer. 30. 7).

In a magazine article, of course, all points cannot be dealt with. Let us pass on to 2 Thessalonians 2. 1-3. Verse 2 shows us that the Thessalonian believers were troubled by a report, purporting to emanate from Paul, to the effect that the day of the Lord was already come (see true rendering in N.T. or R.V.). The Apostle seeks to set their fears at rest by telling them in verse 3 that the revelation of the Man of Sin must first take place. But not only so. He beseeches them not to be shaken in mind because of another fact mentioned in verse 1, namely "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him." It is as if he said, "There can be no 'day of the Lord,' with its judgment and terror, till He has come and gathered us to Himself."

Now, we must not mix up Scripture terms as Mr. White seems to do on page 14, by his references to 1 Corinthians 1. 7, 8, 2 Corinthians 1. 14, and Philippians 1. 10. "The day of our Lord Jesus Christ," or "the day of Christ," is a day of brightness and glory and joy. But "the day of the Lord" (as 2 Thess. 2. 2 should read) is a day that the Thessalonians dreaded, a day of wrath and judgment. This latter is undoubtedly ushered in by the Lord's coming for His people and their gathering together unto Him. The "day of Christ" is rather connected with His revelation in glory.

But Mr. White identifies these events. There is no rapture, he says, previous to the appearing. But what says 1 Thessalonians 4. ? In both his Epistles to the Thessalonians Paul reminds them of what he had taught them by word of mouth. But in chapter 4. 15 he comes to something which he communicates by special divine revelation. The occasion was the sorrow they felt at the loss of some of their number through death, and the possible fear

that they would thus be losers in the day of Christ's coming. Not so, says the Apostle, for when He comes the dead in Christ will be raised, and those yet alive caught up together with them in the clouds. Thus will it be that in the day of His appearing God will bring *with Christ* (ver. 14) those who have fallen asleep.

But what will this coming of the Lord mean for the world? It will mean the ushering in of the day of the Lord, the time of His terrible judgments. The world will be saying, "Peace and safety;" then sudden destruction will come upon them. The day will overtake *them* as a thief in the night.

All this Mr. White refers to in support of his view. But surely, if read aright, it teaches us the simple truth for which we contend, namely that the Lord's coming for His people is the first event to be looked for. Then follows the day of the Lord, with its awful trouble and destruction, until the day of glory and gladness is brought in by the subsequent coming of Christ to reign.

Mr. White seems to think that because tribulation is the normal portion of Christians during this period of the Lord's rejection, *therefore* it would be incongruous to exclude such from the Great Tribulation. He rightly distinguishes (p. 19) between ordinary tribulation and penal judgment. But what he apparently fails to discern is that the period of the Great Tribulation will be one of *penal judgment inflicted by God*. "The tribulation of those days is no honour, but the severest infliction on sin, and unbelief, and apostasy. It is a judicial punishment on the Jewish nation because they broke the law, despised the Messiah, and will then have received the Antichrist" (*W. Kelly, "Lectures on the Second Coming"*).

It is true that others besides the Jews will be involved in the Great Tribulation. It "shall come upon all

the world " (Rev. 2. 10). This will, no doubt, be on account of the guilty alliance of the re-established Jewish state with the nations of the West. "Joining the apostate Jews (for Judaism and Christendom will yet coalesce), they will be the material supports of the man that will set himself up as God in the temple of Jerusalem" (*W. Kelly, "Lectures,"* p. 267). Just as Jonah, fleeing from the presence of Jehovah, involved others in the catastrophe that overtook him, so has it been, and so still more will it be, with that people to which Jonah belonged. But from among the Gentiles in those coming terrible days a great multitude will be saved. Brought to repentance by the testimony that will then be rendered, they will be washed in the blood of the Lamb. From all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues they will come a "multitude which no man could number" (Rev. 7. 9-17).

Mr. White refers to this vast company (p. 31). He rightly calls attention to the true rendering of verse 14: "The tribulation, the great one." But would he have us believe that *the church* is here represented? A study of the whole book of the Revelation will lead us to a very different conclusion. In chapters 2. 3. we have set forth, in prophetic outline, the various phases of the church's history. No account of the rapture is given, but chapter 4. commences with a door opened in heaven, and thither the vision now directs our gaze. And in that happy scene the twenty-four elders are found seated around the throne. Surely they represent the company of heavenly saints, no longer on earth, but transferred to heaven by the rapture. In chapter 7. they appear *in contrast with* the great multitude (ver. 13). They cannot, therefore, be the same. There will be many families in the glorious universe of God. The church will be the most highly privileged of all. The great multitude of Revelation 7. will be another richly

blessed family. But we must not confound the two.

It remains for us to notice Mr. White's questions on pages 27, 28. He says: "I ask these questions in no spirit of triumph over those against whose views I am contending." Evidently, therefore, he regards them as unanswerable, and as entitling him to triumph, though he generously forbears. They stand in his pamphlet as the conclusion of the matter. Let us, then, briefly examine them in order.

(1) "*The Church is represented in a suffering condition to the very end of the dispensation. Indeed, were it not so, where would be 'the patience and faith of the saints' (Rev. 13. 10) ?*"

If Mr. White means that Scripture affirms that the saints of the present Christian period continue in a suffering condition *to the end of the age*, we simply deny it, and leave the burden of proof with him. "Saints" is a term equally applicable to believers of past and future dispensations as to Christians, and in Revelation 13. 10 is used to denote those who will be on earth after the church is taken to heaven.

(2) "*Why should the Lord have said for their comfort, when He was leaving them as sheep in the midst of wolves—'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age ?*'"

Because the Lord will have His people to the end of the age, though they will then be Jews, not "Christians," properly speaking. The precious promise of Matthew 28. 29 will then be as full of cheer for *them* as it is now for us.

(3) "*If the Church is to be removed from the earth before the Coming of the Lord in manifested glory, why did the apostle write to the Corinthians commending them for their mistake (?) in 'waiting for the coming [lit. REVELATION] of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 1. 7) ?*"

It was no "mistake" of the Corin-

thian believers to have "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" ever in view, and thus to wait for the revelation of Himself. Mr. White is waiting for that day, though he believes Antichrist is first to come. May we not wait for that day, therefore, though we believe that *Christ* is first to come and gather His people home? Looking for Christ to come, as we believe He may do at any moment, does not hinder us from looking forward with keen desire and holy anticipation to the day of His public triumph and glory.

(4) "*Why did the same apostle urge Timothy to 'keep the commandment without spot UNTIL [not simply in view of] the appearing' (Epiphaneia; 1 Tim. 6. 14) if the Church would not then be in circumstances calling for any exercise of endurance—for such is clearly involved in the keeping? "*"

Does Mr. White really think that in this passage "until" can have any force but "in view of?" How could Timothy keep the commandment without spot *until* an event hundreds of years subsequent to his death? No doubt Timothy faithfully observed the charge committed to him *in view of* the appearing. He certainly did not do so *until* the appearing. In the same way we may seek grace to be faithful until, or in view of, the day when faithfulness will be recognized and rewarded—the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(5) "*Why should the apostle again and again refer the saints to the 'APPEARING' as their hope and his, rather than to any previous Coming, and say 'when Christ who is our life shall appear THEN shall ye also appear with Him in glory' (Col. 3. 4)? "*"

In this passage the *manifestation* of those whose life is now hidden is the subject, and this will take place at the appearing or manifestation of Christ, not at the rapture.

(6) "*Or write of them as 'looking for*

that blessed Hope, and Appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ' (Titus 2. 13, R.V.) ? ""

We need not here discuss whether "the blessed hope" and the "appearing of the glory" are presented as separate objects of desire, or as one. The Apostle is treating of the manner of life suitable to the believer in this present world, or age. Naturally he turns, by way of contrast, to the coming age, and, therefore, speaks of what will introduce it. All is beautifully in place. When we think of the Lord's love to us our thoughts turn to the moment when love's desires for its objects will be achieved, and when we shall be caught up to meet Him and be for ever with Him. But when the question is obedience, good fidelity, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, and so on, our thoughts as naturally run on to the day of Christ's appearing, when all faithful service and godly walk will receive the Lord's approval and reward.

(7) "*Or describe the crowned ones in the day of His Coming and Kingdom as those that 'love His Appearing' (2 Tim. 4. 8) ? "*"

Because here, again, the contrast is with "this present age" which Demas loved. The Apostle had in view the reward which the righteous Judge would bestow, not at the rapture, but the appearing. Accordingly he spoke of loving His appearing, in full consistency with the matter of which he treats.

(8) "*Why should the Apostle Peter bid believers 'gird up the loins of their mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to them at THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST' (1 Peter 1. 13) ? "*"

Because he has been drawing the contrast between the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Christ had suffered, and therefore His people need not be surprised at having manifold trials during their

sojourn on earth. But their faith, though tried with fire, would be a contributing element to the praise of Christ *at His appearing*, i.e. in the day of His glory (ver. 7). This favour they might anticipate with joy, as being theirs at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(9) "*Why did he not bid them hope for an earlier ungirding, which it is hard to think he would not have done, if he had known of such a hope?*"

Whether Peter knew of a more immediate hope is not the question. He wrote by divine inspiration, and what he presents is perfectly in accordance with the testimony he was called to render.

(10) "*Why did the same apostle write 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that WHEN HIS GLORY SHALL BE REVEALED ye may be glad with exceeding joy' (1 Peter 4. 13), if there was any hope of a previous cessation from trial and suffering?*"

Because what Peter seeks to engage the hearts of the Lord's people with is not merely their relief from suffering, but the glory that shall be Christ's, and in which they would share. Mr. White takes for granted that the Apostle would have told them of the rapture, "if such a hope really existed." This is not unlike the way that certain "Higher Critics" speak of the Scriptures. "Such and such a writer *must* have mentioned such and such a thing if it really happened." Mr. White condones such an attitude towards the holy Word of God no more than does the writer. His words, therefore, are the more surprising.

Truly there is no reason why Mr. White should set forth his ten questions in a "spirit of triumph." He might have quoted other passages which refer to the day of Christ (His appearing and public glory) as that which is eagerly anticipated by the believer. But all this does not militate against

our *immediate* hope being the coming of the Bridegroom for His loved ones.

There is Some One now who "lets" or hinders the revelation of the wicked one. And He will not cease to "let" until He be taken out of the way. Who can this be but the Holy Spirit? Who has power to hinder "the working of Satan" but He? And when will He be taken out of the way? Not in the day of glory, for then He will be poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2. 28). We believe the Holy Spirit's abiding presence on earth will cease at the rapture. For that event He looks with desire. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" to the Bright and Morning Star, who shines for His church before the Sun of Righteousness rises (Rev. 22. 17; Mal. 4. 2).

I do not mean to suggest that the Holy Ghost will then cease to work on the earth. He will continue to operate in His grace, but His abiding presence will terminate with the removal of the church. *Then* the work of Satan, without let or hindrance, will come to a head in the full development of "the mystery of iniquity." With the rise of Antichrist will come the period of the Great Tribulation, to be followed, in its turn, by the glorious appearing of Christ, the destruction of His foes, and His millennial reign.

There is, thus, much that we, in common with the future remnant of Israel, look forward to with earnest longing. But we shall be great losers if we let slip what is the *special* hope of the church.

May I, in this connection, be allowed to quote what I have written in a paper on "The Importance of the Rapture" ("Simple Testimony," December, 1909)?

"In the ways of God, that which belongs *special*ly to any of His people is that upon which He would have their attention fixed. This principle is illustrated in Deuteronomy 4., where the people are commanded to refrain

from idolatry, and particularly from the worship of sun, moon, and stars (ver. 19). Notice the ground upon which the prohibition is based: 'Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars . . . *which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.* But the Lord hath taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him *a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.*'

"They were forbidden to worship the heavenly luminaries, not on the ground that they are merely created things, and can neither see nor hear, but on the ground that God has made them for the use of all nations. The light that they give shone upon the Gentiles as well as upon the sons of Israel. They were not, in any sense, *special* to the people of God.

"There was, on the other hand, that which was special to them: their deliverance from the iron furnace, and their portion as the people of the Lord's inheritance. Upon these things they were to lay great stress.

"To apply this principle to the subject before us; the 'appearing' of Christ is not special to Christianity. It is the hope of Israel, and, indeed, of the Gentiles and the whole creation as well. It will mean blessing to the whole earth, in the suppression of evil and the introduction of peace and righteousness. On the other hand, the 'rapture' is special to Christianity.

It was not revealed before. Though Old Testament saints may share in the joy that will be ours at that moment, it was not set before *them* as a hope, as it is before the saints of to-day. It is the peculiar hope of the church."

With heart and soul I join with Mr. White in longing for "a fuller and deeper consecration to the Lord, both in word and deed." Like him, I "mark how stealthily, yet surely, the Apostasy advances, and with what startling rapidity anti-Christian teachings are developing." Would to God that there could be a closer drawing together on the part of those who seek grace to cleave to the Lord and be loyal to His Word.

But this is no time to sacrifice truth in the smallest degree, least of all one so important and practical as the Lord's coming for His people previous to the day of His appearing. Let us, with increasing purpose of heart, stand firm for all that is distinctive in Christianity: the unique place of the church as the body of Christ, united to her glorious Head by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; the heavenly character of our calling, our position, our blessings, our citizenship; all that is involved in what Paul calls "My gospel;" the vast riches of the mystery, long hid but now revealed, and with all this what is so intimately connected with it, the promised rapture of the saints as the *immediate* hope of our hearts.

Science or the Bible—Which?

(J. WILSON SMITH).

I WAS told the other day that the people of a certain town in a so-called Christian land did not want the Bible; they wanted science. Strange predilection, thought I!

The same people would never have preferred ashes to bread, or tares to wheat!

In things physical we are keenly alive to that which is best and most nutritious; but, alas! in things spiritual the taste is vitiated, and money is spent on that which satisfieth not.

Science preferred to the Bible! Is there any palpable contradiction between perfect science and revelation?

I say "perfect," because science is still, admittedly, in its infancy and incomplete. Had we perfect science, were our knowledge absolute, then a comparison might be safely made, but not before.

Well, what is science? The dictionaries give us as one definition—"systematized knowledge." That is vague enough; but another says it is "ascertained truth." This is conclusive. Let us lay hold of science, and we possess truth on any given subject. What a boon!

Now, there lived in B.C. 640 a very celebrated man called Thales—a philosopher—whose name and teachings have come down to us. He taught, amongst other things, that all things were formed *out of water*. This was, in his day, an ascertained result of science, and, no doubt, the people around were quite satisfied with his great scientific discovery.

He had a pupil called Anaximenes who flourished as a philosopher a few years later than Thales. He, finding fault with the "ascertained truth" of his master, propounded the doctrine that all things were formed *out of air* and returned to it again.

The first said that water formed the air; the second that the air formed water. Each was an "ascertained truth" and a scientific discovery!

After Anaximenes there appeared one Leucippus, another philosopher, and the greatest of the three. He rejected both of the above ascertained facts of science, and stated that all things resulted from *atoms*—separate, movable atoms. This is called the "atomic theory," and is very generally believed in to-day. The solid earth on which we stand and build our houses, and from which we gain our livelihood, the earth—this great planet, with its continents, oceans, rivers, mountains, and forests, is the result of a concourse (fortuitous, of course) of these wonderful atoms, as suggested by Leucippus!

Here, then, is another "ascertained truth," another scientific doctrine, if not dogma, which overthrows all previous scientific certainties. This is just a little perplexing to plain folk, whether they lived in a period B.C. or A.D.; and does not give either them or ourselves a very solid footing for our faith.

Such might be inclined to ask: "Where did the water, or the air, or the atoms, from which all things visible and tangible were made, come from?" And a highly pertinent question too.

Can no scientist answer that query? Let us quote the words of a writer of a history of science: "To those deep and eager questionings which ask, 'Whence originated this stream of energy? whither is it bearing the universe? and wherefore?' science has no answer! She, looking before and after, sees only obscurity, and must leave the questioner as

*'An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry!'*"

These words close his large and interesting volume, and leave us, as to this point, in unscientific "obscurity."

The fact is that science is unreliable. It is, at best, but bits of knowledge gradually acquired, thrown into a system, and placed in the pantheon for highest worship. But, supposing the bits of knowledge were faulty, could the scientific conclusion be right? Everything hangs on that. Hence the scientist has to grope in the dark. Each of our three philosophers threw their fellows overboard, and utterly rejected their scientific conceptions. Facts came before the third which led him to reject the second; and, in like manner, the second rejected the first. What scientific confusion! And what certainty have we as to the doctrines of their many followers right down to to-day? Science is in constant flux, so that the *Twentieth Century Dictionary* definition of it, "ascertained truth," is plainly incorrect. It may be said, fearlessly, that there is truth which science

cannot ascertain, the above quotation being witness, and therefore for people to prostrate themselves before such a goddess and to regard her as the fount of wisdom is one of the rank follies of the day!

Now, that which science does not and cannot do the Bible does. Unscientific it is not, but it does not, so to speak, waste its time on things material and mundane. Its realm is the spiritual and moral, rather than the physical; and because of the dislocation of the whole world by sin, it turns the earnest attention of its readers to another creation altogether.

The Bible is the revelation of God. How could either science or wisdom find out God? God "dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see!" (1 Tim. 6. 16).

But, all the same, this discredited Bible supplies us, in its very first words, with that which has baffled all the mere scientists from Thales downward. It says, in one comprehensive sentence, consisting of but seven words in the original—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

The Lord's Joy.

Angels have their joy over the repentance of sinners. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." It is happy to have this secret of heaven disclosed to us, and to read one illustration of it after another, as we do in Luke 15.

But there is something beyond this. The joy there, though in heaven, is *public*. It utters itself, and has companionship. Very proper that it should be so; very proper that the whole house should share it, and find it a common joy. But there is something beyond this. There is the joy of the *Divine bosom*, as well as this joy of heaven. John 4. 27-32 gives it to us, as Luke 15. gives us the public joy of heaven. And this joy of the Divine bosom, I need not say, is the deeper thing. It is full, silent, and personal. It asks not to be raised or sustained by others. "I have meat to

God! Let His name suffice—omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent—"God created!" What more simple, more intelligible, or more satisfactory?

Reject God and confusion the most terrible must follow.

The water, the air, and the atoms were all created by God. He is the living originator of all things—the intelligent "First Cause" of everything.

This is not the ascertained result of science. It is revelation; and were science truly scientific, it would bow to a truth which only revelation—the Bible—can make known.

Much else there is in the Bible—in the revelation God has been pleased to give us of Himself, of all that He is in righteousness and in love, of His Son and Spirit, of man, and of matters far beyond the powers of science to investigate, so that the Bible transcends science as heaven overtops the earth, and has withal a voice to the poor, weary, sinful soul of man utterly unknown to science.

Man needs the Bible.

eat that ye know not of" is the language of the heart of Christ, as He tasted of this joy. The glory was filling the house, so that the ministers of the house must stand by for the time. The Shepherd had but just brought home the stray one of the flock, having laid it on His shoulders rejoicing, and as yet the joy was all His own. The household had not been called to rejoice with Him, when the women left Him a saved and happy sinner. Disciples felt the character of the moment. They would not trespass. The fat reserved for the altar, the richest portion of the feast, "the food of God," was spread, and the disciples were silent, and stood apart. This was a wondrous moment—not many like it. The deep, unuttered joy of the Divine bosom is known here, as the public ecstatic joy of heaven is known in Luke 15.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

A.T. asks :

"Why should prayer to the Holy Ghost be discountenanced by some, seeing that He is an equal Person in the Godhead with the Father and the Son?"

The Holy Ghost is undoubtedly on an equality as to His Person with the Father and the Son. But we, as believers, cannot properly address prayer to Him, for He dwells within us as the One by whom, and in whom, we are enabled to pray to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are exhorted to pray not to the Holy Ghost, but *"in the Holy Ghost"* (Jude 20).

In the ways of God's grace and the carrying out of His will in us the Holy Ghost dwells in all believers. He identifies Himself with all their needs, and does not make Himself an object to them or present Himself as the One in whom their resources are. He is here to direct their thoughts outside of themselves to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16. 13, 14). Moreover, we have no instance in Scripture of prayer being addressed to the Holy Ghost.

Prayer for the Holy Ghost.

A.T. asks further :

"Why do some object to Christians praying for the Holy Ghost, seeing that the Lord said in Luke 11. 13, 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'"

Because Christians, who are not Christians in name only, have already received the Holy Spirit, which those disciples whom the Lord addressed in Luke 11. had not ; for "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7. 39). The disciples before the day of Pentecost were undoubtedly praying, according to Luke 11., for the Holy Spirit, and in answer to their prayer He came upon them, and has been in believers and with His church ever since. Every one who believes the gospel of their salvation is sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1. 13). He seals them by indwelling them (John 14. 17 ; 1 Cor. 6. 19). It would not be right

for us to pray for a gift that we have already received.

It is right, however, for us to desire and to pray that we may be filled with the Holy Ghost (Eph. 5. 18), and that He may not be grieved within us (Eph. 4. 30), or quenched in His ministrations amongst us (1 Thess. 5. 19), for though He dwells within us, His power and gracious ministry are often greatly hindered.

Where are those that Sleep?

W.H.B. writes :

"The Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul speak of the dead as being 'asleep.' Can you say from the Word of God where they sleep?"

Death was commonly spoken of as sleep in Greek literature. In Scripture it has reference to the man as identified with his *body* and never with his spirit. Matthew 27. 52 and Paul's reference to David (Acts 13. 36) are scriptures that would establish this—the *body* is in question in both instances. *"Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake."* Daniel 12. 2 probably refers to the nation of Israel ; but this gives us the connection of the thought of sleep ; it refers to the body in the dust of the earth.

Those, however, who as to their bodies sleep in, or through, Jesus are themselves, as Scripture makes very clear, with Christ the Lord (see 2 Cor. 5. 8 ; Phil. 1. 23). And those who thus sleep as to their bodies have the blessed *consciousness* of being with Christ and all that that means ; for the Apostle, in expressing true Christian desire, tells us that this is "far better."

"Better Sacrifices."

H.C. inquires

"As to what the 'better sacrifices' spoken of in Hebrews 9. 23 are."

The reference is to the sacrifice of Christ : one sacrifice, but with many aspects. The tabernacle of old was but a figure of the dwelling-place of God which the universe is yet to be, so it could be purged by sacrifices which themselves were but figures of the true. That which is temporary and figurative

has "passed away, that which is eternal and real is still to be manifested, and when it is so it will be seen that every part of God's universe where sin has been, whether of men or angels, on earth or heaven, is purged by that better sacrifice, " the sacrifice of Himself " (ver. 26).

The Lord's Supper.

" Berean " writes :

" During the last few years new thoughts and practices have sprung up with regard to the Lord's Supper ; is there any scriptural foundation for these ideas? That coming together in ' assembly ' we do not remember the Lord as the One who suffered and shed His blood, thus procuring forgiveness of sins, but ' call Him to mind ' now that He is in heaven. That the bread and the wine do not signify redemption, nor the great work of atonement, and that these things are unsuitable to bring forward at the Lord's Supper ; that the cup does not speak to us of Christ's precious blood, but means we have a ' portion ' of blessing, according to scriptural imagery."

" Berean " must have been in strange company lately, and these *ideas* of which he writes denote a departure from the blessed simplicity of the Lord's Supper ; they evidence, what is always to be dreaded in the things of God, a thirst for " some new thing."

If we turn from them to the Scriptures we find that, in the two passages in which the Lord has expressed His will as to the perpetuation of the Supper, it is the Lord in His death who is brought to mind. " This is MY BODY which is given for you : this do in remembrance of ME. . . . This cup is the new testament in MY BLOOD, which is shed for you " (Luke 22. 19, 20). " As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come " (1 Cor. 11. 23-26).

There is no thought here of calling Him to mind as He now is, it is death that is presented to us—the death of our Lord. The bread and the cup, one symbolizing His body and the other His blood, must mean this, for it is the dead body and the shed blood.

And in partaking of them we can say, " The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is

it not the communion of the body of Christ ? " (1 Cor. 10. 16).

Now the Lord is alive, and that for evermore, and where two or three are gathered together in His name there He is in the midst of them ; and His presence is as real to faith to-day as His bodily presence was to the disciples on the resurrection day. But He " was dead " once for us ; and so a calling to mind comes in. His sorrow and death are past, but we partake of His Supper " for a remembrance " of Him. This is the import of the Supper: it brings Himself before us in the greatness of that love which led Him to give Himself for the church, and so we forget ourselves and even our blessings in the contemplation of what He is.

Where the rights of the Lord are maintained in any gathering of His people, there will be no rules and regulations as to what should be brought forward or kept back. He will guide, and that according to the apprehension of those who are gathered. We must remember that the offering of the turtle doves was accepted of God equally with the young bullock (Lev. 1.).

As to the cup speaking of blessing to us, which we suppose is meant in your letter, it does indeed do this. It is spoken of as the " cup of blessing which we bless ; " but this is because it is the communion of the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10. 16). The blood is the pledge and seal of God's love to us, it is the evidence as to how far He would go to bless us. His whole thought towards us has come to light in it, as it has also secured for us in everlasting righteousness all that which His love purposed should be ours. None of these could have been apart from that blood, the giving up of His life in sacrifice, and this is our communion. The bread, bringing before us the " body "—the dead body of Christ—sets the responsible side before us, death passed upon Him *in our stead*, there we see the judgment of God against man in the flesh fully executed. In the Supper we are identified with this as well as with all the blessings that the blood has secured. The cup and the bread are one Supper.

(Other answers held over through lack of space.)

Notes and Comments.

(EDITORS).

A Time for Prayer.

THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER have always been the means by which the saints of God have found their way through the maze of confusion which the sin and self-will of men has created in this world. THEY WERE NEVER MORE NEEDED THAN NOW. We must hold fast the Word of God and contend for the faith more earnestly than ever because the great mass of the professors of Christianity seem to be taking the high road to the final apostasy at a headlong gallop. We must give ourselves to prayer more constantly because the social and industrial convulsions of the day seem to be threatening the conditions under which we are able to "live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." Papers on the former appear in these pages, and a few comments on the latter may be of use to those who are perplexed at the trend of things, asking what shall we do.

Let none suppose that God is indifferent to the state of things in this world. He is not only the Saviour of the souls of men, but He cares for them in this present life, for He is "a faithful Creator," and "the living God, who is the *Preserver* of all men, especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4. 10, N.T.). And in this connection, when distress and destitution seem ready to overwhelm the poor, as a result of the lawlessness of men, we may turn to God in prayer. We may pray for kings and for all in authority, that they, the powers which are ordained of God (Rom. 13. 1), may not bear the sword of authority in vain, but that they may have judgment and wisdom given to them, that the lawless passions of men may be held in some measure of check, for the sake of men generally, but especially for the sake of the household of faith—God's household—that they

may lead "quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." And as it is the poor that suffer first and most in these times of stress, we must remember that God's household is largely composed of such, for the Scriptures saith, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" (James 2. 5).

But such may exercise implicit trust in God, for He sits above the water-floods, and maketh the wrath of men to praise Him, and He is the "*Preserver . . . especially of those that believe.*" The Scriptures are full of comfort in this regard, so that the children of God need not "live in careful suspense [marg]. . . for your Father knoweth ye have need of these things" (Luke 12. 30). Prayer has its place in this connection, for we read, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4. 6); and, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (4. 19).

* * * *

There is no doubt but that things are moving at a rapid rate towards the time when no one will be allowed to buy or sell who does not receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 13. 16, 17). The principles of this terrible oppression are already in evidence in the great federation movements of the day, making it increasingly difficult for Christian workmen to follow their employment and remain separate from worldly and godless associations; but for the sake of the church there is that which hinders its full development. "The hindrance is still the existence of the governments established by God in the

world; and God will maintain them as long as there is here below the gathering of His church" (*J.N.D.*). If this is understood, even though we shall not expect peace nor yet stable institutions in the world that crucified the Prince of Peace, it will yield encouragement to prayer that the bulwarks of government may be well maintained against the inrush of the lawless one who will defy both God and man, to the end that "ours may still profess honest trades for necessary uses" (Titus 3. 14, marg.).

But the Scripture not only speaks of "that which restrains," but also of Him "who restrains now until He be gone" (2 Thess. 2. 5-7, N.T.). This is the Holy Spirit of God in the church, who will abide here until the rapture of the church, and who prevents, by His very presence in the world, the full revelation of Satan's plans in the man of sin. And so there will be maintained for us an open door for testimony to our Lord, a door which we shall readily find if we are simple and dependent.

But as we see the principles that shall then be ascendant showing themselves now, we know that the time is short. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. This thought should disentangle the saints of God from the world and unite them in heart and voice in crying, "Come, Lord Jesus."

* * * *

But if we are to pray aright we must do so, not according to our natural inclinations, but as directed by the revealed will of God. Our natural inclinations are always selfish, and would lead us to pray from a national or class standpoint, and to seek peace and prosperity for the country of our birth, and to be indifferent and sometimes even antagonistic to other peoples. Not so will the Word of God lead us, for "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the

bounds of their habitation." And in doing this He has displayed His tender desire for their eternal welfare, for the Scripture continues, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from any one of us" (Acts 17. 25-27). It may be that those heathen nations that had not had the glorious light of gospel are here specially in view, but the words are true for all, then and now. Now the gospel is going out towards all, and it is the will of God that prayers should be made for *all* men.

There are two great circles in regard to which we have to exercise the privilege of intercession—"all men" (1 Tim. 2. 1) and "all saints." This is the only distinction amongst men which is recognized of God. The saints are taken out from amongst all nations that they may form the one household of God, and the distinction between them and all men is a great and definite one; it has been made by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, the sanctification and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of the Father's house and the heavenly inheritance.

It is a distinction which, if recognized by the saints of God, will keep them from being involved in the social, industrial, and political agitations of the day. They will stand apart from the schemes of men, as Abraham stood apart from the cities of the plain, an intercessor upon the mountain-top with God for them.

There is a matchless dignity about one who is an intercessor for others according to the will of God, for he has become intimate with the thoughts of God, he is a friend of God, and while he holds apart from men in the clash of their contending interests he can look upon them with tender compassion and pray for their salvation. "For 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" (1 Tim. 2. 3, 4).

Devotedness.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

There are three ways in which true devotedness will show itself in Christians : (1) To the Lord's person, as illustrated in Anna. (2) In the appreciation of the fact of His death, as illustrated in Mary. (3) In devotion to His interest on earth, as illustrated in the widow and her mites.

FIFTY-FIVE is the retiring age for Government officials who work under the burning skies of India ; sixty for officials in this country. But there is no age limit for devotedness, and devotedness is the crying need of these days.

Himself.

Of this needed devotion we have a fine example in Anna (Luke 2. 36-38) ; she knew no age limit. In her time there were dark days in Israel. For four centuries no prophet had come among them with burning tongue to revive their hopes. There was no Shekinah glory in the temple. Things were indeed at a low ebb.

But Anna departed not from the temple. She had read with glowing heart the words of the prophet, "*The Lord, whom ye seek, shall SUDDENLY come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts*" (Mal. 3. 1) ; and for the fulfilment of this she looked and waited.

She was a widow of about fourscore and four years, yet she served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Day after day, month after month, year after year, she was found in the temple, waiting for the Lord. Dear, happy, devoted Anna !

What ecstatic joy was hers when Malachi's prophecy received a partial fulfilment—a sweeter fulfilment, if possible, than the time of its actual fulfilment, when the Lord shall come in a future day in discriminating judgment to set up His kingdom over His people ; for in anticipation of that great and terrible day, we read : "*Who may abide the day of His coming ? And who shall stand when He appeareth ?*" (Mal. 3. 2).

This coming was all of grace. A babe in Simeon's arms—the Sign of Isaiah's matchless prophecy—Emmanuel indeed, God with us ! What a moment of supreme joy for the long-waiting widow !

Aged though she was, she hurried out with the glad tidings to those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, and her devotedness is expressed in the beautiful words : "**SHE SPAKE OF HIM.**"

What a delightful sight for heaven ! What a theme was hers ! There is nothing like it.

* * * *

His Death.

It was but two days before the feast of the passover. The chief priests and scribes, outwardly orthodox, inwardly wicked hypocrites, professing to receive the words of Moses, yet rejecting Him of whom Moses spoke, were plotting to put Jesus to death. They would stoop to craft, they would suborn false witnesses, if only they could accomplish their devilish work.

Not far away—at Bethany—the Lord was sitting at meat in the house of Simon the leper. There was Simon, grateful that the divine word had dispelled the loathsome leprosy ; and doubtless Lazarus, raised from the dead by the same wonderful voice, and Mary and Martha, grateful sisters, who had seen the tears that ran down His cheeks in sympathy with their sorrow. Here was doubtless a picture of future and universal blessing. Yet that future could only be secured by His death. Little did the disciples understand the meaning of what lay before their Lord and Master. But devotedness is quick-witted.

Mary broke the alabaster box of

costly spikenard, and anointed the blessed person of her Lord. This ointment a Jewish woman treasured for the great event of her life—her marriage. The possession of it gave distinction to her, and its use was reserved for the most joyous day of her life. Mary, in effect said, "I want no distinction where my Lord has none. If He has a grave, my best shall go into His grave. I want nothing but Himself. His death will close earth for me." Blessed devotedness!

The disciples murmured. The ointment was worth three hundred pence, equal to over £9 of our money. Why this waste? Why not given to the poor? Ah! such murmurers really loved the poor but little, for they loved the Lord little. Who cared for the poor as Christ did!

But the Lord valued her devotedness, and wherever the gospel shall be preached this deed of hers shall be narrated. The Lord praised her, defending her from the complaints of those less devoted in memorable words. This was her reward: "She hath done what she could."

But note, her action was governed by a sense of His death and its import: hence its fitting character. Oh! that devotedness to the Lord might make us feel the chill of His rejection, the emptiness of this world that has no room for Him.

"Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,
With all thy boasted store;
We'd not have joy, where *He* had woe,
Be rich where *He* was poor."

* * * *

His Interests.

Jesus sat over against the treasury watching the people casting in their gifts in support of the temple worship.

He marked how the rich cast in liberally. They had abundance and gave freely and had plenty left. But His heart was moved with joy as He beheld a poor widow casting in two mites. It was her all—her living. His omniscience knew it, and He called

attention to it. What made her act thus? Was it recklessness? Nay, it was devotedness!

The temple was God's temple, His Name was there, and her heart was devoted to that to which His Name was attached.

How the Lord prized that act! As it were He placed the heaped-up offerings of the rich and wealthy in one side of the scales of the sanctuary, and the widow's two mites in the other, and lo! the mites go down and the heaped-up weight of brass goes up. How is that? They say that the emanations of radium are immeasurable and yet imponderable. The emanations of devotedness may be immeasurable, but they are the reverse of imponderable—two mites plus devotedness weighed more than that multitude of coins given carelessly by the rich.

And mark, the poor widow was not in the difficulty of having only a single coin, of having to give all or keep all. The sacred narrative tells us she had *two* mites, which make a farthing. She might have given one and kept one. But no, the Lord speaks of her in high praise: "She . . . cast in all that she had, even all her living."

We often hear of the widow's mite being given, generally an excuse for a paltry dole. But our Lord never spoke of "the widow's mite," but of "the widow's mites."

Christ has His interests on earth, for His church, His body is here. He is not indifferent to it, for He loved it, and gave Himself for it; and those who are truly devoted to Him will not forget this great fact, they will be prepared to spend and be spent for it because it is dear to Him.

* * * *

Oh for devotedness of heart to our absent Lord! We need say nothing about our service, our intelligence, our giving—all, all will fall into its right place and proportions if the heart is right, if devotedness is ours.

God Speaking in the Son.

(WILLIAM H. WESTCOTT).

(Continued from page 87.)

IN Christ God has come near to us, to delineate, in an active, moving Person, His own character, feelings, thoughts, purposes, yea, His own very nature. In a former paper we have seen this at the birth and baptism of the Lord Jesus; we now go on to His cross and resurrection.

His Cross (Mark 15. 39).

"When the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the SON OF GOD."

All the gracious and blessed ministry of Christ among men spoke out the readiness of God to bless. It told His ability to meet every form of need, it showed the versatility of His grace. It was Jesus who acted, but He was the transcript of God—the tangible, visible, audible expression of all that God is. He was not an optical illusion, failing of substance, as a reflection in a mirror; never did mirror reflect so faithfully the person standing before it as Christ reflected—or rather expressed—God. In every mirror the left is right and the right is left; and most of us are accustomed to remark how inaccurate the reflection of the eyes is to a second person looking on. But in Christ there was no inaccuracy and no disparity. He expressed God without defect, or loss of a single gesture, or accent, or manner. In the Son, God was speaking.

This, then, is the light in which we are now invited to consider the death of our Lord Jesus. We are to understand the language of the cross, the substance of God's communication to us in the Son when He was put there. Where all is so marvellous, and so infinite, we are sure to omit much; yet, if we remember our smallness, and

the greatness of God, it is little wonder if we do not easily grasp all He would show us. The defect, however, will not be in the showing, but in our seeing; not in His language, but in our apprehension of it.

In the first place God was speaking out *His love for men*. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Then, again, He was giving utterance to *His utter abhorrence of sin*, and exhibiting its infinite consequences before all worlds. The suffering Saviour was really forsaken when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was made sin for us, and God *condemned* sin in the flesh. His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and Christ *suffered* for sins—the just for the unjust. His soul was made an offering for sin.

Further, He proves to us that He is able to *make even the wrath of man* (and we may say the wit and power of Satan) to *praise Him*. David prayed (2 Sam. 15. 31), "O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." This was answered by making Absalom listen to the counsel of another. But man's wicked counsel to get rid of Christ was allowed to be carried out entirely, to its own defeat. "For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, *for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.*" What a comfort for believers to realize that God is greater than any com-

bination of men that can be against Him; even though there be behind them all the subtilty and force of Satan himself.

But in the cross of Christ there is the fullest declaration of *what God is* in all His glory *on the sinner's behalf*. For him death was met, its sting borne, its victory reversed. On his behalf the sins were collected by divine omniscience and laid upon Christ; the darkness gathered, the wrath fell, the storm burst, the sword awakened, the fire consumed. The Substitute from God drained the cup of wrath, exhausted the judgment, bore the curse, tasted death as the wages of sin, died unto sin. The heel of the woman's Seed was bruised by the serpent, but the serpent's head was bruised, and his power for mischief for ever brought under control. The grave was entered by our Lord, but it was that God might show us the way out of it by resurrection.

God has indeed spoken in the Son. Sin has been laid bare in its uttermost unloveliness, and in all its latent possibilities, and has met its utmost due. Hatred has risen to its highest height against incarnate love, but love has risen higher and has overflowed it. The river of God's grace, supplied through righteousness, is flowing over the barren place where Jesus died. If we would see the greatness of sin, it is there. If we would see the greatness of God who has put sin away, we see it there. But at what a cost! Lord Salisbury, at the news of the first defeats of British troops in the Boer War, set his face and said, "*We must see this through.*" Blood and treasure flowed, and gallant men died, and the widows and orphans remain to this day to prove at what a cost Britain "*saw it through.*" But the One who at His baptism seemed to say, "I will see the cause of the sinner through" had to lay down His own precious life, that God might reveal all that was in His heart and put our sin away. Truly

as we look upon the cross we may say that actions speak louder than words. That mighty action is indeed language from God. The veil was rent, the way from God to man was righteously opened by Christ's death; the soul approaching God by virtue of the blood of Christ finds no barrier now. The hand of man might indeed ignorantly renew the veil, and might ignorantly continue the sacrifices of old, as though God had not rent it, and as though Christ had not died; but there is now no need of renewed sacrifices. God Himself has opened the way in. As we gaze on Christ's death, and think of all its far-reaching results, we say with the centurion, "Truly this Man was the Son of God."

His Resurrection (John 20. 30, 31).

"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, THE SON OF GOD; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

We have had the testimony of angels in Luke 1. and 2.; the testimony of the Father and the Holy Ghost in Matthew 3.; the testimony of man in Mark 15.; and now, in John 20., the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. All concur in proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God.

But these last verses are said of Him when He had offered up Himself as a sacrifice, and when He had risen from the dead. By His resurrection God put the seal of His own approval on the work He accomplished by His death. The Holy One who, as Lamb of God, had borne judgment, had by His blood made atonement, and was now seen in resurrection in all the power and joy of acceptance before God, and of relationship with the Father. In what respect, we may ask, is there any language from God here? What may we gather in the way of communication from God by the resurrection of Christ?

Is it not in this, that the Lord had gone (as He told His disciples in chap. 14.) to prepare a *place for them*? He was yet to ascend to His Father and God, and to His Father's house, to complete the preparation (ver. 17); but are we not to interpret Christ's resurrection as indicating the place He had won for us? He had stepped out of the grave on to a platform of ineffable peace; but it was peace, eternally and righteously complete, which He had secured on *our* behalf. He said, "Peace be unto *you*." He was also in the energy and power of resurrection life, beyond all reach of death and judgment; but it was not for Himself alone: He breathed on His disciples and communicated His risen life to *them*. He stood in unclouded favour before His God—no question open, no cloud remaining, no judgment left; but it was that He might say, "My God, and *your* God." He rose in the fullness of His blessed relationship with the Father (ever true of Him as Eternal Son, but possessed of a new phase and a new character for Him in Manhood on earth), knowing the Father's inalienable affection to be on Him, but it was to make it all ours who believe upon Him, for He said, "My Father, and *your* Father." All that He took in resurrection He took not for Himself alone, but for us, that we might share it with Him. His place determines our place; every detail of it, so charming and blessed, is the detailed setting forth of our position and relationship and privilege before His God and Father. What He is as eternal Son remains His own and incommunicable, so that He must ever be pre-eminent; what He is as risen Man is shared in grace with us.

It is in this way that all is language to us. His position speaks. It tells us of what God has planned in His own mind, triumphing over all our sin, defeating Satan with an utter defeat, revealing His own glory, and setting us before His face as sons.

And He will bring all the sons to glory. All shall be consummated in glory. In John 20., though Jesus had not yet ascended, He said, "I ascend." He was going there into all the completeness of the position designed for Him of the Father. Will the purpose of God break down, then, as to us? No more than it broke down as to Him. Thus for the complete thought of God as to us, we need to turn our eyes higher, and still higher, even to God's own presence, to the Father's house on high, where we see Jesus, in all the blessed homeliness of that glory. By that position God is speaking to us, and telling us what is His determination as to every soul that believes upon Jesus.

This is the purport of the last two verses of our 20th chapter of John. "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"—that you may commit yourself unreservedly to Him "and that believing ye might have life through His name"—that you may understand that He makes you participator in His risen life before the Father.

All hail, then, blessed SON OF GOD! We have learnt in Thee what God is. Thyself art language to us; interpreting all that He is in His nature, all that He is in His triumph over sin, all that He is in His thoughts of blessing to usward. We thank Thee because He has drawn nigh to us in Thee, removing our fear, taking up our case, setting our once guilty consciences in divine rest by the one sacrifice of Calvary, and introducing us into the Holiest of all. There we learn in His own very presence the greatness of His grace, the blessedness of His love, and the infinite glory of the Object—even Thyself—who art for ever to engage us there. Revealer, Interpreter of God, in whom God has spoken to us, we worship, we adore Thee.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 14.

The Entry into Jerusalem and Attendant Circumstances.

IN Luke 9. 51, we see our Lord, after His descent from the Holy Mount, setting His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. All the teaching in LUKE from this point up to the cross may be read in the light of this declared purpose (see chap. 13. 22).

In chapter 19, He comes in view of the city, and this remarkable account of His final presentation in meekness to His own people follows. Isaiah 63. tells of a presentation yet future when the two terms "just and having salvation," omitted in MATTHEW's citation of Zechariah 9. 9, will be fulfilled according to His own declaration—"I that speak in *righteousness*, mighty to *save*." In the initiatory fulfilment in the Gospels the Lord shows His authority over man and beast in a striking way. He rides an *unbroken* ass's colt amid the shouting of the multitudes, and in defence of the act of apparent wrongful appropriation the disciples are bidden to say, "The Lord hath need of him." He speaks as King in His own land, thus manifesting perfect accord with the purpose of God for that moment to present Him as King to Zion.

In comparing the accounts of this scene, which we find in all four Gospels, it appears that many disciples were present from Galilee to keep the feast at Jerusalem (Luke 19. 37; John 12. 12). These had learned of the remarkable display of divine power at the grave of Lazarus (John 12. 18) shortly before, and were thus prepared to meet Him with the enthusiastic acclamations of which we read. These joyful cries were taken up by the crowds (Matt. 21. 9). So that on His arrival at Jerusalem MATTHEW, who always emphasizes the lowly grace of Jesus and His association with the despised places of the land (2. 23), tells us all the city was moved, saying "Who is this?" The multitudes reply, "This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." The natural feeling of the Galileans to appropriate the Prophet to themselves is evident, as in an earlier day they would

have made Him by force a king (John 6. 15).

In MATTHEW and MARK there is no sign that the Lord is not in His spirit in harmony with this scene of joyful enthusiasm, but in Luke 19. 39-44 we find important additions which enlighten us as to His estimate of the moral worth of what came under His eye. Replying to the remonstrance of the Pharisees, the Lord indicates that behind the exultant cries of the people there was a divine power at work which, were they silent, would find expression in the very stones of the street. At the same time the tears of the Saviour as He foresees the desolation of the beloved city make us conscious that He no more trusted this outburst of emotion than if His welcome had been voiced by the stones. Here, as elsewhere, LUKE exhibits a moral depth in his treatment of the history which is not found in MATTHEW or MARK. The purpose of the Spirit in MATTHEW is to present the facts as evidence of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and thus to attach faith to Jesus as Messiah. Hence, before the entry into the city is described, Zechariah 9. 9 is cited with the omission of the words already noticed. MATTHEW, in harmony with this purpose, gives also certain details after the cleansing of the temple not found elsewhere (21. 14-16). And again Scripture (Ps. 8, Septuagint) is quoted in a manner full of significance. Neither MARK nor LUKE refer to the prophecy; the former furnishes details almost always in the order of their taking place, in order to present an accurate history of the great Servant-Prophet.

All show how Psalm 118. 26 is taken up—"Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah." The first two Gospels add the Hosanna—save now—from the same psalm, but LUKE, omitting this, gives us "peace in heaven and glory in the highest"—a much deeper thought and not found in the psalm. It indicates the purpose of God for the present time, while the full

accomplishment of Zechariah 9. 9, waits for another day. Now peace in heaven is established in the person of Christ as the result of redemption (Col. 1. 20). Where Jesus is *there* is peace and glory in the highest.

MARK alone gives the blessing of the kingdom: "Blessed be the coming kingdom of our father David." The same Gospel also tells us that the cleansing of the temple did not take place till the day following the triumphal entry (chap. 11. 11, 15), the judgment of the fig tree intervening. The fig tree is the well-

known symbol of Israel under divine requirement, here found fruitless and set aside for ever. God will not again look for fruit from fallen nature. The curse pronounced is the only instance of power used for destruction in the long list of our Saviour's miracles.

In MATTHEW, and more fully in MARK, we find introduced His most precious teaching as to prayer. How suited this is to the Gospel which affords special instruction to the Lord's servants is plain and noteworthy.

(C.E.H.W.)

The Shadow of His Wings.

"*The shadow of Thy wings*" (Ps. 36. 7).

How great the rest that comes from the consciousness of being under the shelter of His wings, not merely as sheltering one from what is outside, but still more as assuring one of what His love is. The *strong quills* preserve you from dangers outside, but the nearer you are to Him the more you enjoy the *soft down*, and not merely

the quills of the wing. This is the home—the place of rest, and of cultivation of everything good and great.

It is the home that really forms every one. The homeless one must be more or less the heartless one. Home with Christ is a wondrous home; and when it is known, outdoor work of every kind really only contributes to the comfort of the home.

The Grace of the Lord.

We have His own word for believing that His grace is *sufficient* for us, as sufficient for us as is the atmosphere for the birds that fly therein, and as is the mighty ocean for the fish that live in it. But we must remember that His grace is also *indispensable* to us; spiritual disaster will assuredly overtake us if we neglect it. The other day I saw a group of beautiful ferns in a grotto from the roof of which was continually distilled a cool, clear, crystal

rain; those ferns were perpetually fresh and beautiful, because their leaves were constantly bathed in the refreshing drops.

I observed to a friend who was with me that if we would be kept fresh and green in our spiritual life, and a source of refreshment to others, we must be constantly laved and bathed in this grace of our Lord, grace which, thank God, is as *inexhaustible* as it is indispensable and all-sufficient.

The Love of the Lord.

I was greatly struck by a conversation I overheard some years ago.

A Christian lady said to a well-known servant of Christ, "Nothing but love will keep us."

He replied in one word, "Whose?"

The lady had referred to *our* love to the Lord—he referred to the *Lord's* love for us, and he was right.

Oh! to dwell on His love, and thus there will be answering devotedness to Him.

A. J. P.

Some Remarks on Justification.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"Being justified freely by His grace" (Rom. 3. 24).

"Being justified by faith" (5. 1).

"Being . . . justified by His blood" (5. 9).

"**H**OW can a man be just with God?" is a living question. It was asked in the earliest years of man's career of sin, and it still abides in all its seriousness, though the devil is making gigantic efforts to drive it from the region of the thoughts of men by forcing "myself and my neighbour" of New Theology and socialism to the front. It is the supreme question, for God, the Judge of all, must have the final word about all things and every man.

It is certain that no man can be just with God on the basis of what he is naturally, for righteousness is not inherent in sinful men, and it is written, "*There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Rom. 3. 10). Nor can any man gain righteousness by his own works, for it is also stated that "*by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin*" (ver. 20); and again: "*No man is justified by the law in the sight of God*" (Gal. 3. 11). It is enough to quote these passages from the Scripture of Truth, they are so plain that no comment upon them is called for, and the man who refuses to bow to them is guilty of the crime of making God a liar.

When a man owns that these words of God are true of him, when he ceases from self-justification, and shuts his guilty mouth before God (Rom. 3. 19), and is ready to hear what God will say, then does he learn that God is "*just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" (ver. 26), and that it is "*to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*" (4. 5).

Not only does this wonderful de-

claration break as the music of God upon his astonished ears, but his eyes are opened, and he sees that God displays His very righteousness in bringing this about. It is good news, and a blessed sight to the sin-burdened and conscience-stricken soul. It is the good news of God.

There are three means by which men are said to be justified—*by grace*, the source; *by blood*, the channel; *by faith*, the way of appropriation. It is as though one said, "We obtain our water from the great reservoir in the hills;" and another, "We obtain our water from the water main;" and another, "We obtain our water from the tap." All three are right, for there must be the source, the channel, and the way by which it is appropriated.

By Grace—THE SOURCE.

Justification is by the grace of God. It comes to men according to His desires for their blessing, and not according to their deserts, because of what He is and not because of what they are. God looks for no reason in them why He should bless them, He has found all the reasons in His own heart. He justifies freely by His grace.

By His Blood—THE CHANNEL.

But a righteous basis must needs be found from which God can dispense His blessing; there must be a channel by which, in perfect justice, justification may come unto man—for God must be just. Mercy may not triumph over truth, nor peace be proclaimed apart from righteousness. Every attribute of God must be in harmony in all His ways.

The death of Christ has provided this righteous basis and channel. He was delivered for our offences, and every claim of divine and eternal righteousness has been met by His sacrifice, a sacrifice infinite in its value and eternal in its results. The Scripture speaks of the "precious blood," and well may each one who has proved its value take up the word and sing :

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Jesus, God's own Son ;
Telling that the work is finished,
All is done.

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus
Shed on Calvary ;
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for me."

By Faith—THE WAY OF APPROPRIATION.

If we revert to our illustration, we may get help on this point. The reservoir amid the hills and the great main to the city were provided and laid apart from our assistance. It was the thought and skill of others that provided these things, and the water, so needful for life, is brought into our very houses without our lifting a finger in the matter. But all this would be in vain as far as we are concerned if we did not turn the tap and appropriate that which has been provided for us. If a man refused to avail himself of the provision made for his need he would die of thirst, and that in spite of the fact that all the water in the mighty reservoir was at his disposal behind the insignificant tap in his house.

It is even so in regard to this great blessing. The wonderful reservoir from whence it comes, and the equally wonderful channel along which it flows, have alike been provided apart from our interference. We had no hand in the matter. God's thought and wisdom and power have been in exercise, and He has brought the blessing *unto all*. It is within the reach of every man, but, alas ! there are thousands who, in spite of this, are going into hell-fire for ever. The reason is that they will not

appropriate by faith that which God's grace has provided for them.

But if we believe God, believe that He is as good as His gospel proclaims Him to be, and that He has raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, proof to all that the work is done, sins atoned for, and righteousness satisfied, we shall discard for ever our works as a means of righteousness and rest confidently and in faith in what God is, and what Christ has done. And then shall we rejoice in the fact that through our Lord Jesus Christ "ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS, FROM WHICH YE COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW OF MOSES" (Acts 13. 39). Yes, "justified from all things." Cleared in the sight of God from every charge of guilt, as clear, indeed, of all charge of guilt as is our Lord Jesus, who, as our substitute, was delivered for our offences, but who has been raised again for our justification.

* * * *

Faith made Perfect by Works.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. . . . But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2. 17-20).

It appears on the face of it as though this passage were in direct contradiction to the doctrine of Romans 3. and 4., but it is not so, the teaching of both fill their own place perfectly in structure of the truth of God.

It will be observed that the writer of the Epistle is dealing with what "a man may say," and he declares, and rightly so, that *works* and not *words* are the supreme necessity ; they should be brought into evidence. To illustrate : Suppose that I possess a piece of land and decide to have it planted with apple trees. I instruct a nursery man to supply a kind suitable to the land in question. He brings a load of young bushes all labelled with celebrated names, and assures me that

in a few years' time I shall be able to gather heavy crops of fruit. I wait, and wait, but no sign of life appears; the trees yield no apples in spite of the labels that they bear. The dealer said they were apple trees, and he may continue to say it, but of what use are his words, they are vain words, the trees are dead; they have not, nor can they, *justify* his assertion with regard to them.

But suppose again that I have that land planted with trees, and that as the spring breaks forth after the winter storms, and, amid the singing of the mating birds, the life-sap begins to flow from root to branch of my trees, forming and forcing out into the genial sunshine the beautiful apple blossom. Now I have hope, and I watch with eager interest the development of the fruit, until at last the autumn sun kisses the cheeks of my apples red and brings them into full maturity. Now I have apples, and I do not need any label on my trees, nor any grower to assure me that the trees are really apple trees, for the apples themselves settle the question.

But I could not have apples without an apple tree, for they do not grow upon

thorn bushes, and if there are apples everybody knows that there must be apple trees somewhere. The tree is the *faith*, the apples are the *works*. Living faith brings forth living works. But the faith must be there before the works can appear. The works are the outward and visible evidence of the inward and unseen faith. Abraham was justified by works, we read, when he offered his son upon the altar. And when he did that "the scripture was fulfilled which saith Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

But mark it well: the faith was there probably forty years before the fruit of it reached maturity. God knew that it was there and imputed righteousness to him at once. The offering of Isaac was, on Abraham's part, the fulfilling and the justification of what the Scripture had said so many years before.

Solemn and searching words are these from the Epistle of James, and every man of us should test himself lest he be a vain, empty, wordy, dead professor instead of a true believer showing his faith by his works.

"Unto Caleb . . . [Joshua] gave . . . the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron" (Josh. 15. 13).

The very stronghold of the Anakim became Caleb's possession and habitation. . . . The point of peril was the place of possession. This is the obvious lesson—and one always exemplified in history. It is where special risks are encountered, but met in the courage of faith, that the mightiest victories are won; and there we find our richest heritage and privileged possession; our former foes become our food; our dread is changed to our bread.

"[Jesus] said unto [the lepers], Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed" (Luke 17. 14).

Faith begins as experiment, and ends as experience. It begins with confidence, and ends with thanksgiving.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58).

There is no vacation in the vocation of the saint.

Bible Study.—Jude.

(EDWARD CROSS).

Foreword.

STANDING as it does among the writings that complete the canon of Scripture, and with its earnest appeal for faithfulness in regard to the final scenes of the apostasy that bring about the judgments, swift and sweeping, with which this present age will end, the Epistle of Jude is of peculiar interest and importance. In it the saints are called to "contend earnestly" for the faith as once for all delivered to them, but which is here given up, abandoned, alike in precept and in practice.

Everything is suitable in its place. The babe needs milk; the full-grown, meat. Song becomes the sanctuary, and they that dwell in His house will be still praising Him; while for those, again, who are in affliction and distress, He says, "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations." The labouring man needs the daylight to urge him forward to his work; while the gentle shroud of night, nature's soft touch, invites his slumber when his toil is o'er. There are scriptures that tell of the beginnings of things, and there are scriptures that tell of the close. The soul is first established in grace, and the end is glory. The company is gathered, and the bonds of faith and fellowship are formed for the service of the sanctuary above, and for the relationships of daily life below. The church is set in her divinely appointed place, according to the heavenly glory that has been purposed for her from the beginning and the ways of God that conduce to its fulfilment, in the realization of the counsels of His will, reaching from where He was All to where He will be "All in All." Each scripture has its own place, and each is perfect there, as the whole is composed of all its parts, fitly joined together and compacted in a unity of effect, which results from a unity of purpose, depending again on the unity of the divine mind, one, in what is essential to itself, triune, in the accomplishment of its designs.

Equally important as the rest, and instructive in its place, is this Epistle,

which pictures to us the closing scenes of an apostasy, which, finding its counterpart in times anterior to our own, characterizes the final phases of what was once the profession of Christ, but which ends in denying Him altogether, and refusing every vestige of His authority and His rights, in whatever form set forth.

There is much apparent similarity between 2 Peter and the Epistle of Jude. But while each speaks for the most part of the same people, and of the same time, and the language of both is much alike, yet each deals with the subject before him from his own point of view. Peter is occupied with the government of God, exercised on behalf of His people, whereby He makes all things subserve their blessing and His own ends; and, while he speaks of false prophets, "false teachers," and "scoffers" of "the last days" with their "damnable heresies" and their "pernicious ways," he ploughs his way, so to speak, through all these scenes, leading on the Christian hope, first to "the day of the Lord," when righteousness will triumph over evil, and then to "the day of God," when righteousness will dwell peaceably in a new heaven and a new earth, to be disturbed by sin no more.

Jude speaks of the same people and the same time, but views them rather as actors than as teachers of these evil things. The one is but the complement of the other. The preaching and the practice are of one kind. But while Peter shows the way in which God deals with it all, Jude sets before the saints the way in which they should act, and appeals to them to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered" to them. His subject is the apostasy.

The Epistle of Jude is one of those books called "antilegomena," i.e. it was for a time refused by some a place in the canon of Scripture. This was principally because of the supposed reference by Jude to apocryphal writings. Yet by others it was always recognized as

inspired; and truly it seems to carry on the face of it the divine impress as distinctly as any other part of Scripture.

Other writings of the N.T. that were reckoned among the "antilegomena" are Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and the Revelation: but the objections made to these books were finally overruled, and "the complete canon of the N.T., as commonly received at present, was ratified at the 3rd Council of Carthage (A.D. 397), and from that time was accepted throughout the Latin church, though occasional doubts as to the Epistle to the Hebrews still remained" (*Westcott*). Thus did God patiently wait on man's weakness, or his will, for these scriptures were equally inspired at the beginning as at the end.

The O.T. too has fared roughly at the hands of man; and among other parts of it not the least so, the books of Genesis and Daniel. As to the former the following pertinent remarks of Dr. Bettex will interest the reader:

"Instead of extending time and pains in studying the products of this field of labour (natural science), and instead of winnowing truth from error, the corroborated from the merely speculative elements, and sternly gainsaying and refuting science where it draws false conclusions, yet not without exulting in the majestic, august horizon, which it unfolds to the mind, the majority of Christians, after a few remarks fired off at random regarding the fallibility of human knowledge, or to the effect that even scientists do not know everything, prefer to betake themselves to the domain of pure edification and the sphere of the affections, where they feel less exposed to the unswerving logic of facts, the rigid mathematics of the universe. As if knowledge too were not instructive, and the creation of the world no less a divine act, or less worthy of observation, than its redemption. Does not the law of Moses rest on a divine conception of nature? Does not David seek edification in the inspection of God's world as well as of His law? And do we not see how Jehovah Himself, when He descends in the whirlwind to convince Job of the inadequacy of his self-extenuation, points him in the sublimest imagery to creation as so great a revelation of divine power and wisdom that, in view of such a

spectacle, man must shut his mouth? What, again, is the subject of prophecy, that prophecy which we are not to treat lightly or despise? Chiefly, no doubt, the accomplishment of the promise which God had sworn to Israel to fulfil; but in the second place the redemption of nature and the renovation of a divine universe. With such a restoration the book of Revelation is brought to a close."

Again, "'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' This is the granite portal through which we pass from eternity into time. Here stand the pillars of Hercules, the frontiers of human exploration, beyond which rolls and surges the illimitable, fathomless ocean of the Godhead, blessed for ever, and independent of all creatures. . . . When, therefore, the critics would lull us asleep with the assurance that the credibility of the Bible does not depend on the truth of the first chapter of Genesis—or, in other words, that God's book begins indeed with a few small lies—but that is of no consequence, for further on there is much in it that is beautiful and true—we enter our 'caveat,' and warn them to keep their hands off the Ark of the Covenant. . . . The inspired Word proceeds, therefore, to depict in vast lapidary style the grand epochs of creation. 'The earth was without form and void, and darkness shrouded the deep.' A testimony in thorough accord with the voice of Science."

In his preface to "Lectures on Daniel the Prophet," Dr. Pusey says: "This has been, for some thirty years, a deep conviction of my soul, that no book can be written in behalf of the Bible like the Bible itself. Man's defences are man's word; they may help to beat off attacks; they may draw out some portion of its meaning. The Bible is God's Word, and through it God the Holy Ghost, who spoke it, speaks to the soul which closes not itself against it. . . . A writer who seems to think exclusive adherence to definite truth the great antagonist to the mind of Christ, would have us agree to differ in every particle of faith, yet to hold ourselves to be one in one 'common Christianity.' Like the Pantheon of Old Rome, everything is to be enshrined in one common Temple of Concord, not of faith, or minds, or wills, but of despair

of truth. Nothing in this new school is to be exclusively true, nothing is to be false. No words are to have any exclusive meaning. Every one is to decipher the old inscriptions as he likes, so that he do not obtrude that meaning as *the* sole meaning. 'Everlasting' is to one to mean 'lasting for ever,' to another, for what seems to be 'an age,' as men say; 'atonement' is to one to mean *only* 'being at one' with God, somehow, by imitation, or admiration of the 'greatest moral act ever done in this world;' to another, if he likes, it is to be that act of God's awful holiness which human thought cannot reach; to one the Bible is to be, if he wills, 'the Word of God,' so that he allows his neighbour an equal chance of being right who holds that it 'contains' somewhere 'the word of God,' *i.e.* a revelation of no one knows what, made, no one knows how, and lying, no one knows where, except that it is to be somewhere between Genesis and Revelations, but probably, according to the neo-Christianity, to the exclusion of both. We are to recognize together that God the Holy Ghost 'spake by the prophets,' yet not so as to exclude their being fallible in matters of everyday morality. The authority of Jesus is to be respected; yet not so far but that modern critics may be held to know more than He, our God."

Bold words indeed, and true. How sorrowful, then, to find him elsewhere pulling down with the one hand what he built up with the other, and taking a prominent part in leading on the apostasy by throwing his readers upon the interpretation of the Fathers for the understanding of the Scriptures, on the plea, not that the Fathers were superior to the Scriptures, but that they were nearer to the time when the Scriptures were written, and therefore superior in intelligence to us.

Scripture, according to Dr. Pusey, is "reverenced as paramount;" but in what way he explains as follows: "The Old and New Testaments are the fountain, the Catholic Fathers the channel, through

which it has flowed down to us. The contrast, then, in point of authority is not between Holy Scripture and the Fathers, but between the Fathers and us. They are not "equalled, much less preferred, to Holy Scripture, but only to ourselves; *i.e.* the ancient to the modern, the waters near the fountain to the troubled estuary rolled backward and forward by the varying tide of human opinion, and rendered brackish by the continued contact with the bitter waters of the world."

How seductive this is and false is well shown in the following remarks: "The most honoured of the Fathers were men whose minds were impregnated by the superstitions of Pagan religion, and the subtleties of Pagan philosophy: are we to assume that nineteen centuries of Christian religion have so enfeebled or depraved the intellect of Christendom that we are less capable of understanding the Scriptures than they were? They were 'near the fountain' of Christianity, forsooth; yes, but they were nearer still to the cesspool of Paganism. And inquiry will show that it is to this cesspool that we should attribute every perversion of the truth which to-day defaces what is called the Christian religion" (*Sir R. Anderson*).

Quite true; but beyond that, the principle of referring to the Fathers in this way denies at once the necessity at first for, and the sufficiency at all times of "the Spirit of God which we have received," "the unction from the Holy One," that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. "The anointing which ye have received of Him abides in you," says the Apostle, "and ye need not that any man teach you," as though the Spirit of God had lost His power or the Word of God its sufficiency (*cf.* 1 Cor. 2. 12; 1 John 2. 20). It is a very plausible and subtle evil indeed; a Judas' kiss, by which, while professing to honour the Scriptures, it betrays them; while placing the lions at the gate, it first draws their fangs, and then hands over the key of the fortress to the foe.

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46. 10).

Luther has finely rendered this, "Be silent unto God, and let Him mould thee." When we are too active we try to

fit God into our moulds, but when we are yielded like the plastic clay God can shape us according to His will, and work in us and through us His highest plan.

Symbols of Christ.

In all the realms of God's kingdom, from the lowest to the highest, we find symbols of Christ. In the lowest we have Christ represented by the *Stone*, the Rock—the emblem of strength, of firmness, of never-changing stability: the foundation which cannot be moved. But He is also like the plant. And this in its highest and noblest form, for He is the *Vine*.

But He is symbolized forth in a higher kingdom than that of plants. He is strong and royal as a lion; He is meek and gentle, attractive and patient, "made for suffering," like a lamb. But yet higher we rise. He is called "the Son of Man;" for what-

soever is truly human (according to the thought of God)—wisdom and love, strength of purpose and gentleness of submission, concentration in God and expansive benevolence to all, work and energy, and meditative rest and festive sabbath—all that is truly man finds in Him its perfect exponent and fulfilment. And, above all, He it is, in whom and by whom all things were created and are upheld, the Lord of glory, the Son of the Father. The Father beholdeth all things in Him; and we, to our unspeakable joy, with adoring hearts and light-filled eyes, may also learn to see all things in Him.

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23. 6).

This is a confident statement, and there are many who would probably judge it to be a very presumptuous one too, if they heard it to-day. They would argue that it would be more becoming and perhaps less boastful to say, "I *hope* that I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," for, say they, "nobody can be sure."

Well, if to "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" depended upon our conduct or faithfulness to God it would be presumption and the very height of conceit even to hope, for we could not expect any blessing upon that footing; and, instead of dwelling "in the house of the Lord for ever," banishment from that house under the everlasting displeasure of God would be our justly deserved portion.

But the psalm begins with "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD," and if we understand it aright, we shall see that, beginning as it does, it could not close in any other way; it would be incomplete if it did. The Shepherd has charged Himself with the safety of the sheep. He must lead His flock safely

home, so that if the "Lord is MY Shepherd" I will dwell "in the house of the Lord for ever." It is not a question of the faithfulness or strength of the sheep, but of the faithfulness and strength of the Shepherd; and what truly saved soul can doubt either one or the other! His faithful love has been put to the test.

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

"The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." His strength also has been proved, for He passed down into death's stronghold, and there He rent the jaws of the lion as one would rend a kid, and He has risen again from the dead in the triumph of a mighty victory, and it is the hand that gained the victory, and delivered the sheep from him that had the power of death, which is the devil, that leads them gently and securely to the house of the Lord.

Everything depends upon our Lord Jesus Christ, that GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, so that every one who can truly say "the Lord is MY Shepherd" may also say, with glad confidence, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The Advocate with the Father.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

1 John 2. 1.

IN considering the subject of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus in a previous paper, it was recognized that there is another aspect of the wonderful service that His love for His own engages Him in while they pass through the world. It is that which is presented to us in the text at the head of this paper: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The priesthood of the Lord Jesus, as was seen from the Epistle to the Hebrews, is with God and in exercise for us that we may not sin. It is to maintain us in spite of weakness here in consistency with a heavenly calling; meeting us, in every form of testing and exercise and conflict with the opposing forces of Satan, with His powerful succour and precious sympathy, that we might hold fast the confession of His name, and be free for the occupations of the heavenly sanctuary which He has opened to us by His perfect sacrifice. Priesthood does not contemplate sin in the people of God, save for the moment when Christ was both priest and victim at the cross; being founded normally on the perfection of the sacrifice by which sins were removed from before God for ever, and therefore from the conscience of the believer. Yet, as James says, "in many things we all offend;" if there were no provision, then, for failure and sin in the believer with all our humbling experience of how possible this is, how terrible it would be.

Now, it is just here that in infinite grace the Epistle of John brings in the office of Christ as Advocate. Let us weigh well the way He is presented, in connection with what has gone before to which the Apostle refers. Addressing the whole family of God, after his manner in the Epistle in the endearing term of "children," he says, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin

not." He refers, of course, to what has gone before in chapter 1. From verses 1 to 4 the subject is "the Word of life." It is Christ personally who, being the life, is also the Word of it, for it was perfectly manifested in Him to those who were with Him when He was here on earth. They had seen that eternal life which had been in Him with the Father expressed in Him, and were able to declare it to us; that we might be brought into the deepest privileges of such a life fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, that our joy might be full.

The necessary conditions of this fellowship, then, came out in the message of the last six verses, wherein we learn the nature of the life. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (ver. 5). This is what characterizes the life and all that flows from it. Three things belong to the Christian position (ver. 7): (1) We walk in the light—the light is God perfectly revealed and known; (2) we have fellowship one with another in that light; (3) and the blood of Jesus Christ, the efficacy of which is declared that it cleanseth from all sin, is the basis of the whole position, without this it would not be possible for sinners such as we to be in it at all. The effect of the light is to bring out our sins in confession (ver. 9), at the first turning of the soul to God, for a forgiveness of non-imputation that can never be repeated, and afterwards, if failure comes in as between the child and his Father, for a Father's forgiveness and the removal of His chastening hand.

The positive side of the position with God having been given in these verses (5, 7, and 9), verses 6, 8, and 10, bring out the mere profession of the enjoyment of it without reality. Note "if we say" three times over. The Christian is thus enabled to judge the

pretension of any who assume to have the privilege of fellowship with God and walk in the darkness; who say that they have no sin, being self-deceived and without the truth; and who say they have not sinned and make God a liar.

Thus the great truth of the Epistle is set before us: eternal life and its wonderful privileges, and what is true of that life as characterized by the nature of God. For God in His grace would set us down before Him to instruct us in a life we possess in the Son of God and what its nature is. Nor could anything more fully confirm our possession of it, for we could take in no thought of a life we did not partake of. We shall not find here the fact that, besides this life, we have, as long as we are here, the flesh with which we were born in the world, and which is characterized by its source: this is abundantly established from other scriptures. Elsewhere we have learned how God has dealt with it in the death of His Son, and that it is ours to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive to God as Christ is. In this Epistle there is but one nature contemplated, and that is God's own nature, of which we partake as born of God.

All that has gone before in chapter 1. is brought to bear upon our souls in chapter 2. that we sin not. But he immediately adds, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours [Jews] only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Thus, even where the sin of one of His is in question, the love of the Lord Jesus does not fail, nor does He leave us to ourselves, but He takes up our case and acts for us according to the deep necessity of it. For this is just the force of "Advocate"—the same word in the original as "Comforter," applied to the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel. The meaning of it is difficult to convey in one word in English; it means one who acts for us in the circumstances, whatever they

may be, wherein we have need of him. Thus it is to be noted "Advocate with the *Father*." The sin of the believer does not change the relationship in which he stands with the Father. We have changed our places as criminals at the bar of God in conscience for that of children for ever with the Father, and never, even in the worst failure, shall we be disowned as such. This makes sin in the Christian a far more heinous thing, for it is committed against all the light and relationship and love into which we have been introduced. But there is the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin, declared in Psalm 32., that we may know it. There is no more conscience of sins, according to Hebrews 10., for those who have believed God's testimony to the perfection He has found in the finished work of His Son. That is, the conscience never again connects sin with judgment to come, but always with a judgment that *has taken place* in the death of Christ and is for ever past. The conscience rests where God rests, and He remembers our sins and iniquities as such no more. But the accuser might seek occasion to tempt the fallen one to think he could never call God his Father again, and it is in this very connection that John is inspired to present the Advocate with the Father, that we might know the relationship to be immutable. And besides, it is "Jesus Christ the righteous." He is there in all His own personal perfection, and "the propitiation for our sins," in all the abiding and unintermittible efficacy of His work, so that no charge can stand against those whom God has justified.

The momentous consequence is that the question of sin is removed from the whole domain of righteousness and imputation, of which there can be no question, to the far deeper one of holiness and communion, which is always absolutely interrupted by any activity of the will of the flesh; this blessed service of the Lord as Advocate is to restore that communion. It does not

mean that we have to go to Christ to intervene for us. "If any sin, we have an Advocate." He acts from Himself to bring about in us all that is needed for restoration.

We must now look a little into the character of that wonderful action of His grace. The object of it is to bring us to detect and judge in ourselves that wherein we have failed—to confess our sins that we may know a Father's forgiveness and be restored to the joy of communion with Him.

This precious service of the Lord for us has been illustrated for us by His ways with Peter in the Gospel of John, to which I turn. In the symbolic washing of the disciples' feet (chap. 13. 1-11) the principle of it is given. I say symbolic, because of the Lord's words to Peter (ver. 7)—"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." There was clearly something far deeper in it than the mere lesson of humility that lay on the surface of the feet-washing. But verse 1 shows us first the new position that the Lord was taking that gives its character to all the subsequent communications—"Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." Now we have to go through the world, out of which He has departed, but we are not forgotten in all our need by Him. For "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." In that blessed and unfailing love of His was found the spring of His action that follows. In the marvellous grace of our Lord Peter was allowed to hear of a love beyond all our thought, and to hear of this love on the very night in which he was to deny that he ever knew Him. But who is it that undertakes the cause of those so beset with danger in such a world and liable to fail, who would even stoop to take their feet into His hands to wash them? It is none other than He into whose hands the Father has given all things, who had come from God and was now going to God. But what light is thrown on the

defilement we so easily, and, alas, too often carelessly, contract in our walk that it necessitates the action of the Son of God to remove it.

Peter resents the humiliation of the Lord in stooping to wash his feet till he learns that it is essential to his having part with Jesus where He was going. And thus we learn that while His wonderful service for us includes recovery from the effect of sin and the soul's restoration, it goes much further, revealing to us a love that is so great that cannot bear a cloud between us and Him, and provides for the removal of whatever would intercept the light and joy of His presence. Peter thought he could not have too much of such washing. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

This leads the Lord to distinguish between two applications of the water, which everywhere in Scripture represents in type the Word applied in the power of the Spirit. The first is that by which we are born wholly anew and made partakers of a life and nature of which the Spirit is the source, and in which we are clean every whit. This can never be repeated. The second is what the washing of the feet implied, namely, the constant application of the Word to preserve or deliver us from what would hinder blessed nearness to Him in the Father's presence. Nor are we left to apply it to ourselves: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." We see it as we follow out the ways of the Lord with Peter in His unutterable grace to His poor servant, and to each of us. No warning led Peter to suspect the danger he was in from confidence in himself. He thought that a warm heart could carry Him through anything for the Lord—"I will lay down my life for Thy sake." But nature's energy must fail in such a path as that, and he succumbs before the taunt of even a servant girl, denying repeatedly that he ever knew the Lord. "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," as Luke records (22. 61). That

look broke his heart. It told him of a love that knew no change. He knew that he was forgiven even before the special message from his risen Lord (Mark 16. 7), or the personal interview that was accorded him (Luke 24. 34 ; 1 Cor. 15. 5). But communion was a very different matter, and had yet to be restored. There was still the sense of distance, and a void in his heart that none but Christ could fill. He goes back to the old occupation once so willingly surrendered for Him, leading others with him. It was a profitless night, but made way for the blessed Lord to intervene in His power and grace, and lead Peter into the reality of what he could not understand when the Lord had washed his feet. "Jesus stood on the shore." The net was now well filled and all brought to land, where already a meal was prepared for them by the blessed Lord. When that was over "Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than do these?" How gently and yet irresistibly the question would recall his boast, "Although all shall be offended yet will not I" (Mark 14. 29). Who had failed so appallingly as he? What can he say? To whom can he turn but to the One so sinned against? "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee." But it is to be noted that, as is clear in the original, Peter does not content himself with using the general word for love that the Lord employed ; but the word for the special love of a friend, "Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee," and so again when the Lord repeats His question.

Three times he had denied Him, and three times the question is repeated. It was painful work, but the conscience must be deeply probed and the root of his failure laid bare that the recovery might be thorough. The third time the Lord puts the question, but with a touch of inimitable grace He adopts Peter's word, already implying that He trusts him—"Simon, son of Jonas, art thou attached to me?" Peter could not but feel it, but under that

all-searching eye fixed on him in such love he could only answer, "Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I am attached to Thee." The work is done ; the defiled feet are washed, and the Lord can confide to Peter His most precious interest here, His lambs and sheep to shepherd and to feed. He also gives him, in the power of communion fully restored, to take the path in which once he had broken down so utterly. He should go to death for the Lord.

Thus we are permitted to have a precious sample of the action of the Advocate in the case of the sin of His own, though, as we have seen, the washing of the feet must not be limited to that case. It is the Lord who sets Himself to apply His Word to the conscience and heart, to detect and bring to light for us what it is that has broken communion or hindered the enjoyment of His presence, that we may confess it and judge ourselves. The moment that point is reached He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse from all unrighteousness—that is, from everything inconsistent with the relationship in light into which we have been brought with the Father and the Son.

How blessed the revelation of these distinct aspects of the service of the Lord Jesus for us, whether as Priest with God or as Advocate with the Father ; and the ways of His unfailing grace and love to maintain us in the enjoyment of a heavenly relationship, or to restore, when we have failed, to fellowship with the Father and with Himself, which is the most precious privilege of them. "Having loved His own which are in the world, He loves them to the end"—till we shall need the assurance of it no more. But oh ! how it should make us abhor the defiling thing, whatever it may be, which has needed the service of the Son of God to deliver us from it and its effects. "He desireth truth in the inward parts," but has to work to produce it, that with a heart that has nothing to condemn us we may have confidence before Him.

"Hold Fast!"

(W. BRAMWELL DICK).

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 11).

IN every department of life, industrial, political, religious, and international, there is unrest and upheaval. Every day furnishes fresh cause for excitement, and we know not what a day may bring forth.

The Spirit-taught believer, while by no means indifferent or unconcerned, is not disturbed by this state of affairs, for he has "THUS SAITH THE LORD!" as his unerring guide, and God has said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him" (Ezek. 21. 27).

So that, by what is taking place, his attention is directed to the coming of Him whose "right it is," and he is cheered by the fact that He has said, "Behold, I come quickly." The mass of men do not know this, while many Christians who mentally assent to it in reality deny it, by co-operating with those who are engaged in the futile attempt to bring about A MILLENNIUM WITHOUT CHRIST.

Men are uniting their forces in a gigantic endeavour to improve conditions here, leaving the hereafter—if indeed they believe in such—to take care of itself. The activity of Satan, working through those whom he has blinded, is manifest on every hand. Authority is disregarded; divine institutions are lightly esteemed; and the masses are eagerly grasping after power, believing that with them lies the solution of problems that have thus far passed the wit of man, and that never will be settled "until He come whose right it is." The great fact of sin, as the cause of all misery, is ignored; the ugly fact that death is here is as far as possible kept out of sight and mind. Concurrently the deity of Christ and

the truth of the Atonement are denied, and if the existence of God be admitted, it is assumed that He has left it to His creatures to remodel the world according to their own ideas.

Thus men seek to-day to assure themselves that *they* will banish war and introduce an era of peace; so reform the criminal population that prisons will be no longer necessary; reduce suffering to a minimum; place every person on an equal footing; and, in short, so revolutionize the conditions under which humanity exists that they will bring in a new earth, and leave God to deal with heaven Himself.

In the religious world commotion exists also. "The faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) is being abandoned by whole bodies of professors who accept in lieu thereof a virtually Christless religion.

All this would be depressing indeed were it not that we have the "sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1. 19). God is over all—blessed for ever. If the overturning process is going on, He is behind it. He can use any or all of His creatures for the carrying out of His purpose. Angels, men, and demons are alike at His disposal.

We might as well try to stem the tide as stop the overturning, yet with quiet confidence we await the issue, and look forward to the time when He who sitteth in the heavens will laugh (Ps. 2. 4) when He will blow upon all men's pretensions and their fanatic schemes, and will bring to the front Him "whose right it is." Not only does He possess that right because of who He is, as the eternal Son of the eternal God, but He has established His title to it as Man by His perfect submission to the will of God, and by His death and His resurrection out

from among the dead. By that death and resurrection He laid the basis of that which He will accomplish when He comes. Then He will rule with equity, war will cease, poverty will disappear, suffering will end, death will be no more, every enemy will be laid low, "all taint of sin shall be removed," and He will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). So that THE MILLENNIUM WITH CHRIST in the seat of authority will lead up to an eternal day of unclouded bliss, such as we have attempted to describe, in which God shall be absolutely vindicated, His name shall be eternally glorified, and His triumph will be complete. While we await that day—to be preceded for us, of course, by His coming for us (see 1 Thess. 4. 13-17)—we have, in our text, His own gracious word of encouragement: "Hold that fast which thou hast." This may not appear to be very heroic; we do not engage in propaganda either for or against the movements of the day in which we live; neither by word nor act do we seek to further or defeat the schemes of men; but, realizing that we are passing through a world to which we do not belong, from which we can derive nothing, and to which, as a system dominated by the god of it, which is the devil, we can contribute nothing, we seek to respond to the call of our absent and rejected Lord to "hold fast." We must hold fast Christ as we have learned Him (Eph. 4. 21). Not fancies or fables, not the reasoning of the human mind, but the truth. What is truth? Christ. Where is He? Cast out of the world; refused both by the religious and political leaders of the day, He is in seclusion at the right hand of God. Through Him we are forgiven and justified; by His death we are reconciled: in all His acceptance who is risen from among the dead, we are now before God; associated with Him and blessed in Him, we are "partakers of the heavenly calling." All this He bids us "hold fast."

This was what He appreciated as He took account of the church in Philadelphia. They had "little strength," yet they seemed to realize their heavenly origin, mission, and destiny. Doubtless scorned by the world, treated with contempt by the mere religionists of the day, and probably persecuted by those who professed to be Christians but declined the narrow and—as they may have thought—inactive path, the Lord could and did say to them, Thou "hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name" (Rev. 3. 8). They esteemed it an honour to be associated with the absent and rejected Christ; and if to the natural man their lot seemed to be unenviable, theirs was the immense distinction of having Christ's approval. There ever have been such people in the world, thank God, they constitute HEAVEN'S NOBILITY.

The seven thousand in Elijah's day who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19. 20) were holding fast. Just prior to our Lord's first coming, there were those who held fast; they feared the Lord and "spake often one to another" (Malachi 3. 16); Simeon and Anna, (Luke 2). who waited for Him and spake of Him—held fast.

In 2 Samuel 23. we have the list of David's mighty men, and if we were asked to write their epitaph we should write across that scroll of honour, "They held fast." Let a reference to only one of these brave men suffice. In verses 11, 12 we read of Shammah holding "a piece of ground full of lentiles" against a troop of the Philistines. It might seem an insignificant thing about which to fight; the odds appeared to be against him, and had he quietly surrendered it did not seem that the loss would be serious. Had any of his comrades been near they might have counselled that, as in their judgment there was nothing vital at stake, he should compromise, and failing that submit. Such advice Shammah would have met with an emphatic "No. The ground is David's, and, in his

name, I hold it for him." As it was, his comrades were not near, but what was not witnessed by man was observed by the Lord. He honoured Shammah's faithfulness, the Philistines were discomfited, the ground was held, and the hero's name is enrolled in imperishable fame. What was the secret of this? Faith in, affection for, and fidelity to David.

"Our Lord is now rejected and by the world disowned," and while that is so we may expect everything here to be shaken. Men are giving up God; Christendom is throwing overboard the Bible with all its precious teaching; nor will matters be different "until He come whose right it is." Meanwhile it is ours to hold fast that which we have, the truth in all its divine integrity and glorious simplicity. It may involve our being nicknamed by

the world, pushed aside by the religious systems of the day, that seek place and power in the world, and cold-shouldered by those of our fellow Christians who do not love the reproach of Christ; but the compensation will be the approval and commendation of our beloved Lord. What He values more than aught else is a heart that is true to Him, and the mark of devotedness is to "hold fast." It is only for "a little while"; soon we shall hear His summoning shout and rise to meet Him on the glory cloud; then the journey ended, the conflict over, we shall, with all His saints, dwell in His presence and delight in His love through God's eternal days. Till then may we have grace to heed His Word; "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

The Alabaster Box of Ointment.

There is no waste in the services of the heart or the hand that worships God, be they as prodigal as they may. "All things come of Thee," says David to the Lord, "and of Thine own we have given Thee."

The cattle on a thousand hills are His, and the fulness of the earth. But Pharaoh treated Israel's proposal to worship God as idleness, and the disciples challenge the spending of three hundred pence on the body of Jesus as waste. But to give the Lord His own, the honour, or the sacrifice, the love of the heart, the labour of the hands, or the substance of the house, is neither idleness nor waste. It is chief work to render to God.

Renouncing Egypt is not idleness, nor is the breaking of a box of ointment on the head of Christ waste; though we thus see that a certain kind of reckoning among the children of men, and even at times (and that too frequent) among the saints of God, would charge these things as such.

He knew when to cast away, and when to keep. "Let her alone," He said of the woman who had been upbraided for breaking the box of spikenard on Him; "she hath wrought a good work on Me."

But after feeding the multitudes He would say, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

This was observing the divine rule—"There is a time to keep, and a time to cast away." If the prodigal service of the heart or hand in worship be no waste, the very crumbs of human food are sacred, and must not be cast away. He who vindicated the spending of three hundred pence on one of these occasions, on the other would not let the fragments of three loaves be left on the ground.

It would have been waste, it would have been profaneness to have thus abused the food of life, which was God's gift; and Jesus would not let the fragments lie on the ground. "Gather up the fragments that remain," He said, "that nothing be lost."

These are but small incidents; but all the circumstances of human life, as He passes through them, be they as minute as they may, are thus adorned by something of the moral glory that was ever brightening the path of His sacred, wearied feet. The eye of man was incapable of tracking it; but to God it was all incense, a sacrifice of sweet savour, a sacrifice of rest, the meat-offering of the Sanctuary.

The Will of God.

(JAMES GREEN).

(Continued from page 77).

IN John 6. the Lord says that He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but *the will of Him that sent Him* (ver. 38), which He did in His life and death, but He further says :

" This is *the Father's will* which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day " (ver. 39).

The Father had found in the Son the safe depositary of all His things. Creation, government, inheritance, priesthood, kingdom, and prophetic office had all been dishonoured by man, for in everything entrusted to him he had utterly failed. But now all these things are committed to the Son and are absolutely safe in His hands, and in them all will God be glorified.

Following on this the Lord speaks not of things but of persons, saying :

" And this is *the will of Him that sent Me*, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day " (ver. 40).

It was necessary, of course, that He who had the right to do this vested in His own person should lay the righteous basis for its accomplishment in His death. This He has done, and we know Him now as raised up from the dead, from which unassailable position He wields a power which is unopposable, for the giving effect to all the Father's will in the eternal blessing of all that believe in Him.

In the operation by which God raised up Christ from the dead He has established a resurrection condition, in which He can display Himself in the full blessing of His heart, and surround Himself with the multitude of the redeemed, and rest in the love which must fill everything with its own

blessedness. Such is God : delighting to bless, and providing at the cost of the death of His own Son, and by the power of resurrection wrought in Him, the means and the place by and in which the perfection of that blessing may be secured.

In the *Epistle to the Romans* we learn that the will of God has been to meet ungodly sinners in their deep need by the death of Christ, to justify them through faith in Him, to bring them into peace with Himself and place them in Christ, where no condemnation can reach them, and where nothing in the wide creation can separate them from His love.

The *Epistle to the Colossians* goes a step farther and shows how the will of God has operated in raising Christ from the dead, and believers with Him, so that, " if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation, old things are passed away : behold, all things are become new " (2 Cor. 5. 17, N.T.).

The old things connected with man in the flesh have passed from before God ; the believer can know that his sins are gone ; his old nature, sin in the flesh, is condemned ; his standing as a man in flesh has vanished ; his status as belonging to this world is ended ; he is not to account of himself as living in it, he is dead with Christ, and his life is hid with Christ in God. This being so, he is to seek the things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and to set his mind on these things, and not on things on the earth ; " the will of God " has set him in this resurrection place with Christ risen.

The *Epistle to the Ephesians* unfolds " the good pleasure of His will " (chap. 1. 5) ; in verse 9 " the mystery of His will," and in verse 11 " the counsel of His own will." In " the good pleasure of His will " He chose us in Christ before

anything was created, that we should be in perfect suitability to Himself, "holy and blameless;" that we should be this before Him in all the blessedness of love, and in the highest character of spiritual blessing "in Christ." Not only so, but that the relationship of His own Son as man should be ours, and all this in order that God may find His own satisfaction and pleasure in giving such blessing, and appointing us to this place of sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself. Such is "the good pleasure of His will." What a God and Father is ours, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having set us in this position of wondrous blessing, He counts upon the interest of our hearts, in the purposes of His will in relation to the world to come, concerning the Christ in whom He has set us; so it is His "good pleasure" to make known to us "the mystery of His will," a secret never revealed to creature intelligence before; a purpose purposed in Himself before the ages of time; that in the administration of the fulness of times He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens and which are on earth. His will is to give to Christ absolute headship in that day of display, and to bring everything into unquestioning subjection to Him: all things shall utter His praise. He who in the eternity of His being was before all things, by whom all things were made, for whom they were created, and by whom they are upheld, shall receive all in the glory of His Manhood; at His name every knee shall bow, and all in heaven, earth, and under the earth shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. All shall yield to the supremacy of a Man, and that Man the Son, the One in whom the fulness of Deity dwells, until as Man He yields up the kingdom to God even the Father, that in the full joy of what God is the universe of bliss may subsist to the eternal ages.

But yet a deeper secret of infinite grace has been brought to light, a

revelation of the inner working and means by which God will effect this display of the headship of Christ. We read in Ephesians 1. 11: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the *counsel of His own will*."

This is of such personal interest to Himself that it is referred to not only as the counsel of His will, but of His *own* will. What, then, is the particular portion which belongs to the saints whom the Apostle designates by "we?" That it is only of these he speaks is clear from verses 12 to 14; those who, whether Jews or Gentiles, believe the Word of Truth, the gospel of their salvation, and have in consequence been sealed with the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. These are the saints who, from Pentecost until the Spirit is taken away at the coming of the Lord in the air, form what is everywhere known in the New Testament as the church, or assembly of God.

A few words describe the wonder of the place in which the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has placed this family. He who names every family in heaven and earth, and places them around Himself in blessing, has given to the church the nearest place that His divine counsel and love could devise, putting all things under the feet of Christ, He has given Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). The body and bride of the Christ has been formed out of Him who loved the church and gave Himself for it; it is bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh (chap. 5. 25-30). It is united to Him by the Holy Ghost, and so one with Him, that there might be the capacity and intelligence in it for the full expression of Himself, and the executive of every thought of Him who is Head of His body. It is also the object of all the deep affection of the bridegroom's

heart. His eye shall for ever find delight in the perfect comeliness He has put upon it, the fadeless beauty of the bride adorned for her husband. The world to come shall witness the unveiling of this secret of the heart of God, the counsel of His "own" will. It shall see the church as the channel through which all blessing shall flow from Him who is the spring, the source, the fountain of life, shall see it reflecting all the moral beauty of the Christ, and filling the whole universe with the perfume of the love she knows so well, the love that was revealed in all its fulness to her, by His journey from the highest glory to the very dust of death, that He might raise His bride up with Himself and seat her on His throne.

In Colossians 1. 27 the Apostle speaks of the riches of the glory of this divine secret, in the present time, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

In his own soul a light above the brightness of the sun had shone, eclipsing every earthly glory by its heavenly brilliance; and filled with the greatness of that light, he would fain have communicated its radiance to every saint, even to as many as had not seen his face in the flesh, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God . . . in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2. 2-3).

This mystery, in the unity which the Spirit has formed, exists for God, abolishing every earthly distinction, limited by no human boundary, including every saint of every clime under the whole heaven, and excluding by its very nature and character everything to which Christ has died. It abides unchangeable; and every heart that has learnt from God the blessed secret of His will treasures with deep joy the bright ideal that so soon will be displayed.

God has been pleased to reveal the very centre of the working of His will in grace, in the place He has given to the church in Christ its Head; and this wondrous truth is to affect the believer in every walk and relationship of this present life. He is to know and stand perfect and complete in this revealed will of God, filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding, in order that he may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit for His praise and delight. It is only as we know the greatness that is in the Head that we shall in any measure understand what the body is as the complement of Himself; only as we are enlarged in our affection to Him shall we see the wonder of the grace of God, which stayed not at the safety of the redeemed, but united them to Christ by the Holy Spirit, having put all things under His feet and given Him to be Head over all things to His body the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; that so might glory be brought to God in the church by Christ Jesus, not only in the world to come, the millennial day, but unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen (Eph. 3. 21).

In conclusion we may say as to the practical effect of such knowledge, that seeing that Christ has given Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father, our desire must be to walk in separation from the spirit and course of that age of which Satan is the God and prince (Gal. 1. 4), and to yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him in intelligent service (Rom. 12. 1).

The time must be redeemed (Eph. 5. 16, 17), and the ordinary duties of this present life lived in the light of the will of God; those who are called to serve earthly masters may do so as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6. 6), and not with eye service as men-pleasers; for

His will is our sanctification, the setting apart of spirit, soul, and body to Him, that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men but for His pleasure. Every circumstance of joy or sorrow may be received with thanksgiving from the loving hand of our God and Father, as His will in Christ Jesus concerning us, as a detail of the great plan that is conforming us to the image of His Son. From hearts filled with a deep sense of His love will ascend the triumphant word: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8. 28).

In the desire to do His will the written Word will become indeed a light and lamp to us, the one sure and certain guide through the dark labyrinth that the will of man has formed professedly in the name of Christ, but in which He has no place. Our place with Him is outside the camp, bearing His reproach, where His shame is borne indeed, but where the God of peace makes perfect "in every good work to do His will, working . . . that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Heb. 13. 21).

Blessed, thrice blessed, is the path of His will, where His ear is ever open to,

and all the resources of divine power are at the disposal of the soul that abides in Christ. Not a transient passing joy, not a thing of a moment. When the world has passed and its lust, when its faded pleasures are but as the dream of a night vision, still in those scenes of heavenly joy the doer of the will of God shall abide for ever.

May the greatness of the work and person of our Lord Jesus Christ fill our hearts with delight and our lips with praise; may the perfect nearness into which it has pleased Him to bring us as sons to His Father draw forth the adoring worship of our hearts; may the revelation to our souls of the eternal secret of the mystery of God bow our knees to the Father of glory, as with wonder we contemplate the unsearchable riches of His wisdom. And may it so command our whole being that the prayer "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" may be more realized in our individual lives and our collective responsibilities. That thus as we wait for the day of glory that shall be displayed at the revelation of Jesus Christ, the affections of our hearts may be undividedly set on Him whom, having not seen, we love, in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we may rejoice in the blessedness of the salvation that has set us free to walk with gladness of heart, in the blessed pathway of the will of God.

"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25).

"Nearness to Christ would keep us from sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart, and would give us a feeling as to, and an interest

in, the whole church of God, for Christ can love nothing less.

"Then I shall refuse to own anything that is not the bride of Christ, but be always ready to own anything that is the bride of Christ." (J.N.D.)

Still to my yearning soul
New strength impart,
Sunshine or cloud can only lead
To where Thou art,

Control and keep me, Lord,
In touch with Thee,
That daily I to Thy great love
Responsive be.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 4.

(H. J. VINE).

The Throne. The Golden Nail.

THE predictions of the second section of the first part of Isaiah are both striking and stirring. In the first section of this part of the prophecy we have found the truth, which gives us an understanding of this that follows. It is the Virgin's Son, whose name is Emmanuel, who shall "sit upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice for ever." He is the divine explanation of the wonders here unfolded. The many and mighty overturnings of empires and kingdoms in these remarkable chapters are to make way for Him. As we remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, *raised from among the dead* (2 Tim. 2. 8), all will be clear and plain to us.

The glorious government of Christ, with its great, widespread, peaceful, and rich blessing, shall surely come. He shall sit in divine and judicial right upon the throne; but thanks be to God and our Father for the grace which has *already* made our glad hearts to rejoice in Him, before "that day" of His kingdom glory which has drawn us to Him during the time of His rejection, when Messiah is cut off and has nothing. It is an unspeakable privilege and honour to be allowed to "*suffer with Him*" now, before we "*reign with Him*" then, when in regal splendour and mighty majesty He shall worthily fill the throne. He came to His own, but Israel did not receive Him. He was in the world, but the world did not know Him. Some have received Him, and right is theirs—theirs only—to take the place of the children of God, for such are born of Him.

The Throne.

Chapter 16. 5 directs us to what is immediately before the mind of the

Holy Spirit in this section. "*In mercy shall the throne be established: and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David.*"

But there are great obstacles in the way. There are proud and princely powers of profanity and wickedness which dispute the establishment of this throne, therefore "*the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers*" must be broken (14. 5). And for this purpose God will muster the armies of His wrath and prepare the weapons of His indignation (chap. 13.). The world powers must give way. The Lord Jesus must be enthroned in right and might. The oppressor, and Babylon the golden city, must cease. Babylon is the oppressor. It was Babylon politically which oppressed God's people Israel. It is in principle religious Babylon which oppresses to-day. In both ways, therefore, it must be overthrown, to make room for Christ and His own; for Christ and His earthly people Israel, and for Christ the Son of God and His heavenly assembly. Then shall multitudes mourn aloud, "*Babylon is fallen, is fallen!*" (See Isa. 21. 9, and likewise Rev. 18. 2.)

Others must also be brought low! Palistina must be dissolved! Proud Moab be stricken! (14.—16.).

A mercantile power will seek to aid in the restoration of God's earthly people to their land (18.), but the effort will fail of final success.

Egypt and Ethiopia are shaken (19.—20.), but it is deeply interesting to notice that when our Lord Jesus Christ rules with authority and power, Israel shall be "*third with Egypt and with Assyria*, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be EGYPT MY PEOPLE, and ASSYRIA THE WORK

OF MY HANDS, and ISRAEL MINE INHERITANCE" (Isa. 19. 24, 25).

Before that day, however, as we have said, there must take place the great and important changes spoken of in this section. Mighty mountains must be overturned! High hills shall be cast down! Great governments and lesser shall crash to their fall! These prophecies of widespread destruction might well appal us did we not gaze upon them from a quiet and strong fortress, the Lord Himself being our "Refuge from the storm" (25. 4). He keeps "in perfect peace" those who trust alone in Him (26. 3).

In chapter 24. the Holy Spirit describes the final dissolution, in the midst of which the saved shall sing, as they see the majesty of the Lord appear, glowing with glory and splendour. "*Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down. . . . Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. . . . The earth is clean dissolved . . . the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard*" (vers. 1, 17, 19, 20). "*From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs. Glory to the RIGHTEOUS ONE!*" (ver. 16). Listen once again; how loudly swells the joyful song! "*They shall lift up their voice, they shall SING FOR THE MAJESTY OF THE LORD*" (ver. 14). The brightness of His majesty will be so glorious in its splendour that we learn from the last verse that "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Right worthily will our blessed and adorable Saviour fill the throne of this world's government in that day.

It is no wonder that chapter 25. follows with an outburst of "*praise,*" and 26. with a "*song,*" and that 27. ends with "*worship.*"

If the glory of our Lord and Saviour is so great in connection with the earthly throne, human language must

necessarily fail to describe that which the assembly shall share with Him above, when all things in the heavens, as well as upon the earth, shall be headed up in Him, who is the Christ (Eph. 1.). Oh that we might be strengthened mightily of the Holy Spirit, according to the riches of the Father's glory, so that, as He who is the centre of all the glory dwells in our hearts, through faith, we might be able to take firm hold of the breadth and length and depth and height; and know, too, that which is even greater still and more precious than the wonderful glory, THE LOVE OF THE CHRIST—the love of the One who is the Head and the centre of all, the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge.

The Golden Nail.

There could be no entrance to, or understanding of, these scriptures apart from the truth concerning Him who is the Seed of David and who has the "key of David."

To those who keep His word and do not deny His Name, amid the ecclesiastical breakdown of this present day, as described in Revelation 2. 3., the Holy and the True, who "has the key of David," promises, "because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

It is only in Revelation 3. 7, and in our section (Isa. 22. 22), that we read of this "key" being in the immediate possession of One "*who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open.*"

And it is that which the Holy Spirit gives us in Revelation which enables us to appreciate the right and rich value of our discovery in Isaiah 22.

Eliakim carries the key of the house of David here. His name means "*whom God will raise up,*" and he plainly points on to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God has raised up, to

secure all "the sure mercies of David," the promises connected with David's Seed. He is robed and strengthened, and the government committed into his hand, and he becomes a father to the people (ver. 21).

Those who are addressed in Revelation 3. have "a little strength," but here we are told in verses 23 and 24 that we have One on whom we can rely in the fullest possible way, for He is fastened as a nail in "*a sure place*." The nail might be all that it should be, but it must also be fixed in a firm spot, if that which is entrusted to it for support is to be secure. This golden nail, which we behold here, is also "a glorious throne to His Father's house" (ver. 23). He is also the One who has "the key," as we have seen, and is therefore none other than Jesus Christ raised from among the dead. He is indeed set in "*a sure place*," in the very glory of God, His Father's house. The children of God, do indeed find Him

worthy of all their trust; but it is also declared that "all the glory of His father's house" is likewise entrusted to Him; all securely hangs on this golden nail of divine providing. There can be no giving way or breakdown here, though all else is shaken. Even the type gives way (ver. 25), but the glorious Antitype, our risen and glorified Saviour, remains. To Him, the Son, it is said, "THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER." Soon our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who died for our sins, whom we trust now, shall be publicly manifested, in marvellous majesty, crowned with many crowns, decked with many diadems.

"Thou art coming, crowned Saviour!
Not the second time for sin;—
Thou art coming, throned Saviour!
Bringing all the glory in.
All Thy Father's house, its glory
Hangs, by sure behest, on Thee!
O the sweetness of the story!
Saviour come! We wait for Thee!"

(To be continued.)

"His Name shall be called Wonderful."

We need not be astonished at the strange misconceptions and grievous errors into which men fall who are trying to understand Jesus as they understand other historical men. For the name of Jesus is "Pele," Wonderful, Enigma. His person, His character, His life cannot be explained by the ordinary rules. They refuse to be classified under the ordinary categories. He is the great Miracle, the Eternal in Time, God and Man. He is not even in His humanity intelligible, except on the territory of revelation.

From the Jewish Scriptures we must learn what is meant by his being the Son of David and the Son of Abraham—what the words "Son of Man" imply, and the word "Anointed," "Messiah," of whom Moses and the prophets spake. For the history of Jesus does not begin with His birth in Bethlehem. The first verse of Matthew sums up the Old Testament history. His goings

forth are from old. He who understands not the election of Abram, the exodus of Israel, the Angel of Jehovah, the types of the tabernacle, the high priest, and the sacrifices, the meaning of the shepherd-king, the son of Jesse, and of the sure mercies of David, must find insuperable difficulties in the life of Christ. All attempts to understand Jesus Christ separate from the Old Testament are must unphilosophical, and can tend to no satisfactory result. For Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of Moses and the prophets. He is not the Christ of history, but of a special history—the divine history of Israel. True, He is the Light of the World, He is the Desire of all Nations; but He is all this because He is the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, for salvation is of the Jews. The gospel narrative is like a high tableland, but we cannot be spared the ascent from Genesis to Malachi.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

Preaching to the Spirits in Prison.

C.E.B.C. writes

"Asking for some help on 1 Peter 3. 18, 19, and 4. 6, as an acquaintance of his reasons from these verses that men will have another chance of salvation after death."

Even if this passage taught that our Lord after His death went to preach to the spirits of the disobedient Antediluvians, *which it does not*, it would give no warrant for any one to hope for another offer of salvation after death, for only the sinners of Noah's day are in question. If the passage did teach that Christ went to preach to those sinners, we might well ask why they were singled out for this special favour and not those of Sodom, for instance. The former had a faithful witness amongst them in Noah, the latter an unfaithful one in Lot. And why was not every sinner who died in his sins from Adam's day to the death of the Lord included in this supposed fresh offer of salvation? For mark it well, only those "which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah," come into the passage.

But we would further ask, Why do men in this day want another offer of salvation? Is not the glorious and gracious offer which God is now making sufficient for them? Is it not good enough? The truth is that they do not want God and His blessing, they prefer their lusts and pleasure, and their own ways rather than His will; and the devil, whose easy prey they are, is deluding them into a false peace by the hope of another chance after death. And this accounts for the popularity of "larger hope," "millennial dawn," and kindred doctrines, they are devil-inspired and suit well the unregenerate heart of men. Let none be deceived, the gospel of God concerning His Son is the best that God could offer men; He has been at an infinite cost that He might offer it righteously; it is His *best* and His *last* offer to all those who hear it. After this there comes the judgment—"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, and the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 8, 9). And again, "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (chap. 2. 12).

These are solemn words, giving warning to all whom it may concern, and wise is the man who takes heed to them.

The interpretation of 1 Peter 3. 18, 19 is plain: it was Christ who was preaching in Noah in those distant days while the ark was preparing. The eleventh verse of the first chapter of this same Epistle confirms this, for there we read that it was the Spirit of Christ which testified in the prophets.

The teaching of chapter 4. 6 is equally clear. The Epistle was written to Jewish believers, who were accustomed to think of God as judging the living—here they are told that the dead will also be judged. They are not to be judged as *spirits*, which would have been the case if the gospel had been preached to them while in the disembodied condition, but as *men in the flesh*. Responsibility is attached to life here in the flesh, and to those who are now dead the gospel was preached when they were alive and thence their responsibility and judgment accordingly. In every age God has given a testimony to men, and in this testimony His readiness to bless and a way of salvation has been declared, those who have rejected this testimony have died without hope, without mercy, and without excuse, and their judgment will be according to the testimony sent to them.

A paper on these scriptures appeared in the August and September, 1910 issues of "Scripture Truth," to which we refer you.

Will all Christians be caught up at the Coming of the Lord?

W.E.T. writes:

"Is there any warrant for saying that not all Christians will go at the coming of the Lord as described in 1 Thessalonians 4. 15-18 and Hebrews 9. 28? Some teach that only those who are watchful and waiting for His coming will go."

There is no warrant in Scripture for such a thought as is here expressed.

"The dead in Christ" and "we which are alive and remain" in 1 Thessalonians 4. take in the whole church, to which every truly saved person in this dispensation belongs. If every believer is not to be caught up to the Lord, according to this passage His church would be incomplete, and He could not "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27). The marriage of the Lamb could not take place in heaven (Rev. 19.) if part of His bride were not there.

Looking for Him is the characteristic attitude of the church, His bride, for "the Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Rev. 22. 17).

Our place as belonging to the church and in the Father's house, whither we shall go at the coming of the Lord, is all of grace and according to God's eternal counsels, and not according to our faithfulness at all, and to teach that to which our correspondent refers is to display a lamentable ignorance of the truth as to the church, and the counsels and grace of God.

"Holy Spirit" and "Eternal Spirit."

J.W.L. inquires:

"Why the Holy Ghost is put forward in Hebrews 9. 8, and not God or the Lord, and why in the fourteenth verse of the same chapter His title should be changed to the eternal Spirit."

Hebrews 9. 8 clearly shows that, in the

types and shadows of the old dispensation, the Holy Ghost was speaking to men, and every inspired word with regard to these types and shadows came from Him, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The minds of the Hebrews were to be turned from the shadows, which themselves were used of the Spirit to teach that by them there could be no access to God, to what was living and vital, the "better things" of which this Epistle speaks. The Spirit is shown in this Epistle to be the Speaker in each of the three great divisions of the Scriptures: the Psalms (see 3. 7), the Law (see 9. 8), and the Prophets (see 10. 15).

In verse 14 the better sacrifice by which access to the Holiest is now made manifest is brought into view; "Christ, through the *eternal Spirit*, offered Himself without spot to God." The Holy Spirit is spoken of as eternal in connection with this offering, because of the infinite and eternal efficacy of it in contrast to those types which were imperfect and temporal. And the vitality and power and greatness of it is evidenced in that it was offered through the eternal Spirit in contrast to the offerings made by men, and the service of the tabernacle which are here spoken of as "dead works." How beautifully does this verse bring the three Persons in the Trinity before us—"The living God," "Christ without spot," and "the eternal Spirit."

"That I may win Christ."

O let me live my life of witness here
With eyes uplifted and with eager soul;
And may no earth-born cloud or selfish fear
Intrude to hide from me the heavenly goal.
Shine bright before my soul,
O Christ, my heavenly goal.
Let things behind from mem'ry fade away,
Let no reluctance clog or cool my zeal.
For heart with constant courage girt I pray,
To press toward the mark, through woe or weal.
Shine bright before mine eyes,
O Lord, my heavenly prize.

(J.T.M.)

CORRECTION: In January number of "Scripture Truth," p. 17, first col., line 3 from bottom, after "Worthy art Thou," insert (Rev. 4.), and same page, second col., line 12 from top, for (Num. 18. 22) read (Num. 18. 23). The A. V. reads, "The levites;" the Heb. has, *halēvi hū*, the levite he, himself.

"Whose I Am."

(JAMES HOYD).

THINE, Lord, am I, thro' grace divine, which sought me
 When far I wandered on my wilful way;
 Thine thro' the blood, Thy precious blood which bought me;
 Thine in Thy sovereign love: Thine come what may.
 Thine body, soul, and spirit, Thine for ever,
 By ties which neither death nor hell can sever.

Thine, Lord, am I. Worthless the gift I offer,
 But Thou hast pledged Thy word to welcome me.
 What for such mercy could the creature proffer?
 What compensation render unto Thee?
 Behold me at Thy feet, bond-slave for ever.
 From Thee no adverse power my soul shall sever.

Long with Omnipotence have I been warring,
 Now brought at length to see my sinful state;
 I to my very self am an abhorring,
 But not to Thee, all-powerful Potentate,
 For Thou hast pardoned, and my soul for ever
 Rests in those bonds no creature might may sever.

Could I have found in sin the satisfaction
 My soul was seeking I had scorned Thy grace;
 For, not for me had holiness attraction,
 Riot I ran with all the rebel race.
 But Thou hast bound me to Thyself for ever
 With cords of love not even death could sever.

Thine, Lord, am I, when on my way is shining
 The sun in all his majesty and might,
 And even when the day star seems declining,
 And the blue dome is bathed in clouds of night.
 Thine thro' life's changes, joys and griefs for ever,
 In light from which no noxious cloud can sever.

Thine, Lord, am I, when confidence seems shaken
 In everything in which my soul had trust;
 Thine when defamed, when friendless, and forsaken,
 Thine tho' this dust return again to dust;
 Thine, only Thine, in life or death for ever.
 Me from Thy love not e'en the grave shall sever.

Thine while the warfare light with darkness wages,
 Weak tho' I be and craven to the core;
 Thine while the bruit of battle hotly rages;
 Thine when the fury of the fight is o'er;
 Thine in the rest of God, and Thine for ever
 Where comes no foe my soul from Thee to sever.

Thine, where no evil thing can ever enter
 Tumult to bring into that holy calm;
 Thine, in the glory of which Thou art Centre;
 Thine, where Thou raisest the eternal psalm;
 Thine in the Father's house, in love for ever,
 Where comes no foe Thine own from Thee to sever.

Christ's Priesthood.

(J. WILSON SMITH).

"We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4. 15).

IT is only in the Epistle to the Hebrews that Christ is definitely spoken of as Priest—"the High Priest of our profession;" but, if intercession belong to that office, as it surely does, we read in Romans 8. 34: "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."

Mark, His intercession is His present exercise in heaven, as the result of His death and resurrection. These, completed to the glory of God and the settled peace before Him of all who believe (in present justification and filial relationship), furnish the ground of this precious intercession—of Priesthood.

By no means does intercession add to our security as believers. That is assured already; nor does it move the heart of God toward us, as though we needed reconciliation. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5. 10). The death of the Son of God, sent of the Father in infinite love, effected our complete reconciliation; the life of that Son, in present glory and power, secures our salvation from every menace.

We start our Christian course as reconciled, and made secure for ever, by that which has been done for us in the death and resurrection of the blessed Lord; but we have to pursue that course in conscious weakness and dependence. We need an arm on which to lean and a heart as faithful as it is kind in which to confide day by day.

This we have fully in our great high Priest. His intercession is active for

us before God; and His succour and sympathy are continually realized by His tried and tempted people here below.

If the Spirit makes intercession in us with groanings which cannot be uttered, so does our faithful Lord intercede for us on high.

Little we know how indebted we are for those intercessions!

Little did Peter appreciate that his Master was praying for him, so that, when the temptation came, his faith should not fail; or how that intercession was answered when, having failed, he "wept bitterly." His faith, thus, was kept in life, though, in order to learn his lack of dependence, he himself was allowed to fail.

"If any man sin," we read in 1 John 2., "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

It is advocacy with "the Father" because relationship is supposed, and confession is made to the Father on the part of the offending child, so that his offence is forgiven, and he is "cleansed from all unrighteousness." Advocacy is therefore subsequent to intercession. This is for sustainment, that is for restoration, so that communion may be full and unclouded. Advocacy is distinct from intercession, which properly has to say not to sin or failure, but to infirmity and need.

Hence we are told to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy [pity] and find grace for timely help" (Heb. 4. 16). A more lovely expression could not be found for the tried and needy pilgrim than "the throne of grace." It signifies the omnipotence of compassion—pity all powerful!

The words are derived, I gather, from

chapters 1. and 2. In chapter 1., having made expiation, Christ sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; while, in chapter 2., He is presented as a merciful and faithful high Priest. Hence we may speak of a mercy that is majestic, and of grace enthroned! And all this for those who feel their own personal inability for one step of the way.

Is not such living compassion predicated in John 13.-17.? We have the feet washed in 13.; "another Comforter" in chapter 14.; slavery exchanged for friendship in chapter 15.; "good cheer" in face of a hostile world in chapter 16.; and the most wonderful intercession in chapter 17. Surely we may discover all this in the present priesthood of our Lord. And were not His "learning obedience" when here below, His "strong crying and tears," and His death itself His qualifications for that office? Did He not reach perfection by the things He suffered? He alone can best sympathize who has passed through the sorrow; and so we read of His being a "Man of sorrows" before we read of His soul being made "an offering for sin" (Isa. 53.). His perfect life as Man preceded His expiatory death on the cross. Now

He is highly exalted. "We have such an high Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8. 1). Nor did He glorify Himself to be made an high priest. That He did not, but the title lay in the unique dignity of His person: "He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee," said also, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 5. 5, 6). His title lay in His personal glory as Son of God; His qualifications lay in the sore ordeal of His perfect life of sorrow among those who had proved the bitterness of the results of sin in its myriad forms. He was apart from sin, but not from tears, nor hunger, nor thirst, nor weariness. He went into death itself to complete His path of perfect obedience, and, at the same time, to atone for sin, and to overcome all the adverse power of Satan.

He is free now to exercise, in the place of divine power, the functions of a merciful and faithful high Priest toward all who come unto God by Him. He ever liveth to intercede for them, and is able to save them to the uttermost—for ever!

All thanks and glory to Him!

The Lost Diadem.

(FRANK B. HOLE).

TO say that the outstanding feature of the present age is the wellnigh universal spirit of unrest is to utter merely a platitude. The thing is so obtrusive as to be patent to even the most frivolous mind.

Unrest, upheaval, clashing of interests, conflict, these are no new things in the earth. When, since the far-off days of peaceful Eden in innocence, did they *not* exist? Never a year since the blight and curse of sin descended on this world but they have been painfully manifest.

Admitting this, however, we venture to affirm that the present epidemic of unrest and upheaval has already assumed such proportions that it may justly be termed *the* feature of the age; and further, with the Bible as guide, to predict that it will yet increase until the stiff gale becomes a perfect hurricane.

The unrest existing to-day has about it two features which are worthy of notice:

1. *It is practically universal in its*

extent. Every country of note is afflicted with it. Of old its seat was mainly found in rude and barbaric tribes, now it is most pronounced in the most highly civilized and richest nations. The civilization may be Eastern and ancient as in China, or Western and modern as in Britain and America; it matters not, upheaval is threatened, and who shall say the force and fury of the eruption when it comes?

2. *The unrest to-day is touching every department of human thought and activity.* It never did this before. Many an empire has risen and flourished and decayed, whilst repose has rested upon the world of philosophy or of the applied sciences. To-day violent changes are marked in all directions. Men's minds are working with almost superhuman energy in the manufacture of new ideas and theories: social, political, and theological.

What does it all mean? That is the question which surely must be uppermost in the mind of every sober observer. For the Christian who bows to the Word of God and accepts its sayings there is no difficulty in discovering the divinely given answers. Human histories give us at the best imperfect details of a few of the most tragic happenings of time; the Bible alone puts into our hands the golden thread of divine purpose running through all history. Let us attempt humbly to seize the divine thought by the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God that we may obtain the divine answer.

* * * *

Most of our readers are aware of the fact that before the Flood government did not exist. That age culminated in such violent corruption and unrest that destruction was God's only remedy (see Gen. 6. 1-13).

On the cleansed earth government was instituted in the person of Noah (Gen. 9. 1-6). After the break-up of

Babel the authority seems to have departed from the main line of Noah's descendants, and each separate family began to range itself under its own tribal head, and the idea of kingship arose. There was no fresh development in regard to government on God's part until He called His people Israel out of Egypt, that *He*, the great JEHOVAH, might exercise authority in their midst. The moment He chose for doing this was most significant. Egypt, almost the oldest of the nations, had just risen to the highest point of her glory, having expelled the alien dynasties of "shepherd kings," and being united under the rule of powerful and warlike Pharaohs who carried their conquests to the Euphrates. Then it was that God asserted His right to His people, and smote the proud oppressor a heavy blow which evidently marked the beginning of decline for that empire. He carried His people, though much hindered by their perverseness, into the land of promise. *Jehovah claimed that land as His*, taking possession of it by His people. He claimed it as His in token that the whole earth is His. Twice is He spoken of as "Lord of all the earth" in connection with the passage of the Jordan (Josh. 3. 11, 13).

Arrived in the land of promise, the people soon tired of being peculiar in having God alone as their leader, and clamoured for a king (1 Sam. 8.). This, though a serious departure from God, was permitted, and after they had had bitter experience of the man after their own hearts God raised up the man after His own heart and delegated to him His visible authority in the world, placing him as a shepherd over His people and extending his kingdom by crowning his arms with success. The diadem—which was properly the diadem, not of Israel only, but of the whole world—was placed upon his brow and confirmed to his seed. For a brief moment it was worn by him and Solomon his successor.

Then the inevitable story of decline.

The kingdom divided; the smaller half only following the wearers of David's diadem, and they growing less and less powerful as the departure, in spite of occasional revivals God-given, became more and more pronounced.

At last the end came. Zedekiah, the last wearer of the diadem—though perhaps he wore it only in name—added treachery to his sins and dishonoured the name of his God, whereupon, as recorded no less than *three* times in Scripture (2 Kings 25.; 2 Chron. 36.; Jer. 52.), Jerusalem fell before the Babylonians, and the dominion passed into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, "the times of the Gentiles" setting in.

It was just at this time that by the pen of Ezekiel a prophecy was given. As the diadem—which was, be it remembered, that not only of Israel, but of the whole earth—fell from the brow of the last apostate prince of David's line, struck thence by the hand of God in retributive judgment, these words were written. They are so important that we venture to quote them in full.

"And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him" (Ezek. 21. 25-27).

* * * *

How wonderfully illuminating! How steady the beam of light here thrown over the dark pages of human history since that day! The diadem has indeed been removed, and if a comprehensive history of the world were compiled it would prove to be but a record of the various efforts of men and nations to exalt themselves and seize upon the diadem, and of the sure and

skilful way in which, just as they appeared certain of success, God has abased and overturned them.

A vision of this was granted to the prophet Daniel (chap. 7.). It confirmed the dream previously given to Nebuchadnezzar (chap. 2.). For a brief moment it seemed as if the diadem was to belong to that great king. But exalting himself he was painfully abased in abject madness, and soon his great Babylon fell and was overturned. So too with the succeeding empires—Persian, Greek, and Roman. Each ran their day and each was overturned at the end.

Since the dissolution of the Roman Empire no great empire, holding practically the civilized earth in its grip, has been permitted to arise. To-day Europe resembles an armed camp. The diadem of the earth is lost; it is "no more." No one nation dare attempt to regain it. The very effort, they know, would be their overturning.

The present state of extremely unstable equilibrium cannot, however, go on for ever. Political leaders feel this and talk vaguely of the coming "Armageddon," meaning thereby a great conflict which will embroil practically all the civilized earth. They appear to forget that the real Armageddon is not a frightful conflict of man against man, but rather a cruel and impious hurling of the united forces of men against God (see Rev. 16. 13-16).

It is more than possible, however, that these vague warnings of coming ills uttered by human leaders do herald the near approach of the true Armageddon! Their words, like those of Caiaphas in John 11. 49-52, may mean more than they themselves are conscious of. New forces of great strength have arisen in these later years. They centre themselves round the idea of "the brotherhood of man" based on "the universal fatherhood of God." Socialism, unitarianism, the new, progressive, humanistic theology,

are all branches of this root idea. Their use in the hands of Satan is to prepare the way for the last great federation of mankind, to get ready for Antichrist.

✧ It might be objected by some that the Messiah to whom the diadem belonged by right has already come. He has indeed, but He came not asserting those rights, but allowing man to have his hour and the power of darkness to assert itself that He might accomplish redemption. Satan, who profanely has usurped the diadem, actually offered it to Him in the temptation in the wilderness. He refused it, and chose not that short and easy cut to glory, but the toilsome road that led through death and resurrection—"ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24. 26).

He did, however, plainly predict the coming of another prince who would accept a diadem—purporting to be the true diadem of the earth—from the hands of Satan. "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5. 43).

In the days of the coming great trinity of evil—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, spoken of in Revelation 13.—it will seem as if at last Ezekiel's prophecy was reversed and nullified. Mankind already shows symptoms of going "federation-mad." It will then have federated itself into such a condition of so-called "brotherhood" that it will only need the appearance of an unscrupulous "superman," energized by Satan, for him to seize the reins of power and institute the most monstrous tyranny the world will ever witness. Let that state of

things be reached, and what can save men from the net they have cast for their own feet? It is quite possible that many, even a vast majority, may support and glory in the tyranny established. They will say, "Peace and safety," thinking that at last the diadem is recovered so permanently that no more overturnings need be feared.

"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thess. 5. 3). The last line of Ezekiel's prophecy will find sudden fulfilment. The last great overturning will take place in the true Armageddon, when both beast and false prophet and their armies are destroyed by the sudden appearing of Him "whose right it is."

In that day the long-lost diadem, brilliant then, not only with the gems of creation, but the brighter jewels of redemption, will be brought forth and placed upon the head of the once rejected Man of Nazareth, our adorable Lord Jesus. Upon His sacred brow the diadem will have found its permanent, its eternal resting-place.

* * * *

In view of these things, dear brethren in Christ, let us not be disturbed in mind. Let us be only concerned that we keep flying the flag of true testimony to Christ. Let us not join hands with the world, nor aid its schemes and movements which are paving the way for Antichrist. Let us abide in communion with the Father and the Son, and treasure in our hearts the thought that all the unrest and the overturning is only "UNTIL HE COME." Shall we not turn our eyes toward the sun-rising of that day, saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus?"

"Be not of careless or of anxious mind,
But let God's gracious peace thy spirit fill
With quiet diligence to seek and find
Just time to do His will."

The Astronomer and his Little Screw.

(H. P. BARKER).

A True Narrative.

A HUNDRED and twenty years ago, in the old town of Utrecht, two individuals might have been seen sitting on a wooden bench outside a certain house engaged in lively conversation.

The elder of the two was an old man, silver-haired and venerable, generally known by the sobriquet of "Father Martin." In his earlier days a school-master, he had spent the greater part of his threescore and ten years in the service of his Lord and Saviour.

The young man at his side was Van Bremen, a student at the celebrated university in that ancient town.

"Now let me hear what your difficulty is, Mr. Van Bremen," said the older man.

"Why," replied the student, "it appears to me that the whole teaching of Christianity is at variance with the most simple rules of order and proportion. You allow that this globe is but a speck in the immeasurable universe, and that there are myriads of others a thousandfold greater than ours. Can you really believe that the Creator Himself has visited this minute, insignificant world, and that He has actually chosen out this little ball, which swims among the gigantic heavenly bodies like a drop in the ocean, that He might manifest Himself in a remote corner of its surface?"

"Would it not be as absurd to believe this as to expect that our king would choose one of the smallest and poorest hamlets of the land, and live there for some years in poverty, merely to manifest his kindness to its few inhabitants, and to show his royalty to a handful of beggars?"

"Well, Mr. Van Bremen," replied the aged servant of Christ, "it is not the first time that the gospel has been

accused of being at variance with the usual ideas of proportion. What, for instance, could sound more unmathematical to the ear of human understanding than this saying? '*God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and things that are not to bring to naught things that are.*' Such a maxim seems to turn everything upside down. But what alters the case is that by some means or other the underside has unhappily been turned up! When the rules of order have been wilfully upset some extraordinary method must be adopted to redress the evil.

"This was evidently shown by a very learned astronomer, who, fifty years ago, had a conversation on this subject with my cousin Peter, the steeple-watch. Shall I tell you the story?"

The student willingly agreed, and Father Martin continued.

"My cousin," said he, "for more than thirty years had been employed as steeple-watch in the tower of the cathedral. Do you see yonder small window on the first gallery? That is the window of the cosy little room where he spent nearly two-thirds of his life. There he lived, quite alone as far as human companionship went, but in his Bible he had an inseparable companion. He knew this precious book from its first page to its last, yet he confessed that every day he read it again with fresh delight. Shortly before his death he said: '*I gradually drop all my other books. They are very nice, and written by godly authors, but I never can read them twice without feeling driven to my Bible to make up for the loss of time.*'"

"Now, it happened one winter evening that my cousin Peter was sitting

in his little parlour in the steeple, his open Bible on the table and his iron stove burning by his side. The night was bitterly cold, and a violent gale was blowing from the east. Peter had just given a fresh stir to the stove, and settled himself in his arm-chair to continue his reading, when to his surprise he heard steps upon the stone staircase, and the handle of his door was turned and a gentleman stood before him, breathless from fatigue and shivering with the cold. It was none other than the famous astronomer himself!

“ ‘Why, Dr. Blankenhagen!’ cried my cousin, rising respectfully to greet his unexpected visitor. ‘Is it you who come here so late and in such weather?’

“ ‘Yes,’ said the doctor. ‘I have a task in hand that must be undertaken to-night, for such an opportunity will not return for two hundred years.’

“ ‘What opportunity, sir?’ asked Peter.

“ ‘Why, a conjunction of certain stars will take place at 12.32 to-night, and I should rue it all my life if I missed so rare a sight. It is 11.30 already, so I must be going up to fix the telescope.’

“As the doctor spoke he looked round at the comfortable little room.

“ ‘A snug place this!’ he continued; ‘but I don’t understand, Peter, how you can be so happy living here all alone.’

“ ‘I am not quite as lonely as you suppose, sir. You know I am fond of reading?’

“ ‘Yes, I never come here without finding you at your Bible. But this increases my surprise. How can you fill up your whole life with the contents of that one book? Only compare this small volume with the infinite book which I peruse. The whole firmament lies open before me, and every day new discoveries delight me. But you know nothing of the stars, Peter.’

“ ‘Well, sir, though I don’t know the names of all those beautiful witenesses of the Creator’s power, yet my Bible teaches me somewhat about them. It bids me *lift up my eyes on high, and to behold who has created these things, that bringeth out their host by number.* This often causes me to look up with admiration to the bright sky, and to exclaim, *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth, who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. The heavens declare Thy glory, O Lord, and the firmament sheweth Thy handiwork.*’

“ ‘Ah, well,’ said the doctor, ‘that may be true, but it is a poor sort of astronomy, after all. I admire the man who can tell us exactly how the stars run in their courses, and who knows just where they will be to-morrow and next year and a hundred years hence.’

“ ‘Surely,’ said my cousin, ‘the Lord has given great gifts to man. My Bible exclaims: *When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet.*’

“ ‘Why,’ said the doctor, with a smile, ‘your Bible goes even farther than I in exalting man. I don’t see that the stars are put under his feet. If that were the case I should have had no need to climb up all these steps.’

“ ‘With your permission, sir, you would speak otherwise if you read the Bible as zealously as you do the book of stars. It is true that man, as born from Adam, is below the stars; and especially since he has sinned against his God he has sunk into a bottomless pit of misery. But there is one SON OF MAN, and it is of Him that the psalm I have quoted speaks. He is exalted far above the stars, having dominion over all the works of God’s hands. He is now sitting at His right

hand, supreme over all the worlds that swim in immeasurable space.

“ ‘He is the Head of His church, sir, and all who believe on Him are members of His body. He loves them, for He has bought them with His blood, and He will by and by take them to be always with Him to share His glorious place of dominion and power. In Adam everything is lost; but in Christ more has been gained than ever was lost, for He is both Son of Man and Son of God.’ ”

“ ‘Indeed,’ said the astronomer, shaking his head and smiling, ‘that is all very well. But do you really believe that the Creator of all those magnificent stars has lowered Himself to become a man, and choose this little globe for His dwelling-place? The sun alone is larger than the earth many thousands of times, and yet even the sun is but a speck of dust compared with Sirius. Can you suppose that the great Prince of heaven should pass by those magnificent worlds to take interest in such a paltry particle of the universe as this earth of ours?’ ”

“ ‘Sir,’ answered my cousin, ‘I read that a shepherd will leave his ninety-nine sheep to seek one that is lost. Such a shepherd is Christ. If you feel yourself a sinner, the inhabitant of a lost world, you will praise the redeeming love that saves the one, while you admire the wisdom that rules the other. The sun may be a large body and the earth a small one; but would God be truly great if He could not care for the former except by neglecting the latter? God’s glory is His love to His creatures. And if no way to save His fallen creatures can be found but by Himself taking their place and bearing their dues, He is great enough to make Himself of no reputation and descend into the awful depth, even though it cost Him His life.’ ”

“ ‘Just then the tremendous blows of the clock-hammer striking the midnight hour upon the great bell over his head reminded the astronomer that

the precious moments were flying past. Jumping from his chair he seized his lantern, and began climbing the steps that led to the top of the tower.

“ ‘Scarcely fifteen minutes had elapsed when my cousin was again roused by a violent push at his door. The doctor in great agitation stood before him.

“ ‘Quick, Peter,’ he cried, ‘there is not a moment to lose. Take your lantern, I pray, and help me to search!’ ”

“ ‘What is the matter, sir?’ ”

“ ‘Oh, be quick, I entreat you! A small screw slipped from my cold fingers when I was fixing up my instrument. It must have fallen on the balcony outside this room.’ ”

“ ‘A little screw, sir! In what direction did you drop it?’ ”

“ ‘Round the corner, Peter, at the north side. Be quick, I beseech you, for unless that screw be found all will be lost.’ ”

“ ‘Peter hurried out, followed by the doctor. The lantern was placed upon the floor, and the two men stooped down and groped over the cold stone pavement of the balcony. At length the doctor, unmindful of the keen frosty wind that was chilling him to his bones, knelt down and began rubbing over the stones with his hands as if he were polishing them. At length, after crawling and groping like this for some minutes, he came upon the object of his search.

“ ‘Ah, here it is!’ he cried, and jumping up he bounded up the steps to his telescope.

“ ‘An hour passed. The tower clock struck one, and again the doctor appeared.

“ ‘I have seen it all,’ said he; ‘it was most beautiful. I shall get a report printed that will interest the whole astronomical world.’ ”

“ ‘I am glad, sir,’ said Peter, ‘for I feared you would miss it altogether through that screw. When you came rushing down I thought at first that

you must have seen some monster that terrified you. And how surprised I was to find you making such an ado about a tiny screw ! ’

“ ‘Why surprised ? ’ asked the astronomer. ‘Did you not understand ? ’

“ ‘Well,’ said my cousin, ‘I said to myself, “There is that famous Dr. Blankenhagen, the most learned and one of the wealthiest men of this town, one to whom everybody bows respectfully, running down our stairs, panting and coughing, at this late hour of night ; there he is, kneeling down in the dust of this rough balcony, groping with his delicate hands over the dirty pavement, and all for the sake of a little screw, a miserable piece of common metal, not worth a farthing ! ” ’

“ ‘Well, well,’ cried the doctor, ‘don’t you see, you simple fellow, that everything depended on that little screw ? My telescope would have been of no use, and my journey from the street to this tremendous height would have been a failure. I shall now have the honour of publishing the report of this remarkable phenomenon—an honour which would have been lost but for that screw.’

“ ‘Then, sir,’ said Peter, looking at the doctor with an expression of deep earnestness, ‘you yourself have experienced what a man will do to recover what he has lost, insignificant in itself, but connected with the delight of his heart and with the honour of his name. And if you, the noblest and wealthiest inhabitant of Utrecht, have not hesitated to lower yourself to the dust of this pavement for the sake of a

lost piece of brass, why do you wonder that the great Creator should have humbled Himself to find and save His lost creatures, however insignificant and worthless ? If you, sir, did not dread the trouble and pain of a night so intensely cold to seek a lost fragment of your great telescope, can you be surprised at learning that the Son of God, for His glory’s sake, did not shun even the sufferings of the cross to rescue a portion of His universe which he loved, and which otherwise would have been eternally lost ? ’

“The doctor was silent ; a tear glistened in his eye, and he seemed absorbed in thought. Then rising he took my cousin’s hand, and with an expression of deep feeling, said, ‘Peter, you are better and wiser than I. Your book teaches you higher things than the stars ever taught me.’ ”

* * * *

With this Father Martin’s tale was finished. The student rose, and taking his hat, said, “I thank you, Father Martin ; I am quite conquered. Your cousin was a better astronomer than the doctor.”

* * * *

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world 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. I. 27-29).

Dependence.

We must always be in dependence upon God or fall.

God’s love for us is unwearied and His faithfulness is infallible ; let us rest in absolute dependence upon Him.

Let us delight in dependence—that the Lord should minister to us and care for us.

The point for us is to rest in the arm of the Lord, whatever may be, and not run to get help elsewhere.

Anxiety which anticipates evil is not the faith which faces the difficulties through which God sees well to make us pass.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 5.

(H. J. VINE).

The Altar, the Pillar, and the Feast.

WE have already noticed that Egypt and Assyria are to be blessed along with Israel in the day of blessing from the Lord, but this blessing is inseparably connected with "the SIGN in the depth and the height." So we read, "*It shall be for A SIGN and for a witness . . . in the land of Egypt. He shall send them a Saviour, a great One, and He shall deliver them*" (chap. 19. 20). The "Sign" is called in verse 19 "AN ALTAR" and "A PILLAR." There is only one Person who answers to this striking twofold description of the "Sign." That person is Christ, who has stooped to the unsounded depth of sorrow and suffering at Calvary, where He offered Himself without spot to God as a sacrifice, and who has been raised again from among the dead and exalted to the height—to the throne: "JESUS CHRIST, the faithful Witness, the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen" (Rev. 1. 5, 6). The secret of Egypt's future fulness is surely explained by this "Sign." For our Lord Jesus Christ alone in the greatness of His work and the excellence of His glory makes all these things clear to us. He is the Altar and the Pillar.

The Feast.

Chapters 25.-27. close the second section of Book I and introduce us to joyful festivities; the feast of fat things, of wines on the lees. It is enjoyed on the mount of royal grace (25. 6), not on the fiery mount of law-giving. The praise is full! The song is sweet! The worship is true!

The provision "*in this mountain*" is wonderfully abundant (25. 6). Fatness, fulness, and joy, well refined and pure, are here. "*In this mountain*" the veil that covers the face of all the troubled nations shall be taken away by the One who robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory. He alone, the glorious Fulfiller of the promises and prophecy, shall reign in risen life and glory! For He is "Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from among the dead." True believers know this royal mount in its gracious meaning already. As "risen with Christ" they sit at the feast. "He will swallow up death in victory" (ver. 8), confirms this, for the Holy Spirit takes up these words and uses them in 1 Corinthians 15. 54. We can say even now in the words of verse 57, "thanks be to God who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ!" He is risen and the victory is ours!

Again, we read, "*in this mountain* shall the hand of the Lord rest" (ver. 10). "We have waited for HIM," is said twice in verse 9. For whom? Our Lord Jesus Christ! This waiting will not be in vain! His victory over death and the grave will be known and enjoyed then *in this mountain* by the believing remnant of God's people on earth. Like Thomas, who said, "*My Lord and my God*," when he saw Him *in resurrection*, they also will say, "Lo, this is *our God*, this is *our Lord*!" (ver. 9). "We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!" Then the Lord's rest will be blessedly realized "*in this mountain*." It is no wonder the high praises of One so great ring out in triumph here! "O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will PRAISE THY NAME!" (ver. 1).

How beautiful is the song that greets us in chapter 26., after all the turbulent scenes of the previous chapters, which were nevertheless necessary to clear the way for abiding peace! The singers have learned that "*favour*" will not teach the wicked *righteousness* (ver. 10), nor bring them to "behold the majesty of the Lord." They have also learned that it is when God's "*judgments are in the earth*," breaking the staff of the wicked and casting down great governments, that "*the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness*" (ver. 9). These are wholesome lessons.

This song, so supremely sweet, is sung in the joy of "*salvation*" (ver. 1), and of the "*perfect peace*" which the Lord gives (ver. 3), and of the "*everlasting strength*" which is in Him (ver. 4).

The song is sung also in the sense of *resurrection*, as the feast of chapter 25. is enjoyed. This we see from the remarkable words of verse 19, where Israel is said to rise as from the dead by His power! They then call to others, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead." They rejoice and sing in "*the land of the living*," before the Lord, the Righteous One! It will be like life from the dead! And away from the uttermost parts of the earth comes echoing back the loud and joyful chorus, "GLORY TO THE RIGHTEOUS ONE!" "They shall sing for the majesty of the Lord and cry aloud from the sea" (24. 14).

The terrible power of Satan in the tossing sea of the peoples and the nations is destroyed. Israel is preserved and watered and kept, day and night, as a beautiful garden, a vineyard of pure wine (27. 2).

One by one they had been gathered home, once "*ready to perish*" and "*outcasts*," but now with truth and love they "WORSHIP" the Lord, Jehovah, in the holy mount at Jerusalem (ver. 13). It is always thus with "the true worshippers," whether in that day or this. In the hearts of the worshippers of this day, who worship in spirit and in truth, the sense of grace is deeply imbedded by the Holy Spirit of God. "*Ready to perish*," they were as the woman of John 4., but grace has filled and satisfied their souls. "*Outcasts*" also, as the man in John 9., they have learned the PERSONAL GLORY of their Saviour; He is none less than "THE SON OF GOD," and they worship in His presence. His precious blood has cleansed their guilt and cleared their consciences. They are purged worshippers, and in the beauty of holiness, boldly entering the very holiest of all, because of the infinite value of the work, and the priceless perfections of their glorious Saviour, the Son of God; their full hearts overflow before Him in worship and adoration. No ecclesiastical organization or gorgeous ritual can produce this, nothing can, in fact, but *the knowledge of the SON OF GOD, the knowledge of Him who is shown by resurrection to be the Son of God truly, though David's seed according to the flesh.*

Let not thy praise be transient—a fit of music, and then the instrument hung on the wall till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence makes thee take it down. God comes not guest-wise to His saints' houses, but to dwell with them; therefore let praise be lifelong and continuous.

"His praise shall continually be in my mouth." "As long as I live I will praise Thee."

One mark of the evil servant is that he smites his fellow-servants; this is not done now so much by open persecution as by the tongue of slander.

Bible Study.—Jude.

(EDWARD CROSS).

1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called :

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write

unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 1.

IT is matter of much controversy who the author of this Epistle is, whether the Apostle Jude, called also Lebbæus and son of Alphæus and brother of James the Apostle (*cf.* Matt. 10. 3; Luke 6. 16), or Jude the brother of James, of whom we read in Acts 12. 15., 21.; known as "James the Just," and called in Galatians 1. 19 "the Lord's brother"; in which latter case he would be the son of Joseph and Mary, and thus a maternal brother of our Lord after the flesh. To establish this latter assertion would be to end the long-drawn controversy as to the perpetual virginity of Mary, and to overthrow the whole fabric built upon the assumption of this basis. The question is not so easily settled as might at first be thought; and, after all has been said that can be said on either side, each party in the dispute remains of the same opinion still.

The matter turns principally on the use of the words brother and sister; whether they are to be understood in their natural and ordinary meaning, or with a broader and more extended signification.

It is well known that the word "brother" is used in a wider sense than "one born of the same parents;" just as the word "parent" in French may mean a relation in any degree. That is, the word may be used in a primary and proper sense, or in a secondary and more extended way. But in good writing, a secondary or metaphorical use of a word will be made plain by the context, so that its meaning will not be obscured. Thus Matthew 23. 8: "One is your Master, even Christ, and ye are all brethren," leaves no doubt in the mind as to the use of the term; and, again: "He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren" (Heb. 2. 11, 12) is equally clear, and no one thinks of interpreting

it otherwise than the new relationship which, as risen from among the dead, He announces in John 20. 17. So, again, the word is used in a national way: "Men, brethren . . ." (Acts 2. 29); yet in none of these passages is there any doubt as to the sense in which the word is used. But to force a secondary use of a word in an unnatural way without due notice in the context being given, denotes a prejudice that would take advantage of the elasticity of human speech to adapt it to a preconception, and argue from it, not what one wished to learn but what one wished to prove.

Treating the Gospels as history given to instruct, and not to confuse the reader, it is difficult to understand such scriptures as Matthew 1. 25; 12. 46, 47; 13. 55, 56; Mark 6. 2, 3; Luke 2. 7; John 7. 5; Acts 1. 14; 1 Corinthians 9. 5, etc., otherwise than as referring, in their natural and ordinary meaning, to those who were the uterine brothers and sisters of the Lord after the flesh; and, granted that "her first-born Son" (Luke 2. 7) may have reference to the sanctifying of the "first-born," according to Exodus 13. 2, 12, 13, this does not detract from the plain implication of Matthew 1. 25.

If we accept this view of these passages there seems but one conclusion to come to, viz. that the writer of this Epistle was not the Apostle of Luke 6. 16, but the brother of "James the Just," "Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem," and an actual "brother of the Lord" (Gal. 1. 19); while also in this case, his styling himself "Bondsman of Jesus Christ and brother James," is at once decorous and just. He speaks of himself as "brother of James," and so indeed he was. But though the Lord deigns to call us "brethren," Scripture nowhere authorizes any such familiarity on our part towards Him; not even for one born of the same mother after the flesh.

The Epistle is addressed to "the called ones, beloved in God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ;" and in view of the state of things here-in-after described, it is an immense comfort to know that there were such, and will be such to the end.

Verse 2.

As has been often remarked, "mercy" is not included in the epistles addressed to the church as such; but when addressed to the saints in their individual character it is added. Thus in 1 and 2 Timothy the formula is "grace, mercy, and peace;" (Titus 1. 4 is doubtful); while in the Epistle to Philemon the church in his house is included; hence "grace to you, and peace." Here mercy is prominent at the beginning of the Epistle and again at the end (ver. 21); as the saints assuredly need it in these trying circumstances.

Verse 3.

While using all diligence to write to them of "our common salvation," he was diverted from this very important subject by the consideration of the serious state of things developing before him, and he writes to them instead, exhorting them to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

Three times in the article on "the Epistle of Jude" in Smith's *Bible Dictionary* this Epistle is called "unimportant." One wonders where the writer's mind could have strayed to with this verse before him. How *important* it is is manifest by regarding, ever so superficially, the state of things prevailing in Christendom to-day. True, it is not with the unfolding the glories of Christ, or the doctrines connected therewith, that make for the blessing and progress of the soul, that we have here to do; but with the actual state of an apostasy that first edges itself in surreptitiously (ver. 4), like the cuckoo, and then pushes out, and openly denies in principle, and refuses in fact, the most radical and fundamental titles and the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, forsooth, is "unimportant!" and in that light it seems to be only too generally regarded to-day, when the prevailing trend is so markedly to succumb to the forces that make for the pronounced apostasy in which "the end of the

time" (ver. 18) will close. On all hands this is patent—socially, politically, religiously. Christ is the "image of the invisible God, first-born of all creation; because by Him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all, and all things subsist together by Him" (Col. 1. 16, 17), *i.e.* He is "the characteristic power, the active instrument, and the end" of all things—of all glory and blessing, and of all authority, to bring about the times of the "restoring of all things," of which God has spoken by the prophets, and the "refreshing" so earnestly desired by man (Acts 3. 19, 21). But instead of that, unrest prevails everywhere. The foundations are being shaken (Ps. 11. 3, 4); the present is in flux, the future is in doubt (Ps. 4. 6); the activities at work are destructive; there is no constructive policy, no return to the old paths (Jer. 6. 16), nor to "Him in whose hand their breath is and all their ways" (Dan. 5. 23; Amos 4.). Every fresh suggestion is but the repetition of what has already been tried and found worthless; their guides are blind guides, and they refuse the only Saviour. Woe to them!

"Then the case is hopeless, the situation desperate; let us succumb." No! Now is the time to prove the virtue of faith; the faith that is *in* them (Heb. 11. 33-38); and so he writes, exhorting them to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to them.

ἀπαξ=once for all, is used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition (*Grimm*). The faith so given cannot be altered or improved; and, as received by them, they by it "once for all knew all things" (ver. 5).

Verse 4.

"Certain men had got in unnoticed." In this the Epistle differs from 1 John 2. 19. There they "went out from us." It was an attempt to corrupt by anti-Christian doctrine the truth maintained in the testimony of Christ; and those who propagated such doctrines went out from the Christian circle. Here they have

got in "unnoticed," and as the tares "sown by the enemy while men slept" (Matt. 13. 35), they fruit into open ungodliness, "turning the grace of our God into dissoluteness, and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ."

This is the foundation principle of all the socialistic elements of apostate Christendom, at once atheistic and anti-christian in their essence and intent. Professedly desirous of redressing the inequalities of social life, they are really "ungodly persons," perverting the springs of all goodness, refusing the idea of all authority, and ignoring the rights of property, invested in Him, to whom alone those rights belong.

δεσπότης=master of slaves, implying absolute *ownership*. κύριος=lord, a title of honour—Sarah called Abraham "lord"—involving *authority* of a moral kind, in the various spheres of relationship in which it is exercised.

They were "of old marked out beforehand to this sentence;" not "predestined" to it, as by God's eternal purpose. πάλαι=of old, is never used of that *purpose*, but points to some fact in time (*Alford*); but they are the same who in Old Testament prophecies "were of old so noticed and marked out" (note N.T.).

Verse 5.

But how difficult it is to awaken people's minds to the state of things around! This is so much the case that when the most monstrous and blasphemous doctrines are propounded, as in the New Theology and allied movements, the mass hail them as evidences of the progress of the times, and an advance towards "liberty"—disentanglement from

the trammels of a faith that has grown too antiquated for modern use! On all sides are to be seen to-day signs of a yielding to the encroachments of evil, growing bolder by its success. In quarters most unlooked for, and in circumstances the most unexpected, the outposts are giving way before the attacks of the enemy. The growing spirit is a spirit of revolt against all authority, divine and human. "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" (Ps. 12. 4). Evil principles there are in plenty, and those who preach them. Of these 2 Peter speaks. But principles, preached and listened to, do not stop there. The seed is not sown to lie; and words prepare for deeds. Look at the unrest in every department of life to-day, civil, political, religious; and in every country too. There is immunity nowhere from this epidemic of revolt against authority and the institutions which have struck their roots in the foundations of ordered government. The restraint of moral power, on the wane generally, is extinct largely, and there seems nothing ahead in the conduct of society, after centuries of Christian emollients, but a recurrence to brute force. And so the old motto, "Might is right," will become more than ever the ruling principle of "the end of the time." The king, who "does his own will," will honour "the god of forces" (Dan. 11. 36-38). "The will of God" will form no part of his economy (*cf.* Exod. 5. 2). That which was at the beginning will reappear at the end; and the principles of apostasy, already working in the early history of the church, will be consummated at the close. These and such-like are the forces which we are called to resist, in "contending earnestly for the faith once for all committed to the saints."

Humility.

(MONTGOMERY).

THE bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing
Sings in the shade when all things
rest:
In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility.

The saint who wears heaven's brightest crown
In deepest adoration bends;
His weight of glory bends him down
Then most when most his soul
ascends:
Nearest the throne of God must be
The footstool of humility.

Emmanuel—Jesus.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

“Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.”

“They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1.).

THE mystery of the sacred person of Jesus is altogether beyond creature comprehension. Men cannot say how the divine and human—Godhead and Manhood—are united in Christ Jesus, “for no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” But we may own Him as very God and very Man, and worship and adore Him, who, in becoming man, never ceased to be God.

Miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, Jesus was truly born of the Virgin. He took part in flesh and blood and became that which *He was not before*, yet He never ceased to be that which *He always was*. In incarnation He was not God in human form merely—a theophany, a man in *outward* appearance only—as He appeared to Manoah and Abraham, but a man with body, soul, and spirit as we have. He was weary in *body* at Sychar's well, He groaned in *spirit* at the grave of Lazarus, was troubled in *soul* in Gethsemane in anticipation of Calvary's sorrow. He was sensitive to neglect, contumely, ingratitude, misunderstanding—He deeply felt these things, though bearing all in a meek and lowly spirit; He was a real man in every sense of the word. His perfect human affections went out toward the home in Bethany; He delighted to turn thither after the day's toil, and found repose among those who loved and appreciated Him.

He delighted in the society of His own disciples. He took them unto the holy mount that they might behold His glory, and into the death chamber of Jairus's daughter that they might witness the power of resurrection which declared Him to be the Son of God. He desired their companionship, and looked for their sympathy in the distress of His soul in Gethsemane;

they failed Him, and His words to them, “Could ye not watch with Me one hour?” prove how keenly he felt this.

He was ever dependent upon God. He lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. He exercised no will apart from the Father. He sought not His own glory, but the glory of the One who sent Him. His meat was to do His will and finish His work.

In Him we see a man—a true man—in all that man should be for God and all that man should be to man, for He loved the Lord His God with all His heart and His neighbour as Himself, and yet He never ceased to be God! Herein is the wonder of wonders, the marvel of marvels, the great mystery, and here we bow and worship.

This is altogether beyond our comprehension, beyond definition and explanation; the Father only grasps the complex mystery of the person of the Son. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him, when as a lowly man He trod the earth, died, and rose from the dead, and dwells in Him still, the now glorified Man on the throne—a real man. He was heard, seen, handled by His disciples after His resurrection; He ate and talked with them, and while in the act of blessing them, He ascended into heaven, and is still the Man Christ Jesus, the one mediator between God and men; though He sits by right at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He is, and ever will be, the *Man Christ Jesus*; He is the First-born among many brethren. Yet in Him also we shall eternally behold the effulgence of God's glory, the exact expression of His substance.

He is portrayed as God manifest in the flesh by the four Evangelists.

Matthew tells us that the Virgin's son is "Emmanuel" — God with us; *Mark*, that Jesus is the *Lord* whose paths are to be made straight, the beloved Son in whom the Father's pleasure is found; *Luke* presents Him as the Son of Man whose genealogy can be traced to Adam, and yet declares Him to be the "Son of the Highest;" whilst *John* goes back to the beginning, and affirms that then He, the WORD, was not only with God, but was God, the first great Cause from which all creation emanated, and yet—wonder of wonders!—*became flesh*, a real man, and tabernacled amongst men.

Jesus grew up from infancy to manhood, experiencing perfectly every vicissitude of that growth apart from sin; this had no place in His being; He was not only sinless but incapable of sinning.

Godhead glories and human perfections centre in Him; He is the "I am," the self-existing One, David's Lord as well as David's Son. We cast our crowns at His feet and worship before Him who is Son of God and Son of Man. Worship is His by right, hence He accepted without reserve the homage rendered to Him in the days of His flesh. The Magi bowed before the young child, presented those offerings which betokened His kingly glory, priestly grace, and prophetic office (Matt. 2. 11). The angelic hosts celebrated His first advent, fulfilling the word, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

Again and again during His sojourn here voice after voice was raised to celebrate His praise and ascribe glory to Him. The disciples in the boat—impressed with His almighty power—worshipped him, saying, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14. 33); the cleansed leper, falling at His feet, *gave Him thanks*, and thus gave glory to God (Luke 17.); whilst the blind man in John 9., in the light of the revelation that Jesus is the Son of God, "worshipped Him."

After He was risen Thomas owned Him as Lord and God; the women—prostrate at His feet—worshipped Him (Matt. 28. 9); the disciples, as they beheld Him carried up into heaven, also worshipped Him (Luke 24. 52). During His present session at the right hand of God, Paul, Peter, and John render Him direct homage, ascribing "glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim. 4. 18); "glory both now and for ever" (2 Peter 3. 18); "glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. 1. 6).

In the glorious future He will be universally worshipped, every part of the universe will own His authority; the elders, bowing before Him, will cast their crowns at His feet, ascribing to Him those qualities which it would be blasphemy to attribute to any one who is not "over all God blessed for ever!" (Rev. 5.).

The "young child" carried by His parents into Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod is the same holy Babe whom the Magi worshipped, placing their treasures at His feet as His by right. The "hungered" Man who met Satan's temptation with the Word of God and overcame by perfect dependence is the same who spoiled Satan during His life and annulled his power in His death. The wearied Man fatigued with constant service, who laid His tired head on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship and peacefully slept while the storm raged, is the same Jesus who proved that He was God by commanding the winds and quelling the storm by a word from His lips. The sympathetic Man who wept at the grave of Lazarus is the almighty Being whose voice of power awoke the dead to life. The thirsty Man at Sychar's well asking there for a draught of water is the Giver of a fountain whose waters are ever springing up into everlasting life.

His death, equally with His life, demonstrates the wonderful complexity of His being. He was crucified through

weakness, and yet He had power to cry with a loud voice at the very moment of His death. His life was taken from the earth, and yet no one could have taken His life apart from His own voluntary will; no mere man could dismiss His spirit, yet He dismissed His, whilst in the perfection of dependence as a man at the same moment He commended it to the care of God His Father in perfect confidence.

He was taken from the cross and laid in the tomb, His body guarded in every possible way that the malice of Satan and the ingenuity of man could devise, yet the empty tomb with the napkin laid by itself and the clothes folded in order demonstrate Him to be superior to every foe, more powerful than man and Satan combined. During His life He had witnessed by calling others back to life that resurrection

power was bound up with His person, but His own resurrection was the full and final declaration that He is the Son of God with power, the mighty Conqueror over death and the grave.

As we contemplate the marvels found in His adorable person we rejoice to know that He will never cease to be man, real man, in whom we shall contemplate for ever the fulness of the Godhead, and bow before Him, extol and bless for ever the WORD who *became flesh* and dwelt among us; and yet ever was, before the world, in the world, and will be throughout the ages of ages the eternal God, Jehovah's Fellow—co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

“Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son,
God manifest, God seen and heard,
The heaven's beloved One.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.”

What Saints will be in the Tribulation?

(J. N. DARBY.)

THE question, Will the saints be in the tribulation? suggests itself to every one who is occupied with the hopes of the church of God and the prophetic declarations of Scripture as to the close of this earth's painful and laborious history. Personal anxiety suggests it on one hand, and on the other it connects itself intimately with the gravest and most vital points of prophetic inquiry; or rather of the true character of the church of God and its condition at the close.

I cannot, in the space allowed me here, enter at large into the declarations of the Old Testament as to a remnant, nor of the New as to the church. But a short answer to the question itself will help to throw light on the points I allude to and on the rapture of the saints.

And first, as to our being in the tribulation. How do I know there will be a tribulation? I must get some revelation of it. He who would

place the church in it will answer me, I am sure the Scriptures are clear on the point. There will be at the close a tribulation, a time such as there has never been, till the Lord's coming brings deliverance. What, then, are the scriptures which tell us that there will be such tribulation? I am not aware of any other direct ones than these: Jeremiah 30. 7.; Daniel 12. 1; Matthew 24. 21; Mark 13. 19 (St. Luke does not speak of it, nor of the abomination of desolation); to which we may add the more general passages of Revelation 3. 10; 7. 14. The first four passages do effectively prove that there will be a time of tribulation such as never was since there was a nation, or, as it is expressed in Mark, “such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, neither shall be.” The passages from Revelation apply, we shall see, to a wider sphere than the preceding ones; but as they speak of a great tribulation, I have, of course, quoted them. There will be, then, a tribulation.

The other part of the question still remains. Shall we, who compose the church, be in this tribulation? The answer to this question must be sought in the passages which speak of the tribulation itself. The first of them (Jer. 30. 7) is as clear as possible in announcing those to whom it applies.

"It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be delivered out of it." This time, then, of trouble, such as never was nor will be—so that there cannot be two—is the time of Jacob's trouble. Nothing can be clearer or more distinct. The whole chapter may be read, which sets it in the clearest light. It is not merely that Jacob will be found there, but when it is said, "alas! for that day is great, there is none like it," the trouble spoken of is Jacob's trouble. The next is Daniel 12. 1. This is also positively declared to be of Daniel's people. The whole prophecy is the description of what is to happen to Daniel's people in the last days (Dan. 10. 14). Michael, also (*cf.* chap. 10. 21), will then stand up for that people, and, as Jeremiah had said, they will be delivered (that is, the elect remnant—those written in the book). Daniel's testimony, then, is also quite clear. The tribulation is the tribulation of Daniel's people. But this is the rather important because it carries us at once to Matthew, the Lord Himself declaring that He speaks of this same time and same event, using the terms of Daniel and referring to him by name as well as to the statements of the passage (*cf.* Matt. 24. 15; Dan. 12. 11). But all the language of the passage in Matthew confirms this. Those who are in Judæa are to flee to the mountains. Those who are on the housetop are not to come down to seek anything. The abomination which causes desolation stands in the holy place. They are to pray that their flight may not be on the Sabbath. False Christs and false prophets are to seduce with the hopes cherished by the Jewish people. All is local and Jewish—has no application to hopes which rest on going to meet Christ in the air. What

is in question is "flesh" being "saved" (*i.e.* life spared on earth). Mark relates evidently to the same event and almost exactly in the same terms. Thus these four passages, which speak of the unequalled tribulation, apply it distinctively to Jacob, Jerusalem, and Judæa, and the Jews, not to the church. It is entirely another order and sphere of things from the church, and professedly so. There are two passages which, as I have said, are more general: Revelation 3. 10 and 7. 14. Do these, then, apply to the church? The language of Revelation 3. 10 is this: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth." That is, when the church is addressed, it is with a declaration that she will be kept from that hour which shall come to try others.

So that thus far the testimonies of Scripture declare that the unequalled tribulation is for Jacob, and that, when the time of temptation is spoken of in addressing the church, it is to declare that the faithful shall be kept out of it. Revelation 7. 14 may seem more difficult; still, it bears witness to the same truth. For the heavenly kings and priests (that is, the elders who have represented them from the beginning of the second or strictly prophetic part of the book) are professedly another class of persons, who have not come out of the great tribulation. One of these elders explains to John who those who have come out of great tribulation are, as another class of persons from themselves. One of them asks John, "Who are these who are arrayed in white robes, etc.?" John refers to him, and then he explains. That is, the crowned elders are quite a different class from them; so that, while admitting the passage to be obscure in certain points, it is clear in this—in giving us the elders and those who came out of tribulation as two distinct classes. The crowned elders are not at

all represented as having been in it, but as pointing out others as having come out of it. Every element of the description of these persons confirms this distinction.

Another passage—Revelation 12.—while not using the term tribulation, yet speaking of the epoch at which it is to happen, strongly confirms this same truth. When Satan and his angels are defeated by Michael, he is cast out and comes down to the earth, having great wrath, knowing he has but a short time, and persecutes the woman. Now, what is the effect of this most important event on those who can celebrate its bearing? That the trial of the heavenly saints is ended, and that of the inhabitants of the earth and the sea just about to begin in its most formidable shape because Satan is cast down there. The language is this: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they

loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea," etc. Now I do not say that this is the moment of the rapture, for I think that is included in the man-child's being caught up. But I say this, that at the moment of the commencement of the great rage of Satan for the three times and a half, the entire deliverance of the heavenly saints from his power and their definite triumph is celebrated, that is, they are not exposed to that last time of Satan's rage. This chapter, then, confirms, in the fullest way, the exemption of the church from the last and dreadful time of trial. I am satisfied that the whole teaching and structure of the Revelation confirms the same truth; but this would evidently lead me into too large a sphere of inquiry.

We have found that the passages which speak of tribulation first apply it directly to the Jews on one side, and then exclude the church from it on the other. I do not see how such a point as this could be made clearer by Scripture.

"They had been with Jesus."

In the old times, when they wished to attract doves to a certain pigeon-house, they took homing birds belonging to that place and smeared their wings with a costly perfume, and sent them forth. Other pigeons

were so delighted with the sweetness that they followed them to the dove-cotes. Oh, that you and I may be so sweetened by dwelling near to Christ that others may be attracted to Him to see His beauty and to know His love.

"The Steadfastness of your Faith in Christ."

A mind on wheels knows no rest; it is as a rolling thing before a tempest. Struggle against the desire for novelty or it will lead you astray as the will-o'-the-wisp deceives the traveller. If you

desire to be useful, if you long to honour God, if you wish to be happy, be established in the truth, and be not carried about by every wind of doctrine in these evil days.

Divine Love.—No. 1.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Love of God.

John 3. 16.

THE Scriptures speak to us of the love of God, of the love of the Father, of the love of the Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the love of the brethren; and though all this love is divine, and not the affection which is natural to the creature, nevertheless it is the same love that we find in the man who is born of God as that which is in the Persons of the Godhead; for he is, by virtue of this heavenly birth, a partaker of the divine nature. But the direction this love is described as taking in each of these divine Persons and in the brethren is very different. Neither the Father nor the Son are said to love the world, but God is; neither is the Father said to love the church, but Christ is. And all this is full of interest and instruction. I would therefore, by the help of the Holy Spirit, attempt to point out to the reader the way in which the Scriptures present this love in connection with all in whom it is said to be active. Let us first examine what is said as to THE LOVE OF GOD.

In John 3. 16 we get this love presented in all its greatness and universality. It is a love that no man had hitherto been called to contemplate in such fulness, power, and blessing. It is a love that rises above every barrier thrown up to stem its invincible current. It is a love that no angel knew, and a love that no creature could declare. By an angel the intervention of God for the deliverance of the oppressed sons of Jacob could take place, and by angelic tongue could the duty of man to love God be declared; from out of the midst of devouring fire, and from blackness and darkness, could angelic voice utter the claims of God;

but to bring the love of God to man, so that we might be able to say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love" (1 John 4. 16), was beyond the power of the highest created intelligence.

The fall and ruin of the head of the human race furnished the blessed God with an opportunity of retiring upon the counsels of His eternal love, which involved new relationships for man, and a new life by which these new relationships could be enjoyed; a life that was no more in Adam innocent than in Adam guilty: eternal life, the life that is in the Son of God, a life that could never be defiled by sin, and that could never come under the power of death.

But if men were to possess this life, and if they were to stand in these new and eternal relationships with God, it was necessary that satisfaction should be rendered to God for the dishonour done to Him by sin in this evil world. It was necessary that our sins, and the evil and corrupt nature that produced these sins, should be met by the unsparing judgment of a holy and righteous God. It was necessary that One should give Himself for us, should stand in our room and stead, should bear our blame, suffer the consequences of sin by being made sin, in order that the majesty, authority, and nature of God might be vindicated and glorified, for apart from the accomplishment of this no way of salvation could be opened up for guilty man.

Who was there in all the universe of God whose love for our guilty race was strong enough to induce him to intervene on our behalf? and who, even supposing the love existed, had

the ability to take up the work of our deliverance? Not certainly any of the creatures of God, for, for them to have manifested compassion towards us, would have been treason against their Creator and Governor; but even had they desired, and had it been right and agreeable to God that they should so desire, they had not the ability to accomplish anything.

No one could help us but the One against whom we had sinned, and it took Him to put forth all His power to bring about our deliverance. Nothing less than the death of His only begotten Son could enable Him righteously to take the place of a Saviour toward guilty man.

What mere creature could undertake such a work as that of redemption? Who could stand in the presence of incensed Deity, and bear the brunt of wrath's terrific storm broken loose against sin? Who could answer to God for the rebellion of His apostate creature, and stand in the breach when He was giving expression to His righteous judgment and holy abhorrence of that of which the devil was the author and man the willing slave? No mere creature could do this. None but the incarnate Son could enter into this awful question with God.

But why not let man perish for ever? He preferred the service of sin, the darkness of alienation from God, the rule of the devil, to any renewal of relationships or acquaintance with God. Why not take hold of the earth, and shake the apostate race out of its corrupt lap into the lake of fire, and leave him thus to the eternal consequences of his mad rebellion against his Maker? Why trouble any more about such a good-for-nothing creature? Why, for no other reason than that it had pleased God to set His heart upon man. He was not constrained to intervene on behalf of His creature by any good that He saw in that creature, nor by any object external to Himself, but just because it was His

pleasure to take up such a sinner and make him a vessel of His praise.

The sinful and utterly lost condition of man put God to the test in a way in which He had never before been tested, and in a way in which He never can be tested again. If God loved man, the state in which man was as a rebel sinner put His love to a test that no one, had anything been known about it, would have believed love capable of bearing. But that love proved itself to be well able to answer to the demand made upon it: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

That love has opened up a way of salvation for the lost, and the report of that salvation, and where all are to find it, is proclaimed world-wide. God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; and the Mediator, whose death was the witness of that love, gave Himself a ransom for all, and all are called by the gospel to make haste and avail themselves of that salvation while the day of salvation lasts.

In the heart of the believer that love is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost who is given to us (Rom. 5. 5). We are made conscious that it is our present portion. To the way in which it has come to light the Holy Spirit ever directs our attention: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;" and in contrast to the greatest exhibition of human love, which has occasionally caused men to lay down their lives on behalf of those who had shown them kindness, the love of God was expressed to us in the death of Christ *when we were yet sinners*.

In the 1st Epistle of John this love of God is viewed in connection with a circle narrower than the whole world. In the Gospel its aspect is universal, but in the Epistle it is confined to the

family of God. We read in 1 John 4. : "In this was manifested the love of God toward *us*," and "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved *us* ;" and in chapter 3. : "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for *us*." But in the Epistle, as in the Gospel, whether it be to *us*, or to *the world*, the death of Christ is that in which it has been declared.

We get another beautiful reference to this love in Ephesians 2. There we are contemplated as dead in sins. Not a movement of our hearts godward. We are said, as Gentiles, to have been "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Such was our state as sinners of the Gentiles. Also, ruled by the prince of the power of the air, fulfilling the desires of flesh and mind, and by nature children of wrath, everything that was loathsome and abominable to God.

This is what we were under His eye : "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." What a marvellous intervention of the power of the living God, moved by the wonderful love of His heart ! And not only has He quickened us, but quickened us in the life of Christ ; and also raised us up and made us sit in Him in the heavenlies ; and that, too, in order that He might, in the ages to come, show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

From this love there is no separation. Once it is believed—once it gets into the heart in the power of the Spirit—it is there *for ever*. 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" (Rom. 8. 38, 39). In the first verse of this chapter *we* are in Christ, and in the last verse *the love of God* is there, so that where the love of God has got its eternal resting-place, we have got ours through grace ; therefore, until Christ can be separated from that love we never can be ; and as nothing can separate Him from it, nothing can separate us.

It is this love which casts out all fear from our hearts, and gives us boldness for the day of judgment. We are loved with the love of which Christ is the Object—"as He is, so are we in this world ;" and we know that that love will never be thoroughly satisfied until it has us, like Himself, in glory. It is that love which has predestinated us to be conformed to His image ; therefore, in the day of judgment we shall be like the Judge, our very bodies fashioned like His ; ourselves not the subjects of judgment, though our works shall be. Then we shall receive loss or gain for all that we have done upon earth. Where we have been faithful we shall be rewarded, and where we have been unfaithful we shall suffer loss ; but before ever we appear there we shall have been already glorified.

I turn to another passage of Scripture : "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 20, 21). In these days in which evil abounds, such as is depicted in this short Epistle, the tendency is to be unduly occupied with it, and the soul is in danger of coming under the power of it. Here is the antidote to all that. The natural and healthful element of the child of God is this love declared in the gift of Jesus ; and in this love, in the worst days of the history of the church, it is our privilege to keep ourselves, and we are exhorted so to do.

May the Lord Himself direct our hearts into the love of God.

Some Remarks on Justification.—No. 2.

(J. T. MAWSON).

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4. 5).

GREAT pains have been taken by the Holy Spirit to impress upon us the important fact that the blessing of justification comes unto men as entirely of God. It does not come to them because they deserve it; it is by grace, which supposes absolute demerit in the objects of it. God has found no reason in men why He should approach them with this blessing, He has needed none, for the cause of it all is found in His own heart. He blesses men because of what He is Himself and not because of what they are. This is the meaning of the words, "*Being justified freely of His grace.*"

But this is emphasized in chapter 4., in the cases of the two men, Abraham and David, who are there brought in to illustrate the truth. "**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**" He was probably the best man of the olden days, but his works did not put him into the blessing of justification; if they had done so he would have had cause for boasting, but this is a position from which all the boasting of men is excluded (3. 27), for *the works of the best man cannot put him into it.*

On the other hand, nothing is said of David's works; instead, he spoke of his *iniquities* and his *sins*. No man in the Old Testament records fell lower than David in his sins against God and man, and yet we learn that his sins did not

exclude him from the blessing. For he "describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 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 is true that repentance for those sins and faith in a pardoning God were produced in his soul, but the introduction of his case in this chapter is to show that his sins, ten thousand times more heinous because of his knowledge of God's mercy, did not exclude him from the blessing of justification. **IT IS A BLESSING INTO WHICH THE WORKS OF THE BEST MAN CANNOT BRING HIM, AND FROM WHICH THE SINS OF THE WORST MAN NEED NOT EXCLUDE HIM.** It is altogether of and from God, and binds the heart of the sinner who receives it in the bonds of everlasting gratitude to the gracious Giver of it.

God takes to Himself two wonderful titles in this chapter: "*Him that justifieth the ungodly*" (ver. 5), and "*Him that raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead*" (ver. 24). It is thus that He is presented to our faith, so that we may not only have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, being justified by faith, but that we may also joy in Him through the same Person, in whose precious blood God has found a righteous way of bestowing His blessing upon us.

"The Lord said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before Thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land" (Deut. 2. 31).

There is a most important thought and principle lying hidden in this verse. God can truly enlarge His gifts only as we enlarge our reception and possession of them. The

capacity for receiving and appropriating is a condition of further bestowing. God begins to give, and we are to begin to possess, and so go on possessing.

Christ or Antichrist.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

WHAT a marvellous expression of divine goodness was seen when God became Man! (John 1. 14).

What an awful expression of man's wickedness will be seen when man claims to be God! (2 Thess. 2.).

The former was seen in a lowly Christ.

The latter will be seen in Antichrist.

The former is the expression of God's love.

The latter will be the expression of Satan's hate.

The moral effects of the one and the principles that are at work to produce the other are the two great forces in the world to-day. They can never blend. Sooner will oil and water mix, sooner will love and hate embrace, sooner will the light of noonday and the darkness of midnight exist side by side as that Christian and anti-Christian influences can work in harmony together.

Satan knows they can never unite. Nor does he wish it. His aim is that the evil should overcome the good, the darkness should expel the light, that error should strangle truth. There is no quarter given nor asked for by him.

Mighty as Satan's power is, enormous as his resources are, he knows full well that he is on tether. His first victory in the Garden of Eden was clouded over by the prophecy of his defeat. Aye, and the very Seed of the frail woman he had just succeeded in overcoming was to become the instrument of effecting its fulfilment. He utterly failed in tempting Christ in the wilderness. He (the Seed of the woman) could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." In the resurrection of Jesus Satan beheld the earnest of the fulfilment of his doom. And it can be said of a poor weak believer, "he that is begotten of God keepeth *himself*, and that wicked one toucheth Him not."

It may be asked, If Christian and anti-Christian influences never and cannot blend, as totally opposite qualities cannot, how does Satan work his own ends, for work them he does to a large extent? His persistent effort is to lower the character and thus destroy in measure

that which bears the name of Christ in this world. The woman putting leaven into the three measures of meal; the great tree, with birds of the air lodging in its branches, springing from the grain of mustard-seed; the tares sown among the wheat by the enemy—all illustrate methods that have, alas! been all too successful (Matt. 13.).

Satan's effort is aimed at *Christians*. It is only through *persons* he can work. He seeks to persuade them to adopt lower ground than the Scriptures give them. He does this on very specious grounds. Only consent to be friendly with the world, and this in the teeth of the scripture, "*Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (James 4. 4), and the world will be won for Christ. Only take up its politics, and this in spite of the scripture, "*Our conversation*" (citizenship, politics, as illustrated by the full citizenship that obtained in the Greek free cities of that day) "*is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Phil. 3. 20), and politics will become Christian.

But has the world been won for Christ by such methods? As a matter of fact there are more heathen to-day than there were ten years ago. The British Empire is more religious, and less Christian. Have politics of any shade become more really Christian in this land, for instance?

What matters it if men are better off in mere material comforts if they go to hell in the end? What is the good of the blue ribbon, if it satisfies men apart from Christ, which it does so often? I do not say a word against temperance. It is a virtue enjoined in Scripture. But I do say, "*Preach Christ*." A Christian man will, if consistent, be a temperate man. But to "*put on Christ*" is better than resolutions, however praiseworthy. Conversion, not reformation, is needed. It embraces more, and lasts longer; one is for time, the other is for eternity. There is no comparison between them.

* * * *

Men are bending all their energies to the accomplishment of their design

of making the world happy without God. Alas! how blind they are, for all their efforts are only making the world more intolerable to live in.

The first step man took in that direction is significant as evidencing the power behind his desires, and the real effects of that step. It is in principle similar to the aim of the Antichrist to become God. Our first parents wished to be as gods. It was, indeed, the first step, which will *culminate* in the avowal of the Antichrist in a day not far future.

The moving force in the temptation in the Garden of Eden was SATAN. The temptation was powerful in the glittering prize he held out—"Ye shall be as gods." Satan holds out the same prize before the ambition of men to day; and he will be the animating power of the coming Antichrist.

Further, Adam, in attempting to rise, *fell*. They got the knowledge of good in contradistinction to evil, because having the good, all they acquired by their sin was the knowledge of evil. They lost the power of the pursuit of good, and acquired the power to do evil—evil that brought its own punishment, toil, sweat, sorrow in conception, death, judgment. Could wreck be more lamentable or fall be deeper?

And from that sad moment in Eden's garden, when man was driven out to a cursed earth, to thorns and thistles, to toil and sorrow, man with an unconquerable conceit has refused to learn his lesson and find his good in submitting to God.

Passing over Old Testament times, throughout which the spirit of fallen man ever moved him along the road of which the first disobedience was the gate, we come to the times of the Church. Early troubles came through men seeking importance in the church. "I am of Paul. I am of Cephas," tells its own tale. Diotrophes stands as a byword as a man who loved to have pre-eminence, and who was ruthless as to his method of obtaining it. The Papacy, with its awful history of blood and intrigue, is Diotrophesian.

The result of departure from the truth is that the church has been secularized. Instead of being unworldly she is worldly and political, her spiritual power has

gone, and she is driven to expedients more and more desperate as time goes on to keep up even the semblance of being listened to. The full effects of Christians tampering with worldly ways and means were not seen all at once, but now Christians are beginning to wake up from their slumber in a fools' paradise. The definite invoking of the world's patronage, the embarking upon worldly methods, did not bear all its bitter fruits at once. As a few drops of water trickling through a tiny crack in the dykes of Holland, which a child's hand might have stayed, but which, unnoticed and unchecked, increases, until the sullen waters sweep away every obstacle, and at one mad rush spoils the industry of centuries.

So were the beginnings of worldliness in the church, but now we are on the verge of a mighty moral cataclysm. Higher criticism, high churchism, in other words, rationalism and ritualism; indifference and infidelity among the masses; indolence, too, and lack of faithfulness on the part of God's people seem to threaten the total destruction of vital Christianity.

Thank God, we know that He will maintain His truth, and a witness to it in the world, until the coming of the Lord. The question is, how may we be steady in the place of witnesses.

I believe that a due appreciation of the Incarnation of our Lord will greatly help us to avoid the snares of Satan. He was the eternal Word, the Son of God, God, the Son, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, yet He stooped and became man. "*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.*" He never ceased to be God. He became man. He will never cease to be God, He will never cease to be man—One Person. The inscrutability of His Person is complete. We mortals may never know that mystery. "*No man knoweth the Son but the Father,*" places a barrier to the workings of the natural mind.

We can bow before Him as Thomas of old did, and exclaim in deepest worship, "*My Lord and my God.*"

And as we behold the moral grandeur of His stoop, and as we see *the design* of

it, that He came to die, that His death should enable God in righteousness to meet our desperate need, and set Him free to work in the bright designs of His purpose and love in making Him the Head of a new race, "the Captain of our salvation," the Head, too, of the church, His body, thus bringing us into association with Him as the blessed risen Man at His right hand; as we mark *the effects* of it, setting aside man of the old order, man after the flesh, and condemning the world, we are freed, in the measure in which we apprehend it, from the effort to rise in selfish rebellious pride out of our God-appointed place, which is, in short, the very essence of what is anti-Christian, and will be seen, in all its full effect, in Anti-christ himself.

We are men, we shall never be anything else; but the true appreciation of this marvellous stoop of the blessed Lord, with all that it means, will keep us in our place, deliver us from the self-seeking spirit of the age, and produce in us those qualities of meekness, humility, grace, and patience, which are so foreign to us naturally, but which well become those who are *lifted* to such a plane of blessing as is involved by being "in Christ."

Philippians 2. 1-11 shows us how the Spirit of God would use the stoop of the Lord Jesus to effect our minds and practice. "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*"

* * * *

What shall we do? We need not despair. The intelligent Christian is bound to be optimistic. Impressed by the awful power of Satan he sees the mightier power of God. The power of evil is finite; the power of good is infinite. Antichrist rears his head in vain; Satan knows his ultimate doom. It shall yet be said, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." But in the meanwhile, what? I answer in one word—SEPARATION.

The Old Testament warns against wearing a garment made of linen and woollen; of sowing a field of mingled seed; of harnessing an ox and ass together; the New Testament tells us of the folly of patching an old garment with a piece of new cloth, or of putting new wine into old bottles. The linen of the Christian need not be woven with the woollen of the world, the seed of the kingdom must not be mingled with the seed of the enemy, the worn-out garment of "the old man" must not be patched by the piece of cloth of "the new man;" the new wine of joy in the Holy Ghost cannot be put into the old bottles of "the flesh." In other words, SEPARATION is the keynote of divine life in all dispensations.

SEPARATION from the world and a worldly church becomes our safety and happiness. "*Come out from among them 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.). "*Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*" (2 Tim. 2. 20). Shall we respond? Can we trust His wisdom, His power, and His care? Dare we refuse? Oh! for a mighty Spirit-given movement on such lines in these dark closing days. And in being *separate* in heart and ways from the world and worldly religion, we shall be the more truly available for the needs of the world. Never was there a day when the gospel was so needed to be constantly and fearlessly proclaimed. Never was there a phase in the church's history when there was more necessity for sound words to be placed before the Lord's people. May we be up and doing. May we be devoted and consecrated. May we be divinely optimistic. The Lord comes quickly and then our path of separation shall be vindicated as being for His glory and the *true* blessing of the world.

Thine, Lord, am I, when traitorous defection
 Spreads over that which bears Thy sacred name;
 Thine in the evil day of Thy rejection;
 Thine in the place of Thy reproach and shame:
 Then doubly Thine, my Saviour, Thine for ever,
 Tho' legions fell arise the link to sever.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 15.

The Conflict with the Leaders of the Jews.

Matthew 22. Mark 12. Luke 20.

WE come now to the closing incidents of our Lord's life on earth. He is found in sharp antagonism to the religious leaders of the nation in all three Gospels we are comparing—an acute phase of that conflict between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent which began in Genesis 4.; its climax is reached and the true mark of the serpent's poison comes out clearly in the causeless hatred (Ps. 109. 4) with which Christ is rejected, slandered and crucified.

These final scenes are introduced by a deputation of chief priests, scribes, and elders keen to inquire by what authority Christ had done these things. The reference is doubtless to the cleansing of the temple on a previous day. The Lord at once proceeds to test their claim to ask the question by questioning them on a point of all importance to themselves and their followers. The heaven-sent ministry of John Baptist and the authority of Jesus which was called in question were really bound up together, for "John bare witness of the truth." If they could not tell the origin of the mission of the Baptist, their claim to be spiritual guides failed, as also the title to question Him. This incident is related in similar terms in all three Gospels; its importance as helping to free the disciples from an evil influence is thus marked. MATTHEW tells us later (in 23. 2) how the *position* of the scribes and Pharisees as occupying Moses' seat should be recognized; on the other hand, their moral *state* is such that the Lord warns His own not to follow their works—"they say and do not."

In MATTHEW the Lord's reply to His questioners is followed by three parables, only the central one of which is found in MARK and LUKE. In the more dispensational teaching of MATTHEW it was plainly necessary to exhibit the change from the legal demand rightly expected

from the husbandman to the similitude of the kingdom, in which the only qualification for acceptance is the wedding garment provided by the king. These parables have been dealt with in an earlier number, and it only remains to notice the accounts of the coming forward of the representatives of the Jewish sects with their questions, each company receiving from the lips of the Master the unsought-for exposure of their state.

The intention at the back of their apparent candour is definitely told in Luke 20. 19, 20; they wanted to entangle Him with the Roman power and make their Gentile masters the tool of their evil design, the obloquy of which they would thus escape.

The spies pretending to be just men were of the two antagonistic parties of Herodians and Pharisees, and the question of the tribute-money was probably a real matter of contention. Whose side would He take in the controversy? In either case it would seem He must be loser. If He sided with the Herodians, He would lose the favour of the people, and MARK tells us the common people heard Him gladly (12. 37). If He went with the Pharisees, He could be accused to the Roman power as refusing the rights of Cæsar. The manner of His answer is founded on His knowledge of the questioners. The word used by MARK (12. 15) denotes *conscious, intuitive knowledge*, thence "He *learned* their wickedness" (Matt. 22. 18). In LUKE, "He *perceived* or *considered* their craftiness." The reply, which does not vary in the three records, not only silences His adversaries and excites the wonder of the people, but has afforded needed guidance to His followers ever since.

The Sadducees next approach with a question which Jesus tells them demonstrates their ignorance both of the Scriptures and of the power of God,

How in a word the Lord indicates that which makes resurrection, now so generally denied, a matter of faith! It is a question of God's *power*, not of our comprehension. LUKE omits the Lord's rebuke, but, as usual, the terms of His reply take us morally deeper into the question (20. 34-38) than in the other records. The present age is contrasted with that which God will introduce by the exercise of a power demonstrated by a resurrection out of and from among the dead (the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished, Rev. 20.).

MATTHEW, more occupied with the change of dispensation on its earthly side, does not mention this point. The two forms of unbelief so common to-day, the sleep of the soul and the non-resurrection of the body, both receive a direct denial in the Lord's answer. All live to God, and "the very existence of man is adduced as a proof of the necessity of his resurrection." Even the scribes seemed compelled to admit He had spoken well (Luke 20. 39).

LUKE does not give the final question of one of the Pharisees, a teacher of the law; this is found in MATTHEW and MARK, the latter, as so often, giving a fuller description of his character.

MATTHEW deals with the national state more than with the individual. The Lord's answer is remarkable as extracting the spiritual essence of the law and so indicating what is acceptable with God (*cf.* Micah 6. 6-8).

Every hostile voice being now silenced,

the fitting time has come for the question of the moment, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. 22. 42). True heart-response to this puts man's soul right with God and qualifies for all divine teaching.

LUKE here joins with the other two writers in recording this incident. This last appeal, for such it really was, is made to the Pharisees (Matt.). The Sadducees by their unbelief seem more inaccessible to the power of Scripture, but mere orthodoxy leaves the heart and conscience alike untouched. They refuse instruction and must therefore hear their condemnation; this is briefly given in MARK and LUKE, but is expanded in MATTHEW into a sevenfold pronouncement of woe in chapter 23. (ver. 14 should be omitted—*see* R.V.). The first three of these show the effect of the leaven on others, the last four on themselves. In the close of the chapter it should be noticed that distinction is made between those who cannot escape the judgment of Gehenna and Jerusalem, the elect city, whose conversion and blessing awaits another day, when the Messiah will be known and welcomed according to Psalm 118.

This elect remnant is seen in the next chapter undergoing its purification in the time of their great tribulation (24. 21, 22).

The true character of a remnant is beautifully exhibited in the incident of the widow introduced at this point in MARK and LUKE. She keeps nothing back for herself. (C. E. H. WARREN.)

Matthew's Gospel (chap. 16.). *(Continued from Vol. III., page 381.)*

Verses 1-5.

IN this chapter the first revelation of the purpose of God as to the Assembly is given. It is not found in the other Gospels, though the circumstances that led up to it are given in Mark and Luke. Its place here significantly follows upon the judgment of the flesh in the varied forms of it as declared by the Lord in chapter 15.

The persistent unbelief of Pharisees and Sadducees is again manifested in

that they seek a sign from heaven in the presence of the greatest that could be given, in Him who was with them. To this no sign could be added but that of the prophet Jonah, and this put the faith of true disciples to the test; for when the Lord took occasion to warn them against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, they thought that He referred to their having forgotten to take bread with them, so little had they been affected by His power in feeding the multitudes in which they had been allowed active participation.

Verses 13-21.

Unbelief shows itself in other forms also, as the Lord now raises the solemn question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" The only answer was that while all admitted that He was a prophet sent from God, no one cared really to know who He was. The Lord turns from the heartless indifference around to the little circle of His own. "But whom say ye that I am?" This draws out Peter's confession, recorded as to the fact in all the Gospels, but with a phase of it peculiar to Matthew, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." No competency of the flesh could have discerned this fresh aspect of His glory. It was by the express revelation of the Father that Peter knew it. The Son of the living God predicated a life come into the world in the person of the Son superior to all the effects of sin and the power of Satan, a power to be made manifest in a *risen* Christ. The Lord also confirms to Peter the name given him at his conversion (Petros), and reveals that, upon this rock (Petra), He would build His assembly. That is, upon the glory of the person of Christ revealed to, and confessed by, Peter's faith; by which faith he partook of the nature of the building and was a living stone—ready for its place when the building should begin. The power of Satan could not prevail against this that Christ would build—a promise, be it observed, in no way applicable to that aspect of the building in which, later, man was to have his responsibility (1 Cor. 3), with its inevitable failure and consequent judgment. The place thus given Peter in connection with the assembly is common to all believers (1 Peter 2. 5), but the Lord added that of special administrative authority in the kingdom of heaven, personal to himself, for he entrusted him with the keys of it.

Verses 21-28.

From that time forth the testimony that He was the Christ ("Jesus" in

this verse has no authority) was to cease (cf. Luke 9. 20-22), and the Lord unfolds to His disciples what was before Him in Jerusalem, to "suffer many things of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The cross is what answers upon earth to the heavenly glory in which He had been revealed to Peter. This, the earthly consequences of the glory of Christ, puts his poor servant thoroughly to the test. "Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee," thus as Satan seeking to deter the Lord from the path essential to that glory. That which exposed Peter to the enemy's power was that his mind was not set on the things that be of God but upon those that be of men—terrible witness of what the influence of man and his sphere is.

But what can be more solemn than the instruction of the Lord in the connection of the truth here given? To follow Christ according to a relationship to be formed with Him upon resurrection ground as in the assembly He was about to build, involved the antagonism of every principle of the flesh. Self must be denied, the cross taken up. To cling to what goes to make up life in this world would be to lose it; to lose it for His sake would be the way to find it really. The whole world and the soul now lay in direct contrariety to each other; to gain the world would be to forfeit the soul. No wonder the path of the assembly has not been found to be an easy one in such a world. It was a very different one from what Jewish disciples looked for in following Christ to the throne of the kingdom. Yet the moment was sure when the Son of Man should come in His own glory (as Luke adds) and in that of His Father and of the angels, and then He would reward everyone according to his works.

(J. A. TRENCH.)

We must feed upon Christ with fresh energy of spirit every day, else we shall cease to grow.

If we are unconscious of our infirmities we shall have to learn them by experience.

Answers to Correspondents.

(THE EDITORS).

"Time, times, and a half" (Dan. 12.).

G.S.B.

Makes inquiry as to this chapter, and asks what part of Revelation answers to it.

"A time, times, and a half" define the period during which that will take place which is spoken of as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30. 7) and "great tribulation" (Matt. 24. 21). A "time" stands for a year in Daniel (*see* chap. 4. 16), so that this "time, times, and a half" means three years and a half. This period of sorrow for "the holy people" (Dan. 12. 7), that is, the Jews, will come in between Revelation 9. and 13. inclusive. In these chapters reference to this exact time is made five times—as "forty and two months" (11. 2; 13. 5), as "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (11. 3; 12. 6), and as "a time, times, and half a time" (12. 14). The Jewish month was always reckoned as thirty days, and, with this as a divisor, 1260 days represent exactly three years and a half. It will be noted that these numbers have reference to the Jews only, other woes will be happening in the earth at the same time, but the sorrows through which they pass will be special to them and will come upon them because of their rejection of their Messiah at His first coming to them.

Christ as Head.

A Reader

Makes some inquiries as to the expression in 1 Corinthians 12. 3, "The head of every man is Christ," and also asks if we can be holding the Head apart from victory over the world.

The truth of the early part of 1 Corinthians 11. is given to regulate the conduct of women in their approach to God, and headship there carries the thought of authority and direction. The head of the woman is the man, so that she, if subject to God's order, does not take the place of leader, but covers her head as a sign of subjection. But the head of every man is Christ, He has been placed in this position with regard to every man, so that all should be subject to Him and take their direction from Him. That men refuse to do this does not alter the truth of it; it is God's

order for creation, but it is only in the house of God that we may expect to see it carried out.

"Holding the head" (Col. 2. 9) brings in another line of truth entirely, namely the vital unity that exists between Christ the Head and the members of His body. They have certainly to look to Him for direction, but there is more. He is their life, from Him they derive nourishment and character, yea, everything needful, as members of His body, for their own welfare and the glory of God. His position also defines theirs, for they are buried with Him (2. 12) and risen with Him (3. 1), and in consequence they are to set their minds on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. One who has fallen under the power of the world, whether it be its philosophy or religion (the best it has) is certainly not holding the Head.

"I have seen God face to face."

R.W. inquires

As to the meaning of those passages in the Old Testament which speak of men seeing God, since they seem to be in contradiction to John 1. 18, which states that "no man hath seen God at any time."

In the Old Testament God made Himself known to men, and they saw Him according to that relationship in which He was pleased to set them with Himself; but every revelation of Himself was only partial in its character. God was never seen in His essential nature and being by the eye of man. This comes out plainly in His words to Moses: "There shall no man see My face and live" (read the whole passage, Exod. 33. 18-23). To the elders in the mount (Exod. 24) He showed Himself according to His holiness and purity in connection with the covenant He had just made with Israel. To Moses (chap. 33.) He showed Himself in His sovereign goodness and mercy when His people had sinned. But it still abides true that He "dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6. 16). And it is to this, God in His nature and being, that John 1: 18 refers. Yet in

the greatness of divine love, the Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, has come forth to declare Him to us so that we may know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

"Why did God allow evil to come into the world?"

E.F.B. writes :

"If God knew beforehand that man would choose evil instead of good, why did God allow evil to come into the world? Is there any answer to this which will satisfy an unbeliever?"

No answer to the above problem will satisfy unbelief, and the natural man understandeth not the things of God (1 Cor. 2. 11-14).

The origin of evil, and the reason why God, who knew all things from the beginning, permitted it to enter into the world have not been revealed to us, but we may rest assured that He has an answer to every question that can be raised against His righteous rule in the universe. Meanwhile faith in God will make us rest in the fact that the "Judge of all the earth will do right."

The raising of such questions as these

by men is often but an effort on their part to shift the responsibility of their sinning from their own shoulders and to put it upon God. It is rebellious and colossal folly, made infinitely worse by the fact that while they are excusing themselves and accusing God, they are refusing His way of salvation, salvation not only from the future penalty of sin, but from its present power.

Miscellaneous.

G.S.B. "The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead" and "His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8. 11) is the Spirit of God in both instances.

A Reader. "Cremer," so often referred to in "Bible Study," is the "Cremer's Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek," published by Clark, Edinburgh.

The Lord's Coming.

We have received several letters and questions on the above subject arising out of papers which appeared in our March number. These will be dealt with, if God permit, in our next issue.

The Gospel of the Glory.

The gospel of the glory is set forth in 2 Corinthians 3. There we find the contrast between Mount Sinai and what we have at the present time: one is a *demand for righteousness* from the glory of God, the other is a *ministration of righteousness* from the glory of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; so the nearer we approach to the glory, the more we are assured of His righteousness in having us here. We get a good illustration of this in the dream of an old divine when he was learning the gospel. He dreamed that he went

to the gate of a palace and was so well received that he went in, and as he passed through each succeeding suite of rooms he was still better received, until he reached the presence chamber of the sovereign, where he was received with acclamation! So the nearer we approach, the more assured we are of welcome. *We* are not repelled by the glory like Isaiah (Isa. 6.), but, on the contrary, "beholding the glory of the Lord . . . we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

"How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings" (Ps. 36, 7).

To our Readers.

OUR readers will learn with sorrow that the pen of our beloved friend and co-editor, H. D. R. Jameson, will no more contribute to the pages of this magazine. His earth-life is closed. He is "absent from the body, . . . present with the Lord."

For us this is a heavy blow, for he was a true yoke-fellow, and a man of spiritual power and perception. But it was his tenderness of heart, his gentle gracious demeanour, his thoughtfulness for others, and his deep love to our Lord Jesus Christ and His saints that endeared him to us, and because of these precious traits we shall sorely miss him. They were the fruit of the Spirit in him and a cause of thanksgiving in many. It seems strange that one so useful should have been taken away from his service and his family at so early an age, but we know that God's way is perfect. He can make no mistake, and everyone of us who love God and are the called according to His purpose can sing, aye and sing the more sweetly in days of sorrow :

"With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love ;
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned amid the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

Nor will we wait until we reach the glory to bless Him, we do it here and now in the valley of tears, for here it is that we prove the greatness of God's consolations.

Our brother had a clear and penetrating mind and was quick to detect error ; he was a diligent student of the Word, had been versed in it indeed from his childhood, and every doctrine was tested by that infallible standard. But above all he had a heart that delighted to adore and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be observed, if his papers be carefully read, that the greatness and glory of Christ was his chiefest theme. This comes into striking evi-

dence in the papers, "The Word—the Son," and "Many Crowns are on His Head," which appeared in the January and February numbers of this year's issues of the magazine. We shall miss this ministry from our pages, but God, who knows the needs of His household, will surely send the meat in due season.

The disease that loosened the cords and pulled up the stakes of his earthly tabernacle took from the dear lips the power of articulation for some weeks before the end, so that the thoughts that passed through his mind could not find expression in words, but we had but to repeat one of the wonderful verses from God's wonderful Book to bring the look of brightness to the eyes, or quote such sweet lines as :

"How sweet the name of JESUS sounds
In a believer's ear,
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds
And drives away his fears."

These things he understood, and he understands them better now, for "to die is gain," and "to depart to be with Christ is far better." So wrote an inspired apostle, and so shall every saint of God prove whose earthly tabernacle is dissolved.

God gathers His servants to the rest of His bosom just as He sees they can be spared from the earth, and He goes on with His work, and we, who are left, will, by His grace, go on with Him—walking before Him as dear children, growing in our appreciation of the preciousness of Christ, provoking one another to love and good works, and reaching out into the cold blind world of men to lay hold of them for the Lord and His glory ; and we trust that "Scripture Truth" will continue to be of some little help in these things.

Brethren pray for us, and pray especially for the dear widow and three fatherless boys. It will be a comfort to them to know that you are doing this, and your prayers shall receive an abundant answer from God. To whom be glory, both now and ever. AMEN.

The Work of the Gospel.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THE fear has been expressed that there is a danger of our becoming, as Christians, too evangelistic. This is a strange fear and those who feel it must have imbibed a strange gospel, or sadly backslidden from the true one, if ever they knew it. Is it possible for us to become more evangelistic than the Apostle Paul, who, with a persistent zeal and indomitable faith, carried the glorious gospel to Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free? Is it possible for us to be more compassionate of heart and untiring in activity than the One who said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor?" If not, then we need not fear; there is no danger of our becoming too evangelistic.

The tendency, alas! is all in the opposite direction, nay, it is not a tendency merely that we have to deplore, but the sad fact that the evangelistic spirit, which is the true spirit of Christianity, seems ready to die. The indifference to the eternal welfare of the souls of men on the part of the vast majority of Christians is appalling, and should cause great exercise of conscience and searchings of heart. This indifference, and the fact that some should fear that we may become "too evangelistic," is but sad evidence that the love of many has waxen cold.

It has been said by one who was a true minister of Christ: "I believe the Christian who is not cultivating an evangelistic spirit is in a truly deplorable condition. I believe, too, that the assembly which is not cultivating and manifesting an evangelistic spirit is in a dead state. One of the truest marks of spiritual growth and prosperity is earnest anxiety after the conversion of souls. It is hard to believe that "the word of Christ" is "dwelling richly" in any one who is

not making some effort to impart that Word to his fellow-sinners. It matters not what may be the amount of the effort; it may be to drop a few words in the ear of a friend, to give a tract, to pen a note, to breathe a prayer. But one thing is certain, namely, that a healthy, vigorous Christian will be an evangelistic Christian—a teller of good news—one whose sympathies, desires, and energies are ever going forth toward "the regions beyond" (*C. H. Mackintosh*).

But we must understand what evangelistic work is, lest we are deceived by what is spurious and not of God. That is not evangelistic work which, adopting sensational methods, works upon the feelings of the hysterical, and produces converts which last a day or a week or until the special excitement is over; that is the work of the devil, whatever else it pretends to be, and the results of it are often disgust with, or suspicion of, gospel work in general on the part of thoughtful men, or a callous indifference henceforward, or despair, on the part of those who have come under its influence. In any case the work of God is brought into disrepute, and He alone can calculate the harm of it.

Nor is evangelistic work the merely holding of gospel services because the regular time for such has come round, and so, perforce, must be held; about such services there is often a frigid formality, a formality that hardens with a terrible hardness those who attend them regularly. This is often seen in the young who are children of Christian parents. "Gospel-hardened" has become a current phrase, but may not the sad condition that it describes be largely due to these dead and powerless services? We thankfully admit that the regular Sunday evening services are often means of great blessing to many, but this is where those who hold them

do so in dependence upon God and communion with the Master, and the evangelistic spirit is in evidence in the gathering in of the unconverted.

Evangelistic activity of the genuine sort springs from the divine love that God implants in the heart of a man who is himself saved, and this love makes him desire the blessing of others. It is true that the most fervent desire that ever flamed in the heart of a Christian for the souls of men is as nothing to the boundless desires of the heart of God; nevertheless these desires are the same in nature and character, for divine love cannot act differently in the Christian from the way it acts in the Christian's God.

This love is lighted in the heart by contact with Christ, and is kept brightly burning as His company is kept. It must find its outlet in gracious activity, which, to be effective in blessing, must be directed by Himself. *"Come ye after Me, and ye shall catch men."*

He is not an evangelist who is satisfied with the public platform, no matter how eloquently he may discourse, but he is one who, it may be with stammering tongue and broken utterance, goes after men because he loves their souls, who carries to them the glad news because it thrills his own soul like a trumpet call, who will win them for Christ at any cost to himself because Christ has become unspeakably precious to himself. We need to pray that God will raise up such in these dead, cold days, men whose love shall make them "ache

for souls," and be in season and out of season in their determination to win them, and may we covet to be such.

But our activities must be IN HIS NAME, for so runs the commission that our Lord has given. We may do it by His authority and count upon the "all power" which is given unto Him, but the work must be done as He would do it were He here, for we are in His stead to proclaim the life-giving Word—as His representatives, His ambassadors, this is the import of "IN MY NAME." Solemn consideration! Demanding the refusal of every method and motive in the prosecution of the work that is not consistent with that name; demanding, too, the refusal of popularity in the world and the acceptance of the path that He trod.

"Yet it is well, and Thou hast said in season,
'As is the Master shall the servant be;'
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honour which they gave not Thee."

"In My name" defines also the character that the servant should bear, for it declares the character of the Master, and how shall we describe that? Meekness, lowliness, long-suffering, patience, forgiveness, tender compassion, and quenchless love, all these and more shone forth in Him with a wonderful shining, and it is ours to reproduce that character in our service amongst men. Oh, the dignity of it! The distinction! The incalculable privilege! Shall we not embrace it, and in lowly dependence upon God make our lives one ceaseless psalm of thanksgiving to Him for His grace in permitting such as we are to have a part in this work of God?

Originality in Service.

There is an originality about every servant who comes from God, for God does not fashion two servants in the same mould—that is man's work—and just in proportion as we are formed in the presence of God, shall we each have our own peculiar fitness for our

own service. The man who comes from God will not put on the armour that others have worn, or follow in the beaten track where other servants have trodden; he will not confer with flesh and blood as to the scope or character of his service.

The Indifferent World and the Lukewarm Church.

(WALTER B. WESTCOTT)

THE indifference so prevalent in the world to-day is, to some extent at least, accounted for by the indifference in the church. It is very rare to see a Christian who gives the impression that he truly and wholeheartedly believes all that he professes. The onlooker, in consequence, frequently labels Christianity as cant, and affects to believe that there is nothing in it.

No reasonable excuse can, of course, be made for such an attitude, but it would be well if the folly of it were demonstrated by the general consistency and fervour of Christian lives.

It is generally admitted that the doctrines of Christianity and the teaching of Christ stand on a level unapproachable, and the "cant" consists in the evident failure to put them into practice.

No sober-minded believer who truly mourns over the alarming indifference of the age will fail to mourn also over his own coldness and lethargy. It was said of the Lord Jesus "the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up," and the life of the Gentile Apostle astounds us with its burning zeal and ardour. But where shall we find men of bold decision, profound conviction, and consuming zeal to-day? Alas! for our Laodicean lukewarmness, so nauseous to the Lord. "I would thou wert (either cold or) HOT!"

The patent fact is that the church of the present day is burdened with a false gentility and an unctuous respectability that puts decorum before doctrine and ease before earnestness. It is time that we Christians undertook a little self-examination. Do we really believe the doctrines we profess and the texts we freely quote? Let us consider one or two of them.

1. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1. 16). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16. 15, 16). Do we believe that the gospel, and the gospel only, is the God-appointed means of salvation? that the great majority of people in the world to-day have never heard of it? that men and women are living and dying in their sins all around us? Dare we, who know the glorious, gracious provision for man in his sin and bondage, withhold it from the people?

May the Lord thrust out preachers, truth-distributors, soul-winners into the midst of the sin and strife and squalor of "all the world."

Some Christians confine their "fellowship in the gospel" to attending gospel preachings or contributing of their means to those who are working for the Master, but did *He* not say, "He gave to *every* man his *work*?" Are you and I doing some work for Christ? If you have not found your "line" yet, ask the Lord to show you speedily what it is, and see that you put a hook at the end of it! For both line and hook are needed if men are to be caught.

2. Do we believe in "Eternal Punishment" for impenitent souls? As to our creed we may still give this truth a place, but oh, brethren, do we preach and live as if the meaning of it had really gripped us? Shall we not retire into the presence of God and ask Him to make us realize as much as we can bear of its appalling meaning? No hope! No mercy! No escape for ETERNITY for the man or woman, no matter how amiable,

how cultured, how near and dear to us, who neglects so great salvation! And how the mind reels and the heart aches as we behold the giddy, careless, godless throng, madly pursuing pleasure, sin, lust, on the downward way to a Christless HELL!

May God sober us, melt us, give us compassion, send us to our knees, and set us on our feet to win men for their own sakes and for Christ's sake.

3. "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22. 20). Do we believe that the Lord is coming back *very soon*? Everything points to it, and most of us affirm it, but *does the truth practically affect us*?

At any moment—so we say—and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—so Scripture says—our opportunities for service, and the last hope of Christendom, may die away for ever. No more sorrow, no more failure, truly—and our hearts are glad to know it; then we shall see Him, "whom, not having seen, we love," and His joy and ours will be complete.

But what about those who are left? What will the Lord's coming mean to them?

When Lot was hurried out of the doomed city of Sodom, the angels asked him urgently, "Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law and thy sons and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, *bring them out of this place.*"

Has the reader any unsaved relatives or well-loved friends? Pray for them, warn them, plead with them, for a more awful doom than that of Sodom awaits those who are not ready when Jesus comes.

* * * *

Oh! that men and women who owe their all to grace of God and the cross of Christ may be aroused to the reality of the great truths so freely spoken of, and may there be a great forward movement, led by the Spirit of God, intensifying affection for Christ, zeal for God, and pity for a dying world!

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 6.

(H. J. VINE).

Israel, Egypt, and Assyria under Christ.

REFERRING back again very briefly to the close of Isaiah 19., it is most interesting to note that the two nations which were the cause of so much trouble to Israel shall be blessed of the Lord along with her in the day of Christ. What a glorious display it will be of the sovereign mercy as well as of the wisdom of our God!

Verse 23 shows that peaceful relations and interchange will be maintained between Assyria on the north and Egypt on the south, and Israel in between the two, the national head and centre: no longer a hindrance

as aforetime, but a help, given of God to sustain the system of nations which will then obtain in the world.

Verse 24 shows that these three nations together (restored under Christ Jesus) will be a means of blessing "*in the midst of the earth.*" Under our Lord Jesus Christ, the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS, they will form a threefold power for maintaining widespread blessing. Their territory forms the natural centre also.

Verse 25 shows that Israel will surely be the special earthly, national "*inheritance*" of the Lord, as the

assembly, of which we form part through surpassing grace, will be His heavenly possession, His bride; but how precious to see He will call Egypt "*My people*," and Assyria "*the work of My hands*." How it magnifies His mercy! How it teaches us of Himself, of His goodness!

To understand God's thoughts as to this future system of nations rightly, it should be remembered that such a system was before Him in Deuteronomy 32. 8; and Ezekiel speaks of it as "Eden," "the garden of God." Israel, Egypt, Assyria, etc., which were stately trees in this "garden" planted by God, were cut down, and a new system of nations and government came into force, finding its head, not in Israel, but in Babylon. This latter system, of which Daniel treats and not Ezekiel, continues to this day. It is a marvellous system, symbolized in the great image (Dan. 2.) of appalling developments. Christ suffered under it, and the assembly is being formed for glory during its prolongation. It will, however, be utterly ground to dust when the Stone smites it; when our Lord Jesus Christ comes; when He takes the power and the glory which rightly follows His sufferings and rejection. In that day the original system which God had before Him will be set up in Christ, the risen One from the dead. Then, indeed, under Him, Israel, Egypt, and Assyria will be "*a blessing in the midst of the earth*." All depends on Christ risen.

* * * *

We now pass to the closing scenes of the remaining sections of Isaiah (1). Chapters 28-35. present "the King in His beauty," reigning in righteousness; while chapters 36-39. form a distinct historical section of striking significance.

Isaiah (1) has four separate sections. Isaiah (2) has three. This is full of meaning, proving to us that in the God-inspired Word every detail is taken

into account—the numerical as well as the literal structure of it. Isaiah (1) in its four sections gives us the outward and public history; Isaiah (2) in its three sections the inward and moral history; and the $4+3=7$ showing the perfection (for which 7 stands in Scripture) of this book, in connection with which the religious rationalists of the day are displaying their folly, sawing it asunder, which, as it is commonly reported, the religionists of Isaiah's day did with the writer of it.

But our business is not with them and their dastardly work, but with the unfading and indestructible treasures which the Holy Spirit has placed here for us, for here we find "things concerning HIMSELF," and this is their wealth which we may possess.

In the last section mighty monarchies are overturned, as great mountains torn up by their roots, to make way for the rightful reign of the Son of David. Then the whole earth is clean dissolved and moved exceedingly! But in these chapters we see that woe comes upon the proud, the profane, and the rebellious people who are already possessing the land which is Jehovah's land, "the glory of all lands," for how could our Lord Jesus Christ establish His reign of righteousness amidst such surroundings?

The Sure Foundation.

The foundations of His throne must be firm; and therefore we are again reminded here that the Sign must appear in "*the depth*" first. "*The sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow*." Christ must first "*suffer and enter into His glory*." And so we read again of the precious Stone of chapter 8. in 28. 16: "I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a TRIED STONE, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: He that believeth shall not make haste." He who becomes a sure foundation, the foundation upon which so great and majestic a superstructure is to rest in perfect

stability, must indeed be proved by trials and testings which will leave no doubt as to His everlasting competency in the minds of the many myriads that are to have Him as their foundation. This precious Stone, this foundation Stone has been tested. He is indeed "A TRIED STONE," and proved to be "A SURE FOUNDATION." Others have been tried, only to prove themselves *sure failures!* Even the well-beloved and highly honoured Peter failed, and it is for our instruction that this is recorded. He failed in forbidding these very sufferings of Christ; he failed in denying Him at the time of His sorest trials; he failed in falling under metropolitan influence, so as to practically deny the truth of the gospel and of the church (Gal. 2.). It is *no wonder* that he points away from himself to this "precious Stone" in his 1st Epistle! It is *a wonder*, though, that so many should still claim Peter as the rock foundation of the assembly. God's Word tells us that he was the apostle to the Jews, as Paul was the apostle sent to the Gentiles, and who therefore most naturally was inspired to write the Epistle to the Gentile *Roman* believers in his day. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, Jesus Christ."

"The church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Who else could have endured the bitter trials and testings which were His? The sore sufferings at the hands of man? The appalling power of the prince of darkness? The fiery indignation of an outraged God that He suffered as He endured the stroke of sin's just judgment? Who? None but the sinless, spotless One! The precious Stone!

THE TRIED STONE! He not only endured the trials and testings, and came through them more than a triumphant conqueror, but in that fierce and fiery furnace His moral glories and excellences shone out

in their own native brilliance. He spake rightly! His silences were eloquent! His actions, like His words, told His intrinsic worth! Silver and gold and precious stones in their divine and spiritual meaning expressed their never-to-be-forgotten perfectness in Him, when in "*the depth*" of sorrow and solitary suffering He was "*the Tried Stone.*"

Truly His worthiness, and His trustworthiness also, has been thus proven. It can be said, "He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." We can rest with implicit confidence here! The foundation has been tried. It is firm, immovable, "A SURE FOUNDATION!"

Rear the superstructure of splendour and glory higher than the earth, yea, higher than the heavens themselves, our Lord and Saviour, the Christ, is divinely capable of sustaining it all. Yea, He alone, the perfect One, the proven One, and none other! Only He who is the Sign in "*the depth*" and "*the height.*"

Let the "crown of pride," then, be trodden under the foot (28. 3). Let the scornful religious leaders, with their refuge of lies and their agreement with Antichrist, be swept away (ver. 15), so that the Lord Himself may be "*for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the believing remnant*" (ver. 5).

Woe to the "crown of pride!" Woe to the city where David dwelt, now so "degraded" (29.)! "Woe to the rebellious children" (30.)! "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help" (31.)! But the necessary lesson shall be well learned by the believing remnant, and the "King shall reign" (32.); then, woe to those who took treacherous advantage of His suffering people (33.)! "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion" (34. 8). That being settled by the righteous Lord, then there shall be a full restoration, as we see in the final beautiful

words of our section: "*The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*" (35. 10).

* * * *

After this swift survey of our eight chapters, we shall be now at leisure to gaze adoringly at "*the height*" of glory which is herein shown to us, as connected with our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Pride, scorn, and rebellion are righteously removed, and we see, rising radiantly before our eyes like the sun in its splendour, the glorious majesty of the Messiah, the Christ, the King, brightening and blessing all with His beams, and especially where, in the days of His deep sorrow, the darkest shadows enshrouded Him: even where they murdered Him on the cursed tree! There is seen the brightest of His earthly shining. What a triumph of good over evil! It is just like our blessed God to act thus.

Thrice happy are they who have already accepted God's holy judgment of sin in its root and its fruit, at the cross. They are indeed at liberty, in the life of Christ risen, to be led by the Holy Spirit to behold the glory of Christ, and to see *unfolding* the

things concerning Himself which are *enfolded* in all the Scriptures of truth. These things which are hidden from the natural eye are all clear and beautiful to the spiritual eye. But let never so much favour be shown to the fallen, unregenerate man, he will not behold the beauty of the Lord; nay, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The righteous judgment of God, at the cross, against sin, must be accepted. There only can the way be found to the restful fields of spiritual wealth contained in the Word. Then made free in Christ Jesus, who is raised from the dead, having finished the work which He came to do, we may know the things of the Spirit, and "the mind of the Spirit, which is life and peace." It is true as to His work *on the cross*, and also consequently as to His work of government *on the throne*—"the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (32. 17, 18). It is as thus blessed even now, through the cross, that our hearts rise to rejoice in Christ Jesus and in His manifold perfections.

Tobiah's Taunt.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

IT was pretty biting. His words in their bare sarcasm stung.

Nehemiah—against whom the taunt was directed—had heard in the land of captivity serious things as to the state of his native land. A remnant left, and they in great affliction; the wall of Jerusalem broken down, and the gates burned with fire.

No wonder he wept and mourned and fasted and prayed. His sad countenance brought him to the notice of the king. God answered prayer by inclining the king's heart to answer Nehemiah's request.

Next we find him at Jerusalem, stirring up the remnant to zeal and energy, and stirring up too the opposition of God's enemies, so that it was said of Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite, "it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."

Nothing daunted by opposition and frowns, the work went on with vigour and heart. As the wall rose up, and piece joined to piece, the wrath of Sanballat knew no bounds. Tobiah joined in. "Even that which they

build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall," was his biting taunt. A fox springs lightly. What sort of wall would it be if his spring broke it down? A dry stone dyke—no cohesion, no strength—weakness itself.

Is this not like Christianity from a *human* standpoint? In its early days driven underground in the catacombs of Rome, it looked as if a little more opposition would crush it out of existence altogether. A poor weak thing it looked when a plain monk—Martin Luther—stood before the Emperor Charles V of Germany, the Papal Legate, cardinals, princes and electors. But it could not be crushed. Its vitality could not be destroyed. It lived.

To-day it looks as if it bid fair to be extinguished beneath the weight of Higher Criticism, New Theology, Spiritualism, worldliness, Socialism, the advance of heathen beliefs, making inroads, as they are doing, in so-called Christian lands. But will it be so?

* * * *

For answer turn to the *divine* side of things. Simon Peter had just confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and the answer had come quick from the Lord, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock [the confession of Christ as the Son of God] I will build

My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 13-18).

There are many Tobiahs about to-day. His generation, alas! runs no chance of dying out. But we have an answer for all comers. This is the answer to Tobias's taunt.

Christianity is a heavenly exotic. It can draw no nourishment or support from the soil of this world. Nor has it been shielded in a hot-house all these centuries. On the contrary, it has been exposed to every blast of Satan, saturated with blood, exposed to fire, smothered with the ashes of a corrupt religion, covered with the dust of a base superstition, and yet it lives, nay, it prospers by the very things destined to destroy it. No weapon formed against it prospers. No hand raised against it but perishes. It is a miracle of miracles.

And though on the *human* side we see much failure—sects, parties, divisions, truth given up, principles jettisoned, coldness, worldliness, Laodiceanism, the apostasy setting in with bewildering and startling rapidity—yet on the *divine* side nothing lost, all maintained according to God, the Lord Jesus soon to come to claim His bride and present her to Himself "a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing"—not a stone in the heavenly building lacking, not even one stone chipped or marred, all perfection, and for ever.

Correspondence.

SUNDAY EVENING GOSPEL SERVICES.

We shall be glad to publish suitable replies to these questions.

... I have been exercised of late as to the Sunday evening preachings in the regular places set apart for it. What ought to be done where companies are small and in view of the fact that frequently most or all who attend these are regular attendants and professed Christians? What should be the character of the servant's message?

(1) Ought he to announce the glad tidings with all simplicity as if it were the latest news, and those present strangers to it; or

(2) Should he seek to present, according to his ability in handling the Word, the great foundation

truths of Christianity, more particularly to help saints in their feeble apprehension of the truth?

One realizes that *course No. 1* is no easy matter, where the historical side of the message is already well known in a Christianized country; and on the other hand *course No. 2* savours of Christian ministry to the exclusion of God's message to the lost and perishing.

A discussion on a matter like this in the pages of "Scripture Truth" should prove helpful.

D. W. H.

The Son Unchanged (Heb. 1.)

WM. HY. WESTCOTT.

THERE is none to compare with the holy Person in whom God has spoken. He supersedes all that had place before His coming into the world ; and in Him we reach finality, for none will supersede Him. But can we speak of *finality* in One whose glories are infinite ?

Finality is reached in the sense that no other Person will ever appear, to be the revelation of God ; in Christ there is the complete, absolute, and eternal setting forth of all that God is.

But the glories of God are both infinite and eternal. All created magnitudes, however great they may appear when we place them in relation to each other, are small indeed when viewed in reference to Him. All the changes which may occur in the circumstances of responsible creatures, or in the ways and dispensations of time, or in the physical constitution of things, do not produce change in Him.

Here, then, is a fresh field in which we may discover and ponder the glories of Christ. He is the complete revelation of God. In Him God has spoken. The "sundry times" and "divers manners" of the former partial communications have given place to that which is neither circumscribed by the locality or time of its occurrence, nor limited to any manner or way of God's revealing Himself ; it is absolute. God hath in these last days spoken to us in (the) Son. Future developments in the history of the world and of creation will produce alterations of administration and changes of form ; but the Son will remain unchanged and glorious, the complete unfolding of all that God is. Nothing will or can be added to Him to make God better known.

Finality is truly reached ; our hearts are conducted in this marvellous Epistle to the Person who is the adequate revelation of God for the whole vast universe, for all its varied orders of created

beings, for all its ages of ages, and for the solution of every question of good and evil. How vast is the range of glory opened up to our awed and adoring hearts as we contemplate the blessedness of the SON.

The first four verses of the chapter under consideration give us a comprehensive survey of His person, and lead us up to the point where He had made purgation of sins, and had taken His position in Manhood at the right hand of the Majesty on high. I say, in Manhood, for this is the great wonder of wonders in God's ways. The glory of God has shone out, the essential being of God is exactly expressed in the Son become Man. The framework of the universe is held up by One now in human form. Purgation for sins, for the moral disaster that has come in by the creature's revolt from God, has been made by the eternal Son in Manhood, Himself sinless, and the revelation of God.

In the fourth verse, after the purgation of sins, He passes beyond the highest orders of created beings, into the place that is native to Him. As the risen Man, entitled so to do by the glory of His person, He sets Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the Personality in the Godhead to whom *in Manhood* is committed the administration of all the rights and purposes of God. The government of angels and of men, the ordering and control of dispensations, the final triumph of good over evil, are all in His hands.

Now it is in this connection, I submit, that the rest of the chapter is written ; and I think it will be found that the quotations (seven in number) which follow not only involve, each and all, the consideration of our adorable Lord—who is ever the eternal Son—from the point of view of His Manhood in resurrection, but they also present a vista

of His unchanged and unchangeable glory from the day when He stepped on to the resurrection platform to the eternal day when time shall be no more. That is, that every passage quoted, read and taken in its own context, brings Christ—who is Son from and to eternity—into view on the ground of resurrection; and they are placed in such an order that they begin with the suggestion (and, as I believe, the statement) of His undiminished glory on the morning when He rose from the dead, continue through the present time to the appearing and kingdom, and forecast His unchanged glory and final triumph at the end. They not only cover His past and present offices, but bring into view “the world to come;” so that the writer having brought it into view and having spoken of Christ’s position in relation to it, justly describes it in chapter 2. as “the world to come, *whereof we speak.*” The speaking of it is antecedent to the second chapter, or at any rate to the fifth verse of it, and casts us back upon what has been previously stated. This, as I trust the reader will see, more than suggests that the first chapter brings before us, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, those glories of Christ which will cover all the exigencies of “the coming age.”

We will take the quoted passages in their order. Viewing Christ in His place higher than the angels, the writer—inspired by the Holy Ghost—inquires, “For unto which of the angels said He at any time,

THOU ART MY SON; THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE?”

All of us know that this quotation is from the second psalm. It is referred to in Paul’s address in Antioch (Acts 13. 33). Possibly from our frequent indifference to the context of a passage, we have not noticed as we should how the Apostle sums up the story of the Saviour, Jesus, in verses 23–31. In the twenty-third verse he says, in introducing Christ to the notice of his hearers, “Of this man’s [David’s] seed

hath God ... raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus”—*and does not quote the second psalm.* Briefly summarizing Christ’s rejection in Jerusalem and proclaiming the fact of His death, he states that God raised Him from the dead; and in the thirty-second and thirty-third verses, with that complete story of the dead and risen Saviour before his hearer’s minds, he uses the same expression that God has raised up Jesus (not “again,” as in the Authorized Version), *and quotes the psalm to illustrate the situation.* Then, in further proof that resurrection from the dead was required to secure everything for God and man, nothing being sure to man that had death in front of it, he quotes the “sure mercies of David,” and other passages.

But let us examine the psalm itself. In verse 2 there is a concerted movement of the authorities against the Lord and against His Christ. Doubtless this federation will be a second time fulfilled in a fast-approaching day; but in Acts 4. 25 this combination is definitely applied in the inspired Scriptures to the rejection of the “holy servant Jesus,” by Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations, and peoples of Israel. There was therefore a first and partial fulfilment, to say the least, when Christ was rejected and crucified. The sixth verse shows that notwithstanding all this apparent resistance to God’s purpose, He goes quietly and resistlessly forward with His plans; for His purposes are to be fulfilled in resurrection and the king is anointed on Zion in full accordance with the holiness of God. But in verses 7 to 9 the Messiah Himself (and I think it is clear that it is from His position as the once rejected but now raised One) declares the decree, and quotes the Lord as saying to Him, “Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee,” etc. I do not think you can apply that to the question of the eternal Sonship of Christ, though He is the eternal Son, and Christianity stands or falls by that truth; nor do I think that the incarnation and birth in Bethlehem are in view

there, though He who was born there is the eternal Son, and is called the "Son of the Highest," to whom the throne of David shall be given (Luke 1. 32), and the "Son of God" (ver. 35). But the context of the passage demands that we view it as dating from the moment when all that man had done against Christ was quietly reversed. In resurrection, God salutes the risen Man, and says, "Thou art My Son; *this day* have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me," etc. etc. Did He say to Christ *in the days of His lowly humiliation, and before His death*, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel?" Yet this is all part of what Jehovah said to Him, which was introduced by the greeting "Thou art My Son." It is consistent with what Christ is and will do *in resurrection*, but we cannot, I think, connect that process of judgment with Christ in the days of His flesh.

The first quotation, then, in Hebrews brings us face to face with the Son, risen from the dead, unchanged still, greeted as Son in resurrection by God, and emphasizing "this day" as a day of great joy and triumph for God.

The second quotation is:

"I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER,
AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A
SON."

This is from 2 Samuel 7. 14. It is a wonderful passage. David is assured by God of the continuation of his kingdom in his "seed" (*cf.* Acts 13. 23; Rom. 1. 3, etc.). God would establish his kingdom, and he would build God's house. In David's mind (*see* 1 Chron. 22. 7-10) this was to have its fulfilment in Solomon; but what was in the mind of God?

Christ is the One who fulfils in His own person all that was typically set forth in David and all that was typically set forth in Solomon. As David, He met and meets all the power of the enemy. As Solomon, He is to sit on David's throne, and rule in peace and

equity. The first verse of Psalm 72. combines these two characters of Christ in one. David thrice encountered hostile power. In his private life and capacity he overthrew the lion and the bear. As the representative of his people and for the glory of God he met Goliath. In connection with his throne and kingdom he overthrew seven nations (2 Sam. 8.). Thus also Christ. Privately He overcame Satan in the wilderness; on behalf of His people and for God's glory He overcame Satan at the cross; He will subdue the world to His feet in the day of His appearing to take His throne and kingdom. Then, in His Solomon character, with neither adversary nor evil occurrent, will He rule over all Israel and over all the earth.

In passing we may notice the inquiry that would naturally occur to the reader as to the words: "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," etc. Under this clause Solomon, who was the type of Christ, broke down; but Christ, who is the Antitype, never will. The kingdom will remain intact in His hands.

But what does the passage itself imply? Does it not teach us that David's seed would be the object of God's solicitude and interest and delight, and that the Father would be the One for whom David's seed would live and labour when in the throne of His supremacy and rest? No angel could fulfil this high behest. To which of the angels said He at any time, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?" This, then, lets us into the secret of all the activities of His resurrection life and of His position on the throne. The Father's delight is in Him, and He is working for the glory of the Son. The Son's delight is in God, and He is working for His Father's interest and satisfaction. It was the principle upon which He lived in the days of His flesh (*see* John 14. 31); but in our passage in Hebrews it is stated of Him in His Solomon cha-

racter, with the throne and the kingdom in view.

As regards this moment in which *we* are found, Christ is unseen by the world. It is the faith period, during which we are introduced to Christ in the heavens. We have been led to discover Him there in resurrection, Centre of the Father's delight and affection, even as He is there for the fulfilment of the good pleasure of God.

The third quotation is introduced :
 "Again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith,
AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

This is taken possibly from Deuteronomy 32. 43 (the "Seventy" version of it); and if so, it is associated, not with the Incarnation and Birth of Luke 2., but with the avenging of His servants' blood, the rendering of vengeance to His adversaries, the showing of mercy to Palestine and the Jews.

But more possibly it is taken from Psalm 97. 7, where those beings that are higher than men are spoken of as gods. Both the 96th and the 97th Psalms are written as the expression of the earthly people's delight in seeing Jehovah coming in and reigning over the earth. It is the glory that is in view, not the humiliation of Christ. It is the inauguration of His kingdom. The angels are summoned to worship Him.

The fourth quotation is from Psalm 104 :

"WHO MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

This, again, is a psalm of Jehovah's majesty and glory. The circumstances of humiliation through which the Saviour passed in the days of His flesh are not in contemplation, but rather the glad day when His rule will extend over all the earth. Then will the mighty angels do His bidding, and gladly serve His will. As the cherubim stood at

Eden's gate to forbid the return of sinful man to paradise, so will His ministers exclude from His kingdom all that offend and do iniquity; the sinners will be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked be no more. How glorious the Master, whose servants are so great!

The fifth quotation is :

"THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER: A SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM. THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HATED INIQUITY; THEREFORE GOD, EVEN THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY FELLOWS."

This is from Psalm 45., a great millennial psalm. The verses quoted open up to us a world of interest as we ponder their meaning. A divine Person in the throne, companions associated with Him in His reign, His kingdom characterized by righteousness and the suppression of iniquity; and gladness from God filling His heart and the hearts of His companions in a scene that is never to be superseded by any alien power as long as time shall last.

It is remarkable as addressing the future Messiah definitely as God : "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The burden and administration of the kingdom does not diminish or tarnish His glory, any more than did the bearing of our sin or the contact with death in the day of His humiliation.

The sixth is :

"THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS: THEY SHALL PERISH; BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY ALL SHALL

WAX OLD AS DOTH A GARMENT ;
AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU
FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY
SHALL BE CHANGED : BUT THOU
ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS
SHALL NOT FAIL."

This is from Psalm 102. It is Jehovah's response to the One who was destitute and weak, and whose days were shortened here. He took up the sorrows of His earthly people, and for their sake bore indignation and wrath at Jehovah's hands. Enemies reproached Him, and He sounded the lowest depths of trouble, weakness, isolation, and grief. He prays: "I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days;" and then, instead of responding with a mercy which added fifteen years (as in Hezekiah's case) to the threatened life, Jehovah replies with this marvellous statement of the Sufferer's glory.

The earth's foundation was laid by the One who is crying out of all this distress; the heavens that then darkened over Him were the work of His hands. But the material creation, in the form known to us, will perish, while He stands and endures; its days will be numbered, and the signs of decay and age be found in heaven and earth; but He will be the same, and His years shall have no end. It is noticeable how that He speaks in His humiliation of His "*days*" four times over (vers. 3, 11, 23, 24); while in Jehovah's reply to Him He speaks of "*Thy years*." They are throughout all generations, and they shall have no end.

So that the outlook over Christ's glory is enlarged to the end of the millennial kingdom, when the present heavens and earth will be folded up and changed; and as to their present form, at any rate, they shall perish, having served their purpose. All that is material shall undergo its change; but Christ shall undergo none. Never will there be any diminution of His glories, or change in His person. Over-

whelmed as we are in the presence of His greatness, charmed as we are by the blessedness of our Object, we have the heart-rest and satisfaction of knowing that our holy Lord, the Son of God, will never lose the lustre of His brightness, the fine gold will never become dimmed—He is eternally "the Same."

The seventh, and last, quotation is:

"SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES
THY FOOTSTOOL."

This, of course, is Psalm 110. There is no need to emphasize the fact that this is a resurrection psalm. Christ, who is David's Son, is David's Lord (Matt. 22. 41-55). Seen here in flesh, the Spirit who indited David's Psalm indicates His removal to Jehovah's right hand for a time, to be seated there until the period when His enemies should be subdued. I say *period*, for, while it is certain from the psalm that He will strike through kings in the day of His wrath and will judge among the heathen, it is plain from 1 Corinthians 15. 24-26 that it looks on to time when there will not be an enemy left to destroy. His kingdom will endure, and no rule or authority or power will succeed against Him. Even the final breakdown of man, when Satan shall be loosed and shall deceive the nations for the last time (Rev. 20. 7-10), bringing them up against the people of God, will result in the utter confusion and final overthrow of revolt in man and devil; and the kingdom will remain intact in the hands of the Lamb. Then will occur the removal of heavens and earth, the judgment of the great white throne, and the casting of the unsaved into their final destination of the lake of fire for eternity. *The last enemy* that shall be destroyed is death. So complete is Christ's triumph, so absolute is Christ's glory, that in no part of the universe will it be possible to say that death has removed one human soul from Christ's sway, either as Saviour for blessing or as Judge for punishment.

This leads us to the bound of what is spoken of in Hebrews as "the world to come."

To sum up briefly, then, no alteration of dispensation, no lapse of time, no changes in the material creation, can effect the least change in our blessed Lord.

1. On the day of His resurrection He was found "the Same," untainted by all He had passed through.

2. In the throne, "the Same" in His affection for the Father, and the Father's for Him; and in the blessedness of that relationship in which He is so wholly devoted to His Father's will.

3. "The Same" on His return to the world for the inauguration of His millennial kingdom.

4. "The Same" in His right and power to control the whole administration of the kingdom, on its heavenly side as well as on its earthly side; angels and authorities and powers being subject unto Him.

5. "The Same" in the excellence of His moral character in the throne, uncorrupted by the splendour of His kingdom, as He was undaunted by the sufferings that led to it.

6. "The Same" when creation grows old and is changed, preserving intact every glory that He had when He laid its foundations and built it in its highest parts.

7. "The Same" when all opposition to God is silenced for eternity, when all taint of sin shall have been removed and all evil shall have been done away; every question of good and evil settled, and God shall be all in all.

We used to sing in the first days of our conversion:

"Oh, what a Saviour is Jesus our Lord,
Well might His Name by His Saints be
adored."

We sing the same now; but even yet we wonder and wonder on as we see wider and deeper glories ever unfolding before our hearts. Praise takes on a richer tone as we understand more fully how worthy He is.

Thoughts on Service.

(ARTHUR CUTTING)

IN the Gospel of Mark—where we have portrayed for us the path of the Lord as the perfect Servant—we find two very significant verses in relation to those whom He called into His service. In Mark i. 17 we read, "*Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men,*" and in chapter 3. 14, "*He ordained twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.*"

In these verses there is stated the things necessary for effective service.

The first might include companionship and discipleship; the second might include commission and success.

In other words—

with Him = communion,

after Him = discipleship,
from Him = commission,
by Him = power—equipment.

Is it not important that we should first learn that our company is more to Him than our service for Him? He can dispense with our service—"God buries His servants and goes on with His work"—but He will not dispense with our company. Our company is necessary to Him for the satisfaction of His love, and His company is necessary to us if our service is to be acceptable and fruitful. In His company brusque nature is judged and harshness of spirit corrected. With Him we learn the divine art of winning men, and this cannot be learned in seminary or school.

Bible Study.—Jude.

(EDWARD CROSS).

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

APOSTASY, ἀποστασία = a falling away, defection, rebellion. The word occurs in the New Testament only in Acts 21. 21, "apostasy from Moses," and 2 Thessalonians 2. 3, "the apostasy." The verb from which it is derived occurs several times and in various senses, e.g. amongst others:

Hebrews 3. 12, "apostatizing from the living God."

Luke 8. 13, "in time of temptation they apostatize."

1 Timothy 4. 1, "some shall apostatize from the faith."

In 2 Chronicles 33. 19 (LXX.) we read of "all Manasseh's sins and his apostasies." These passages, along with others, show that apostasy does not only mean the final outcome of an evil course, but equally the first step in that career. Genesis 3. 6 was as truly "apostasy," though only the first step, as is all that has eventuated from it, until its last phase as described by Jude. In Ezekiel 20. the prophet traces the continuous rebellions of the people (vers. 5, 13, 21, 28) until they finally came to Bamah (ver. 29), i.e. the "high place" of Baal, referred to in Micah 1. 5 as the culmination of Judah's apostasy. But their idolatry was equally pronounced in the land of Egypt, as it was afterwards in their subsequent history (cf. Josh. 24. 14). The first step in self-will that crosses the border line of divine command is apostasy, as real as the last act to which it leads. Jude is occupied with its final outcome, and with the judgment of God upon it (ver. 15); but he goes back to show the start of it in olden times, and the continuity in the governmental ways of God in dealing with it from the beginning (vide Deut. 31. 21 and 29). Between these two verses there are thousands of years; but the principles operating are the same in both.

In reading this epistle we must remember that Jude is not occupied with "our common salvation," with Christianity and what is proper to the Christian, but rather with Christendom and the final phase of the apostasy, where the faith is given up.

Verses 5, 6, 7.

An important principle arises here connected with the government of God. The possession of privilege is, in itself, no guarantee for its continuance. Of this Jude gives three examples, with which those to whom he writes were already familiar, where the privilege, or status, once enjoyed was forfeited through the conduct of those who held it.

(1) The Lord having saved a people out of Egypt, afterwards destroyed those who had not believed;

(2) And angels, too, who had not kept their own original state (cf. Gen. 6. 2), but had abandoned their proper dwelling, He keeps in eternal chains, under gloomy darkness, to the judgment of the great day; even.

(3) As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, committing greedily fornication, in like manner with the angels above named (cf. Gen. 19.; Rom. 1. 27) going astray after other flesh, lie there as an example to us, as they are undergoing the judgment of eternal fire, i.e. fire from which there is no recovery. The country that was a very Paradise, "the garden of the Lord," "like the land of Egypt" (Gen. 13. 10), is become "brimstone and salt and burning, that is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon" (Deut. 29. 23); a striking picture of the final and irrevocable judgment of which we are so frequently warned in Scripture (cf. Isa. 66. 24; Mark 9. 48; Luke 16. 26; Rev. 20. 10). These cities stood apparently somewhere to the north-west of the Dead

Sea, within, comparatively, a few miles of Jerusalem, and, through all the history of the children of Israel in the Land, were a standing testimony to the pitiless judgment of God on apostate wickedness, and as such were cited by the prophets (*cf.* Amos 4. 11, *et al.*). Yet the people closed their ears to the warning, and their eyes to the witness ever present before them; and "they sinned yet more" (Exod. 9. 34; Ps. 78. 17) in open disregard of God, until His wrath consumed them in their wickedness—a beacon and a warning, unheeded, alas! by Christendom to-day, as it is travelling a similar road to a like doom.

From scenes such as these it is refreshing to turn to Psalm 18. 20-27. Here David, voicing the Spirit of Christ, sets Him forth as standing firm in His righteousness, in the maintenance of the position in which He is set for the glory of God; and the Lord answers Him accordingly. "The Lord hath rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me; for I have kept the ways of the Lord, and I have not *wickedly departed from my God*" (the same word is used here in the LXX. as for "ungodly" in Jude. *Cf.* again 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8, as further illustrating the same principle). "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth"—*λοιπόν* = consequent on this—"the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not only to me, but also to all those who love His appearing;" and again, ponder John 13. 31, 32; 15. 10; 17. 4, 5; Phil. 2. 7-11.

This is, in fact, the great principle of the judgment seat; for, while every blessing we receive is the fruit of grace, yet that grace works through righteousness, and provides that God shall be glorified in those with whom He surrounds Himself. Grace does not operate so as to dispense with what is suitable to the presence of God; but by "the supply of the Spirit" to provide that which is well pleasing to Him. Thus, while we are not "in the flesh under law," seeking thereby to work out our own righteousness, yet the law is not abrogated. Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; to give it its full force and meaning (Matt. 5. 17); and the gospel

so works that "the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8. 4; 13. 8-10).

Verse 8.

Yet, despite the terrible examples of God's wrath detailed above, do these dreamers also, in like manner, defile the flesh, despise lordship, and speak railingly against dignities. Overcome by an evil spirit, as by the stupor of sleep, they are incapable of governing their thoughts, or of using the senses with which they are naturally endowed in a rational and consequential way. There is no divine restraint upon their passions, and they will have none of it. Abandoning themselves to their own imaginings, "they defile the flesh"—a reference possibly to the gnostic doctrines already rife in the apostles' days, derogatory to the humanity that Christ has glorified, and leading in result to an exaggeration of existing evil; the flesh, already defiled, they defile still more: lordship of every kind, the thing in the abstract, and whenever exercised, they set at naught; and dignities of every order they blaspheme. It is the full fruit, ripened, of Genesis 3. 1-10; the final revolt against what is divine in itself, and divinely ordered in the government of the world.

And is not this the spirit that we see working in every department of life to-day—social, political, and ecclesiastical? God is left out, and the authority of His Word is flouted. Of old "they smote the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" (Micah 5. 1), and if the "authority of the Highest" was thus contemned, and justice outraged in the "Judgment Hall" (John 18. 28), is it any wonder to see authority set at naught to-day by those without, and justice looked for in vain from those within?

Verse 9.

How different was the conduct of Michael, who, though so highly placed, at the summit of the angelic host, when contending with one who was a fallen being, did not dare—mark the word!—to speak abusively against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee."

Of this incident there is no record elsewhere in Scripture, though a similar form of expression is found in Zechariah 3. 1-3. Doubtless it is one of the many

traditions handed down outside the records of Scripture, used here by the Spirit of God, as He does also the prophecy of Enoch lower down, and as He can use anything anywhere that suits His purpose (*cf.* Josh. 10. 13 ; 2 Tim. 3. 8 ; Acts 17. 28).

The death of Moses is typical of the death of Christ, identified as He was *positionally* with a people under the governmental hand of God in wrath. For one untoward word and act he forfeited his right to lead the people into the land (Num. 20. 10-12). How much he felt this we gather from the way in which he repeatedly referred to it (*cf.* Deut. 1. 37 ; 3. 26 ; 4. 21 ; 31. 2 ; 32. 50-52 ; 34. 4). He besought the Lord pathetically to be allowed to go over into the land, but without avail. "The Lord," he says, "was wrath with me for your sakes, and would not hear me." It was on their account that this judgment fell on him. In a similar way we must understand such passages as Psalm 38. 4 ; 40. 12, etc., where we see the Spirit of Christ identifying Him positionally with the sins of His people. He could have "called for more than twelve legions of angels" and "gone out free;" but then, "how should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" (Matt. 26. 53). Pilate would have had "no authority whatever against Him if it had not been given to him from above" (John 19. 11-12). But "unless the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24). Joshua is a type of Christ in resurrection, acting now in the power of the Spirit. He will in due course bring the people into the land. Meanwhile, Moses must die ; but no one knows how ; and no one knows where his sepulchre is to this day. The death of Jesus is as mysterious as His birth. No one can uncover the mystery of either. The devil disputed about the body of Moses. What the subject of the disputation was we are not told ; but as it was his work then, so it is his endeavour to-day to exhume mysteries kept hidden from the mind of man, and to degrade the infinite and divine by exposing it to the curiosity of human speculation. It is sometimes said that his object was to get possession of Moses' body, so that he might seduce the children of Israel to an idolatrous worship of it, as they worshipped the brazen serpent

(2 Kings 18. 4) ; but there is no hint in Scripture of any such idea. We are told that "Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil, reasoned about the body of Moses ;" but all beyond that is hid from us. Our wisdom is to leave it there, and to learn the lesson that the conduct of Michael teaches.

Verses 10, 11.

Yet these men use blasphemous, or abusive language in regard of matters of which they know nothing : and in respect of what they know by the light of mere nature, like irrational animals, in these things they corrupt themselves. And this is the boasted progress of "the last time"—the goal towards which man tends, with his mind and will emancipated from all restraint, human or divine. Woe to them ! because they have gone in the way of Cain ; they have rushed headlong in the error of Balaam for the sake of gain ; and they have perished in the rebellion of Core.

Cain stands for natural religion in contrast to what is revealed. The nature of sin and its judgment, the forfeiture of the sinful life, and the need of atonement through the blood of a spotless victim found no place in his thoughts. In his approach to God he brought of the fruit of the ground, already cursed, an offering to the Lord. He heads the line of the apostasy with a religion false in its inception. Balaam follows with a religion prostituted to the love of base gain, selling in the service of the devil what he had received from God, and plotting the ruin of the people by an inspiration which, while professedly divine, was really Satanic. In Numbers 23. 15 the Authorized Version reads, "while I meet the Lord yonder." The words "*the Lord*" being in italics shows that they are not in the original ; and Numbers 24. 1 makes plain that he was all the time seeking, not the Lord, but "enchantments."

Core closes the list, with the final phase of the apostasy, denying at once the royalty and priesthood of Christ, as represented in his rebellion against Moses and Aaron. In the sons of Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, he sets up "the rights of man," the spirit of the age and the climax of the apostasy, regardless of the prophetic sentence pronounced upon him by his father (Gen. 49. 3, 4), and ignoring the sovereign rights of God in His choice of another (Num. 16. 3).

The Love of the Father.

IF we examine the way in which the Father's love is presented in Scripture we shall not find the thought of sovereignty connected with it as we find connected with the love of God ; nor, indeed, shall we always find it to be set upon the same objects. God is said to have loved the world, the Father never. The Father has a world of His own outside of which His affections are not said to travel. It is a world, or sphere, or order of things, not yet brought to light ; but it exists in His counsels, and is of Himself. This present world is not of Him. All that is in the world is lust and pride, and it is not of the Father, but is of the world (1 John 2. 15, 16). With the love of the Father we find the thought of complacency, delight, satisfaction. His love is confined to things which are grateful to His nature. The Son is said to have been the Object of the Father's love before the foundation of the world (John 17. 24). And when upon earth, as He was about to take the place of public testimony for God, the Father's voice is heard declaring His delight in Him. This voice from heaven was a witness of the pleasure the Father took in the first thirty years of the Son's sojourn here below. Again, on the mount of transfiguration, we are privileged to hear the same powerful testimony rendered by the Father to the place the Son had in His blessed affections.

Jesus Himself says : " The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand " (John 3. 35). The Son had the love and confidence of the heart of the Father. The Father could confidently put everything into the hand of the Son, knowing that everything would be faithfully held for His glory. Again, He says : " The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth " (John 5. 20). And " what things soever He doeth, these

also doeth the Son likewise " (ver. 19). In this way the Father came to light in the Son, and in Him He was glorified. How dear the Son was to the heart of the Father no creature mind shall ever be able to understand.

In John 10. 17 we read : " Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again." His obedience and His love to the Father carried Him down to death, even the death of the cross ; and there was laid a firm foundation upon which could be established the eternal counsels of the Father ; and having laid in the blood of His cross this firm foundation, He in resurrection gives effect to those counsels to the glory of the Father. He says : " Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee " (chap. 17. 1). And because of this wholehearted devotedness to His glory, the Father's heart goes out to that blessed Son of His in infinite love.

There is nothing of the nature of sovereignty or grace in all this, for here there is a reason for the love of the Father lying outside of Himself ; a reason existing in the Object of that love ; the excellence of His person, and the obedience which comes to light in His lowly life on earth, calling forth that love as One perfectly worthy of it, however infinite it be. And how readily the Father responds to the claims of the One who presented Him with such a motive for love. He says : " Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because He hath poured out His soul unto death : and He was numbered with the transgressors ; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors " (Isa. 53. 12). And " wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 9-11). The blessedness and excellence of the Son is beyond all creature thought, and indeed it is a joy to us that it is so; nevertheless, it is also a joy to us that there is One who fully estimates His infinite worth: it is not, blessed be God, unknown.

But *we* also are objects of the love of the Father. Jesus says: "The Father Himself loveth you." It is not merely that we are called to contemplate the love which the Father has to the Son, though this would be an unspeakable privilege; but we are to know ourselves as objects of that love. But even as regards us this love is not presented in its sovereign character. The Lord gives a reason for this love being lavished upon us, though surely we have no claim to the least of His favours. And yet if the Father loves us there is a reason why: "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (John 16. 27). There is something in us which draws out the Father's love to us. It is something which is of the Father Himself, and which He implanted there. It is not what is natural to man at all, and it was not natural to us. The natural man sees no beauty in Jesus. By the natural man He is always despised and rejected; but "they shall be all taught of God," and "every one therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (John 6. 45). This affection that is in our hearts for Jesus has been begotten by the teaching of the Father, and to His heart it is exceedingly precious. In this world, that is hostile to the Son, the Father finds us lovers of Jesus, and by this, if I may so speak, the heart of the Father is profoundly affected.

Feeble fellow-believer, you love Jesus. Perhaps you say your love is so weak, and your ways are often so wilful and crooked that you hesitate to speak of

your love for Jesus. You feel He is worthy of so much, and you render to Him so little. Yet you do love Him. Possibly you wonder why every one does not love Him, for, as regards yourself, you feel you must love, reverence, and confess Him, even if by doing so you stirred up the wrath of the whole world against you. Well, is this nothing to the Father? Can He be regardless as to the attitude assumed by you toward the Son of His love? Impossible.

God loved you when there was nothing lovable about you. He loved you because of what was in Himself. But the *Father* loves you because of what is in you. He has found something in you in which His heart has unbounded delight. What is it? Nothing but the little spark of love to His Son, which He has kindled there for Himself. Here, where His Son has suffered every ignominy that the profligate heart of man could invent, you are found on His side, lifting up a feeble testimony in His favour, and the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Him, and have believed that He came out from God.

There is nothing so precious to the heart of the Father upon earth as that little spark of love to Christ which has been kindled by Himself in the souls of His saints. Where this is not, darkness and death reign. And the Father loves to cherish this little vital spark, and by the power of the Holy Spirit fan it into a mighty flame. Satan would seek to quench it, and upon it the world has a baneful influence; but "we love Him because He first loved us," and the better we know His love, the more shall we love Him; and if we love Him we will show this love by keeping His commandments, and treasuring His word in our hearts; and if we do this Jesus says we shall be loved of the Father, and both Father and Son will make their abode with us (John 14. 23).

We read these things in the Holy Scriptures, and we treasure them as the sayings of Jesus, but what do we know about them experimentally? Can the reader say: "Ah, I know what that means. I know what it is to

have the Father and the Son dwelling with me. I know something of the joy that springs from having these divine Persons as my honoured guests." But if we find that we have not embraced this unspeakable privilege, and if we have to confess that we know, in an experimental way, little or nothing about it, are we to continue in this condition of spiritual destitution? Are these pearl gates which are even now swung open that we may enter into the joys of the Father's house, before we leave this scene of lawlessness, darkness, and death, to remain unused by us as though we had no right of entrance, or as though they were guarded by cherubim and a flaming sword? Surely not.

Worldliness increases on every hand. Almost every day brings to light some apparently spiritual Samson falling under its deadly influence. The atoning death of Christ is scoffed at, and to His words those who profess His name are becoming stone deaf. His saints who have received much light boast of it as an intellectual attainment, and attempt to turn the edge of the Spirit's sword against Christ's members. And all this has come to pass because we have not kept the commandments of Jesus, treasured His word, and been more in company with the Father and the Son. The Lord says, speaking of the religious enemies of the gospel: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me" (John 16. 2, 3). This is what is lacking to-day, the knowledge of the Father and the Son. I do

not mean to infer that any true believer is without this knowledge, but what I do mean is this, I fear we have not these divine Persons as our continual guests. We know forgiveness, and, like Martha, we may be cumbered about much service; but what do we know about the unutterable sweetness of entertaining in the secret of our own souls the Father and the Son?

Oh, how infinitely sweet it is to sit down alone, or to walk in solitude apart from every other human being, and let the Father and the Son draw near to us, as Jesus did to the two sorrowing disciples on their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, that we may breathe for a little moment the very atmosphere of heaven. What a health resort we shall find this to be.

And all this remains for us to-day as truly as ever. Everything may have become corrupted ecclesiastically. That house which was intended for a house of prayer may have become a den of thieves, but all these things remain for the individual as certainly as though there was no failure at all. The writings of John are intensely individual, and the privileges opened out to us in them are not dependent upon the faithfulness of the Christian company. If no other in the whole world enjoyed these things I may. To-day they are the portion of the *overcomer*. And there is much to overcome, but there is infinitely more to be entered into and enjoyed.

How unspeakably sweet it is to go through this world with the sense of the Father's love keeping the heart. If the reader does not enjoy it, then I would entreat him to go in for it, for it is his privilege as a child of God. May both writer and reader know it better.

"Study to be quiet" (1 Thess. 4. 11).

Study to be habitually calm. "A meek and quiet spirit . . . is in the sight of God of great price." The rush of modern social life is especially

fatal to the prayer habit; for until the spirit is hushed and becalmed in His presence, God cannot reflect His own image in our consciousness.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 16.

The Prophetical Ministry of the Lord Jesus.

THE great prophetical chapters MATTHEW 24., 25., MARK 13., LUKE 21. are all prefaced by a brief testimony as to the destruction of the temple, an event of immense importance when seen to be the dissolution of God's earthly centre (*cf.* Jer. 45. 4, 5). The disciples, but little prepared for this announcement, naturally ask the questions recorded in all three Gospels: when these things would be and would there be any signs to indicate their approach? MATTHEW adds a further question as to the second coming and the end of the age. In accordance with this, the Lord's reply in MATTHEW is much more full and detailed, and carries us on at once to the "beginnings of sorrows," which immediately precede the terminal events of the dispensation. Following on this, MATTHEW's testimony may be summarized as giving the Lord's second coming in relation to Israel up to 24. 45. That verse, and what follows down to 25. 30 inclusive, shows the relation of believers of the present time to that event, while 25. 31 to end tells of the great sessional judgment of the Son of Man, before whom will be gathered all the nations (not the dead).

This orderly unfolding of the future is not found in the second and third Gospels, which, nevertheless, have their distinguishing characters plainly marked.

LUKE gives the events which in MATTHEW and MARK are called the beginnings of sorrows (literally and significantly "travail pangs") without so specifying them, and then says (21. 12), "BEFORE all these things, they shall lay their hand on you," etc., a time of trial and persecution is indicated which would need much patient endurance (19).

MATTHEW omits the preposition "before," and makes the persecutions coincident with the sorrows: LUKE is dealing with believers in Palestine prior to the Roman invasion, A.D. 70. On the other hand, MATTHEW is occupied with events at the end of the age. The sign for

which the disciples ask is given in LUKE as Jerusalem encompassed with armies; in MATTHEW and MARK as the abomination of desolation, meaning thereby an idol whose establishment causes desolation. In both cases flight is to be their resource; but it should be noted that the terms used do not convey the same urgency in LUKE as in the others.

The circumstances connected with the fall of Jerusalem are related up to verse 24 inclusive, and are not found in either MATTHEW or MARK. The latter writer, true to the character we have so often previously noticed, regards the believers as servants of the Lord, and many exhortations are given accordingly, as verse 9 chapter 13. "Take heed to yourselves," and the rest of the verse with 11-13 occurs in Matthew 10., not in 24., and forms part of the charge to the disciples in reference to their ministry when the Lord should be absent from them. It may be noticed that MARK lacks the definiteness of application found in MATTHEW (*cf.* Matt. 24. 14, 15 with Mark 13. 10 and 14). So that any servant at any time may profit by the exhortations and learn that it is God's will that the gospel should be preached to *all* nations and they *all* should hear (2 Tim. 4. 17). How important! Moreover, in the end of the chapter we have a very suited instruction (vers. 34-37). The Son Himself, true to the servant character (*see* Isa. 42. and 49.) in grace assumed, knows not the day nor hour of His own return, the attitude of His followers should therefore be one of watching and prayer. In the meantime each has his work, but the danger of pre-occupation with the work is guarded by the urgency of the exhortation to watch. LUKE in quite another connection (chap. 12.) gives the special reward of the watching and working servant. How encouraging to consider that it is MARK, the servant who broke down himself (Acts 13. 13; 15. 37), but knew restoring grace (2 Tim. 4. 11), who is now

fitted by the Holy Spirit to instruct Christ's failing servants to the end of time !

One other point may be mentioned as clearly indicating the Jewish character of the MATTHEW prophecy ; in verse 20 the disciples are exhorted to pray that their flight should not be on the Sabbath day. This is neither in MARK nor LUKE and could evidently not have a Christian application.

We must now notice how LUKE 17. 22-37 as well as 21. affords matter for comparative study. The setting of this instruction is quite different to MATTHEW 24., and with much that is similar there are conspicuous differences. Here, as in the other prophetic scriptures, the Lord is addressing His disciples. In this chapter He seems definitely to turn from the Pharisees and their question as to the kingdom, and speaks to the disciples from verse 20 to the end of chapter, with which the parable which opens chapter 18. should be connected. This parable helps us to understand that the elect disciples referred to are not in the light of the Christian revelation, which does not allow prayers for vengeance. Stephen prayed for his murderers, and Saul was converted. Here it is written, " Shall not God avenge His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them. I say that He will avenge them speedily." A distinction is thus made first between the believers in chapter 17. and those in the central part chapter 21., who are in Jerusalem as Christians, and who in obedience to His word flee for safety when the armies approach. In chapter 17. the Son of Man is seen not coming in merely providential dealings by means of Gentile enemies, but personally. The disciples are therefore instructed as to how He should appear. Would it be on earth as at His first coming, or as the lightning from heaven ? A host of pretenders are at once exposed by the truth here made known, and the soul is directed to God and heaven for deliverance.

Israel would be as the antediluvian world, and more serious still as Sodom. Terrible considerations for a Jew ! He is to remember Lot's wife. Evidently the teaching here is to separate the hearts of the disciples from the place which was under the sentence of divine wrath. The urgency of the case is

enforced by verse 31, which has quite a different application here to that in MATTHEW and MARK, where the urgency is as to their flight (Matt. 24. 17) when the awful sign of the idol is manifested. Other signs are given in Matthew 24. 29, Mark 13. 34, and in Luke 21. 25, as happening at the close of the tribulation and connected with the return of the Son of Man to the judgment of the living. The terms used must be, I think, understood symbolically as being fulfilled in the break up and subversion of the empire of the Beast of Revelation 13. 1, which is also described under the pouring out of the seventh vial, chapter 16.

In concluding this necessarily brief and very imperfect study, it may be well to point out that these prophetic scriptures refer in the first place to the Jewish Christians in and about Jerusalem up to the time of the destruction of the city by Titus (Luke 21. 12-24). There is no further direct reference to the saints of the church period except in the parables, Matthew 24. 45 to 25. 30. The remaining portions contemplate Jewish believers in the last week of Daniel 9. The beginning of sorrows occupies the first half of the week. The second half is introduced by the ceasing of the sacrifices in the restored temple and the setting up of the abomination of desolation according to Daniel 9. 27 and 12. 11 ; the latter verse being that to which reference is made in MATTHEW and MARK. This is the sign for the saints to flee. The great tribulation, or Jacob's trouble, Jeremiah 30. 7, follows. Many fall during this time, obtaining a better resurrection (*see* Rev. 14. 12, 13), which shows how a special blessing attaches to those dying " from henceforth " (*i.e.* at that time) ; but there is always a spared remnant who are brought through the fire (Zech. 13. 9) who eventually become the nation, the apostates under Antichrist being cut off. It is to this spared remnant and their martyred associates that the main part of these prophecies has special application. Some, again, are seen as the " brethren " (24. 40) of the great King who have preached His kingdom, with the results set forth in the unique parable of the Sheep and Goats who compose the nations to whom this testimony has been rendered (24. 14).

(C. E. H. WARREN).

“The Lord’s Prayer Twice a Day, yet no Better.”

(EDITOR).

SOME time ago I was staying with a farmer friend for a few days. His was a Christian household from the head of it down to the little fourteen-year-old servant lassie. The music of the gospel and the contentment that godliness yields were everywhere in evidence, producing the harmony of a quiet gladness within the house, and making the members of it long for the blessing of their neighbours. It was a great pleasure to be there.

We decided, the time of the year being especially suitable, to hold some gospel meetings in the granary, and invited the people in the vicinity to come. To our invitations they responded well, and some, who came to the preachings without a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, believed the gospel and found peace with God through Him.

Nobody was more anxious to gather the people to the meetings or more delighted when they came than the little Christian servant, for she had a truly evangelistic heart, so that I was very surprised at the close of one of the preachings to find her sobbing with grief in the farmyard. “Why, what can be the matter?” I asked. “You seemed so happy in the meeting.” Then she explained the cause of her grief: there had been some at the meeting whom she had especially invited, and she had hoped and prayed that they might accept Christ as their Saviour, but they had gone away without doing so. I admired that girl with her gracious heart and tear-washed face, and felt that if only more of God’s servants knew how to long and weep for souls as she did there would be less indifference in those who do not know the Saviour.

She was sent on an errand one day to a shop about a mile from the farm,

and, as usual, was on the look-out for opportunities for confessing Christ.

“Have you been to the gospel preachings?” she asked the young woman who served her at the counter.

“No, I haven’t; and I don’t intend to come either,” was the reply that surprised her.

“What!” she said; “don’t you want to be a Christian, then?”

“No, I don’t, but there’s a girl in the end cottage, she does; she is telling everybody that she wants to be saved.”

Hearing this, the young fisher for souls ran off to the end cottage and found a thoroughly anxious sinner there. She wanted to be right with God, but how? that was her difficulty. My young friend assured her that Jesus was more anxious to save her than she was to be saved; she was quite sure about that, for He had saved her; and leaving her with this comfort she promised to ask me to call and see her.

The next morning I found that end cottage. A girl of eighteen or so opened the door for me, and I said to her, “I am looking for an anxious sinner who would like to find the Saviour; I wonder if you can tell me where she lives?”

“Yes, it’s me, sir,” she said. “Will you come in?”

I went in; the cottage was what is called in that part of the country “butt and ben,” *i.e.* there were just two rooms, a bedroom and a living-room, which also served as a bedroom for the younger members of the family. The girl gave me a chair, and then slipped away into the bedroom; why I could not tell, and almost ten minutes elapsed before she came out, and then I understood. She had combed and brushed her hair and put on her

Sunday blouse, for so ignorant of God's salvation was she that she did not think that she could be saved in her workaday clothes. Such ignorance in an enlightened land like this may raise a smile, but that poor girl, preparing herself, as she thought, to hear the Word of God, must have been an object of great interest to God's angels, for she was a repentant sinner groping in her darkness after God; "*and there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*"

She took a chair beside me, and I said to her, "Now, just tell me what it is that troubles you and how long you have wanted to be saved."

She said: "It's about three months now. I went to hear Mr. S—— preach in the kitchen at the farm, and it made me feel very bad because I knew that I was a sinner, and I have said the Lord's prayer twice every day since, but I'm not a bit better." That was all she could tell me, and I had to wait some time before she was sufficiently composed to hear what I had to say. But the tears were the evidence of repentance, and these shine like gems in the sight of heaven, their price is beyond rubies.

"You have heard of Jesus?" I said.

"Yes."

"And that He came into this world to save sinners?"

"Yes."

"Then He must have come to save you?"

"Yes," she said, and a new note of eagerness entered her voice.

"He had to die for us," I said, "or He could not have saved us. But He loved us, and "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed*" (Isa. 53. 5).

She began to understand it, to understand the gospel story. I explained further to her that God sent His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to save us, so that we

might have everlasting life, and that upon the cross Jesus bore the judgment that our sins deserved, that He finished the work there and bowed His head in death, and that the precious blood which flowed from His spear-wounded side was shed for her, and that God said of it, "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.*" I told her, further, that so perfect was the work that Christ had done upon the cross that God had raised Him up from the dead that all that believe on Him might be justified from all things.

She told me that she believed it, believed that Jesus died for *her* sins, but that she would like to be sure that her soul was saved. We turned to Acts 13., and read: "*But God raised Him from the dead*" (ver. 30); "*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things*" (vers. 38, 39).

The smiles that broke through the tears told more eloquently than words could have done that those words of God had done their work, and we knelt at once together upon that cottage floor to give thanks to God for that exceeding grace of His that had saved us.

Not much in that, perhaps, some may say, but those who so talk have no true sense of the proportion of things; in their estimation time is greater than eternity, and the things of the world more than the welfare of the soul. They do not see things as God sees them, or they would understand that the salvation of one soul, even though that one be a poor country girl, is of more importance than the rise or fall of thrones and kingdoms. Indeed, we are definitely told, and that twice over, that heaven rejoices when a sinner repents. This is wonderfully strange, but also blessedly true, and being true, let us who love the Lord consider it deeply and prayerfully, and seek grace, energy, and wisdom to become winners of souls.

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITOR).

The Coming of the Lord and the Tribulation.

WE have received a number of letters with regard to the papers on the Lord's coming and the revelation of Antichrist that appeared in the March issue of this magazine. Some of these raise questions as to what was stated by us which we propose to answer in the following order:

(1) *What passages of Scripture teach that Antichrist will not appear until the Church has been taken away, and that the Church will not go through the Tribulation?*

2 THESSALONIANS 2. 7, 8. There we learn that though the mystery of iniquity doth already work, its full revelation in Antichrist is hindered by the presence of the One who will hinder until He be taken out of the way. This One is the Holy Spirit of God, who abides for ever in and with His saints who form God's assembly (John 14. 16, 17). The time when He will be taken out of the way will be when the church is taken out of the world.

REVELATION 3. 10. The letter to the church in Philadelphia is addressed to those to whom the Lord can say: "I have loved thee;" this must apply to the whole church for which Christ gave Himself, and not to a part of it only. To them the promise is, "I also will keep thee from [or out of] the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth." The church can only be kept out of this world-wide tribulation by being taken out of the world, and she will be taken out of it, for she is not of it, but belongs to heaven where her Head is. This salvation from the great hour of trial is linked up with the Lord's coming, to which their thoughts are directed by the announcement: "Behold I come quickly" (ver. 11).

It has often been said that the church is not seen on earth in Revelation after chapter 3. This we believe to be true; up to that point John writes of "*the things that are*"—this present church period; from that point onward he writes

of the things "*which shall be hereafter,*" or more specifically, "after these things" (see chap. 1. 19). The opening of chapter 4. commences the "after these things." "After this I looked, and, behold . . . heaven. . . Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."

It is interesting and instructive to see that it is from heaven that John beholds the terrible and devastating events that are to happen throughout the whole world. He was outside and above it all; this is the place of the church, from whence all will be viewed. Moreover, he saw round about the throne "four and twenty elders." We believe that these represent "those that are Christ's at His coming." But for further help as to this we refer our readers to the paper, "What saints shall go through the Tribulation," in the May issue.

(2) *Who are those taken, and who left, at the coming of the Lord?* (Matt. 24. 40-41). This scripture does not refer to the coming of the Lord for the Church according to 1 Thessalonians 4., but to His coming to earth for the deliverance of His people—the godly remnant of the Jews, the judgment of the wicked nations, and the establishment of His kingdom. When He so comes one will be taken from the earth in judgment and another left to enjoy the blessing of the millennial reign. Read the whole chapter to verse 41 for confirmation of this.

(3) *Did not the teaching of the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church originate in the Catholic Apostolic Church?* (Our correspondent gives the late Dr. Tregelles as his authority for saying that it did.)

We have no data upon which we can state definitely where and when this truth was first revived. There was a great awakening of interest amongst Christians as to the prophetic teaching of the Scriptures about the year 1830. Meetings were held in various places for the study of prophecy, notably in Dublin. It was about this time that the extraordinary outbreak of speaking in

unknown tongues, and supposed revelations, took place in Mr. Irving's church, where the C. A. C. had its origin. These utterances were said to be the voice of the Spirit. Some truth may have been ministered there, no doubt it was, or earnest souls would not have been deceived,—and the devil works by deception,—but with it was much false teaching as to the person of our Lord, and there was a woeful mixture of what applies to Israel and what belongs to the church in the prophetic teaching. For instance, it was held, and still is, we believe, that only 144,000 will be caught up at the coming of the Lord.

We believe that at the time referred to there was a most gracious and general revival of spiritual life. Christians came together to study the Scripture, they found that the Spirit of God was able and ready to teach them, Christ became a greater reality, and it seems as though the cry rang out, far and wide: "Behold the Bridegroom." Christians all over the world awoke to the fact that the Lord was coming again. That the devil should attempt to neutralize this truth and bring it into disrepute by linking it with an heretical system of teaching, such as that found in the Catholic Apostolic Church, does not surprise us, for we have read 2 Corinthians 11. 1-15.

(4) *The word "meet" in 1 Thessalonians 4. is one that is invariably used for "meet and return with," and the placing of a long period between the meeting and returning is quite without a shred of proof in Scripture.*

¶ We do not know by whom or where the word "meet" is invariably used for "meet and return with." But it is evident that the return in kingdom power and glory is in the passage in the words, "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." These were not to be shut out of the kingdom as the Thessalonians seem to have feared. But in the special word from the Lord which follows this assurance, the kingdom is not presented as the special hope of the saints, but THE LORD HIMSELF; for it is notable that it does not say, so shall we ever reign over the earth, but "so shall we ever be with the Lord." The saints are to be with Him in the Father's house, and for the marriage

festival prior to His coming forth as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19.).

(5) *When did the any-moment coming of the Lord become the hope of the Church, since Paul speaks of expecting death (2 Tim. 4. 6), and Peter "putting off my tabernacle" and "after my decease" (2 Peter 1. 14, 15)?*

The coming of the Lord was evidently the hope of the Thessalonian saints, for they were waiting for God's Son from heaven (chap. 1. 10). And it is set before the seven churches of Asia, to whom the Revelation was first written (see chap. 2. 25; 3. 3; 3. 11; 22. 7, 12, 20). The fact that Paul and Peter were both to suffer martyrdom for the Lord's sake and that they knew it did not in any way set aside the coming of the Lord as the immediate hope of His saints. Indeed, Peter speaks of those who say "Where is the promise of His coming?" as scoffers walking after their own lusts, and tells us the reason why that coming is delayed, it is because the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3. 3-9). This passage does not definitely present the rapture of the church, for this does not enter in Peter's line of ministry, but it proves that the coming of the Lord was the expectation of the people of God, when the Epistle was written.

Is the Church the Bride of Christ?

Questions have also arisen on this subject in connection with the foregoing. They are as follows:

"If the mystery of the Church, which is His Body, was not made known in either the Old Testament or the Gospels, the scriptures which speak of the Bride must refer to the Jews."

But the church is viewed in several ways in Scripture other than the body of Christ; it is the household of God built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. It groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, and it is the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2. 19-22). The household, temple, and habitation, as well as that of bride, are all thoughts brought out in the Old Testament, finding their perfect fulfilment in the church. "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from

generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1. 26), presents the church in another aspect, the riches of the glory of this mystery is *Christ in the Gentiles (who believe) the hope of glory* (ver. 27), and further, that they should be members of the body of which He is the Head, that they should, being in this indissoluble unity with Him, derive life, character, and nourishment from Him, so that He, being their Head and so of necessity their life, should come out in expression in them down here, for He is in them, and they are Himself, as He said to Saul of Tarsus: "Why persecutest thou Me?" All this is developed in Colossians 3. and 4. But the church being all this does not prevent the other aspects of it—it will also be the bride of Christ.

"Is it not remarkable that (if we allow that the church is the Bride) Paul, although he was the Apostle to whom was committed the full and complete Word of God to the Gentiles, should not in any of his writings speak of the church as the Bride? Is it conceivable that he should have omitted to tell us that we are the Bride if we had been?"

The writers of the Epistles were inspired by the Holy Spirit to present Christian doctrine each from a different standpoint, and while there is perfect harmony there is no needless repetition; so that if Paul does not speak of the church as the bride John does, as we shall see. But Paul unquestionably gives the church as the wife in Ephesians 5. 23-33. He brings it in in order to teach wives and husbands their duties one toward another. What could be clearer than: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the church.*" It is evident that men have to treat their wives as they do their own bodies, for this is what the Lord does, He views His body as His wife. Again, the first union of man and wife ever witnessed is brought into the passage in the quotation from Genesis 2.: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Then follows the Apostle's application of the quotation: "This is a great mystery: but *I speak concerning Christ*

and the church." Our correspondent errs as to this passage by confounding the words "this is a great mystery" with "the mystery hid from ages and from generations" (Col. 1. 26). This is not *the* mystery, but *a* mystery; there are others also (see 1 Cor. 15. 51). The only relationship which can fully bring out the love that Christ bears to the church is that of the husband and wife.

Is the view that the Church is the Bride borne out in any of Paul's writings other than Ephesians 5.?

We know of none other, nor are they necessary; one word of God is sufficient, but John presents the church in this way.

"How do you prove that the Church and not Israel is the Bride—the new Jerusalem?" (Rev. 21.).

(1) The holy city—new Jerusalem—will descend out of heaven (vers. 2, 10). Israel will not come out of heaven, their place and blessing is entirely earthly, while the church is heavenly in origin and character, and will bear the image of the heavenly. At the inauguration of the millennial kingdom she appears in heavenly glory to take her destined place in the government of the world (9-27).

(2) The holy city—new Jerusalem—is presented in her distinctive heavenly character in connection with the eternal state, and this proves that she cannot be Israel, for in the eternal state, on the new earth, the distinction between Israel and the nations will evidently cease to exist, for those who have their portion of blessing on earth in that changeless day of glory are spoken of simply as men, there is no distinction as between one nation and another, "*the tabernacle of God is with MEN,*" and "*the former things have passed away.*" But in the eternal state (vers. 1-8) the church is seen still in her distinct and heavenly character, for she appears again coming down from God out of heaven; but she is not here to be shown to men (ver. 10), or described as "*a great city having the glory of God,*" a glory that shall light the whole earth and fill all beholders with admiration, but "*as a bride adorned for her husband.*" She is to be the joy and delight of His heart and eye throughout the eternal ages, "*not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing*" (Eph. 5. 27.).

(3) If the new Jerusalem were Israel

it could not be built upon the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (ver. 14), for Israel had Abraham or the sons of Jacob as her foundation, but the foundations of the church are the apostles, they were her beginning (see Eph. 2. 20).

(4) When the Lord presents Himself in the last chapter of Revelation as "the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star," there breaks forth an answering cry from the Spirit and the bride. The Spirit is here to prepare the church and to produce bridal affection in her heart for Christ by taking of His things and showing them to us, just as Abraham's nameless servant (Gen. 24.) went forth to find and prepare Rebecca for Isaac, who is a type of the risen Christ. And here we find that the Spirit's work will not fail, it will be finished as truly as the work of Christ was finished, and the church as the bride will cry, "Come"—and observe that it is to Christ as the Morning Star that the bride says "Come." Israel will not know Him as the Morning Star, but as

the "Sun of Righteousness." They will come into blessing and own Him whom they have pierced when the day dawns. But before the "Sun" arises with healing in His wings for Israel, the church, holding her vigil of love through the night watches, describes Him, the bright and Morning Star, and to Him she cries with longing heart, in concert with the Spirit, "Come!"

"If the holy Jerusalem is the Bride, why are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on the gates of it?"

As to this, J. A. Trench has written: "The gate is the place where rule is administered in the East. The order of government on earth was ever connected with Israel and its twelve tribes as the centre of it. But now that which is its (administration's) fitting symbol is found connected with the heavenly city in the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on the gates. To the church under Christ the judicial administration of the world to come is entrusted" (1 Cor. 6. 2; Rev. 2. 26, 27; 20. 4).

The Necessity of Communion.

The servant of Christ must cultivate communion with God and intimacy with Christ, for this will make his gospel testimony fuller, richer, and more simple. It will keep him in touch with the grace that can stoop to the lowest point to win a sinner's heart, and enable him to feel the reality of the things of which he speaks. The terror of the Lord, the love of God, the value of Christ's works, and the blessings that faith enjoys, these are great themes, but unless the servant who ministers them has entered into their greatness in the presence of God, he is a mere lecturer, heartless and

without power, instead of being a living witness and a true minister.

There is no real freshness or power if we are out of communion with God. Apart from this our greatest necessity as servants, our hearts lose their sensibilities, and we drop down into a frigid formality. The most glorious and soul-stirring realities are soon held as mere doctrines, and, of course, are preached as they are held. Then very soon the servant begins to feel a complacent self-satisfaction as to his service, which is not disturbed even by the lack of manifest blessing, and this is a mark of an awfully backslidden state.

The True Servant's Estimate of Himself.

The servants of Christ are often hindered by an exaggerated sense of their own importance, but all such conceit dies a speedy death in the presence of God; it is then that we become conscious of our nothingness. The Baptist could speak of himself as only a "voice," and a greater than John was consciously "less than the least of all

saints." The moment we think *ourselves* to be anything we are out of the servant's true position and spirit. There is a beautiful contrast between John's account of himself and the Lord's description of him (cf. John 1. 22-27 with Luke 7. 26-28). The more worthy we are of the Lord's commendation, the less do we commend ourselves.

“In sure and certain hope.”

[As we believe our readers would wish it, we give the following brief account of the burial of our brother, H. D. R. Jameson.]

A LARGE company gathered together at the graveside in the burial ground of the village church of Killingworth. D. R. H. opened the simple service by saying that some time ago our beloved brother had expressed the wish that, if the Lord should take him home, the following hymn might be sung at his grave :

“We are by Christ redeemed :
The cost—His precious blood ;
Be nothing by our souls esteemed
Like this great good.
Were the vast world our own,
With all its varied store,
And THOU, Lord Jesus, wert unknown,
We still were poor.

“Our earthen vessels break ;
The world itself grows old ;
But Christ our precious dust will take,
And freshly mould :
He'll give these bodies vile
A fashion like His own :
He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan.

“Thus far by grace preserved,
Each moment speeds us on ;
The crown and kingdom are reserved
When Christ is gone :
When cloudless morning shines,
We shall his glory share ;
In pleasant places are the lines,
The home how fair !

“To Him our weakness clings
Through tribulation sore,
And seeks the covert of his wings
Till all be o'er.
And when we've run the race,
And fought the faithful fight,
Then shall we see Him face to face
With saints in light.”

After the singing of this hymn J. T. M. read 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18, and spoke as follows :—

“A common sorrow has gathered us together in this quiet cemetery to-day. Hugh Jameson was well beloved by us, and those who knew him best loved him most. But ours is a sorrow that is relieved by a wonderful hope. If I may

so say, we have two joys to-day that more than counterbalance our sorrow : one is the thought of his present portion, the other the supremely blessed prospect that shines before him, and before all of us who believe in Jesus.

“He has received his promotion, he is with his Saviour—‘absent from the body,’ he is ‘present with the Lord.’ It is as though a soldier were called from a distant outpost of the empire to dwell in a palace, and near to the king whom he had faithfully served. Blessed portion this ! The greatest joy that our brother might have known on earth is as nothing to his joy this day in the presence of his Lord.

“There is also the prospect which this passage in 1 Thessalonians 4. reveals to us. The Christians of that ancient Macedonian city were waiting for the Son of God from heaven, and they feared that their dead friends would miss the glory of that appearing, so the Apostle wrote to tell them not to sorrow on that behalf, ‘for, if we believe that JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with HIM.’ Then follows a special revelation from the Lord Himself as to the manner of His coming for His saints. Every circumstance of triumph will be there. The Lord Himself, the heavenly Bridegroom, with the shout of a Victor on His lips, shall come forth from His glory to receive His bride. The voice of the chief angel shall martial angelic myriads as a retinue for the Lord and His saints, and the trump of God shall call all heaven to witness the home-bringing of ‘those that are Christ’s at His coming.’ And it is the ‘dead in Christ,’ His saints whose death was precious in His eyes, who shall feel the first touch of that resurrection power, for they shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, TO MEET THE LORD in the air : and so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD. ‘Wherefore comfort one another with these words.’

"What a day of triumph that will be for us and for our Lord! What glad surprise shall fill our hearts when we behold His face; but who shall tell the joy that our Lord will have as He receives to Himself the church for which He gave Himself, 'without having spot or wrinkle or any such thing?' And the pledge to us that these things shall be infallibly fulfilled is twofold: 'Jesus died and rose again,' and we know it 'BY THE WORD OF THE LORD.'

"We are not a defeated company of people to-day, nor are we defiant in the presence of death, but we are triumphant. The tears may be upon our faces, but the joy of the Lord's victory is in our hearts. We can say, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . But thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"And our beloved brother, he has not met with defeat. We had not many words from him during those last weeks, for he had lost the power of speech. But there were moments when the thoughts of his soul burst through the iron barrier of weakness and decay; such a moment was that when he exclaimed, 'Welcome, welcome, welcome!' He was asked if he were saying 'Welcome' to the Saviour, and he answered with an emphatic 'Yes.'

"And now he is at home, the fight fought, the faith kept, and the course run; he has received his Saviour's welcome, a welcome the joy of which no human words can tell. And it is but a little while and He who shall come will come, and we too shall be welcomed to the Father's house.

"O day of wondrous promise!
The Bridegroom and the bride
Are seen in glory ever:
And love is satisfied."

"But I would have you observe the deeply affecting exhortation in the Scripture: '*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*' Why are we told to comfort one another? It is because our God and Father would have us, as His children, manifesting His own nature one towards the other, and He is the God of all comfort. He does not ask us to do or be anything that He is not. And this thought I would specially

commend to the dear widow and fatherless boys. You may learn the character of the God under whose wings you trust by the command that He gives to His people here.

"But, further, the Lord knew that the divine love which He has put within our hearts would make us yearn to minister consolation to those who are so sorely bereaved. He knew also that we should feel the utter poverty of the best words that we could command, and so He has put His own words into our mouths that we may repeat them to each other at times like these, and His words soothe the troubled breast and heal the broken heart; they are words of life and everlasting consolation.

"O sorrowing hearts, this God is your God! And until that quickly coming day of the Lord's return He will be your shield; but He is more, He is also 'your exceeding great reward.' Rest sweetly content in the knowledge that He is your shield, and be free from all anxious suspense as to the future, free to exult in the God who places all the resources of His grace at your disposal and who wants you to make Himself your joy and glory. Then shall you be more than conquerors through Him that loved you.

"But are there any in our company to-day who are still strangers to the Saviour in whom beloved Hugh Jameson rested, who do not know our God, the God of resurrection? To you we appeal. Christ died for sinners, therefore He died for you. We can bear witness to His saving power, and to the fact that His blood cleanseth from all sin. He will receive you to-day, even as He saved our dear brother. We beseech you to turn to Him, here and now, beside this open grave, and be assured that none who come to Him will He cast out."

H. J. V. then committed the body to the Lord's keeping and gave thanks to Him that He had, in His great love for us, tasted death in all its bitterness on our behalf; that the thought of this sweetened the waters of Marah for us and enabled us to bless His name in our sorrow. He commended the widow and fatherless boys to the God of the widow and the Father of the fatherless,

and prayed that some standing round that open grave who were still strangers to the Saviour might be reached and saved ; for nothing would be more to the wish of our beloved brother than that some one should receive blessing at his burial.

Finally we sang :

“ For ever with the Lord !
Amen ! so let it be :
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality. ”

“ There shall all clouds depart,
The wilderness shall cease ;
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace. ”

And so the earth closed over the body of another of the Lord's saints. We placed it there, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall clothe the corruptible body with incorruption, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

The Prospect.

And is it so ? I shall be like Thy Son :
Is this the grace which He for me has won ?
Father of glory, thought beyond all thought,
In glory, to His own blest likeness brought.

Oh, Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee?
Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,
Thy saints the prize and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be, Thy love had not its rest
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest ;
That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

Nor I alone, Thy loved ones all, complete
In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet,
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

J. N. Darby.

“ He ever liveth ” (Heb. 7. 25).

Luther was once found, at a moment of peril and fear when he had need to grasp unseen strength, sitting in an abstracted mood, tracing on the table with his finger the words “ Vivit ! Vivit ! ” — “ He lives ! He lives ! ” It is our hope for ourselves, and for His truth, and for mankind. Men come

and go ; leaders, teachers, thinkers speak and work for a season, and then fall silent and pass away. He abides. They die, but He lives. They are lights kindled, and therefore, sooner or later, quenched ; but He is the true Light from which they draw all their brightness, and He shines for evermore.

Hosanna to the living Lord !
Hosanna to the Incarnate Word !
To Christ, Creator, Saviour, King,
Let earth, let heaven hosanna sing !
Hosanna Lord ! Hosanna in the highest !

Things which cannot be Shaken.

(WALTER B. WESTCOTT).

"CHRIST, . . . who is over all, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER" (Rom. 9. 5).

"ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3. 16).

"The SPIRIT OF TRUTH. . . . He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14. 17).

THE Christian need not despair. The general upheaval cannot affect anything that his faith has built upon. Nothing is more certain than that the waves of the sea of unrest will break harmlessly upon the Rock of his salvation.

One might suppose, from the utterances of some wise and learned folk, that Christianity was played out, and that none but young fools and old fogies believed its hoary doctrines. Some of us, however, are hardy enough to assert that the truth of Christianity was never more needed than it is to-day, and that never was it more effectual where it is allowed free course.

Let us take courage and congratulate ourselves that the great outstanding tenets of our faith cannot be affected by criticism or unbelief, but stand as far above man's puny challenge as the heavens are above the earth.

Let us consider some of these:

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We who have trusted in Christ believe in One who is greater than all creation, which is His handiwork. Before ever a world existed, or any creature in the universe drew breath, He lived co-equal with, and was Himself actually, God. With a word He called into being the vast creation: the fiery stars, the rolling planets, the very earth on which we live. His fiat was final, His power was boundless, His empire universal.

Never shall we cease to wonder that a Person so gloriously pre-eminent

should stoop to the estate of manhood. He who was Maker of earth and heaven became the object of man's hatred. Misunderstood, despised, reviled, He suffered and threatened not. But it was only by His permission that men mocked and scourged and crucified Him. It was all part of the way marked out for Him before He came to earth, but no hand can now be rudely laid upon Him. He is in triumph and victory to-day, and whatever men may say of Him, He is beyond their reach for ever. We, therefore, who believe in Him shall never be confounded.

Then His work upon the cross is done, and done for ever. Men may scoff at the idea of vicarious sacrifice, and despise the blood that God calls "precious," but the finished work of Calvary still stands alone. It has no successor, it cannot have a rival, it needs no complement. All the theories of men, all man-made theologies, all Christless substitutes, will vanish in the day of testing, and those only whose faith is based upon the "blood of the Lamb" shall enter the Father's house. The "old-fashioned" believer will thank God then and through eternal days that

"His faith was built on nothing less
Than Jesu's blood. . . ."

THE WORD OF GOD.

Let us state boldly here and now, and once for all, that we believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God. The overthrow of authority is one of the most prominent features of the present social disorder, and the Scriptures are rejected as being a check upon liberty of thought and

action. There are two classes in particular who are bent upon the overthrow of the Word of God as authoritative: first, those whose lives are rebuked by its searching condemnation of evil; and second, those whose unbridled thoughts and bold imaginations are hampered by the plain unbending assertions of Holy Writ. To the humble believer, conscious of his ignorance and need of guidance, the Word of God is a "lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path." Through it, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, He learns the character of God, and his heart rejoices in all the blessed unfolding of grace and truth throughout the Scriptures. To him it is enough that God has spoken, and he is content to believe that what He has said will surely come to pass. It is confirming to his faith to know that in a thousand ways already the Scriptures have been vindicated—by the fulfilment of prophecy, by the experience of nations and countless individuals, and by the excavator's spade. And the day will come—let us again affirm it—when they who rest implicitly upon the holy Word of God will find it true in every detail, and will thank God for the grace given to them by which they refused all the petty criticisms and the impious reasonings of the human mind.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

A Person of the Holy Trinity, no less august than the Son who came to earth, dwells in the believer and abides with him for ever. This truth the world knows nothing of, but to the Christian it is a fact most wonderful. What does he need of human wisdom or philosophy who is indwelt by God the Holy Ghost? As the Comforter He reveals the Father's love, and presents a living Christ in all His glory and perfection; as teacher He unfolds

the things that are freely given to us of God; as the seal He marks us off as God's possession, and as the earnest He gives the foretaste of future glory. Of what account to us—with such a Person as our guest—are all the fierce attacks, whether flank or frontal, upon the citadel of God?

Very easily could we name more of the bulwarks of the Christian faith. Suffice it to say, that God's truth is in God's keeping, and though the Ark may sometimes *seem* to totter, no Uzzah-hands are needed to support it. Many a defence of the Bible has done more harm than the attack it sought to meet. The "assured results" of the higher critics need alarm no thoughtful person. The only thing certain about them is their uncertainty, and they are mainly consistent in their inconsistency.

The Christian is on the winning side, the day of vindication is at hand. In the meantime he may boldly "preach the Word and be instant in season and out of season," and stay calmly confident amidst the clash of creeds, the downfall of dynasties, the overturning of authority; not that he is indifferent to these things, but that his faith and hope are both in GOD. Well might bold Martin Luther write:

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing:
Our Helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.

"Did we in our own strength confide
Our striving would be losing:
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.

"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us:
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.

"God's Word, for all their craft and force,
One moment will not linger:
But, spite of Hell, shall have its course,
'Tis written by His finger."

Every trial of our faith is but a trial of God's faithfulness, and is "much more

precious than gold which perishes, though it be tried with fire" (1 Peter 1. 7).

Enclosed with Cedar.

(T. OLIVER, D.Sc.).

"AND the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was not a stone seen" (1 Kings 6. 18). The cedar is characterized by extraordinary durability, glorious height, refreshing shadow, and comely excellence, and, as having these qualities, it is typical of Christ. The cedar wood has a fine grain, fragrant smell, and is so incorruptible that cedar beams, little changed, have been found in the ruins of Asiatic temples between two thousand and three thousand years old. This sets forth in measure the abiding character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Corroding time has no influence on Him. He remains "changeless throughout the changing years."

Botanists tell us that the excellent preservation of cedar wood is due to its bitter taste which is not relished by worms and other destructive organisms. Even so, Christ is not relished by the world; unregenerate men cannot appreciate His value. They have no palate for His sweetness, it is bitterness to them. But to those who love Him He is the Bridegroom, and the countenance of the Bridegroom to them is as Lebanon; excellent as the cedars. He is the altogether lovely One (S. of Sol. 5. 15, 16).

Christ our Acceptance before God.

Because of the desirable qualities of the cedar, Solomon took care to have everything of his building, good though it might be, covered with it. The inner

court had three rows of hewed stones and a row of cedar beams (1 Kings 6. 36). It is all typical of the truth unfolded in Peter's 1st Epistle. There the living stones, hewed by a Workman who never made a mistake, are built up into a spiritual house. They are, however, acceptable to God by *Jesus Christ*. They are wrapt up or covered in the beauty of Christ.

"As within His temple olden
Was there seen no costly stone,
Nought but cedar carved and golden,
Nought but Christ, and Christ alone—
So the stones so dearly bought
God in heaven beholds them not" (Bevan).

Christ our Protection in the World.

"We have a little sister and she hath no breasts . . . and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar" (S. of Sol. 8. 8, 9). The little sister is a telling illustration of the Christian who has not been established in the love of Christ, and who is in danger, door-like, of being moved backwards and forwards by every wind of doctrine. She is typical of all apart from the preservation which we have in Christ. We need to be encased in the cedar, to be "*rooted and built up in Him*, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2. 7). So shall we have protection from the vain deceit and philosophy of men, and so shall we be able to shed about us the fragrance of Christ, and show forth the praise of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19. 6).

The great purpose of the divine creation shall roll on to inevitable fruition and glory, though Ephraim turn aside, and Jerusalem herself—city of peace, city of beauty—be numbered amongst the cities of confusion. Our trust is in the living God. Princes disappoint us;

prophets, preachers, teachers go astray; but God reigns, and that which is crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made plain; all things shall be smoothed into rhythm, and God's universe shall sing God's praise.

Divine Love.—No. 3.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Love of Christ.

THIS love is both upward and downward—love to the Father and to those given to Him of the Father. In speaking of love *upward* I do not desire the reader to come to the conclusion that Jesus was ever less than “God blessed for ever” (Rom. 9. 5), but in becoming a man He took a place less than God, so that He could say, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14. 28); and therefore I speak of His love to the Father as having an upward aspect, as His love to us is love to those beneath Him.

Then His love to the Father had no limit, nor was it affected in its even flow by anything external to it. To Him the Father was supreme, and compared with Him nothing else was of any account. His life, His happiness for time and eternity, He placed at the disposal of the Father. Be the prospect before His soul a throne of glory, or be it a cross of shame, the will of the Father makes either acceptable to Him (Matt. 11. 26). He was born King of the Jews, and had title to the throne of His father David; but with lowly and subject heart He turned from the glamour of royalty and took His weary way to Golgotha’s woes, saying, “That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do” (John 14. 31).

But that the even flow of the love of His heart to His own is unaffected by external influences cannot rightly be said; for His love to those who are His is subject to the will of the Father. They were the Father’s gift to Him, and as such He receives them, and as such appreciates them. “Thine they were,” He says, “and Thou gavest them Me” (John 17. 6). And again He says, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast

out” (John 6. 37). He was here as sent by the Father, not to do His own will but the will of Him who sent Him; and as to those who were to be His companions in the day of His glory, He leaves the choice of such to Him whose servant He had become. Having taken the place of Man, in nothing does He speak of Himself as a free agent. His love to the Father was, as I have intimated, boundless; and its mighty current was unaffected by anything that lay in the channel which had been digged for it by the will of Him whom He designated “Lord of heaven and earth.”

But no one that the Father drew to Him was unacceptable to Him. To Him such were the excellent of the earth, “in whom,” He says, “is all my delight” (Ps. 16. 3). In the estimation of the world they were a base and beggarly lot, and ill-fitted for companionship with One who claimed the throne of the world. But for all that they were the nobility of heaven, princes of the blood royal, born from above, and children of God. And as such He recognized them. They had heard and learned of the Father, and of Him were they drawn to Jesus, and His delight was in them.

But also they were the choice of Jesus. Such is the mystery of divine persons. Of the Father were they given to Him out of the world, but yet He can say, “I have chosen you” (John 15. 16). Mending their fishing nets, sitting at the receipt of custom, following the Baptist, He found them; recognized in them the subjects of divine counsel; beneath their lowly exterior detected the heavenly characteristics that bewrayed their royal lineage; loved them, called them after Him, and at the end, in the greatness of His love, laid down His life for them.

We have seen that the love of *God* is universal. The *Father* is said to love the Son and those who have affection for Him. Of the love of Christ the Father is the supreme object, but those also who are given Him of the Father are loved by Him with a love surpassing knowledge, a love that found its full expression in that in which also His love to the Father was expressed—His death upon the cross.

It was this love of Christ that constrained the apostles in the preaching of the gospel. Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5. 14). The whole world lay under the judgment of death, and under this judgment Christ came, in order that He might be righteously able to quicken some of them in His own life, so that they might live to Him who died for them and rose again. He wanted to surround Himself with men taken out of death, who would live to Him in the affections of their hearts. To this end He gave Himself a ransom for all. He went down into that under which all men lay, and thus expressed His love in order that that love might take effect in the hearts of those who came under His life-giving power, and that they might love Him and thus live to Him.

But Paul makes this love of Christ intensely individual when he says, "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). And this every one of His own is entitled to take home to himself. And what a privilege it is to be allowed to take hold of the fathomless love of such a Saviour and direct it all into one's own heart! And it most surely is the privilege of every one of His own, for the Apostle of the Gentiles, however great a servant he was, had no greater claim on the love of Christ than had the most insignificant saint upon the face of the earth. Therefore both reader and writer may look up to Him who sits upon His Father's throne, supreme in the universe of God, and say, "*He loved me, and gave Himself for me.*"

Then we are told that "having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 13. 1). Nothing could quench that love. There was everything to test it, everything to drive it back into the heart that gave it birth. Amongst His twelve disciples there was desertion, denial, treachery. There was the dark chalice of bitter death to be drunk; there was the malice of men, the power of Satan, the forsaking of God; and all this must be met and endured if He is to have these few feeble followers with Him in the glory. Will His love bear such a strain as this? Will He really go to the cross for them? Will He stand in their room and stead in the presence of a righteous and holy God? Yes, He will do all this, for "*having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to the end.*"

"He gave Himself for our sins" (Gal. 1. 4). Did He not know what this involved? Had He underestimated the weight of that awful judgment that must be poured out mercilessly upon the One made sin? Was He unaware that it meant being made a curse? Had He overlooked the abandonment of God? He knew everything. He was well aware of all that was to be enacted at Golgotha. He neither overlooked nor underestimated anything. But at all cost He would do the will of the Father, and at all cost He would ransom our souls from the power of death. Therefore, in love beyond all human thought, *He gave Himself for our sins.*

He is also said to have loved the church, and given Himself for it (Eph. 5. 25). The church is, in a peculiar way, the object of the love of Christ. It is not said to be the object of the love of *God*, though it is called His church. But neither is Christ said to love the world, though it was in His death that the love of God to the world came to light. But the church is the bride of Christ. It is the Eve of the last Adam. He loves it, gave Himself for it, sanctifies it, and will present it to Him-

self glorious. He devotes *Himself* to its blessing. In His death there was the most complete surrender of all that He was on behalf of His church. He loves us in the way in which a man loves his own flesh: "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." How could we think otherwise seeing that *He gave Himself for it*.

And this love of Christ surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3. 19). Even in redeemed creation, that wonderful expanse in which God glorifies Himself, and which shall be illuminated with His glory; that universe of blessing, the Father's world, the final result of the accomplishing of His eternal purposes, as we look abroad upon its dazzling brightness and wealth of unspeakable and everlasting felicity, the well-known and perfectly enjoyed love of Christ will be the stay and strength of our enraptured hearts. The position given to us at the centre of that "breadth, and length, and depth, and height," might well bewilder our poor creature minds, were it not that we find the love of Christ a perfect stay and support, so that we are able, with blessed composure and worshipping hearts, to look abroad upon the magnificent spectacle of a universe ablaze with the glory of the living Father, and of God resting in His love. May our souls be ever in the sweet enjoyment of "*the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.*"

From this love we may well say, "Who shall separate us?" (Rom. 8. 35). He has died for us, and in this His love has come to light in all its power. "Greater love," He has said, "has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15. 13). He has made us His friends, and, oh, how friendly has He proved Himself to be! This love can never be fully known, but neither can it ever be forgotten by those who have tasted its sweetness upon earth. Daily

do we now tell Him of our appreciation of His matchless love, but what are all our feeble praises to-day when compared with that day in which we shall see Him face to face, and, bowed at his feet, shall pour out the adoration of hearts which for all eternity shall overflow with songs and thanksgiving!

But He not only died for us, He is risen again. He has broken the power of death. He is also at the right hand of God. He is in the place of power and authority. He is supreme in the universe. He is Lord of all. And He makes intercession for us. His death, which was the witness of His love, has not exhausted His love. The same love dwells in His heart now that He is risen. And in the power of that love He makes intercession for us. The ephod of the high priest was in a very special way the priestly garment, and to it the breastplate, upon which was engraved the names of the twelve tribes, were engraved. The breastplate was never to be loosed from the ephod (Exod. 28. 28). Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, who is our great Priest before the face of God. Tribulation may overtake us, and it surely will, for He has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, may be our portion here; but "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8. 37).

What a reality His love is! How changeless! How eternal! How well He has proved it! His love to the Father has been by that Father fully appreciated. All the delight of the Father is in Him. But what about our appreciation of that love, love that spread upon death's dark vale its sweetest odours, and even lit up death's domain with its glory? How can we for a moment forget it? How can we ever cease praising it? May our hearts continue ever in the deep enjoyment of it.

Correspondence.

SUNDAY EVENING GOSPEL SERVICES.

Three questions have been asked: (1) What ought to be done where companies at the usual Sunday evening gospel services are small and consisting mainly of professed Christians; (2) ought the preacher to announce the glad tidings with all simplicity as if it were the latest news, and those present strangers to it? or (3) should he seek to present, according to his ability in handling the Word, the great foundation truths of Christianity, more particularly to help Christians in their feeble apprehension of the truth?

Your correspondent, D.W.H., raises for discussion a long-standing difficulty with which every preacher is familiar. An exchange of views may well, as he suggests, be of great profit.

The meeting in question is the "Gospel Meeting," and thus much turns on the interpretation which the individual preacher places on the term *gospel*. In other words, what is he to regard as the *scope* of his message? Is it, as D.W.H. asks, to be restricted to the narrower, more specialized view of the evangelist's work which limits it to the presentation of Christ as Saviour to lost, perishing humanity? or is it to embrace some consideration, at least, of what he terms the "foundation truths of Christianity?"

It is incontestable that without the former no gospel preaching can be regarded as either complete or satisfactory, and even if the whole of the audience are known to be "regular attendants and professed Christians," there is surely no true Christian but in whose heart the sound of the sweet, old, old story is ever precious and ever welcome, while there is always the possibility that among the hearers is some one, whatever the outward profession, in the deep recesses of whose heart there has never yet been a real response to the voice of Christ.

Personally, I recommend that the main appeal be to the *sinner*—that the address be primarily addressed to *him*—and that, as auxiliary to this, such aspects of the subject in hand as afford food for Christians be dwelt upon.

After all, is not the whole question solved if the preacher habitually goes direct to the fountain-head, to the Lord of the harvest Himself, for his message? The Lord knows the hearts of all who will be present, and if faith is really exercised, and a dependent, self-emptying preacher is the servant, there can be no doubt that the message for the moment will be given, and blessing must result. . . .

Hameln, Germany.

S. R. HOPKINS.

. . . First and foremost, do we realize sufficiently that the Lord is the Master of His servants? From Him all direction and instruction must come if service is to be really effectual. He knows the character or need of the audience, and can we not count upon Him to give the suited message? Generally speaking, there is but one hour per week devoted to really gospel work, and personally I believe the gospel should be told out in all its simplicity, and as if the message had never been given before. Those who are unsaved are, in truth, still strangers to it. At the same time the good news, if told out in the power of the Holy Ghost, will greatly cheer and refresh the hearts of the Lord's people.

If the gospel is presented from God's side, *i.e.* something He has done, first of all for the glory

of His own great name and the satisfaction of His heart of love, sinners will be converted to God, and saints will be established in their souls in the great foundation truths of Christianity. I believe the great defect to-day is the way in which the truth of the gospel is presented, namely, merely in the way of relief *men* will get, rather than seeing that God has been glorified in the death of Jesus, and now finds His infinite delight in welcoming back to Himself the sinner. The former is to leave me self-centred, the latter will attach me in affection to God revealed in Christ.

Stockport.

HOWARD SMITH.

. . . Often the smallness of the companies are the result of a moral breakdown on the part of some (one or more) associated with the preachings, and conduct unbecoming to those of the household of faith; their ways in the world have not "adorned the doctrine." At times, too, the wrong-doing has been tolerated or condoned for a long time (for peace sake, perhaps, and often for the sake of *ease*) by those responsible to deal with it; and though in time it may have been dealt with in some measure and the offence or offenders somehow removed, yet the *stigma* remains, and if there has not been real confession, self-judgment, and humiliation on the part of those remaining—there is a blight, and a hindrance to all gospel work with no *power of attraction*, nor outgoing to others for blessing. It is indeed sad when a company of Christians get a bad name in the outside world, and it is not to be wondered at in such cases if "few people attend." If the preachings are to be made a blessing, those connected therewith must have a good report of those that are without. There is no activity in gospel work found with the Corinthians, whose conduct called for severe censure; and in the 2nd Epistle even, where there had been partial self-judgment and humiliation; yet if they are to be enlarged and made a channel of blessing to others, they are to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7.).

If there be indifference to the Lord's honour and interests, so that matters are allowed to drift on without that real exercise of soul which would show itself in coming together for prayer and confession, there cannot be much blessing or spiritual prosperity. But when there are those in a meeting whose hearts get stirred up within them, and, feeling the state of things—like Ezra and Daniel for instance (*see* chap. 9. of both these books)—eat the sin-offering, and take the burden of things before God, while maintaining holy separation from evil; *then* He will work and others will be exercised and stirred up too, so that the "small company" will soon show signs of spiritual activity, and be found seeking the blessing of others. Prayer in regard to the Lord's interests, and for others, will become a vital reality—a secret spring

of blessing and way of power; because as intercession is made for others, profit and blessing will come to those who take that attitude. The closing verses of Isaiah 40. still hold good for our encouragement and assurance of faith, and furnish a definite and comprehensive answer to the question—"What is to be done?"

Many other suggestions might be made as to what is to be done to remedy the state of things stated by your correspondent.

We have seen that practical godliness of life and constant real waiting upon God in secret are the first great requisites. But, further, it is a great help and gain when Christians cultivate an evangelical spirit and loving interest in those around who are still in need of the Saviour and danger of being eternally lost.

In years past there was far more personal work done in the way of speaking to individuals and giving away gospel books. In the parable of the Good Samaritan we not only have set forth the way of the Lord's grace to us, but have also recorded the Lord's closing comment on it—"GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE." But here, again, the manner of life must be in accord with the gospel of grace and peace, or it is worse than useless to seek to win others. It is, however, where rightly taken up, a happy and valuable service, available to all—old and young, male and female. A fine illustration of this individual service is afforded us at the end of the first chapter of John's Gospel; and how the Lord owned and encouraged it. By such means the small companies should soon be augmented.

With regard to the second and third questions, the answer depends much on the facts in each case. The "small company" consists of those familiar with the gospel and most of them already presumably converted; the servant of the Lord should certainly seek to minister meat in due season to those present if he has the gift and ability, instead of (as I admit is too often done) addressing an imaginary company of careless or impenitent sinners. If, however, he has not the ability to minister profitably to those present, he should rather hold his peace than speak words to no profit, but rather to the depressing of his hearers.

Formerly, in such cases, there was more simplicity and less formality, and the Lord was looked to and waited on to meet the need of those come together. The meetings took somewhat the form described in 1 Corinthians 14., and were often very happy and profitable; and even if strangers were present they were at least favourably impressed.

The danger lies in seeking to keep up a certain form of meeting, at all cost, instead of recognizing

the real state of things, and looking to the Lord to undertake for His people and avoiding assumption.

Stockton.

S. M. ANGLIN.

... The question raised by your correspondent D.W.H. is one that needs to be faced in many places.

It is not for any of us to dictate to another servant what he should or should not preach, but I venture to offer a word of advice under three heads by way of reply.

(1) *Cultivate reality.* If all present are professed Christians, and the speaker knows it, how can he possibly "announce the glad tidings with all simplicity as if it were the latest news, and those present strangers to it" without sacrificing reality? Such a procedure must necessarily partake more of the nature of an act upon the stage of a theatre than of that solemn and earnest dealing that befits platform or pulpit. In such a case let him preach the gospel, but in such a way as to instruct and edify his hearers, above all, to inflame their souls with the love of God which the gospel breathes. If there be doubt in the speaker's mind as to the composition of his audience, then nothing but being cast upon God for direction upon the point will do.

(2) *Avoid fatalism.* When gospel interest is low and a new face is hardly ever or rarely seen, as is the case all too frequently, especially where the preaching-place is badly situated, then there is a strong tendency to lose heart, relax all effort, and adopt the discouraging attitude of "thus it is and thus it ever will be." This tendency is specially manifest with the saints who are tied to the one locality or meeting-place. It should be carefully and prayerfully avoided. Such a state of things is not normal but abnormal. It is not something which must be meekly submitted to as part of the will of God, but something which should cause heart-searching and exercise and much prayer and waiting upon God.

(3) *Act courageously.* It often needs much courage to get out of the rut of formality into the high road of reality. Local brethren may object to the time-honoured customs being disturbed, and wish to keep up appearances in the usual Sunday evening service. Avoid, then, the high-handed, or the sensational, adopt the gracious yet courageous line of action. Better, far better, have a break-down, as far as appearances go, if we may but reach reality and the presence of God.

There we shall find, not a lifeless and respectable outward appearance, but rather vigour and movement and blessing.

Madrid.

F. B. HOLE.

Further replies to these questions will be published (D.V.).

"Depths of the Sea."

A bottomless ocean is a good emblem of infinite mercy. When God pardons, He has no reserves or limitations, no half-forgiveness, like the sons of men. He does it with

His whole heart. He pardons freely, fully, and eternally, and delighteth in doing it. Thus He discovers both the glory of His grace and the value of Christ's atonement.

Bible Study.—Jude.

(EDWARD CROSS).

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling

words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

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

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

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference.

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

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Verse 11.

THE conduct of Balaam (Num. 22-24) is made the subject of much comment by the Spirit of God both in the Old and the New Testaments. Moses refers to his attempt to curse Israel, but "the Lord turned the curse into a blessing" (Deut. 23. 4, 5); and Joshua refers to it again in the summary he gives of the Lord's intervention on their behalf (Josh. 24. 9, 10). Of the same incident Micah seeks again pathetically to remind them, "that they might know the righteousnesses of the Lord," *i.e.* His righteous deeds in their favour (Micah 6. 5). But how slow they were to apprehend the danger from which they had been delivered, and their readiness to fall again into the same snare is shown in Numbers 31. 14-20, where the wrath of Moses was stirred up against the leaders of the people for their evil counsel in saving those who had but lately brought a plague upon them. And a similar thing is repeated before our eyes to-day. The sharp sword, which should have done its work in Numbers 31. 17, is present in Revelation 1. 16; 2. 12, 16. Those who held the doctrine of Balaam, as well as those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, were allowed in Pergamos, and gave their character to the assembly there, *i.e.* the assembly which should have been ruled by the authority of the Lord, and been the exponents of the doctrine of the Christ, had dropped down into the place where Satan had his throne, and where he

dwelt (ver. 13), and where the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans were taught instead. A terrible condition of things, where the conclave of the church is turned into a college of infamy.

2 Peter 2. 15 speaks of those "following the way of Balaam, who loved the reward of unrighteousness;" here we read of those who had "given themselves up, abandoned themselves to his error for reward."

And yet, with all this warning and expostulation from God Himself and His Word, how little heed is paid thereto! It is passed by as so much water spilt upon the ground that is not worthy even of observation. Alas! what poor creatures we are; how senseless, and how proud! Like intoxicated prisoners, lured by the enemy into the fatal toils of their destruction.

Verse 12.

(1) "Spots are they," rather "sunken rocks," over which the peaceful waters play, hiding the danger till too late; "they are in your love feasts, feeding themselves together with you, without fear," supported by the indifference of the professing church;

(2) clouds without water, driven of the winds—a withering Oriental figure;

(3) autumnal trees, blossoming too late to ripen fruit—fruitless;

(4) twice dead—in appearance and in fact;

- (5) rooted up, so that they are hopeless ;
- (6) wild waves of the sea frothing out their shameful deeds ;
- (7) wandering stars, out of course, having no ordained orbit ;
- (8) ungodly sinners, without reverence, or godly fear ;
- (9) murmurers — grumblers against others ;
- (10) complaining of their own lot ;
- (11) walking after their own lusts ;
- (12) their mouths speaking great bombastic talk ;
- (13) admiring persons, not truth, for the sake of profit ;
- (14) mockers, jesting disdainfully at all that is holy ;
- (15) setting themselves apart from all godly restraint ;
- (16) natural, soulish, governed by the lower part of man's moral being, in which the passions rule ;
- (17) not having spirit, not governed by the higher part of man's excellence ; more especially true as not having the Spirit of God ;
- (18) dreamers, without rational power of thought (ver. 8).

It is possible that these terms, "natural, not having the spirit," may refer to the gnostic pretensions that they alone were "the spiritual." In truth they were but "natural ;" they had no part in what was really "spiritual" in any sense of the word.

Such are the characteristics of these men who "defile the flesh, despise lordship, and speak railingly against dignities." Language is wellnigh exhausted in describing them. And this is the inspired judgment of God. Its tremendous severity is exceeded only by the words of the Lord in Matthew 23. summed up in verse 33: "Serpents, offspring of vipers, how should ye escape the damnation of hell?" These are not the softening tones of mercy. They would be out of place here, where we have, instead, the withering words of judgment. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Eccles. 3. 1 ; Ps. 101. 1).

Of the above expressions, some of which are found in the New Testament only in Jude, the one on which he lays the chief stress, and which he uses six times, is "ungodly."

ἀσεβής = ungodly, impious. "The idea lying at the root of 'godly' is that of *reverential fear*, profound respect, chiefly applied (in classical usage) to the bearing of men towards the gods—to honour them reverentially with holy awe ; here it is the opposite of what the fear of God demands" (*Cremer*). And how perfectly descriptive that is of the state of things to-day. And this, mark, not in the purely pagan world, but in apostate Christendom. It is not pronounced irreligion ; religion may exist in form. It is not the world as having yet thrown boldly off all profession connected with the name of God—it will come to that ; but while still retaining the veneer of that profession, acts without His fear, and ignores His authority. They are "sunken rocks in your love feasts," gathered in the professed fellowship of the truth, feeding themselves there without fear. The apathy of the professing church offers no barrier to their entrance. There is no holy discrimination to exclude evil ; and once inside, they have nothing to fear from the judgment of those by whom they are welcomed. "While men slept, the enemy sowed tares ;" and there they remain until the harvest.

Verse 14.

From the earliest times such people have been signalized and their final doom foretold. Enoch spake of them in his day. The 7th from Adam, he is a figure of the church ; and to him was revealed the judgment on the world, which came first in Noah's day, type of the judgment yet to come, from which he was caught up—raptured—as the church will be by and bye from the judgments with which this age will close. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5. 24) ; and similarly it is said of Philadelphia, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3. 10).

Noah represents the godly remnant (1 Peter 3. 20) who come through the tribulation, (*cf.* Jer. 30. 7 ; Rev. 7. 14),

preserved in the ark, through faith, until the storm is past (*cf.* Isa. 26. 20 ; 54. 7-10 ; Heb. 11. 5-7). Then, the earth, purified by the judgments of that day, will become the habitation of righteousness, the dwelling-place of redeemed Israel and of the nations, blessed with them, in "the world to come" (Heb. 2. 5 ; 6. 5).

Nor does the delineation of these people, and the judgment that will overtake them, belong to Enoch's prophecy alone. A similar testimony runs through all the prophets, and a like burden might be collated from their writings. So that though the actual prophecy of Enoch is not recorded elsewhere, it was handed down traditionally, guarded by the Spirit of God, and embodied by Jude here in the canon of Scripture.

There is an apocryphal book, written in Æthiopic, called the *Book of Enoch*, in which the author seems to have taken up this prophecy among other things, and "added fables to it." As it has been suggested by some that Jude copied from it, some notice of it will be interesting to the reader. A fairly concise summary of the literature concerning it may be found in "Alford's Greek New Testament." The date of the book is unknown ; some putting it as early as the time of Herod the Great ; some, with perhaps more probability, as late as A.D. 132. But in fact no one knows ; and all argument founded on the date is worthless. Comparing Jude 14 with the *Book of Enoch*, J. N. Darby wrote : "I should decidedly say this is not a quotation. The two passages have the appearance of referring to the same prophecy ; but it cannot be admitted to be a quotation ; the differences are far too great. . . . It is impossible to have a greater contrast than between Jude and this stupid book." In fine, it seems to be pretty well established that if either quoted from the other, the *Book of Enoch* quoted from Jude, not Jude from the *Book of Enoch*.

Verse 20.

From the consideration of such scenes as are presented to us in the preceding verses, what a relief to turn to the resources that are at our disposal to carry us through triumphantly to the end. Viewing the state of things thus pictured, the question naturally arises,

what conduct becomes the Christian in the midst of such a scene ? How is he to occupy himself ? What provision is made for him in his journey through ? The answer is :

1. Building yourselves up on your most holy faith ; the faith already once for all delivered to the saints. It abides constant ; it cannot fail ;

2. Praying in the Holy Spirit ; the sense of dependence, expressed in prayer, and always needed, was never needed more than it is here ;

3. Keep yourselves in the love of God ; *i.e.* in the love that God bears to those who love Him (*cf.* Deut. 7. 9 ; Rom. 8. 28 ; John 15. 9, 10) ;

4. Awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Thus much for themselves ; then, as regards others :

5. Using compassion towards some, making a difference, for all who are involved in this apostate state of things are not equally culpable. Some are quite unaware of the serious import of it, whence it comes or whither it leads, and we must use discrimination in such cases ;

6. Others save with fear, for the atmosphere is infected, and it would be foolish to ignore the danger. Contact with it, even with the best intentions, in an unguarded spirit, would surely be disastrous ;

7. And, as a garment taken from the body of a filthy leper, the soul must learn to hate, and to *keep on hating*, the moral leprosy described above.

Verse 24.

And how beautifully the Epistle ends, as the Spirit turns us to Him who through all these dangers "is able to keep us from stumbling, and to present us, with exultation, blameless before His glory ; to the Only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority, from before the whole age (or course of time) and now, and to all ages. Amen."

Thus, while portraying these scenes of evil, he does not leave our souls under the power of the evil, but lifts us up triumphantly into His safe-keeping and the presence of His glory, to whom belong all glory and all power. Amen.

John, Three, Sixteen.

(J. T. MAWSON).

SOME time ago, in a dream of the night, I thought that with a friend I was visiting some Yorkshire villages, distributing gospel tracts and talking with the people in their cottage homes. At the door of one of these cottages there stood a group of women chatting together in the glorious sunshine of a summer afternoon. We gave a book to each of them, and stayed awhile to speak of God and their souls and eternity. They listened quietly until I quoted to them those splendid words, "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." Then one of them laughed, scornfully and loud, and said, "*The old text again.*" Her companions joined in the laughter, and I awoke with the derisive sounds ringing in mine ears.

Then I thought to myself: Yes, that is the way that the most wonderful announcement from God, brought into this world by the most glorious Person who ever came into it, is being treated by many to whom it was brought. It is an oft-told story, "the old text," and treated as a fable. But why should it be treated with contempt or indifference? are the messengers in anywise to blame for this? It were well that this question were seriously and prayerfully considered by all who aspire to tell this good news to others.

We must not cease to tell it because men cease to be interested in it, for it is God's message to them. A message of deliverance for the perishing and of life for the dead. We, who have believed it, must proclaim it constantly, earnestly, and without tiring, for it is God's best for men at their worst, their only hope for this life and the next. But as we tell it we must

be in the spirit of it; ten thousand times better that we hold our peace for ever, than that we take up these glowing words as though they were ordinary words, or treat the subject of them without the soul being profoundly moved by it. It is right to be careful as to our doctrine, but our danger lies in being correct and cold. When the love of God to a guilty world is our theme, it must burn in our souls as a fire. The bearer of such a message must be like Elihu, who said, "I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer" (Job 32. 18). This state of heart can only be produced by musing in the presence of God, for it was "while I was musing the fire burned: my heart was hot within me: then spake I with my tongue" (Ps. 39. 3).

And what a subject for our meditation: the love of God to guilty men, love that yearned for the self-willed sinner on the downward road, and sent the Only-begotten to demonstrate that love in saving power; sent Him into the thorny path, to taste all the sorrows of it; sent Him not for honour nor the praise of men—for "shame was His kingdom, and reproach His glory;" sent Him to suffering, ignominy, and death.

"*Thieves, and a CULPRIT crucified between them,*
"*All men forsaking Him—and THAT WAS THOU!*"

Only thus could love's story be told, but thus it was told fully and victoriously by Jesus on the cross, told to the everlasting defeat of the devil, told to the eternal salvation of men, told to the infinite glory of God who is the source of it all.

It is by the Holy Spirit of God alone that our souls can rightly follow

that path of sorrow, and that way of love. He alone can conduct our thoughts to God the source of it, who "loved" and "gave." He alone can carry us along the way of it down to the death of the Only-begotten Son, when the powers of darkness were overthrown, sin's full penalty borne, and every claim of divine justice satisfied. He alone can give to us a true conception of the results of this wonderful love in "everlasting life" for "*whosoever believeth in Him.*"

The Holy Spirit alone can enable us to tell out the story again as it should be told. Enticing words of man's wisdom can only spoil it, but if told "in the demonstration of the

Spirit and of power" it must be effectual in winning men from perdition, and in bringing them to God.

No less a theme than this is given to us—the love of God, the sacrifice of His beloved Son, and everlasting life for men. It is God's message for the world, and it does not lose its value or its force because men despise it, even as they despised "His only begotten Son" when He was in the world.

May God the Holy Spirit arouse us to the incomparable blessedness of it, that we may so use "*the old text*" and tell the wonderful story that many who have hitherto treated it with indifference may believe.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 7.

(H. J. VINE).

The King in His Beauty.

"**T**HE King in His beauty" delights to have us near to Him. He died that we might be with Him for ever, to share His *heavenly* glory. And what must that be, when it is said of His earthly glory, "The Lord is exalted; for He dwelleth on high: He hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure?" (33. 5, 6). Rulers without count have come to grief because of failure in some or all of these necessary attributes of a throne! Kingdom after kingdom has decayed or been destroyed for the self-same reason! But His throne takes character from Himself who *is* just and righteous altogether, whose wisdom and knowledge and understanding cannot be numbered; yea, who is Himself "the wisdom of God," and likewise "the salvation of God." Stable, indeed, then must the throne be on which He sits. But though these things must necessarily be connected with the stability of a throne

which is to bring blessing to men, yet power and might is also there. "Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, *acknowledge My might*" (33. 13). It is there to be put into operation if necessary, and so we read, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites" (ver. 14). But the throne is for the blessing of men, so the believing remnant who have waited for Him rejoice in "*their glorious Lord.*" They say, He is "unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our King; He will save us" (vers. 21, 22).

Another "king" will oppress and persecute them, but he (Antichrist) will be cast into the place of his doom: "*for the king it is prepared,*" where the fire is kindled by the "breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone" (30. 33).

The Lord will save them by over-

throwing the oppressor. Antichrist, who is the oppressor, will climb to "the height," and from thence will be his fall, for, "before a fall comes pride, but before honour humility." Antichrist will pretend great humility, for he will come "*like a lamb*," but he is at heart "*a dragon*" (Rev. 13. 11). This is the eagerly-looked-for *superman*, energized by Satanic cunning and power.

The true Christ, Israel's deliverer and our Saviour and Lord, has been highly exalted because He first humbled Himself; for His humility He is honoured in "the height" of the throne.

Kings will be astonished when they see the despised One glorified, and the proud Assyrian oppressor "and his princes shall be afraid of THE ENSIGN" when He shall be seen in Zion (31. 9). "The Ensign" is the sprout of Jesse, of the line of David, our Lord Jesus Christ (see chap. 11. 10). "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (32. 1). Many a rightful heir has come to a throne only to abuse the power that is conferred, but Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead, will reign in righteousness. Under Him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, for He is Abraham's seed, as well as David's. This groaning earth will rejoice when He who is meek and lowly in heart administers the glorious abundance of His royal blessing. Happy, too, the princes who are associated with Him in the ruling of that day. "*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose*" (35. 1).

The picture given us here by the Holy Spirit glows with richest beauty. There is over-abounding joy, for the desert not only blossoms abundantly, but rejoices even with joy and singing! The glory of Lebanon and the excellence of Carmel and Sharon is given to it (ver. 2). What a transformation! From a wild wilderness, a desolate

desert, to a garden of gladness rich with satisfying abundance! This need not surprise us, for we know who THE KING is that fills the throne in that day, and in whose hand the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper.

But the tide of blessing rises still higher, for we read, "they shall see THE GLORY OF THE LORD, AND THE EXCELLENCY OF OUR GOD."

None other but He, who is God and Man, could manifest upon earth such glorious excellence. And we, as belonging to the assembly, the bride of Christ, are called to even higher and more excellent things than these. These are the glowing words that describe the earthly things in which He will be glorious, while the church is to be the heavenly companion of the heavenly Bridegroom, to behold with enraptured gaze His heavenly glory, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Christ is never spoken of as King of His church, His bride, but she nevertheless rejoices in His glory, and, indeed, will share with Him in that which is His as Man.

The Christ.

We shall be greatly helped in our understanding of what is meant when our Lord Jesus is spoken of in the Word as "the Christ" if we apprehend something of the vast range of royal glory which centres in Him as so designated. To many, that wonderful word "in Christ" is a meaningless expression, yet it speaks infinite and exhaustless blessing to the thoughtful saint who has some understanding by the Spirit of the glories of "*the Christ*," for it is His position which determines ours. Many have missed their way by searching the Scriptures solely for things concerning *themselves*, instead of looking for *Him* in all the Scriptures.

When He came to His own, they received Him not, but those who truly looked for Him, and spake of Him, thankfully welcomed Him. John and Andrew were among them. Finding first his own brother Simon,

Andrew said, "We have found THE MESSIAS," and the Holy Spirit adds, "which being interpreted is THE CHRIST." This scripture will help us towards the understanding of His glory. If we read the wonderful things recorded of MESSIAH in the Old Testament, and bring them forward in our thoughts to CHRIST in the New, our view of His glory will be enlarged, and our apprehension of that which is connected with Him will be increased. When we read in the Old Testament of the majesty, the might, the prosperity, the grace, the beauty, the dignity, the high honour, the truth, the meekness, the righteousness, the crown, the throne, the kingdom and dominion of THE MESSIAH, for whom Israel looked, THE KING of whom it is written "BLESSED BE HIS GLORIOUS NAME FOR EVER: AND LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY; AMEN, AND AMEN," we are reading of Him who is THE CHRIST, our Saviour and our Lord, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

But the Holy Spirit shows us still greater things concerning "the Christ" in the New Testament. He is all that was gloriously predicted of Him. He bears all the royal majesty typified by "the Anointed" of the Old Testament; whether by the *warrior* King David, taken out from among the people, or the *peaceful* King Solomon, with his wise administration and the exceeding glory of his kingdom. He, CHRIST JESUS, is the Antitype and fulfiller of it all; but there is more, for not only shall *the earth* be filled with His glory, and all things upon *the earth* be headed up in Him, but in Ephesians i. we are told that "the things in *the heavens*" shall also have Him for their Head, in the administration of the fullness of times.

The surpassing greatness of God's power has raised Him from among the dead, and He is set above every form of government in the wide universe, and we are in Him, "*in Christ.*" Israel spoke of their portion and

inheritance "*in David,*" *in the Anointed* whom God raised up in their day. All believers now have their portion "*in Christ,*" but this involves a new place for us through redemption in resurrection life and glory.

God has put all things under His feet, and given Him to be HEAD OVER ALL THINGS. The glories described by Psalmist and prophet are great indeed, but who shall tell the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height of the glories of *the Christ* in heaven and earth, where there shall also be everlasting glory to God in the assembly in Christ Jesus?

Let our thought rise never so high, there He is in supreme glory and majesty, above principalities, above authorities, above powers, above all dominions; yea, above all heavens. From "*the depth*" He has gone to "*the height.*" "He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." Who can fathom the depth of "the sufferings of Christ?" Who can scale the height "of the glory" which follows? We reply, none of us can! But if that were possible, there is still *a height which is infinite*, beyond all creature ken, for we read in Romans 9. 5, "THE CHRIST, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER, AMEN."

May we be marked by having "the word of *the Christ* dwelling in us richly," and in connection with Him may our singing be with *grace* in our hearts to God, as we chant our joyful psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, edifying and admonishing one another in all wisdom. God grant it abundantly till "that day"—Christ's day—

"When all the saints exalted high,
A glorious anthem raise,
And all that dwell beneath the sky
Speak forth Thine endless praise,
Redeemed creation joins in one
To bless the sacred Name
Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to exalt the Lamb."

In this section there is given to us a wonderful view of Christ, and of His tender care for those who come to Him. "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (32. 2).

"A MAN." Not an angel or fiery seraph; of these we should be afraid, and they could not be of use to us in our need, but He has drawn us with "the cords of a man," with "the bands of love" (Hosea 11. 4).

"AN HIDING PLACE." When strong temptations of sin which as the winds would sweep us from our feet, or when tribulation threatens to overwhelm us, in Him we have peace and are perfectly secure.

"A COVERT." And He is our Deliverer from the wrath to come, which as a tempest shall rage about the wicked, a sure covert for us from the storm.

"RIVERS OF WATER." Quenching our thirst and satisfying our hearts' deepest longings in this world

where nothing can minister refreshment to the soul.

"THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK *in a weary land.*" God is called "the Rock" of Israel in the Old Testament; and we, like them, have proved that this world is "*a weary land.*" How significant, then, and how blessed, that the Christ, "a Man," appears as the rest-giving "shadow" of the "great rock," the ETERNAL GOD, whose wonderful love for us was told out at the cross, when Christ died for us. Yes; He is "*as the Shadow*" of Him whose love is the known present portion of our worshipping hearts. The wealth of this love cannot be counted up, but it is *all* ours in Him through the cross. In "THE JESUS CHRIST MAN" we have "AN HIDING PLACE," "A COVERT," "RIVERS OF WATER;" and lastly, to give us solace, quietude, peacefulness, restfulness, and the consciousness of God's proven and protecting love. He is as "the Shadow of a Great Rock," A MAN AS THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY!

"He with His church has always stood;
His loving-kindness, oh how good!"

Compassion.

What an insight it gives us of the Saviour's heart, this thought of His Compassion! How close it brings Him to us. He had compassion, and drew near to meet our deep and varied needs (Luke 7. 13). The Father, too, had compassion, which impelled Him to run to meet the prodigal boy and to cover him with kisses—the expression of His heart's overflowing of tenderest love (Luke 15, 20). Those who know the heart of God cannot charge Him with unkindness or a want of consideration for His creatures. Although God

allows His people to suffer, it is a great source of consolation that He knows all they have to pass through. God's compassion has been made very manifest to us by His Son coming into the midst of men, and living with them, if only for a time. He did not come simply to "look on," but stretched forth His hand to heal and bless (Acts 4. 30), and last of all died for us, that those who believe might live everlastingly in glory. Who then can doubt the love of God towards men?

(T. R. WESTON.)

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 17.

The Anointing at Bethany, and the Last Supper.

Matthew 26.

Mark 14.

Luke 22.

AS the end draws near, all the gospel narratives indicate the crisis by showing a more definite separation between the followers of Jesus and His enemies than had hitherto obtained. If Jerusalem hardens herself in her guilt and refuses to be gathered (Matt. 23. 37) He would nevertheless gather the little remnant given to Him by the Father into a closer intimacy with Himself—a precious privilege specially to be valued in an evil day. LUKE omits the scene at Bethany and passes on to the Passover and the Lord's Supper; the anointing in this Gospel is given in chapter 7., and is evidently on another occasion and by a woman whose character and repentance are told, but whose name is withheld. From John 12. we learn that the anointing at Bethany is the act of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, to which place the Lord had come four days previously (see Matt. and Mark). The loving care manifested at Bethany, and especially the act of Mary, is clearly in contrast with the gathering together of the chief priests, elders, and scribes, to take counsel *together* to kill Him. This diabolical *purpose* is specially emphasized by MATTHEW, who testifies of the national state and guilt. MARK and LUKE record the fact only. This hostile combination is in principle a "synagogue of Satan," and is the beginning of that opposition to the work of the Spirit which has been more or less in evidence in the history of the church in all ages (see Rev. 2. and 3.).

Alas! The loving devotion of Mary is in contrast also with what is found among the disciples, for Judas leads them (see John 12.) in his evil cavil against her, while himself entering upon his unholy league with the hostile camp, a further foreshadowing of later days, when disloyalty and treachery to Christ would betray His cause to the world for present gain; but the act of Mary bears a special character; it is *what* she has done that shall be told for a memorial of her. She was virtually owning His death as ending

for her all self-aggrandisement in this world. It is good to remind ourselves, in thinking of this scene at Bethany, that what is valued in heaven is love and devotion to the Son of God; as another has said, "love to Jesus is God's supreme delight" (John 16. 27).

As to the Passover and Last Supper, all three writers describe the way the Master Hand orders all things. MATTHEW, who deals with principles rather than details, omits the mention of the man bearing a pitcher of water; the disciples go direct to the householder, one evidently known to the Lord, with the touching word of introduction, "My time is at hand."

LUKE, who describes the Supper in more detail, exhibits the love of Christ expressing itself in the words "with desire I have desired to eat *this* passover *with you* before I suffer." From the next verse it is clear that the Lord is here looking at the disciples in their Jewish associations as those given to Him out of Israel, with whom, in the days of the coming kingdom, relations would be re-established, and the Passover fulfilled in connection with the future restoration of the nation foretold by the prophets (Isa. 11. 11; Jer. 23. 3-8; Ezek. 20. 33-38).

The cross of Christ is, of course, the righteous foundation of all blessing for Jew or Gentile, now or hereafter. This truth, strange to Gentile ears, is repeated with slight variation in all three records (Matt. 26. 29; Mark 14. 25; Luke 22. 16, 18). In the meantime the saints of the present interval have the Lord's Supper in which to remember Him till He come. The words of institution present interesting and suggestive variations.

In MATTHEW emphasis seems laid on the actual feeding on Himself as dead: the words are "Take, *eat*, this is My body;" "*Drink* ye all of it, for this is My blood," etc. In MARK all the best authorities omit the word "eat," and the facts are recorded as the history of what

actually took place. It will be readily seen how important it is in the first Gospel in which the dispensational character is strongly marked, that the disciples should learn their proper place and portion during all the time of His rejection on earth. In place of reigning with a living Christ according to Jewish hopes, they are taught to feed on Him as dead, and that sacrificially "for the remission of sins."

In LUKE 22. 19, 20, as in all the records, the Lord, in giving the disciples the bread and the cup, seeks to present Himself to their affections, and here the words are "given *for you*," "shed *for you*," and we learn further that the institution is intended to have a claim on our hearts for future repetition. 1 Corinthians 11. adds "till He come." The exquisite simplicity of the whole scene and the terms used seem intended by the Spirit as a rebuke to Christians, for the sorrowful way in which the Lord's Supper has become in our hands the occasion of ministering to superstition and carnal strife. Terribly was it marred at the time by the treachery of Judas and the self-confidence of Peter, the latter soon to issue in a public denial with oaths and imprecations. LUKE adds the more subtle evil of a strife among them who should be the greatest (ver. 23), and following this is the Lord's own gracious correction of their incongruous manifestation of unbroken flesh with the words

so surprising in their grace, "Ye are they who have *persevered* with Me in My temptations." Nor does He forget to add the promise of future reward. All this is characteristic of LUKE's Gospel, in which the Gentile is taught to respect the place of privilege belonging to Israel while at the same time the door of grace is left open to any of the nations who can in faith appropriate these precious words, "given for you," "shed for you."

LUKE also lifts the veil from the world of spiritual conflict to show us first Satan, entering into Judas, inspiring the fatal purpose to sell his Master, (John 13. 27 describes a further step from which there is no escape), and then his determination to have the followers of Jesus in his hands (verse 31). How we should treasure the accompanying assurance of the great Intercessor only found here, "I have prayed for *thee* that thy faith fail not."

The change in the condition of the disciples now imminent is also indicated in the instruction so misunderstood by them as to the purse and the sword (vers. 35-38). In MATTHEW and MARK this change is illustrated by the citation of Zechariah 13. 7, which LUKE omits. On the smiting of the Shepherd the sheep would be scattered, this is descriptive of divine government in Israel, of which LUKE gives as usual the moral side.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Matthew's Gospel (chap. 17.). *(Continued from page 174.)*

IT is just at this point, to steady and encourage the hearts of the disciples in going down into a path so new and strange to them, that the last of the great dispensational changes flowing from the Lord's present rejection as Messiah and the deeper glory of His Person is now revealed.

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then shall He reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (16. 27, 28). It is the kingdom in glory then that is presented to the chosen witnesses of it on the Mount of Transfiguration. Some of

the characteristic differences in the accounts of it in the three Gospels have been noted in a previous paper (p. 97). But it may be added that in MATTHEW it is more the personal place of the Lord, *the Son of Man* coming in His kingdom. In LUKE as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered, but MATTHEW alone noticed the majesty of it, that it shone as the sun; while the exceeding whiteness of the raiment of Him who had assumed the lowly servant's form is emphasized in MARK. The divine glory is manifested in "the bright cloud" that overshadowed the disciples at the moment of Peter's suggestion to retain the Lord in (to him doubtless) such desirable association as that of the repre-

sentatives of the law and the prophets ; and the voice from " the excellent glory," " This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," bids them receive their instruction from Him. " When they lifted up their eyes they saw no man save Jesus only," but revealed according to all the Father's delight in Him. The bright gleam of the glory of the kingdom was but a passing one, for the time of its establishment was not yet, but He remains for them, and for us, in an intimacy of communion in the Father's appreciation of His beloved Son, beyond all that will be known in the day of His manifested glory.

But Elijah and that which his coming stands for was not to be lost to them, if far better things were to form their present portion ; Elijah truly shall *first* come, that is, before the great and terrible day of the Lord, according to prophecy. Only he *had* come *in spirit and power* in John the Baptist, which left the Jews without excuse ; and they had done to him as they were about to do to the Son of Man.

Meanwhile those of the disciples, left at the foot of the mount, had been tested by the power of Satan in the lunatic's son : they could not cast him out. In the Lord's rebuke (ver. 17), as in each Gospel the solemn principle is expressed, that failure in faith to count upon the resources of His power in grace, according to the character of the intervention of that grace, was hurrying the time of it to its close—" O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you ? Bring him hither to me." Also we learn that when it is a question of the direct manifested power

of the enemy, only by dependence and the abstinence of the flesh is power over him to be found. Yet, as it is added here, faith as a grain of mustard-seed (that which is smallest) could remove " this mountain," namely Israel as a polity among the nations, and nothing would be impossible to them. How humbling, then, to know so little of faith's power.

One more occasion of testing as to the apprehension of the glory of the Lord, even by a true disciple, at Capernaum at this point, is given only by MATTHEW. They who received the didrachma for the service of the temple (*cf.* Neh. 10. 32) asked Peter if his Teacher paid it. Peter answers for Him—as a good Jew—that He will. But on the Lord putting it to him whether it was the way of the kings of the earth to take tribute of their own children or of strangers, he answers, " Of strangers." Jesus saith unto him, " Then are the children free," putting Himself along with Peter. Yet in lowly grace, taking the stranger's place that His own disciple gave Him, He exercises divine knowledge and power as the Creator of the Universe, so that the first fish Peter catches shall furnish Him who had come into circumstances of human poverty for our sakes, with a stater, or the exact amount for two persons : " that take and give unto them for Me and for thee," thus in infinite grace associating Peter with Himself as not only Son of the King but as Lord of All. Wonderful lessons to form the disciples in grace for the place they were to occupy as representing Him, which place comes out fully in the next chapter.

(J. A. TRENCH).

"Meditate upon these things" (1 Tim. 4. 15.)

A man who wants to see and know a country must not hurry through it by express train, but he must stop in the towns and villages and see what is to be seen. He will know more about the land and its people if he walks the highways, climbs the mountains, stays in the homes, and visits the workshops, than if he does so many miles in the day, and hurries through picture-galleries as if death were pursuing him. In like manner, if a man

would gain a true acquaintance with the truth of God, he must not hurry through Scripture, but pause for the Lord to speak to him. Cattle do not get the benefit of a rich pasture and give their milk for the health of others by being driven at a gallop through the fields ; they must be allowed to quietly graze and ruminate for this. It is only by quiet meditation on the truth of God that we are rightly enriched by it.

The Old Testament in Relation to the Death of Christ.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

THE Old Testament is full of the death of Christ, in type and symbol and picture. No human words can fully convey how all things looked forward to that event of unparalleled significance. We behold the solemn march through the ages towards that wondrous death with deepening wonder and worship.

And just as all things looked forward to that death, so all things look backward. The death of the Lord Jesus is the moral centre of two eternities, as of all time. Never for one instant will it fade from the minds of the myriads of the redeemed throughout the unending ages.

The Apostle Peter, pre-eminent among New Testament writers for his use of the Old Testament scripture, was singularly impressed with the hope that the death of Christ gave to the Old Testament pages. He likens the Lord to

"a Lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained BEFORE the foundation of the world" (1 Peter i. 19, 20);

and tells how

"the prophets . . . enquired and searched diligently . . . 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 i. 10, 11).

The Apostle Paul, likewise, emphasizes the glory of a Saviour God. The foundation of this glory could only be laid in the death of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 3. he contrasts the law and the gospel, describing the former as a "*ministration of condemnation*"—a "*ministration of death,*"

whereas the latter is a "*ministration of righteousness*"—a "*ministration of the Spirit.*"

The law had, indeed, its dignity and majesty, as witness the solemnity with which it was inaugurated at Mount Sinai, but its glory was something like that of the stars, which are eclipsed, and fade out of sight when the sun shines in all its strength and splendour. So he writes:

"For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth" (ver. 10).

* * * *

And now for one of those surprises of Scripture which so markedly stamp the Book as divine and inspired (Gen. 2. 21-25).

This first type of the death of Christ is on the side of *God's glory* and the fulfilment of His purposes of love, rather than on the side of *man's need*.

It is given *before* ever sin came into the world. What mind of man could ever have dreamed of that? It would be judged by men to be a fatal blot, a mistake, a blunder.

Yet so it stands in the page of Scripture, incomparably beautiful, and at once presenting the death of Christ to us in its highest aspect. Before ever sin defiled God's fair creation as far as man is concerned, before ever distance came in, or pain was felt, or groan was heard, or tear fell, or death was known, comes the archetype of the death of Christ.

Adam falls into a deep sleep, a rib is taken from his side, a woman builded, his wife presented to him—picture on the very threshold of time of God's heart yearning for a channe

in which to express His love; type, indeed, of Christ and His bride, of Christ and His church—of love bestowed and reciprocated in the closest possible way. Could anything be finer?

* * * *

We now come to the moment sin came into the world (chap. 3.). What consequences were involved when Eve thrust out her hand to take of the forbidden fruit! Sin, sorrow, distance from God, pain, weakness, death, all came in as man fell and became a dying sinner.

But how quickly God goes after His fallen creature! How full of solicitude is the first recorded question He addressed to Adam, "*Where art thou?*" How quickly He hastened to bring in the remedy! For the first time actual death took place, it was not the death of the guilty sinner, but that of the innocent victims. How else were the coats of skin procured? Our guilty parents were clad in the beautiful skins of those animals that had been slain for them, foreshadowing the death of Christ for us and the fact that every believing sinner is covered before God by all the value of that atoning death. Thus early in the history of the world God would foreshadow that precious death in the aspect that gives the sinner rest and peace and standing in God's holy presence.

Chapter 4. in this opening book of the Bible brings before us Abel's offering, and Hebrews II. 4 leaves us in no doubt as to its typical meaning, and "*He being dead yet speaketh.*"

* * * *

Noah's ark (chap. 6.) also brings the death of Christ prominently into view. The root meaning of *atonement* is "to cover." The word used for *pitch*, which was used for pitching the ark inside and out, comes from a closely allied cognate word. God told Noah that the end of all flesh had come before

Him. Noah was the *first* to disappear, but he was *covered* by the ark, and thus was preserved.

In the same way, on the Passover night, the children of Israel were *covered* in their blood-stained dwellings.

* * * *

Time would fail to take up fully and in order every instance of type and shadow and picture of the wonderful death of Christ. They bestrew the sacred page as thick as leaves lie on the ground in autumn.

Take a few thoughts that rise at random. God said to Abraham:

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. 22. 2).

There is no need to expatiate on its meaning. It is so obvious. It lies on the surface in one sense, yet it is deep as the sea on the other. How full and tender and pathetic a picture is here presented of that death which eighteen centuries later took place in the land of Moriah on the hill called Calvary. In no other way could God's promise of life and blessing for all nations through Abraham's seed be fulfilled save through death, and that the death of the well-beloved Son. Well might the Son of God say, "*Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and was glad.*"

Take Psalm 22. One thousand years before that cry of unutterable anguish was wrung from the depths of the holy Sufferer's soul we read the very words, as written down by Israel's sweet Psalmist:

"My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" (ver. 1).

The details of His death here recorded show how full was the mind of the Spirit of God concerning that which was yet future. One detail in

particular here shows the omniscience of the Holy Ghost :

" They pierced My hands and feet " (ver. 16).

This could not be intelligible to the writer or his readers till the death of Christ explained the riddle, for crucifixion, as a punishment, was unknown till hundreds of years later, when it was introduced by the Romans.

Take another instance. When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal he used memorable words :

" And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God " (1 Kings 18. 24).

When he built his sacrificial altar, laid the wood in order, and placed the bullock in his pieces thereon, built the trench and poured twelve barrels of water, more precious than wine after the years of drought, he pictured the death of Christ in a most striking way. There was no affinity between fire from heaven and a water-saturated victim. There was no affinity between the judgment of God and the holy Saviour, nothing in Him to invite wrath, but taking the sinner's place the fire descended, and He bore the judgment, just as the fire descended on Elijah's sacrifice, consuming it, the wood, the stones, the water, the very dust—levelling all to the ground.

The burnt offering, the sin offering, the peace offering, the ashes of the

red heifer, the meat offering (including the dying, but excluding the death itself), the great day of atonement—all these in various ways typify the wondrous death of Christ. The Passover, in type the blood shed for deliverance from judgment; the passage of the Red Sea, in type deliverance from Satan's power and the world; the uplifting of the brazen serpent, in type deliverance from sin and self; the passage of the Jordan, in type entrance into the purposes of God. All these take each their proper place in prophetic witness to His death.

Lawgiver, historian, judge, priest, psalmist, prophet, king—inspired penmen all—bring in, in a very full way, the death of Christ.

In connection with almost every page of the Old Testament we can imitate the example of the only man, called in Scripture an evangelist, of whom it could be said :

" Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him JESUS " (Acts 8. 35).

But that " same scripture " (Isa. 53.) is concerning His death ! Blessed, wonderful death of our Lord Jesus Christ—very God and very Man !

To it God owes His chiefest glory, and we our every blessing. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Expectation.

LORD Jesus ! Source of every grace,
Glorious in light divine,
Soon shall we see Thee face to face,
And in that glory shine ;

Be ever with Thee, hear Thy voice,
Unhindered then shall taste
The love, which doth our hearts rejoice,
Though absent in this waste.

In peaceful wonder we adore
The thought of love divine,
Which in that world for evermore,
Entwines our lot with Thine.

"The Regions Beyond."

(C. H. MACKINTOSH).

"TO preach the gospel in the regions beyond you." These words, while they set forth the large-heartedness of the self-denying and devoted Apostle, do also furnish a fine model for the evangelist in every age. The gospel is a traveller; and the preacher of the gospel must be a traveller likewise. The divinely qualified and divinely sent evangelist will fix his eye upon "the world." He will embrace, in his benevolent design, the human family. From house to house, from street to street, from city to city, from province to province, from kingdom to kingdom, from continent to continent, from pole to pole. Such is the range of "the good news" and the publisher of it. "The regions beyond" must ever be the grand gospel motto. No sooner has the gospel lamp cast its cheering beams over a district than the bearer of that lamp must think of the regions beyond. Thus the work goes on. Thus the mighty tide of grace rolls, in enlightening and saving power, over a dark world which lies in "the region of the shadow of death."

"Waft, waft, ye winds, the story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like the sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole."

Christian reader, are you thinking of "the regions beyond you?" This expression may, in your case, mean

the next house, the next street, the next village, the next city, the next kingdom, the next continent. The application is for your own heart to ponder. But say, are you thinking of "the regions beyond you?" I do not want you to abandon your present post at all; or, at least, not until you are fully persuaded that your work at the post is done. But, remember, the gospel plough should never stand still. "Onward" is the motto of every true evangelist. Let the shepherds abide by the flocks; but let the evangelists take themselves hither and thither, to gather the sheep. Let them sound the gospel trumpet, far and wide, o'er the dark mountains of this world, to gather together the elect of God. This is the design of the gospel. This should be the object of the evangelist, as he sighs after "the regions beyond." When Cæsar beheld, from the coast of Gaul, the white cliffs of Britain, he earnestly longed to carry his arms thither. The evangelist, on the other hand, whose heart beats in union with the heart of Jesus, as he casts his eye over the map of the world, longs to carry the gospel of peace into regions which have heretofore been wrapped in midnight gloom, covered with the dark mantle of superstition, or blasted beneath the withering influences of a "form of godliness" without the power.

"To you it hath been granted . . . to suffer" (Phil. 1. 29, R.V.).

It is a sort of royal warrant, a divine election to a sacred office. We are accustomed to think of men receiving the royal favour to preach and to evangelize and to make a path of light to peoples far away. But here is the supreme distinction, the royal grant "to suffer!"

And it is just this consciousness of divine election which makes many a sufferer fill the midnight with his songs. It was at midnight, when Paul and Silas were smarting under the scourge, that they "sang praises unto God."

Christ Crucified and Christ Glorified.

(JAMES C. TRENCH.)

IN the introduction to the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul makes the statement that "GOD IS FAITHFUL," and this in spite of the fact that the Corinthian Christians had proved themselves to be just the opposite. It was an encouraging statement, and well calculated to affect their consciences and hearts. It should prove just as encouraging to us, who have no faithfulness of our own to boast in but much unfaithfulness to deplore. Let things be at the lowest ebb, we may fall back upon His faithful love, which if it has to wound, only does so that He may heal. "God is faithful who has called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." And His gifts and calling are without repentance.

In the exercise of that loving faithfulness the Corinthians were made to listen to some very plain speaking. The Apostle had to tell them, amongst other things, that he could not regard them as spiritual people, but as carnal, even as babes in Christ. They needed to be fed with milk and not with meat, for there was among them envying, strife, and divisions, and this was evidence of their carnality—they were walking as men (3. 3). It was for this reason that he determined to know nothing among them (in his ministry), but Jesus Christ and HIM CRUCIFIED. The cross is that in which the judgment of the flesh was declared, and so it has its bearing on every form in which it is manifested, whether sectarianism, pride of knowledge, worldliness, or uncontrolled passions. The cross is generally presented in this connection in Scripture, while the blood, on the other hand, is for deliverance and relief.

He tells them, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect" (that is, "perfect" as having a proper apprehension of what the Christian calling is), and then he just sketches something of what that "wisdom"

embraces, in the vast ranges of truth and blessing that lay unexplored by those Christians at Corinth: things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," but which God had revealed unto the apostles by His Spirit, "for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the depths of God." These things the apostles were communicating to others by the Spirit, but as they could only be received into the heart of the hearers by the same Spirit, it was not to all saints they could be imparted, for the spiritual condition had to be taken into account by those who would "give them their meat in due season."

By the time the 2nd Epistle was written, the ministry of the truth as to the cross of Christ had produced a measure of repentance in them; they had judged their evil condition, and "had proved themselves clear" (7. 6-11), and the Apostle was able to proceed to unfold something of the truths connected with, and flowing from, *Jesus Christ and Him GLORIFIED*.

He takes up again the truth of the faithfulness of God in the opening chapter of the 2nd Epistle. "But as God is true [literally "faithful"], our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us," i.e. they are veritable, unchanging certainties, established in Christ, and He has also established us in Christ (or firmly attached us to Christ), and He, the same faithful God, has anointed us, sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (vers. 18, 22).

1. The anointing of the Holy Spirit of God seems to carry with it intelligence and power (1 John 2. 20, 27; Acts 10. 38; Luke 24. 39).

2. Sealing is God's mark upon us of His ownership.

3. The earnest of the Spirit is God's pledge or guarantee to us of the future inheritance.

In the 3rd chapter the Spirit of God is active in producing in the saints occupation with Christ in the glory where He is. "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart . . . not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. . . . Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord, the Spirit." In quoting this passage the parenthesis (vers. 7 to 16) has been omitted in order to make the sense clear. But the teaching in the parenthesis is also most important, contrasting, as it does, the state of things under the law with Christianity. Moses came down from Mount Horeb with the second tables of the law in his hands, and the glory of God shining in his face, which the children of Israel feared so greatly to behold that they entreated him to put a veil over his face. Why were they afraid? Because the glory in his face was in connection with the law in his hands, which law claimed righteousness from them to fit them for that glory, under penalties if they failed, for, indeed, the law was, as this passage tells us, "the ministration of death" and "condemnation."

On the other hand, our Lord Jesus Christ, before He entered the glory, had put away sin on the cross; had met all the claims of a broken law, taking upon Himself the "death" and "condemnation" it imposed; and now on high, instead of claiming righteousness *from* us, He has become our righteousness there. "For God

has made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (5. 21).

But there is more in that parenthesis from which we may learn by way of contrast. Note what a different state of things exists where the truth as to Christ in glory and our blessing in Him there is not known. We read "their MINDS *were blinded*," for until this day remaineth the veil untaken away in reading the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the *veil is upon their* HEART, nevertheless, when it (their heart) shall turn to the Lord it shall be taken away.

On the other hand, in Christianity there is a ministration of life ("the Spirit giveth life"), of "righteousness," and "of the Spirit" (vers. 6-9), and it might be added of "glory" (18), all of which go to make up the "ministration of reconciliation" of chapter 5. 18.

We are thus able to look away to our glorified Saviour without fear, and know that in Him are all our blessing, whether life, righteousness, or acceptance, and as we are occupied with Him—gazing by faith upon His unveiled face—there are no veils to obscure the glory, and the light of it streams down into our souls. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The light from the glorified Christ shines into our hearts that it may shine out from us again in lives worthy of Him.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels," that is, we have the treasure of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, seen in the face of the Lord Jesus, shining into these bodies of clay, "that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." Then follows (vers. 8-11) the experience through which the "vessel" has to be put in order that the light may shine out. Just as with the three

hundred in Gideon's army, the victory was won by each of them at a given signal breaking the pitcher which contained the light, and thus the light shone forth, and the victory was gained. "Troubled on every side [the vessel], yet not distressed [because of the treasure], persecuted [the vessel], but not forsaken [because of the treasure], cast down [the vessel again], but not destroyed [for the treasure is there], always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus [the vessel], that the life also of Jesus [the treasure] might be made manifest in our mortal bodies [the vessel]."

So that the expression on our part of the light from the glorified Christ which has shone into our hearts takes the form of the manifestation of the life of Jesus as He was seen down here, in our mortal bodies. In other words, occupation with Christ where He is in glory leads to the manifestation in us of the life of Jesus as He was on earth in humiliation.

In the practical part of the Epistle which follows, the Apostle exhorts the Corinthian saints regarding the blessed features of that life.

In chapter 8., in exhorting the saints to liberality to their poorer fellow-Christians, he speaks to them of "*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" (ver. 9). *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was to find an expression in their giving.*

In chapter 9. he takes to task some who in pride and self-sufficiency were commending themselves while accusing him of walking in the flesh. He exposes these pretensions, and beseeches them "*by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*" He desired to manifest this meekness and gentleness amongst them when he visited them, and all his warring was to bring into captivity every thought to the *obedience of Christ.*

In chapter 11. he warns them against those who would seek to draw them

away from the true Christ to "another Jesus," and he was jealous over them with a godly jealousy, that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ, and he feared that as the serpent beguiled Eve, so also might he succeed in corrupting them from *the simplicity that is in Christ.*

And finally, in chapter 12., he relates that after he had been caught up to paradise and had come down again, he was given a thorn in the flesh to buffet him, lest he should be exalted by the abundance of the revelations. This he besought the Lord thrice to remove, but the Lord Jesus, speaking out of the glory, said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Mark, it is the *GRACE*, not the *GLORY*, that is sufficient for His poor servant.

Thus we have the *GRACE*, the *GENTLENESS*, the *MEEKNESS*, the *OBEDIENCE*, the *SIMPLICITY*, and now again the *GRACE* of Christ *GLORIFIED* set before the saints as that that will characterize them as the fruit and outcome of occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

Indeed, in chapter 12. we see the truths that have been before us in the Epistle focussed in a remarkable manner in this blessed servant of God. Paul, taken up with the Lord in glory, comes down here to have the earthen vessel buffeted that the treasure might all the more effectually shine out: learning that it was only in a condition of weakness and dependence that the power of Christ could be made perfect in him, so that he could say, "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong." "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

But it is important to notice how Satan appears, as it were, at every point, to hinder if he can the reproduction of Christ in the saints of God. Briefly we may glance at the passages.

In chapter 2. there is the general statement "lest Satan should get an advantage over us, for we are not ignorant of *his devices*." "His devices" is a comprehensive expression which seems to include all his operations as unfolded in the rest of the Epistle.

In chapter 4. Satan comes out as "the god of this world" blinding the minds of those that believe not, lest the light of the glad tidings of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ should shine unto them.

In chapter 6. 15 we read, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" i.e. "the impersonation of the principle of evil, and therefore in absolute and insuperable antagonism to Christ."

In chapter 11. Satan appears in the form of a serpent, with subtlety seeking to draw away souls after another Jesus, and in the carrying out of this plot he changes himself into an "angel of light," and as "an apostle of

Christ," and his ministers into "ministers of righteousness."

In chapter 12. Paul's thorn was a messenger of Satan, but here he defeats his own object, through the intervention of the Lord Jesus.

So that if Satan can by any means succeed in diverting our gaze from the blessed Lord Himself where He is, his fell purpose is gained, and in his relentless pursuit of his object he will assume any form that suits him, whether as "god of this world," "an angel of light," "an apostle of Christ," "a minister of righteousness," to conceal his real characteristics as "Serpent," "Belial," and "Satan;" so that it is well for us, as it was for the Apostle Paul, that we should not be "ignorant of his devices."

Thanks be to God, he is a defeated foe, and "in vain is the net set in the sight of any bird."

The Greek Words for "Eternity" and "Eternal."

(H. P. BARKER).

THE conflict with the forces of unbelief is, to a large extent, of the nature of guerilla warfare. Driven, without much difficulty, from their positions, the hostile bands take refuge in temporary silence, watching their opportunity to reoccupy the abandoned positions, with arguments that have been again and again refuted. Hence it is that we, of the present day, are confronted afresh with the fallacies of a past generation. We are called upon to fight a foe that has often been driven from the field, and to meet statements that have already been exposed as erroneous.

Unbelief, nowadays, in the fashionable guise of the "Higher Criticism," arrays itself in the robes of scholarship, and arrogantly assumes that it possesses a monopoly thereof. The truth is, however, that in the ranks of humble faith there have been, and are,

men of attainments every whit as great as any possessed by those who range themselves under the opposing banner. *True* learning is the handmaid, not the antagonist, of faith.

The late J. N. Darby was a man whose reading was most extensive and varied. And through a long life, spent in the service of Christ, his pen was incessantly active in the defence and exposition of the truth.

Amongst the many helpful polemical papers that he wrote was one bearing the above title. It is to be found in his "Collected Writings," vol. xxxi., pp. 188-196. It was penned in view of the onslaught made by Dr. Farrar and others upon the doctrine of eternal punishment.

The necessity still exists of meeting the misleading statements made by these men, adopted by them from their

predecessors in the camp of unbelief, and echoed by increasing numbers of their disciples to-day. I purpose, therefore, to give the reader, in brief epitome, the substance of J.N.D.'s brochure on "The Greek Words for Eternity and Eternal."

"We are told by Dr. Farrar," he says, "with much pretension to competency in affirming it, that *everlasting* or *eternal* ought not to be found in the Bible; by Mr. Cox, that it means properly an *age* and *age-long*, and that it cannot be right to translate them *eternal* or *everlasting*."

Here, then, the question is distinctly raised, Does the Greek noun *αἰών* properly mean *eternity* as we ordinarily understand the word? And does the corresponding adjective *αἰώνιος* mean *everlasting* in the sense of *lasting for ever*?

"All that I purpose to do here," says J.N.D., "is to state some passages from other authors which prove that (while used in other senses, some of which are not found at all in Scripture) it does mean *eternity* and *eternal*."

Four Greek writers are quoted—Plato, Aristotle, Philo, and Lycurgus—as using the word in the true sense of *everlasting*.

The quotation from Plato is from his description of the universe. Our author comments upon it thus: "It is impossible to conceive any more positive statement that *αἰών* is distinct, and to be contrasted with what has a beginning and belongs to the flux of time. . . . It is a careful opposition between *eternity* and *ages*; and *αἰών* and also *αἰώνιος* mean the former in contrast with *ages*."

Will the reader carefully note this? It is affirmed to-day by those (whose wish, we fear, must be father to their thought) that the word so constantly used in the New Testament and translated *eternal* simply means *age-long*, or *lasting for an age*. As an *age* must be limited in duration, the idea of eternity is thus got rid of. But the quotation from Plato shows that in

classical Greek the word in question bore the very meaning that is now denied to it!

Aristotle's witness is next adduced, and it is shown that he uses *αἰών* in describing things that are eternal, in contrast to things that have a temporary existence.

"He is proving," says our author, "the unchangeable eternity of the visible universe. That is no business of mine; but it shows what he means by *eternity* (*αἰών*)."

Philo's testimony is shown to be, if possible, even more to the point, and to have special weight as being of the date and same kind of Greek as the New Testament. He uses the word *αἰών* for "eternity, unchangeable, with no *was* nor *will be*."

Commenting on these quotations, J.N.D. writes: "To say that they (*αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*) do not mean it in Greek, as Jukes and Farrar and S. Cox and those they quote, is a denial of the statements of the very best authorities we can have on the subject. If Plato and Aristotle and Philo knew Greek, what these others say is false. That this is the proper sense of *αἰώνιος* in Scripture is as certain as it is evident. In 2 Corinthians 4. 18 . . . things that are for a time are put in express contrast with *αἰώνια*, which are not for a time, be it age or ages, but eternal."

We need not pursue the subject. The remainder of the paper, pp. 193-196, is devoted to the examination of Scripture references which in the most ample manner confirm what has been said. But these passages can be turned up by anyone who possesses a concordance that classifies the Greek words.

Whether referring to the blessing of the saved or the doom of the impenitent, eternal means eternal, everlasting means lasting for ever. For anyone to deny this by an appeal to the Greek is either to betray his own ignorance, or to dishonestly trade upon the ignorance of those whom he hopes to influence by his words.

Continue.

"Patient continuance in well doing" (Rom. 2. 7).

IT is one thing to begin and another to go on to the end. The Galatians made a good start, they "began in the Spirit," but they allowed the flesh to come in, and Paul says, "Where is the blessedness ye speak of?" The Philippians not only began, but *continued*, "from the first day till now."

The word in John 8. 31 to the Jews who believed on Jesus was, "If ye *continue in My word*, then ye are My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The stony ground hearers received the Word with joy, but they did not *continue*: when affliction came on them for the Word they gave it up. The man in John 9. is a sample of one who *continued in the Word* of the Son of God; he was a disciple indeed, he would have no one but Jesus; he knew the truth, and was made free indeed in the outside place *with the Son of God*; he heard His voice; the voice of the Good Shepherd, "Every one that is of the truth hears My voice."

In John 15. we have the secret of all fruitfulness and joy revealed. It is: "Abide in Me," "Abide in My love," "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; *continue* ye in My love." Our Lord ever dwells in the Father's love, and there He would have His own abide. From that will flow love and obedience. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." There is the Father's love to Him; and His love to His own; and their love to one another. But those who continue in His love must expect the hatred of the world. In Luke 22. He said to His disciples, "Ye are they who have *continued with Me* in my temptations." He would encourage on the one hand to continue in His love

where there is *rest*, and on the other, not to lose heart through the trials of the way, or the hatred of the world.

* * * *

In Luke 6. 11, 12, "they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus. And it came to pass in *those days* that He went out into a mountain to *pray* and *continued all night in prayer to God*." Continuance in prayer is most important at all times, and in this the Lord is our perfect pattern. "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*" (Col. 10.). How this marked saints at the beginning, as we read in Acts 1., after Christ was taken up to heaven, "There all *continued* with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." They had ten days' prayer before the Spirit was given, men and women. Then when the Spirit came "they *continued* steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine; and in fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in *prayers*." These things marked the saints at first—teaching and fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. The need of attending to these four things to-day is all important. There is nothing new. That which was from the beginning is what the children of God are to *continue* in: "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which we have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall *continue in the Son, and in the Father*" (1 John 11. 24). To *abide, remain, and continue* in John's writings is the same thing. So John, the last writer in the Scriptures, takes us back to what was from the beginning, what came out in the Son, that which the apostles bore witness to, outside of this we must not move.

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITOR).

"The four and twenty elders" (Rev. 4. 4; 5. 8).

J.A.B. inquires

As to the significance of the number twenty-four in this passage.

It has been stated, and we believe rightly, that this symbolical number has reference to the fact that the elders are priests unto God. In Solomon's temple the priests served in courses of twenty-four (see 1 Chron. 24. 25). The thrones and crowns display their *royalty*, the number of them, and the fact that in chapter 5. they have every one of them, golden vials full of odours denotes their priestly character; they represent "all that are Christ's at His coming," and are "kings and priests unto God and His Father."

Revelation 5. 8, 9, 10.

And—

Who are they who sing this new song?

They are the same heavenly company of saints as in chapter 4. It is true, as our correspondent states, that some of the best authorities read, "Thou hast redeemed to God," and not "redeemed *us* to God." And this rendering emphasizes the burden of the praise; *it is what the Lamb is and what He has done* that is the theme of their singing. The thoughts of the singers are filled with His glory rather than their blessing. And further, the thought in the song is not what *they* owe to Him, but what He has done for *God*. Before the righteous judgments are poured forth, *God has got a people*, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, "out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation."

"What things soever ye desire."

A correspondent asks

If the passage, "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11. 24), can be applied to everything in life? He cites the case of a young Christian whose wife is seriously ill, and who believes that she will recover because he has asked God that she may, taking this verse as a warrant for his faith. He fears that if the wife does not recover the young believer's faith in God may be shaken, and he would like to know how to help him.

We do not lose anything by getting at the true meaning of any passage of scripture. Indeed, loss is often sustained by our taking texts out of their setting and putting upon them an interpretation that suits our own thoughts. The passage referred to is clearly connected with the subject of the Lord's discourse to His disciples at the time, namely, the removal of "this mountain" into the sea. The mountain was the unbelieving nation of the Jews, which stood as a seemingly immovable obstruction in the way of the testimony of Jesus Christ the Son of God. But faith on the part of the servants of the Lord would remove it, for faith brings in the God with whom there are no impossibilities. The mountain has been removed and cast into the sea of the nations, and the word of the gospel is going out unhindered to the Gentiles (Romans 11. is interesting in this connection). This is the setting in which the verse occurs, and it is of wonderful encouragement for the servants of the Lord when confronted with obstacles to the prosperity of the testimony, such as authorities and governments, or indeed of any kind, for if the greatest hindrance of all has given way, every other one will also yield to faith. The words occur in the same connection in Matthew, and others very similar occur in the Gospel of John, but in each case they are connected with *the name of the Lord*, which means that the things asked for are connected exclusively with His interests on earth, and that we ask for them as His representatives.

Is there no comfort, then, for the young believer in his trouble? Yes, indeed there is. In the Epistles, where the full truth of Christianity is unfolded, every matter that could affect the well-being of the Christian is dealt with, and we should turn our brother to Philippians 4. 6, 7. In that passage he is encouraged to spread out his sorrow and need in supplication before God. It does not follow that he will get exactly what he asks for, but he will get something that will prove in the long run of greater value, namely, "THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDER-

STANDING" as a garrison for his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. He will be able to say: I have committed my case to God, it is in His almighty, all-wise, and all-tender hands, and all is well, whatever He pleases to do. The Apostle's own case in 2 Corinthians 12. may be taken as an illustration of this; thrice he besought the Lord to take the thorn in the flesh from him, and he got an answer, not, however, according to his desire, but according to the Lord's wisdom and grace. "He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And he could say in consequence: "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (vers. 8, 9).

We are not able to decide what is for our greatest good, but God knows, and it is well when we are subject to His will. There are times, of course, when faith is given to us to make a definite and distinct request, and "*the prayer of faith*" always receives its answer, but the prayer of faith is "according to His will" (1 John 5. 14, 15).

"Who only hath immortality"
(1 Tim. 6. 15, 16).

R.V.S. inquires

As to the meaning of the above statement.

The passage presents "the inaccessible majesty of God . . . God in the abstraction of His essence, in the proper immutability of His being, in the rights of His majesty" (*Darby*). He alone has essential immortality; He is, and must for ever be, outside and beyond the reach of death and decay. He may, for His own pleasure and in fulfilment of His purposes, place others beyond the reach of it also, and this He will do when the mortal bodies of those who have eternal life in the Son put on immortality; the victory of God over death will be declared in this, and He will finally be *all in all*.

This does not invalidate those scriptures which teach us that man, in whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, is a creature with a spirit which will exist without end, though Scripture shows, as we have pointed out, that God only has immortality *personally*, and will grant it to believers also *relatively* at the resurrection of the just (1 Cor. 15. 54).

The Sufferings of Christ.

C.S. asks

If there is any warrant for saying that the Lord Jesus suffered more in Gethsemane than He did upon the cross.

The sufferings of Gethsemane were of a totally different character from those of Calvary. There the Lord suffered in anticipation of the "cup" which He drank to its dregs at Calvary. All the terror of death confronted Him, and His holy soul shrank from it, and from coming into personal contact with sin—which He was to be made—and the judgment of God. All the darkness of death and sin and judgment were before Him, and the very perfection of the holy sensibilities of His soul produced the agony and sweat as it were of blood. Satan was there to press all this in upon Him, to *drive* Him back from the path of obedience to the will of God, even as he sought to *draw* Him from it in the wilderness by the attractive things of the world. There was all the power of Satan put forth in this temptation, but the Lord did not yield to it; He bowed in perfect obedience to His Father's will. "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." He "was heard for His piety" (Heb. 5. 7, marg.), and went through the trial in dependence upon God, and so He gained the victory.

We are permitted to view the sufferings in Gethsemane, and also those from the hands of men at Calvary, for in these the perfection of the Lord under testing is before us, and He is in these things a pattern to us as to how we should endure the temptation of Satan, and the revilings and malice of men, though even here His sufferings were distinct in that He was sinless, and they were infinitely greater than ours could be. But in the fact that the greater the pressure the more He clung in dependence to God, and took the cup from His Father's hand alone, though in it there was the malice of men and the power of Satan, marks out for us the path of piety, and obedience to God in every trial.

But after this all was different; the thick darkness enshrouded the holy Sufferer there, and no mortal eye can penetrate the mystery of His sufferings as the sin-bearer, when He endured abandonment by God under His holy judgment, and went down into the

unfathomed depths of all those "waves and billows." These sufferings were also in the cup which He took from His Father's hand, but they were unique, they stand for ever alone; only God can know the depths of them. We can but stand and wonder at them, rejoice that He has come out of them, and adore Him for having endured them in the greatness of His love for us. Beyond this our finite minds cannot go, and we need to beware of the profanity of attempting to penetrate the veil that God has drawn about the cross, and of making comparisons where that which is infinite is in question in both.

**"The gospel of the kingdom"
(Matt. 24. 16).**

W. R. inquires

As to the difference between the gospel of the kingdom which will be preached in the days of which Matthew 24. speaks and the gospel preached now. He has heard it said that salvation then is received as the result of enduring to the end, while now it is by faith.

There is a difference between "the gospel of the kingdom" and the "gospel of God concerning His Son." The great theme of the latter is that God has raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and has given Him glory, who was delivered for our offences. As a result of believing this gospel we are justified and receive of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry "Abba Father"; and we are not only brought into God's family as His children, but we are to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8.). By this gospel God is *gathering out of this world* a people for Himself, a heavenly company, who shall bear for ever the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15. 48). The gospel of the kingdom will be preached after the church has been "caught up" out of

the world, to which time this section of Matthew 24. refers. To every people under heaven the fact will be proclaimed that God is supreme, and all will be called upon to own this and worship Him (Rev. 14. 6, 7). It will be told to them that His kingdom is to be established, for His King is coming. Many amongst these nations will receive this testimony, and the blessing which they will receive in consequence is defined in Matthew 25. 31-46. They are blessed of *His* Father and inherit a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the earth. Theirs is an earthly portion under the Lord as King, in contrast to ours which is a heavenly one. That they believed this testimony to the coming King is evidenced in the fact that they treated the messengers of it well: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me." These messengers will be a believing remnant of the Jewish nation.

The statement, "*he that shall endure to the end shall be saved*," refers to the believing remnant of the Jews; they will pass through "great tribulation," "Jacob's trouble"—"and except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elects' sake those days shall be shortened" (24. 22). Under the terrible pressure many will yield to, and receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 13.), but there will be those whose faith will triumph, and like those "who looked for redemption in Israel" at the time of the Lord's first advent, so these will look for His coming to their relief, and this passage will undoubtedly be a support to them (*see also* Zech. 14.). The salvation here spoken of is for millennial blessing into which all will enter who endure through the tribulation, but none will *endure* who have not faith in the promised and coming Messiah.

Jesus, God's Lamb, in the midst
Of the throne Thou art crownèd;
Thou once on Calvary suff'redest
Of man the disownèd;
Worthy are Thou!
Glory encircles Thy brow,
Son of the Father enthronèd.

Notes and Comments.

(By the late Col. S. L. JACOB).

The Bible.

SOME of us have read the Bible humbly and prayerfully for many a long year; we have found it far beyond us, yet every bit of fresh light on it has only proved its infinite value, its wondrous perfection; how it not only meets the need of poor sinful man and shows him a way of escape from his position of being under the power of sin with all its fearful consequences, not only shows him the way to a new life with the most blessed results, far, far beyond the utmost dreams of happiness which man ever dreamt, but also we see in it the true character of God, His purpose, His ways, and His perfections; in fact, all that God is, and all God's thoughts and purposes for man, set forth in man even in God's Son Jesus Christ.

We see, too, how everything in that Book, details of ceremonies and religious observances, scraps of history, religious songs and prophecies, as well as all else, have a wondrous plan running through the whole, and in the midst of extraordinary diversity there is a wondrous unity of purpose and structure that makes the Book a marvellous whole though composed apparently of such heterogeneous materials.

Now in the mass of the critics we see no knowledge of all this, no understanding of the order which runs through the whole, no comprehension of the mystery, how all can be so perfectly human and yet so divine, so that it is like the Lord Jesus Christ, than whom there was never man so human though in everything He was the Son dwelling in the bosom of the Father.

Discipleship.

Lately a lady missionary, who, with some others, had to flee from the murderous mob in China, gave an account of the journey, which was full

of dangers and perils. She told, too, how when they had but a little money they were most anxious and troubled lest it should not suffice, but when maltreated and robbed of all they possessed, then they were perfectly happy and felt quite relieved of all anxiety. How often is it the case that as long as we have some resources we measure these resources to see if they will meet the difficulties; but when we see (what is really true at all times, though, alas! we are so slow to realize it) that we never have any resource at all for the path of faith but in the Lord, then we measure the difficulties with the Lord's power, and all is rest and peace. Alas! that according to Luke 14. 33, how very few of us are disciples at all. We cling to our resources, and thus, while we may even profess to be teachers, we are not even disciples. The path of discipleship begins where all our own resources end, for only then can the Lord come in in an open and manifest manner. He is not willing to act when the action would only accredit our own resources and give glory to man.

Criticism.

Let us not fear adverse criticism. Anything is better than flattery and smooth complacency. In a bracing climate we may feel cold, but the men and women brought up there will be stronger than those who live in a relaxing climate. When the Lord shows us any path let us go forward boldly and unflinchingly. He will sustain, no matter who are against us; but let us never be too old to learn, and if we are shown a mistake, let us seek grace to own that mistake honestly and heartily in the presence of those before whom we have failed. He is not the best Christian who makes the fewest mistakes; far from it, but rather he who is truest in heart to the Lord.

There are few saints like David, the

beloved of God, yet thousands and thousands of saints have avoided David's sins without giving a tithe of the joy to the heart of the Lord that David did. The cold, calculating, cautious soul will avoid many and many a mistake into which the enthusiastic, warm-hearted disciple may fall; but who would not rather be the latter than the former? Lord, do Thou indeed give us the fervent enthusiasm of the Spirit, and form us in the divine nature of love, whilst Thou guardest us from all that is of the flesh, for Thine own glory's sake. Amen.

System.

Some have an idea that all order, method, arrangement in the things of God are illegal; they are said to savour

of system, and be evil. This is a great mistake. Is God the author of confusion? Is not the whole creation of God, excepting where sin has marred it, the perfection of method, order, and arrangement? Does not every heavenly body keep its course and time exactly, so that the best timepiece that can be made must often be tested by these bodies, and no one dreams of suggesting that the difference that is found is due to the star being incorrect in its transit.

Perfection of order is of God, and system is God's plan. It is only when man makes a system which interferes with God's system, and shuts out the action of the Spirit, that it is wrong. It is right to plan if it be in subjection to the will of God (see James 4. 15).

The Way of Liberty.

"I HAVE read Romans 7. over and over, it describes me exactly, but I just remain there." Such was the confession that a young Christian made to me recently. It is probable that his experience is that of many others, and if so they will rejoice to know that there is a way out of the slough of despond in which they are struggling. This way of deliverance is not by self-examination, however, nor in the examination of the bog in which they are. They must turn from the wretched "I" of the chapter to the great and blessed "who" of verse 24. He is able to deliver and He alone. The following extract from the writings of the late J. N. Darby may prove helpful to those who are in a seventh of Romans condition.

"In Romans 7. the state described is that of a person quickened, but whose whole set of reasoning centres in *himself*—he stops short of grace, of the simple fact that whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may—GOD IS LOVE—and only love towards him. In-

stead of looking at God, it is all "I," "I," "I." Faith looks at God as He has revealed Himself in grace. Let me ask you, Am I—or is my state the object of faith? No, faith never makes what is *in my heart* its object, but *God's revelation of Himself in grace*.

"The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth—God's love brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sin of those who rejected Him. In view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest development of God's grace.

"I have got away from grace, if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, 'I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be.' That is not the question—the real question is, whether God is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we find in ourselves has any other effect than to humble us and

increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. Is there distress or distrust in your mind? See if it be not because you are still saying, 'I,' 'I'—and losing sight of God's grace.

"It is better to be thinking of what God is than of what we are. This looking at ourselves at the bottom is really pride, a want of the thorough conviction that we are *good for nothing*. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God. Looking to Christ it is our privilege to forget ourselves. *True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am*

too bad to be worth thinking about. What I want is to forget myself, and to look to God who is indeed worthy of all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that this will do it.

"Beloved, if we can say, as in Romans 7., 'In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth *no good thing*,' we have thought quite long enough about ourselves. Let us, then, think about Him who thought about us with thoughts of good and not of evil long before we had thoughts of ourselves at all. Let us see what *His* thoughts of grace about us are—and take up the words of faith, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'"

Preach the Word.

(J. T. MAWSON).

THOSE servants of the Lord are wise and will have the truest success in their service who take their instructions from the Word of God. In that Word we are told "*the servant of the Lord must not strive*" but "PREACH THE WORD." It is always a mistake and often a manifestation of his folly when a Christian enters into an argument with an unbeliever as to the truth of God, for not by human argument or any carnal weapon are reasonings that exalt themselves against God cast down (2 Cor. 10. 3-5). Our business is to preach the truth, for that is powerful, and the consciences of men will always respond to it, whatever their depraved reasoning may do.

We talked one evening with a man who said that the thought of hell was obnoxious to him, the doctrine was absurd, it was impossible that there could be such a place, so he thought; and about it he would have argued, but we declined to do so and contented ourselves by quoting the words of God as to it.

He was awakened from his sleep that same night by the town's fire-alarm, and, opening his eyes, he saw flames pouring out of the windows of a factory opposite his house. The first thought

that seized him at the sight of those flames was "I'm in hell." Why was that, since he believed that hell was an impossibility? He was taken unawares, and had not had time to set his reason to work or to marshal his arguments; it was his deep, inner consciousness that was declaring itself, and there at the very centre of his being, underneath all his sophistry and fleshly reasoning, he knew that there was a hell and that he deserved to be there.

That is the part of men that must be reached if they are to be converted to God, and our arguments, however clear, cannot reach them there; they fall harmlessly upon the outworks that the devil has built about the souls of men. But the Word of God is living and powerful, it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart and can pierce its way through all the infidel reasonings that lie on the surface and that cover the consciences of men, and convict them of the truth.

Then, again, we say the servants of the Lord are wise who preach the Word, and the more faithfully and without admixture they preach it the more thoroughly will their work be of God and so abide for ever.

Rejoice Evermore. Pray Unceasingly.

(H. J. VINE).

GOD has graciously unfolded to us the wonderful thoughts that filled His heart concerning His beloved Son before the ages of time began to roll. What exceeding grace is this, and what cause we have, in consequence, to lift up our hearts in joyful praise to Him!

A steady, strong saint of God is one who values this. He greatly rejoices in the purpose of God's love in Christ. He knows that "the purpose of God according to election" must stand, and stand firmly; it cannot be moved. He also knows most surely that that purpose, so quickly ripening, will very soon be publicly manifested in great glory, fruitful to God's eternal praise, and he presses forward to that day.

Pray with all Perseverance.

In connection with this, however, we need to be on our guard against a Satanic subtlety which ensnares the minds of many in regard to prayer. A kind of fatalism creeps into the spirit, Carelessness as to persevering prayer stealthily steals into the unwatchful believer's heart. Cold correctness in terms and expressions may remain, and the truth of the Epistle to the Ephesians, that God works all things after the counsel of His own will, still be spoken of. Nevertheless, prayer becomes dull, formal, and selfishly narrow, lacking fervency, frequency, sympathy, and intelligent urgency. But the significant fact should be carefully noticed that it is in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which the eternal purpose of God is spoken of, that we are warned in this very connection of the devil's artifices. Praying in the Spirit "*with all perseverance*," as well as at "*all seasons*," is enjoined at the end of it, crowning a sevenfold list of invincible armour pieces, for our preservation practically, in the present struggle (chap. 6.).

It should also be remarked it is for "*all the saints*" that prayer is to be made. This will preserve us from a sectarian or party spirit, which is so fatal to the saintly warrior. We are also here told to pray that the "*mystery of the gospel*" may be boldly told out; and thus we shall be maintained in heart and mind with God in communion about both; and kept back from the selfish and hurtful narrowness which has so effectually enfeebled numbers of Christian soldiers. Boldness is indeed needed, for in its final issue, although the mystery of the glad tidings makes known an order of marvellous blessedness, it involves the eventual overthrow of the present system of nations. We may therefore well be told to pray with all perseverance.

Pray with Joy and Thanksgiving.

It is also clear that prayer should not be *despondent*. It is to be persevering truly, yet to bring in a tone of despondency is to dishonour the One from whom we rightly expect. Paul spoke of "*making request with joy*." This may well be the case with us also, knowing the all-sufficiency of our blessed God and Father upon whom we are happily dependent. He is able to do far exceedingly above all our asking, or even our thinking. Colossians 4. 2 likewise tells us to "persevere in prayer," but at the same time adding, "*watch in the same with thanksgiving*." As we think of the grace and greatness of God our Father, we have good reason to pray with joy and with thanksgiving; yea, in all things to give thanks.

How grateful, too, it is to Him who loves us to see our hearts thus turning to Himself. He observes His own with divine interest and pleasure as they are journeying heavenward.

Sitting one day in a café I saw a young convert enter accompanied by

two relatives. I knew of him, but he did not know me. I wondered if he would give thanks to God for his meal. I felt keenly for him. Young in the faith and surrounded by worldlings, I knew he would need to have divine courage. I was filled with joy as I saw him bow his head and give thanks to God. He had no idea that a sympathetic stranger was observing him; but how encouraging it is for us to know that our God and Father Himself lovingly observes. His own, and values the prayers and thanksgivings and praises that rise from their hearts.

No Limitations.

Many impose limitations as to prayer where God does not. We are to be *always* in the spirit of prayer, for we are exhorted to "*pray unceasingly.*" When we are thus characterized, our conduct and conversation, whilst always with grace, would be such that we could at once turn happily and reverently to God in prayer and speak freely to Him. The two short verses of 1 Thessalonians 5. are of immense importance, "*Rejoice evermore. Pray unceasingly.*" Prayer and joy travel happily together, hand in hand along the path of faith to the heavenly goal on high.

"Preserve me, O God," our Lord Jesus Christ prayed as He trod the path; but He added, "My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth." He saw also the goal before Him and continued, "Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16.). We learn in Him who knew the purpose of God so intimately the importance of prayer.

Limitations as to place are also sometimes made, but in 1 Timothy 2. 8 we read that men should "*pray in every place,*" whilst verse 1 exhorts that "*all men*" should be remembered; for our Saviour God desires that "*all men* should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." The risen Man Christ Jesus, who once gave Himself a *ransom for all*, being now the one

Mediator, the only Mediator of God and men. Prayer and thanksgiving is consequently to mark us for all men in every place.

Encouraged in Prayer.

May it be ours to be encouraged by these scriptures in unceasing and persevering prayer; and may we make happy and intelligent progress in the same through the knowledge of our God and Father, from whom we may well ask with joy and confidence. There is no need to be discouraged. His resources are inexhaustible, and the armour provided is perfect and invincible. (1) The girdle of *truth*. (2) The breastplate of *righteousness*. (3) The preparation of the gospel of *peace*. (4) The shield of *faith*. (5) The helmet of *salvation*. (6) The sword of the Spirit, *God's Word*. (7) PRAYER.

Our God is the "God of all encouragement," as well as "the Father of compassions;" therefore, if we have been ensnared, or become careless, we can wake up now and give ourselves to prayer in the Spirit:

"WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE;"
 "AT ALL SEASONS;"
 "FOR ALL THE SAINTS;"
 "FOR ALL MEN;"
 "AND IN ALL PLACES."

Very soon God's purpose in Christ of everlasting glory will be seen bursting forth in beauty and splendour, brightening all with its blessed beams. To that gladsome time we are hastening onward; and now, if we would run well and worthily, *prayer in the Spirit* must be the breath which constantly and inspiringly fills the lungs of our souls: making us speed forward, superior to mundane and Satanic influences; giving us wing for flight and joyful communion with God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ on the journey.

"Haste thee on from grace to glory,
 Armed by faith, and winged by prayer,
 Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
 God's right hand shall bring thee there."

Some Glories of Christ.

(JAMES McBROOM).

As typified in the Ark of the Covenant and its Contents (Exod. 25).

OUR Lord Jesus Christ and His glories are of commanding interest to His saints, and the unceasing activities of the Holy Spirit are to keep Him before us, and, than Himself, nothing can be so precious to our souls that have learned His love through His atoning death.

The Book of God has Him as its centre and object, but nowhere is the holy grandeur of His glory seen more strikingly than in the tabernacle and its furniture. Here, as it is said of the temple, "every whit utters glory" (Ps. 29.). The divine and human, official and sacrificial, dispensational and moral co-mingle; everywhere we turn the manifold glories of Christ are disclosed.

The Ark.

Exodus 25. gives the order of the house as in the mind of God, and the ark comes first. It is the vessel which with its appendages formed the throne of God in Israel, the place where His glory dwelt (Ps. 80. 1). From the character of the instruction it is clear that what is immediately in view is the journey from the desert to Canaan. The rings and staves speak of its passage through the wilderness to its place in the purpose of God. From this point of view it connects with our wilderness journey and looks forward to the coming day of glory.

Every Israelite had an interest in the ark, for, carried on the shoulders of the Levites, it took the lead in the desert to find a place for the host of Israel, and as it passed into the bed of the Jordan the waters of the overflowing river rolled back, like the band of John 18. 6 at the

presence of Jehovah. "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back" (Ps. 114. 5). It was thus that a way was made for God's people to pass over.

The diligent reader of Scripture will follow its course from its being carried round Jericho to Shiloh (Jos. 18.), and from there to the lamentable time when it was taken by the Philistines, then to Bethshemesh, the house of Abinadab in the hill country, and so on, till it was eventually put into the place prepared for it by Solomon (2 Chron. 35. 3), and it will be noted that at all times the majesty of God surrounded it. Its history terminates in mystery, for we hear no more of it after the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Let us dwell a little on the beauties of the Lord as presented by the Spirit in this vessel, for it may indeed be said that it is the highest figure of Him in Holy Scripture. Here we are taught something of our Lord Jesus Christ as the One who binds together the moral universe of God, giving effect on the part of God to the counsels of the Godhead. A brief comparison of the three articles which were set in the outer apartment may help to make this clear. In these we learn how He associates His people with Himself in the maintenance of what is suitable to God in (1) worship, (2) true witness, and (3) administration, as seen in the golden altar, the lampstand, and the table.

But inside stood the mystic vessel which gives us Christ absolutely alone in the majesty of His being as the sustainer of all the glory of God. In

the Gospels, which may answer to the inner apartment, we have that which is true in Him, but in the Epistles, which give the outer, we have "that which is true in Him and in you." In the former He, "the corn of wheat," stands alone; in the latter, through His glorious redemption, others are brought into blessing for God's glory, and while ever remaining alone in His glory as God, He is also the First-born among many brethren.

In the gold and wood the adoring heart sees Deity and humanity. "The Word became flesh." The distance between God and man was bridged by incarnation, though for its complete removal the cross had to come in. God and man are brought together; in One who, being God, could unfold all the deep perfections of His love, while maintaining the claims of His throne, and as perfect man could glorify God in the place of man's responsibility and bruise the serpent's head. With holy reverence we may behold this divine reality. Not a vision, not a phantom, not an apparition, but "*Jesus Christ come in flesh*" (1 John 4. 2, 3). The mystery of mysteries! The miracle of all miracles! "God manifest in flesh." Can we be surprised at anything in the presence of this; before it holy angels bow, rendering their homage and praise; they are His obedient servants, whether in the day of His sojourn here or in His ascended glory now. But there is reserved for man as redeemed by Him a more exalted note of praise than even they can raise, "the high praises of God" (Ps. 149.).

The Tables of Stone.

There were three things in the ark (Heb. 9. 4): the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. The latter only are in view in our chapter (Exod. 25.). Rich and precious as is the instruction connected with the two former things, yet we must note that

all the glory of the throne is based upon the tables of the covenant. They spoke of Christ; for all that constitutes the glory of that throne—the being, nature, and character of God, the eternal unchanging principles of His will, as expressed in the tables of stone, find their true and proper resting-place and expression in Christ.

In Psalm 40. the Lord comes into view saying, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: *yea, Thy law is within My heart.*" This is the true answer to the tables of stone in the ark. And when we remember that these same tables are spoken of in 2 Corinthians 3. as a ministration of death we see the infinite moral distance that lay between Christ as man and the whole human race. That which was to man, even under divine culture, a ministration of death, was in Him the delight of His heart and the very sustenance of His being. But the divine thought was to possess the heart of man, and the beautiful moral connection between Christ and His people is shown in Hebrews 10. There the Apostle speaks of the "will of God," in regard to the death of Christ, and in regard to our sanctification. "By the which will we are sanctified," the end in view being, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Heb. 10. 7, 9, 10, 16). God will have men who in heart and mind shall delight in the law of the Lord. They shall take character from Christ. (See also 2 Cor. 3. 3, where instead of the law it is Christ written in the heart, and also Rom. 8. 4.)

The Pot of Manna.

Now the question arises: What special importance attaches to the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that they should also have a place in the ark? The manna was Israel's food, "spiritual food" from heaven, typical of the heavenly grace given of God to sustain His people in their pilgrimage through this wilderness world. It speaks of the life of the Man Christ Jesus. We

may fail to appreciate the wonderful grace of that pathway wherein was the perfect combination and exhibition of "every beauteous grace," yet blessed it is to see that God has decreed that it should be treasured up before Him for ever. Psalm 16., given by the Spirit of Christ in David, shows the dependence, obedience, and devotedness of that path, and as it cannot be confined to the days of His ministry it shows the whole course covering the eighteen hidden years not mentioned in the Gospels. Finding His little band of followers among the poor of the people, the subject of angelic ministry, dependent on a poor and sinful woman for a drink. "Foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests," but He, "the Son of Man, had nowhere to lay His head." Everything bespoke His complete dependence. And if we look for a moment at the other side of His life as brought out by the need of others: He commanded the resources of creation, multiplied the bread to feed His rejectors, readjusted the distorted conditions of humanity so that disease in every variety was displaced.

Add to this that, in His teaching, not only was the whole of the Scriptures open before Him as their Author, but Nature also unfolded to Him her treasures. The various kingdoms of nature contributed (Matt. 13. and Luke 12.), the family also (Luke 15.) and the unseen world (Luke 16.). All this, though it may carry us beyond the thought of manna, furnishes an answer to the question, Why was it in the ark? A true-living Man, stamping His own heavenly character on all, meets us at every turn, and though He is in changed circumstances, still He remains in His own eternal sameness, and in Him the witness of those thirty-three years shall be perpetuated through all eternity. The hidden manna of Revelation 2. 17 is doubtless an allusion to Christ in this way, and is connected with reward, confidence, and communion.

Aaron's Rod.

Aaron's rod recalls a crisis in the history of the people which necessitated a divine intervention. "Men of renown envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord." They refused in type the priesthood and royalty of Christ and brought on themselves the judgment of God. In the laying-up of the rods and the budding of Aaron's the truth of resurrection as the turning point of all God's ways comes to light. This may account for its being in the ark. It is by resurrection that Christ is marked out Son of God with power, and the priesthood, which before stood on expiation, is now established on resurrection, and we learn that God's new creation rests not merely on the blood of Christ but on His glorious resurrection as the first-fruits for God.

The Mercy Seat.

The ark with its contents was covered by the mercy seat which formed a lid, and with it, all one piece, was the cherubim of beaten work called the "cherubim of glory" between which and above the mercy seat sat the cloud of glory, symbol of Jehovah's presence. Everything spoke of glory having for its basis the testimony contained inside the ark. The point in this chapter is evidently the glory of Christ and not the atonement, for this latter we have to go to Leviticus 16., where the blood is put upon the mercy seat. Here it is the meeting place. "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee." "God was in Christ . . . reconciling the world to Himself," putting Himself in touch with man in Him. What a comment on the Gospels is Hebrews 1., "God . . . spoken in Son." In Him we get the revelation of God. That which no prophet knew of He speaks out. Being in heaven, He could speak of heavenly things.

Nowhere could anything be found to surpass what He unfolds in the

Gospel of John (though this may go beyond the type we are considering). He calls His disciples friends in the intimacy of divine love, and makes known the divine communications to them (John 15.). But chapter 17. exceeds all, for there He draws aside the veil and show us what engaged the Father and the Son in the eternal past, then looks ahead and shows the coming display of His own glory, and His people loved by the Father in the same circle of love with Himself. All this anticipates the cross, and just as the mercy seat of Exodus 25.—place of divine communication—had in view the blood-sprinkled mercy seat of Leviticus 16.—place of atonement—so all the heavenly revelations of love and glory which came out during the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ had in view the cross and new creation. Romans 3. is the answer to the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, a risen Saviour has gone in in the rights of redemption, and the eye of faith sees Him even now as the One who bears the glory (Zech. 6. 13). "A Lamb as it had been slain." Wondrous thought! The Saviour, bearing the marks of the conflict, is in the centre of the glory. Nor is it in the mercy seat alone that the distinction between incarnation and redemption is seen, it may be traced also in the cherubim.

The Veil.

From Exodus 26. 31 we learn that in the holy veil there were cherubim, and the Spirit of God in Hebrew 10. 20 speaks of this veil as "His flesh"—thus signifying that all that these wondrous mystic figures represent was set forth in the earth life of the Lord Jesus. The cherubim stood in relation to the tables of testimony which formed the basis of God's direct government in Israel, and through them to all the earth. They speak of the activities of the throne, as seen in Ezekiel 1. and Revelation 4., where the four heads of creation set forth the intelligence, power, stability, and

rapidity of the judgment of the throne, or rather of Him who sits thereon. All this awe-inspiring grandeur which shines in the infinite God—set before us here in figures to suit our creature capacity—has been set forth in grace in the Man Christ Jesus.

We may note briefly a few instances of this coming out in the Gospels.

INTELLIGENCE. "Before Philip called thee . . . I saw thee." "But Jesus . . . knew what was in man." "We speak that we do know." (John 1. 48; 2. 24, 25; 3. 11. Also 1 Chron. 28. 9; Jer. 3. 24; 20. 23; Rev. 5. 6.)

POWER and MAJESTY as seen in the lion comes out both in the moral and material spheres. "Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him." "And He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." "Whom seek ye? . . . they went backward, and fell to the ground." "And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still . . . and there was a great calm." (Mark 1. 25; John 11. 43; 18. 4-6; Mark 4. 39; Isa. 40. 28.)

STABILITY. It is in Mark we have the perfect Servant, working long after sunset and away in the morning before daybreak to a solitary place to pray. "He set His face to go to Jerusalem." "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day." (Mark 1. 32-35; Luke 9. 51; John 9. 4.)

RAPIDITY OF JUDGMENT is seen in the cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the fig tree (Matt. 21. 12, 13, 19, 20).

All this and much more, which the diligent may trace out, comes out in the life of our Lord here; in Him we see the glory of the throne shine out. "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. . . . Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

The Wisdom of God.

A MAN who had thought much of the wisdom of men and who had made the philosophy of the ancients his study, said, in talking to us of a lowly-minded Christian, "When first I met him I thought him a very shallow soul, and yet I had to confess to myself that he had a peace and contentment of heart of which I knew nothing." He had to confess further that the man whom he thought was "a shallow soul," but who knew Christ as his Saviour and God as his Father, was wiser than he.

Men of science have discovered marvellous things, but put all their wisdom and discoveries together, what are they when set side by side with the mystery of God's love, His thoughts, His counsels, all fully revealed in Christ, His holy name of Father declared to us by the only begotten Son? They are nothing at all. "The wisest men of this world are but grubs in the old creation," which shall wax old as a garment and pass away; but the children of God, nourished by the milk of the Word and taught by the Spirit of God, are able to enter into the deep things of God, the things which abide without decay. They have the wisdom of God, and having Christ and the knowledge of God's purposes in Him, they have all the treasures of

wisdom and knowledge. The Christian has the enlarged understanding, the men of science are shallow and narrow and straitened.

"In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Eccles. i. 18). Such is the inspired commentary on the best of man's learning; but those who trust under the wings of God these "shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and He will make them drink of the river of His pleasures" (Ps. 36. 8). The fullness of this is contained in Paul's prayer for the saints of God in Ephesians 3. 16-21;

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Business Prayers.

I mean prayers in which we take to God one of the many precious promises which He has given us in His Word, and expect it to be fulfilled as certainly as we look for the money to be given to us when we go to the bank to cash a cheque or note. We should not think of going there, lolling over the counter, chatting with the clerk upon every conceivable subject except the one thing for which we had gone to the bank, and then coming away without the coin we needed; but we should lay before the clerk the promise to pay

bearer a certain sum, tell him in what form we wished to take the amount, count the cash after him, and then go our way to attend to other business. That is just an illustration of the method in which we should draw supplies from the Bank of Heaven. We should seek out the word that applies to the particular case, plead it before the Lord in faith, expect to have the blessing to which it relates; and then, having received it, proceed to the next duty devolving upon us with thanksgiving.

Divine Love.—No. 4.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Love of the Brethren.

THE love of the saints to one another is no less divine than is that of the Father and the Son. This love is one of the great distinguishing marks of the children of God. Of this family there are two characteristics which unfailingly declare their lineage, and these are *righteousness* and *love*. As *lawlessness* and *hatred* of the brethren mark the children of the devil, so do righteousness and love of the brethren mark the children of God. In 1 John 2. 29 we read, "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him;" and in chapter 3. 12 we read, "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." Then we have in chapter 4. 7, "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God."

The ability to take the place of children of God is only the portion of the saints of this dispensation. We have this place by the Father's call (1 John 3. 1), we have it as a right given to us by Christ (John 1. 12), and we have it in the witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8. 16). But "*born of God*" itself is not dispensational. It was true from the commencement of the activities of the grace of God in this fallen world, and for an example of one born of God the Apostle goes back to Abel; his works were righteous, and "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." If we find a man practising righteousness or loving the brethren we know that that man is born of God. He is not a mere child of Adam, nor is he of the devil, but of God. Every one brings forth after his kind, whether it be the devil, fallen man, or the blessed God Himself.

It is of the utmost importance to see that these characteristics are the out-

come of the divine nature, the nature of the children of God. They are not qualities which can be put on or imitated by the mere child of Adam. Righteousness here is not what the world calls *honesty*, which is only measured by men's dealings with one another. This may be rightly enough called righteousness, but it is not that which is spoken of here. Abel's righteousness is seen in his taking his rightful place in the presence of God. In himself he is nothing but a guilty sinner, but this he most fully admits, and he approaches God in the way opened up to him in boundless grace. It is in a man's dealings with God more than in his dealings with men that his righteousness or lawlessness becomes apparent.

Nor is love mere natural affection, a thing found sometimes stronger than death amongst men; and not only amongst men, but even amongst the lower orders of creation. As originally formed, man was set in intelligent relationship with God, and in an unfallen state his affections would have happily flowed in the channels dug for them in the wisdom and goodness of his Creator; but as fallen they have burst all bounds, and at the direction of corrupt and lawless flesh, they wander where they will regardless of the consequences. This shows man to be at the level of the irresponsible beast of the field, if indeed not at a lower level.

The notion of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is not new, but lately it has been brought into more prominence than heretofore; and indeed it might truthfully be said that the great mass of professing Christians are fighting their battles under this banner. But such a notion has no place in the Word of God. No one is a child of God apart from the new birth. This is hinted at, perhaps I had better

say figuratively declared, in the Old Testament; and the Lord seems to infer that Nicodemus should have known it. He says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3). And when the unbelieving mind of the Pharisee raises questions regarding this mysterious operation of the Spirit of God, Jesus says, "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Ezekiel had said, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36. 25, 26). It is to such words as these the Lord evidently refers when He says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

In the past dispensation man was under probation, and while this was so it would not have been consistent to have plainly declared his hopelessly lost condition, which the reference to new birth does; because if man is so hopelessly lost that he must be born again, when this verdict is given his trial must be concluded. Therefore, while it was always necessary from the fall, if man was to be in right relationship with God, while his trial was running its course it was only hinted at; but now that the resources of God put forth to influence the flesh in right ways have been exhausted, the plain truth as to the incorrigible wickedness of the flesh is declared, and the necessity of new birth is frankly insisted upon.

This new birth is produced by the Word of God, which is incorruptible, living, and abiding. On earth everything perishes but the Word of God. The Jew is grass, the Gentile is grass—all flesh is grass, and the glory of man the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower of it passes away. What, then, remains? "The Word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40).

This Word has been brought to us in the gospel (1 Peter 25.), and by it the believer is born again. His life and nature are divine.

Therefore the one born of God does not practise sin but righteousness. Had he nothing but the divine nature he would be utterly incapable of sinning, for that nature cannot sin. But as long as he is in this world he has also the old nature of the flesh, and it can do nothing but sin, and in this nature he is liable to act, and will do so if he be not watchful. When we are glorified there will be no more need for the vigilance that is now necessary. We will then be like Christ, and free from the presence of the flesh, and failure will be a thing of the past.

But the One who is begotten of God loves Him that begat. We love the Father and the Son, and we love the brethren. It is natural for us to do so. That which the law, by all its threatenings, could not get from the mere child of Adam, God has gotten by His work of grace in our hearts. The law demanded love from man, but never got it. But God has got it by the revelation of His great love to us in the death of His only begotten Son: "We love Him because He first loved us." It is not because we are compelled to do it by threatenings of wrath. This never produced love in any human heart. Terror it did produce, but not love. Love begets love where that love is appreciated; and when the love of God, as it has been brought to light in the death of Jesus, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, we love Him.

It may be that we feel our love so feeble that we are almost ashamed to say anything about it at all. This may be all right, for when compared with the infinite love of God, feeble indeed it must ever appear. Still, we love Him, if we are born of Him; and well He knows it, for He searches the heart and knows all that is there. And we also know it, however we may bewail its feebleness. Peter could appeal to

the omniscience of the Lord at a time when his actions were sufficient to raise doubts as to the reality of his affection for Christ in the minds of his brethren. He says, "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee" (John 21. 17). It is well to have to do with One who knows the most secret thoughts of the heart. He knows us even better than we know ourselves, and this is a great comfort. He has not to wait until we make known to Him our inmost thoughts. He knows what is there, for every bit of good that is there is there by the working of His fathomless grace. And it is there even before we are aware of it ourselves. It is a great surprise to all of us when we first come to the consciousness of our readiness to stand in the face of the whole hostile world in confession of Christ. Those born of God may seem to the eyes of the world either too contemptible to be taken seriously, or, like a few noxious weeds, to be taken up and given to the flame; and they, if they think of themselves at all, will only regard themselves as cumberers of the ground; but the enjoyment of the favour of God gives them a sense of superiority above all the power and glory of the world.

The love of the children of God is self-sacrificing. We are told we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren; that is to say, all the children of God should lay down their lives for one another. The One in whom that love has been expressed laid down His life for us; therefore we should lay down our lives for one another. It is the love of God that is in the hearts of His children, and that love came to light in the death of Christ; and if God so loved us, we are told, we also should love one another. We would be most likely to say, we should love Him; but we never find love to God demanded in Christianity. Under law God says, "Thou shalt love Me;" and, "Ye are cursed if ye do not." But under grace God says, "I love you, believe it and live."

The test of that love being in us is

our love to the children of God. We might say that we love God, but it is that which is of God in the world that tests us; and if we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen? (1 John 4. 20). We may go about looking for love from our brethren, and murmuring because we do not seem to get as much of it as we would desire, but this is a sad state to be in, and manifests a heart not in the enjoyment of the love of God. Love is the very life of the children of God, and is the spring and fountain of all their activities. It is the new commandment. It was the thing that was true in Jesus when He was upon earth, and is now true in His own in the power of the Spirit (1 John 2. 8).

In this we are to be imitators of God, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. As His children we are to come out in His moral characteristics, and become known to be the disciples of Jesus, as He says, "By this shall all men know that ye are disciples of Mine, if ye have love one to another" (John 13. 35). No teacher but Himself ever taught this, hence those who love one another are known in this world as His disciples.

How far above the plotting and working of the enemy God has shown Himself to be. Satan, no doubt, considered he had accomplished something that would act as an eternal vexation to the Creator, when he overthrew the creature in transgression, who was made in His image and likeness. But he little knew the wisdom and might of Him whose implacable foe he had become. That evil has been made the occasion of Satan's everlasting downfall, and of infinite and eternal glory to God. Through infinite grace the fallen creature has been brought to know the Creator in His nature, and to stand before Him in the relationship of son. Earth has been lost, but heaven has been gained,

and all the glory belongs to God ; and blessed for ever be His name, we can say GOD IS LOVE. May we be kept in that love, and may we grow in the divine nature, and be better able to imitate Him whose name is LOVE. Nothing but love is of any value under the sun, but it must be divine love, the love of *God*, the love of the *Father*, the love of the *Son*, and the love of the *brethren*. Without this nature, which in us is the result of new birth, all else is worthless.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, *and have not love*,
I am become as sounding brass,
Or a tinkling cymbal.
And though I have the gift of prophecy,
And understand all mysteries,
And all knowledge ;
And though I have all faith,
So that I could remove mountains,
and have not love,
I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods
to feed the poor,
And though I give my body to be
burned, *and have not love*,
It profiteth me nothing.

LOVE

suffereth long,
is kind,
envieth not,
vaunteth not itself,
is not puffed up,
doth not behave itself unseemly,
seeketh not her own,
is not easily provoked,
thinketh no evil,
rejoiceth not in iniquity,
rejoiceth in the truth,
beareth all things,
believeth all things,
hopeth all things,
endureth all things,
never faileth.

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is LOVE (1 Cor. 13.).

A Letter Concerning the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DEAR BROTHER,

Many pious persons think as regards the humanity of Christ as does your correspondent. Nevertheless, it is a serious error, and a distinct loss for the soul in the falsification of His nature, and therefore of our hope of being "like Him" (1 John 2.) ; for the humanity He had in the days of His flesh is the same humanity He has now in glory (Luke 24. 39). If He was here in the humanity of fallen Adam, He has now glorified that humanity, and when we are "like Him," we should be what we are now for ever. God forbid !

He says : " If the flesh of our Lord Jesus was not ' sinful flesh,' why did it die ? How could it die ? . . . He could not have died unless He had partaken of our flesh. Again, was He not truly the Son of the Virgin ? Then

did He not derive His flesh from her ? I do not believe in the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary, or that she was conceived without sin. If I did, I should have to go back through all her ancestry, and believe them immaculate, in order to get rid of the likeness of our sinful flesh in Christ Jesus ; and when I had done that, I should have got rid of the God-man."

Now, if Christ was in that state before His death, He remains in that state for ever ; for death would not clear Him of it. If it did, then death would clear us also—*our own death* ; and death would clear the wicked dead likewise ; and we should have no need of redemption, and a new creation, or of the death of Christ at all ; for at best, it would be but the death of One in a like state with ourselves ; and if He became

our life, that life, in the state in which it would thus exist, would be no different from the life we now have.

Again, when he says that "Christ did not incur personal guilt, was sinless, in fact," *i.e.* did not commit sin, it is a mere question of degree, not of kind. Some men commit more sins than others, some less. He was the best of all, for He committed none! Now, what Scripture says is that "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21), which is quite another thing.

"Irving taught that there was no personal sin in Christ, but that there was sin in the *nature* He took, so that He was exposed and liable to death. B. W. Newton taught that there was no personal sin in Christ, and—not that there was sin in His nature but—that He was liable to the consequences of it from His *position in relation to God* from His birth. Both alike set aside the atonement." Of the two your correspondent seems to be nearer Irvingism. But none of them, in their teaching, confesses "the Christ of God" (Luke 9. 20).

Again he says that "the Greek word for 'likeness' means 'identity in kind' . . . we all believe that the 'likeness of sinful flesh' (Rom. 8. 3) is identity, not likeness, in the usual sense of the word."

Now plainly, "likeness" does not mean "identity in kind." It does not mean "identity" at all. It precludes the idea of identity in any way.

"That man is like my brother" shows that he is *not* my brother. There is not identity between them. There is similarity, and no more. If there was "identity," I should have said, "That man *is* my brother;" not, "He is like him."

"She sings like a nightingale." But she is not a nightingale, nor is her song identical with the song of a nightingale, though it is like it.

Mark 12. 31. "The second commandment is like it," but it is not it.

John 8. 55. "I should be a liar like you," but not identical with you.

John 9. 9. "Others said he is like him," but not he.

Acts 17. 29. "The Godhead is like unto gold," but not gold.

Galatians 5. 21. "And such like," but all different.

1 John 3. 2. "We shall be like Him," but not Himself.

But, further, if He assumed flesh "identical in kind" to ours, and a body in consequence "susceptible of death," then, when we are "like Him," we should be only like ourselves glorified! Far be the thought from calling that a glorious hope!

He asks: "If the flesh of our Lord Jesus was not 'sinful flesh,' why did it die? How could it die? As I read holy Scripture, it was sin which brought death into the world, and He could not have died, unless He had partaken of our flesh."

If the flesh of Jesus was "sinful flesh," then He would have had to die in consequence. He could not have died for us. He could not have "laid down His life," seeing it would have been already forfeited. The demons would not have said, "We know Thee, who Thou art; the Holy One of God." Contrariwise, they would have said, "Thou art a sinful man like the rest, and in our power accordingly." Nor could He have said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me," if His flesh was "sinful flesh."

He was born of the Virgin, a true man; but not in the state of fallen man, but, "that Holy thing, Son of God" (Luke 1. 35). And the same testimony was borne to Him at His death; for as the centurion and those that were with him saw the miracles that attended it, "they feared greatly, saying, Truly, this man was Son of God" (Matt. 27. 54).

He did not keep Himself from the propensities of a sinful nature. To say, "He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet was without sin," is not what Scripture says, *viz.* "we have not an high priest not able

to sympathize with our infirmities, but tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart" (Heb. 4. 15). Temptation is not sin : yielding to it is. But He was tempted, "sin apart." That word "sin apart" limits the statement, and differentiates between the way in which He was tempted and the way in which we are ; for we have sin in us, and have to restrain it. He had none. It is not that He *committed* none. You might be tempted and not sin, as Joseph was (Gen. 39. 9) ; but you could not be tempted "sin apart." You might be tempted without sinning ; but not "without sin."

Now take the word "likeness," to which he refers, in Romans 5. 14 ; 6. 5 ; 8. 3. But first take Romans 1. 23, "into an image like to corruptible man." The idol made of wood, or aught else, is not "identical in kind" with man, but merely in his *external* likeness.

Romans 5. 14, "after the likeness of Adam's transgression," in no wise means that they ate of the forbidden fruit in Eden. They were not there to eat it. But they disobeyed as he did, similarly, but not identically.

Romans 6. 5, "the likeness of His death," certainly cannot mean that *water* baptism is identical with His *bloody* death ; nor "the likeness of His resurrection" that we are raised identically as He is. 1 Peter 3. 21 speaks of baptism as "the like figure," or "antitype."

Romans 8. 3 says distinctly that God did not send His son in our flesh "identical in kind," but in the "likeness" of it. If He had come in flesh "identical in kind," He would not have come in the likeness of it, but in the same flesh.

When God created man, "He created him in the likeness of God" (Gen. 5. 1). They were not God, nor identical in kind, or in any other way, with Him, but in His likeness ; like Him, not like the beasts ; nor like angels. And when Adam begat a son, he begat him in his own likeness, after his image (Gen. 5. 3), *i.e.* despite the fall, man

still remained man, and did not degenerate from his own status into an animal of another kind. He still retained the outward lineaments and dignity of the human race, in due time to be redeemed by Christ in a new creation ; and so James 3. 9, referring back to Genesis, says, "Men are made after the similitude, or likeness of God," *i.e.* man as such, all men. It is not that they are identical with God in being, or in attributes, but in similitude, in outward form and status, representing Him amongst His creatures. It is not anthropomorphism, *i.e.* being in the form of His body, but as representing Him in creation.

Christ was not "in some unrevealed way provided with a body, which was divinely prepared so as to be different from any human body," because the way in which it was so prepared is distinctly revealed. In Hebrews 10. 5 we read, "a body Thou hast prepared me ;" and the way of it is told in Luke 1. 35. To say that He got from Mary the taint of sin, "identical in kind" with our fallen race, is to deny the distinct affirmation and revelation of Scripture, and is a very evil statement, although the person saying it may be wholly ignorant of the source of it.

To say that "to deny that Christ had the sinful nature of man is to deny that He is man" is equally foolish, and more evil than to say that Adam was not a man until he was a fallen man. Now if Adam was a man before he was a sinful man, surely Christ could be a man as sinless as Adam was before he fell. In fact, He was the Holy Son of God. It is a mere confusion between humanity and the state of fallen humanity. It is not a question of guilt, but of state.

"He who knew no sin" is more than saying "He did not commit sin." He did not know it at all. And so it is said, "He made Him sin for us, who knew no sin." That could not be said of Him if he was it already. You cannot make gold gold, for it is gold ; nor brass brass.

"God sent His Son in the likeness of flesh of sin" when He came into this world. That was what He was like, as He moved about here, a Man amongst men. Then, on the cross, He was "made sin," identified with all it meant under the judgment of God: He who knew no sin—that Holy One, blessed be He for ever—"was made sin, that we might become God's righteousness in Him."

This error of thought on the part of your correspondent does not come from the "New Theology" exactly, though it may in measure be allied to it. It is very "old" indeed. It springs from the same source as do expressions such as, "Christ was made bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," misquoting Ephesians 5. 30, "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." So also Genesis 2. 23. Adam did not derive from Eve, but Eve derived from Adam. But many pious people fall into this error through lack of a clear gospel; and some again from the desire for sympathy in our feeble fallen state, not knowing that we have, in a risen Christ, *deliverance* from it, and power by His Spirit dwelling in us to stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free, and so walking to bring forth fruit to God. We want sympathy, not for our

sins and the wilfulness of our fallen state, but for our infirmity, the weakness of our renewed nature in its desire to do the will of God; and such we have in the priesthood of Christ (Heb. 4. 14-16).

Note also the precision of Scripture in Hebrew 2. 14. "Since therefore the children partake of blood and flesh, He also in like manner took part in the same." "In like manner" means properly "nigh unto," "almost to," as in Philippians 2. 27, "he was sick nigh unto death," but not actually arrived at it; as though the Spirit of God would guard the fact that however similar the humanity of the Lord was to that of "the children," it was not identical with theirs. (See note on Heb. 2. 14, in N.T. by J.N.D.) The contrast between Adam and Christ is again insisted on in 1 Corinthians 15. 45-50. "The first man was out of the earth, made of dust; the second man is out of heaven . . . and as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly One."

May we tread with unshod feet the courts of the sanctuary, and learn to worship and adore.

Yours in the faith of Christ,
EDWARD CROSS.

Lights in the World.

If upon a stormy night in the open street you saw a naked candle brightly and steadily burning in spite of the storm, you would account it a marvellous thing; it would be the wonder of all beholders, a veritable miracle. And yet a greater thing than this is happening—the Christians shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse world (Phil. 2. 15). Their light is exposed to every rude blast of temptation and persecution that the devil and the world can raise, and yet, thank God, the light still burns; but how is it? Certainly not because they have any power or resources as of themselves, but "IT IS GOD *that worketh in them both to*

will and do of His good pleasure." Here is the secret of it all, and if rightly considered it will be seen that this is even a greater thing than the shining of the heavenly bodies upon the earth, for theirs is material light, and this is moral; they declare the handiwork of God, but these His nature and character, for as they are obedient to God they are "*blameless and harmless the sons of God without rebuke. . . . Holding forth the word of life.*" Wonderful place to have is this. May we who know the Lord prize it greatly, and in lowliness of mind depend wholly upon God, who alone can keep us in it.

Correspondence.

SUNDAY EVENING GOSPEL SERVICES.

Three questions have been asked: (1) What ought to be done where companies at the usual Sunday evening gospel services are small and consisting mainly of professed Christians; (2) ought the preacher to announce the glad tidings with all simplicity as if it were the latest news, and those present strangers to it? or (3) should he seek to present, according to his ability in handling the Word, the great foundation truths of Christianity, more particularly to help Christians in their feeble apprehension of the truth?

Your correspondent, D.W.H., has raised a question of much interest and no small importance. May I offer a reply in the form of a personal experience?

I have found that a company composed entirely, or almost entirely, of believers, will appreciate ministry addressed to them, and will re-assemble again and again to listen.

But does one *who is sent to preach the gospel* thus discharge his mission? Let him preach the preaching which his Master has bidden him. If *the gospel* be preached in all its simplicity and faith, mingled with earnest warnings as to the dire consequences of sin and disbelief, exercise will generally spring up in the hearts of the Christian hearers as to bringing their unconverted friends. A "nice word" to believers will incite no one to seek out the perishing, but a warm gospel message oftentimes makes the occupants of the half-filled benches ashamed of the empty spaces. Interest grows, and if the Lord graciously works, sinners are converted and saints are cheered, and their souls set ringing with the joy that is the echo of heaven's own gladness over the sight of repentant sinners.

Are the Lord's dear people losers in a case like this? Who can think so? For to share in heaven's joys means to be drawn nearer to heaven, nearer to Christ, nearer to the heart of the blessed God Himself, whose very nature is declared in the glad tidings of His grace.

Madrid.

H. P. BARKER.

I do not think the solution of D.W.H.'s difficulties lies in either of his suggestive questions.

(1) To "announce the glad tidings with all simplicity as if it were the latest news, and those present strangers to it," is to practise a species of deception to which the omniscient Holy Ghost will not be a partner, for I am assured He will not grant unction and power to words where there is no material suitable to come under their power.

(2) For the preacher to "seek to present,

according to his ability in handling the Word, the great foundation truths of Christianity, more particularly to help saints in their feeble apprehension of the truth," is tantamount to definitely giving up gospel service, to confine his efforts to the Lord's people, and accept the situation that the unsaved cannot be reached.

What, then, is the solution of D.W.H.'s difficulties?

A general humbling of the Lord's people that things are as they are. Patient, earnest, importunate, believing prayer. Strenuous service in persuading the unconverted to come under the sound of the Word. The providing of *live* preachers who have a love for souls, a deep, fervent belief in the great truths of the gospel—men who are in touch with God, men of prayer and power and purpose.

A good deal of D.W.H.'s difficulty comes about through the agreement on the part of the Lord's people that a Sunday evening gospel service shall be held whether preachers suitable or not are forthcoming. The consequence is a "stop-gap" is often requisitioned whom the Lord's people barely endure, and would never dream of asking the unconverted to come and hear.

There is, Mr. Editor, a district, well known to us both, where enough preaching ability does not exist to maintain Sunday evening gospel services, so they make no pretence at keeping such up. But as soon as a suitable preacher comes along arrangements are gladly made for preaching, either in the usual place of meeting or at a public hall, or in a granary or barn or kitchen, or at a place where cross-roads meet. The meetings are actively made known, and the gospel preacher is never called upon to face D.W.H.'s difficulties. He has the luxury of preaching the gospel to those who need it, and feeling that the Holy Ghost is giving power and liberty in the proclamation of the Word, souls are saved and take their place in testimony with the Lord's people.

Is not the whole thing divinely summed up:

- (1) How shall they hear without a preacher?
(2) How shall they preach except they be sent?

Not every one who preaches can be called a preacher, nor claim that he is sent. Where these qualifications exist difficulties vanish.

In conclusion I warmly commend the readers of "Scripture Truth" to study carefully and pray earnestly over the article appearing in your June issue, entitled, "The Indifferent World and the Lukewarm Church." It seems D.W.H.'s questions are raised on page 185 and answered on pages 180 and 181. W.B.W.'s solemn remarks on "eternal punishment" should be laid to heart.

Weston-super-Mare. A. J. POLLOCK.

The questions raised in May issue of "Scripture Truth" are interesting and have doubtless exercised the minds of many preachers of the gospel.

We are supposed to have before us a company of people "most or all . . . professed Christians," and in view of this the first course proposed seems unsuitable, as there should always be a basis of truth in the relations between preacher and hearers, and the message should be suitable to the company addressed. Neither of these conditions would exist if the preacher spoke as though all were unacquainted with the glad tidings, and it is difficult to understand how a preacher could be happy in spirit or helped of the Lord in addressing conditions of soul which he knew were not present.

Course No. 2 seems therefore the one to be pursued in the circumstances mentioned, "to help saints in their feeble apprehension of the truth," and this supposes ability, through divine teaching, on the part of the preacher.

It has occurred to me on many an occasion of addressing a small company of believers on a Sunday evening, that *what* we have to present is not any the less because unbelievers are not present, nor would it be greater if a number of unconverted ones were there, but rather that the point of view from which we speak of the Lord is somewhat altered.

We speak of the Lord to those who know Him as seeking to enhance in their minds His glorious person and work and to establish them in the grace of God, and there does not seem any essential difference between this ministry and the announcement of "glad tidings" to the unconverted.

The difficulty may be felt to be greater when there may be one or two present whom the preacher is not certain about as to their state of soul, but would not *every* state of soul be met by the simple presentation of Christ in one or more of His all-various glories?

It is difficult to conceive the character of a discourse presented to believers in the liberty of the Spirit and from which an unconverted person even would not get some idea that here was something that could meet his need, and, conversely, if the gospel was addressed as to unconverted ones only, and believers were present, there would be food ministered and hearts refreshed, because the story of God's grace does not weary the minds of saints by repetition.

May we not be overburdened or fall into a snare by seeking to make an analysis of the state of soul of those present to hear the message, and assume that *we* are able to judge what they are and where they are, and, having judged, are competent to give suitable ministry to them?

Would not our wisdom lie in being so well acquainted with the truths of Scripture, so at home in the Lord's company and so passively in His hands to do His bidding, that we may be able to catch impressions from Him in respect of each preaching? In this way we should be happy in the ministry of Himself and delivered from pre-occupation as to making our message suitable to what we conceive the needs of the company to be.

If it is a chronic condition of things that unbelievers are not present at the Sunday evening preachings, it should lead to special exercise, but the consideration of this might divert us from the plain question before us. One is anxious, however, that the absence of unconverted ones should not lead us to harbour the thought of giving up "gospel preachings" and devoting ourselves to "the ministry to the saints," and having in our minds the thought that there is any essential difference between the two or that they are two differing ministries in their character.

May the Lord give each one of His servants grace to be near to Him, so that somewhat of His personal glories and excellences might be known by us and our spirits free to speak of Him to whomsoever will hear.

Brighouse.

HUDSON BROOK.

The Higher Criticism ;

Its Effects upon the Souls of two of its Leading Exponents.

To the Editor of "Scripture Truth."

During 1911 I sought, in a series of papers, to bring before your readers the true character of the evil system of attack upon the Scriptures known as "Higher Criticism." May I now supplement those papers with a word as to the effect of this weapon of the enemy upon the souls of two men who have been most dexterous in its use?

First, as to the great De Wette himself. In his scholarly works the real foundations of "Higher Criticism" were laid, and he is rightly regarded as one of its foremost apostles. As is often the case, his laborious attempts to undermine the integrity of the Word of God brought him popularity and success. But towards the end of his life disappointment and dissatisfaction took possession of his soul. Mr. J. Urquhart, in his most valuable work, "The New Biblical Guide" (8 volumes, Marshall Bros.), tells us how Baron Bunsen met him in Switzerland, where he was attending a conference of the Moravians, and was struck with the look of weariness, and yet of earnest seeking, on the great critic's face. He also mentions a still more pathetic confession of failure made afterwards in his dying chamber at Basle. And he had written in pencil some lines which were found among his papers after his death, the concluding words of which may be thus translated :

"I lived in times of doubt and strife,
When child-like faith was forced to yield ;
I struggled to the end of life :
Alas ! I did not gain the field."

The other instance I shall quote is that of Dr. Marcus Dods, President of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, who, after devoting a large portion of his ability and energy to the successful scattering of doubts as to the Word of God, died some few years ago. I

am indebted for the following particulars to "Our Hope," an American monthly (Feb., 1912) :

"His son, we are told, has published in a volume a number of his father's letters covering a period of time when he was at his best, and had reached the zenith of his career. Among these letters are a number of expressions which reveal spiritual darkness bordering almost on despair."

A few sentences are quoted from these confessions, which I reproduce in full :

"I am a backslider. I used to enjoy prayer, but for years I have found myself dumb. Of course one can always make a prayer, but prayer in the sense of asking for things has not been, in my case, a proved force. I pray now, not because my own experience gives me any encouragement, but because of Christ's example and command. I wish I could live as a spectator through the next generation to see what they are going to make of things. There will be a grand turn-up in matters theological, and the churches won't know themselves fifty years hence. It is to be hoped some little rag of faith may be left when all is done. For my own part, I am sometimes entirely under water and see no sky at all."

"*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" This criterion remains as true as ever. What must be the character of the tree which bears such melancholy fruit? How dark must be the inner *soul* history of the rank and file who accept the theories of the "Higher Criticism," when the leaders, with all their learning and knowledge, have to confess to such despondency!

May God grant that your readers, one and all, may be on their guard against the least compromise with what would rob them eventually of all the joy, the power, the reality, of their relationships with God.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

H. P. BARKER.

[We publish the above letter simply as a warning to any who may be in danger of being ensnared to keep far from the arid desert of "Higher Criticism."—ED.]

O dwell with me ; let no distracting thought
Intrude to hide from me that heavenly light ;
Be Thou my strength ! let not what Thou hast brought
Be chased by idle nature's poor delight.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 18.

Gethsemane and the Betrayal.

IN considering the three precious records of the sorrow of Gethsemane it will be necessary, in order to obtain a helpful comparison, to seek to enter into the true import of this peculiar suffering of our blessed Lord, of what lay behind those supplications and prayers offered with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him out of death (Heb. 5.). The whole scene is surely revealed for our reverent inquiry, that Christ as so revealed may become spiritual food for our souls.

As LUKE differs so markedly from the other writers, it may be well to consider his record first. His part is to present to us the perfect Man, of Adam's line according to flesh, yet before God, as another has said, "the representative of man according to divine perfection and counsels, come to begin the new thing, and become the centre of the new creation—only for that His death was needed for God's glory and our salvation—but in His moral perfectness we have the new thing." With what profound heart-interest should we receive the Spirit's revelation of how He met that dark hour, which stands so alone in His life, as in the history of the world, when all the solemn issues of good and evil had their solution, when all that God is against sin was expressed against the holy Sufferer, and when man's sin rose to its height and God declared Himself as victorious over it, not in almighty power, but in infinite love.

The suffering of Gethsemane, then, is the suffering of anticipation; the cup (a symbol of something experienced) was evidently before Him, and not being tasted at the time of prayer.

LUKE gives us three marked additions to the account given elsewhere—1st, the ministry of the angel to His physical need; 2nd, the fact of the prayer being in conflict (for this is the true meaning of the word rendered "agony"); 3rd, the outward evidence of the mental anguish in the sweat—like great drops of blood

falling on the earth. It is the element of conflict which gives special character to LUKE's account: "Being in conflict, He prayed more earnestly." The same writer supplies the meaning of this, for we read in this Gospel alone: "When the devil had ended all the temptation he departed from Him *for a season*." At this crisis the enemy returns endeavouring to turn the Lord aside by fear, having previously failed by allurements. The cup is pressed by Satan on the holy soul of Jesus in its awful significance of death as the wages of sin and the judgment of God; the enemy thus vainly seeks to bring in distance between the perfect Man and Him whose will He had come to fulfil. The Lord overcame by absolute obedience; accomplishing the Father's will He abode in His love, taking the cup from no other hand but His. Let our souls give their full weight to those words: "He *tasted* death." LUKE alone gives us the Lord's own explanation of the character of this moment when, in speaking to His captors, He says: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Moreover, all this account in LUKE is introduced by the quotation from Isaiah 53.: "This that is written must yet be accomplished," and "He was numbered with the transgressors;" "for the things concerning Me have *an end*." Evidently it was death that was before Him.

While this quotation perfectly suits the account we have been considering, the other two Gospels give us the Lord's reference to Zechariah 13. 7: "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." He adds, further, to Peter, James, and John, whom He selected to watch with Him: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." But no mention is made of conflict with him who has the power of death (Heb. 2. 14); and in MATTHEW and MARK it would seem that we must connect the sorrow of Jesus with the smiting of the Shepherd, foretold in Zechariah. This involved the setting aside by death of His Messianic rights, which could not be

taken up in blessing to the nation because of its guilty state. We may learn something of what this was to the heart of the Saviour from the Lamentations, especially chapter 1. 12: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, where-with the Lord hath afflicted Me *in the day of His fierce anger*" (see also Ps. 102.). It should be remembered that this "indignation and wrath" was on Israel for their sins . . . but Christ enters into it in spirit and *also* makes atonement for the people. All this was before Him in Gethsemane, and while LUKE gives the summary of His petitions, MATTHEW exhibits in the three prayers the exercise of His soul in this hour of His sorrow. MARK only records one petition, beautiful in its directness and simplicity: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee: take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." May our affections be freshly drawn out towards Him who when it was a question of the cup of our blessing could give thanks, and yet in entire suitability to His relationship to the Father, and, according to the perfect holiness of His nature, deprecated and shrank from the drinking of the cup of God's wrath against sin whereby alone those blessings could reach us.

In the accounts of the betrayal, the treachery of Judas and the fleshly forwardness of Peter are recorded quite as fully as the hostility of the leaders of Israel; both are foreshadowings of cha-

racters of evil which have been repeatedly exhibited in church history. How often have those who assume nearness to Christ under sacramental forms betrayed His cause and His saints to the world for present advantage; and, again, how often have the saints sought to defend their Master and His cause by carnal weapons?

MATTHEW, who instructs us as to dispensational order, gives the Lord's rebuke to Peter, "Put up thy sword into his place," with the added warning, too often forgotten, "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." What an insight this affords as to the character of the kingdom with which MATTHEW's ministry is so largely occupied! He also, as usual, emphasizes the fulfilment of Scripture (chap. 26. 54, 56 which precluded the prayer for deliverance.

MARK alone affords the episode of the young man who sought to follow Jesus when all others had forsaken Him; the truth of the cross must be known inwardly before any can follow Him in His path of testimony and service (chap. 14. 51, 52).

LUKE, who shows the grace of the Man Christ Jesus, tells us of the Lord's remonstrance to the traitor: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" And then how the wound made by Peter's sword is healed by the touch of his Master's hand. Many a time since has He repaired our blunders in His own gracious way.

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Matthew's Gospel (chap. 18.).

MATTHEW 18. brings out the spirit of grace which alone suits the kingdom of a rejected Christ, as well as what befits the assembly which was about to be formed according to the revelation of chapter 16. The disciples bring that which had been a matter of dispute amongst themselves (as we know from Mark) to Jesus, asking who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. But the Lord sets a little child in their midst as the expression of lowliness and simplicity, in the absence of all thought of self. This character must be produced by grace in conversion, apart from which none could have a place in the kingdom of heaven.

True greatness would prove itself in humbling oneself. To receive one such little child, one morally such by believing in Christ, would be to receive Him, and it would be better to be drowned in the sea than cause or be a stumbling-block to one of them. It is a world of stumbling-blocks—woe to it, and to him individually by whom these come. That we may not be this calls for uncompromising severity as to ourselves in what may prove a hindrance to the soul's progress. Better to lose the most valued members of an occasion of stumbling to oneself than to be led by them to hell. But in thus indicating the character of lowliness

and decision with ourselves that grace would produce, the Lord has not lost sight of the actual child in their midst. However little thought of in the world, they had their place and were represented before His Father's face, if only on the ground that the Son of Man had come to save that which was lost. And their value is further seen in His joy, as of one that had lost a sheep on the mountains and had gone to seek it. Thus it was not the Father's will that one of them should perish.

This leads to the ways of grace suited to the assembly, a more intimate relationship which those who had received the testimony by which the kingdom was to be established would have with Christ as gathered to His name. The case supposed is one of personal trespass. To gain my brother should be the first thought, hence the importance of the private interview, to convict him. Failing this, witnesses were to be taken, and in the last resort it was to be brought before the assembly. If all was without effect, he was discharged from any Christian obligation towards the offender. The Lord then bestows authority on the assembly to act on earth with heaven's sanction in binding and loosing, such as had been conferred on Peter in chapter 16. for the kingdom. And it is just at this point, where, in the exercise of such authority, the need of having to do with the Lord would be felt, that the promise is given to even two who agree as touching anything that they shall ask that it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. This conferred authority and the enjoined dependence both rest upon the immense principle of the next verse, to which all the Lord's instruction of the disciples from chapter

11. had been leading up, namely, *Christ would be in the midst where two or three were gathered in His name.* This was the full privileged position in which they were to be left as representing Him when He was gone. Thus we learn where the assembly was to be found for any practical purpose; it may be at the lowest point as to numbers, but, if truly gathered to His name, Christ would be there, all their sufficiency. Nor was it merely provision for a day of ruin: there was nothing richer than His presence when all was in normal order, and no ruin could touch the blessedness of it to faith.

The spirit suited to the kingdom was still further exemplified from verse 21 in reply to Peter's question. In Luke 17. 1-4 where things are presented somewhat in the same connection, omitting what applies to the assembly only given in Matthew, the Lord had expressed that there was to be full forgiveness for one who owned his trespass even if it occurred seven times in a day. It may have been Peter's question as given here that led to the moral exhortation in Luke, and his desire to make what was left general there the limit of the forgiveness that leads the Lord here to make it virtually illimitable, and to append the dispensational parable only given by Matthew (vers. 23-35).

When in the kingdom grace had been in exercise provisionally as to the Jew, and in spite of it he would exact all of a fellow-servant that owed him 100 pence as compared with the 10,000 talents he had been forgiven, he would be delivered over to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due. 1 Thessalonians 2. 14-16 and Isaiah 40. 2 may be compared as to the force of the parable.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

We often think, if my circumstances were different, my mind would be more spiritual; this is a mistake; it is more probable that if we were more spiritual, our circumstances would be different; God places us in these circumstances on purpose to deepen our spirituality.

Speaking of gigantic foes, Joshua said, "They are bread for us." If so, the bigger the foe the bigger the loaf.

When prayer is made an excuse for non-action, it is displeasing to God. The life of the people of God is to be a life of action, and of progress, under the Divine guidance.

The best evidence of the inspiration of the Word of God is found in the Word itself; when studied, loved, obeyed, and trusted, it never disappoints, never misleads, never fails.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings.

(T. OLIVER, D.Sc.).

"All the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron" (2 Sam. 15. 23),
 "Jesus went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron" (John 18. 1).

KIDRON means "obscurity" or "gloom," and Cedron means "sadness." In the Old Testament scripture King David passed over the brook into exile and obscurity. What sorrowful thoughts must have been his as he parted from the splendour of his kingdom and home to meet danger and distress, the rejected of his people. He had imagined himself enthroned in the affections of Israel, but he was now sadly disillusioned, for Absalom had stolen away their fickle hearts and only a handful went over that brook with him. Typical is this of the sorrow of the Lord Jesus, who went over the brook into the garden. He had been acclaimed by the multitudes but a few days before, and though His was the kingdom and the glory, for He was David's Son and Lord, yet He was rejected of men and despised of the people, "He was cut off and had nothing" and He knew that in a few hours He would be followed with execration to the cross. Who can measure His sorrow as the rejected Messiah, or tell the keenness of His sufferings?

But King David had a comfort in his sorrow, for Ittai the Gittite went with him, went with him because he loved him. What grand devotion his declaration to the king reveals. "*As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be*" (ver. 21).

It is devotion such as this that delights the Lord, and we may render it to Him. His disciples who went over Cedron with Him, sharing His sorrow just in the measure in which they loved Him, were typical men; it is the place that we may also have, for He is still despised and rejected, and we read of "*the fellowship of His sufferings.*"

We are apt in pondering Ittai's devotion to David to imagine that this was only possible to a mighty man of war, but it is exceedingly precious to note that not only did Ittai and all his men pass over the brook, but "*all the little ones that were with him.*" They could not fight the king's battles, but they could share his exile. So now the little ones, those of little strength, have the privilege of sharing the path of rejection by this world with the Lord. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1. 29).

But devotion which makes us ready to suffer for Him can only be produced by the realization of His love to us, and this can only be fully known by His sorrow for us. Sorrow which is expressed in the hymn:

"O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!
 Our load was laid on Thee,
 Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
 To bear all ill for me.
 A victim led, Thy blood was shed;
 Now there's no load for me.
 "Death and the curse were in our cup—
 O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!
 But thou hast drained the last dark drop,
 'Tis empty now for me.
 That bitter cup—love drank it up,
 Left but the love for me."

Christians are often feeble in their devotion to the Lord because, like Ephraim, they have gone after other lovers and "have hired among the nations" (Hosea 8. 9, 10). They have associated themselves with the world and become enslaved and enfeebled by it. But the Lord's love abides and His power is ever able to draw His own into close intimacy with Himself, that they may experience something of the fellowship of His sufferings now as they will soon share His everlasting joy and glory.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 8.

(H. J. VINE).

Israel's Position and Condition—Outwardly, Inwardly, and Prophetically.

WE now come to the final section of Isaiah I. It is an interesting book of history in the centre of the volume. In the four chapters which comprise it (36.-39.) there is a stirring story sweetly told. This story has a secret significance which, through grace, may it be granted to us to understand.

It should be noted that this little section, though the last of Isaiah I., is nevertheless the central section of Isaiah as a whole. There are three distinct divisions before it, also three distinct divisions after it, and here in the central part of the prophecy we have the divine hinge on which all that goes before and follows after hangs evenly and securely.

To approach the truth rightly, let us notice the remarkable fact that we begin where we began in the first section, "*by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field*" (36. 2 and 7. 3). It was there that the "sign in the depth" and "in the height" was first promised by the Lord. It was to Ahaz the king that this sign was first spoken of in Isaiah 7.; now it is upon his dial that the sign of this section is given—"a sign from the Lord," on "the sundial of Ahaz" (38. 7, 8). Therefore the sign of this last section of history is clearly connected by the Holy Spirit with the sign of the first. We must search the Scriptures and that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2. 19), if we are to discover the true value of these curiously wrought connecting links. It is in this way, and not by stepping down to meet the mere literary critic on his own rationalistic and faithless platform, that his folly will be exposed for those who are of the

truth, and who have received the same precious faith with us, through our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are to search for "the things concerning Himself," if we are to find the truth for ourselves and others.

The meaning of the inspired writings will be plain and clear to us, and their hidden treasure will be ours as we find our Lord Jesus Christ in them. In the pursuit of these things no violence will be done to historic or scientific facts, for all is right in the Word of God; but we shall get what is specifically placed there for our appropriation by the Spirit, that for which the blessed Book is purposely written—the excellent knowledge of our Saviour God without which all is emptiness and vanity, the pursuit of the wind.

The outstanding feature of these chapters is the *outward, inward, and prophetic* situation.

Chapters 36. and 37. give us the OUTWARD SITUATION. The Assyrian waters had overflowed the land and now threatened Jerusalem, the city of the great king. Death and destruction were at their doors; they had no strength (37. 3)! *How was deliverance to come?*

Chapter 38. tells us of the INWARD SITUATION "*in those days*" (ver. 1). The king, of the seed of David, was sick unto death, saying, "I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years" (ver. 10). *How could he be raised up again?*

Chapter 39. gives us the PROPHETICAL SITUATION "*at that time.*" The treasures, all the precious things, the silver, and the gold, all the wealthy store of the house of David, with the royal seed, should "be carried to

Babylon" (ver. 6). They should be found among the Gentiles. *How, then, should the seed of David and his riches be restored?*

"Death" outwardly! "Death" inwardly! "Nothing shall be left, saith the Lord" prophetically! Speaking naturally, the whole situation is hopeless! But there is "THE LIVING GOD" (37. 4, 17); the God "who raises the dead;" the God who has already "raised from among the dead" "Jesus Christ of *the seed of David*." Is there anything too hard for Him?

The Seed Royal and the Treasures.

We will take the *prophetical situation* of chapter 39. first. The seed of David, of whom the Christ was to come, and their treasured riches, were to be carried to Babylon. This, of course, historically happened; and as we see in the book of Daniel, "the times of the Gentiles" began. The authority was taken from Jerusalem and handed over to the Gentiles, and "the times of the Gentiles" still continue.

The fall of the Jews has been "the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11. 12), but the times of the Gentiles will have an end, and the riches and the Seed Royal will again be restored; and if the fall of Israel has brought such wealth to the Gentiles, "how much more their fulness? . . . what shall the receiving of them be, but *life from the dead?*" (Rom. 11. 12-15).

Here, then, we see the precious principle of God's divine dealing with Israel disclosing itself. Looking at things with nature's eye all appears to be lost, but the eye of faith sees Jesus Christ of *the seed of David* raised from among the dead; yea, even at the right hand of God, and therefore all the promises are seen to be secured in Him rightly and eternally.

He will return to Israel again. The Seed Royal and greater riches shall yet be theirs. But before He returns and takes up the throne of David His

father, the Christ is known to the Gentiles, not simply as the Son of David, but as *the Son of God*. The fullness of the blessing of Christ has come to them; the unsearchable riches of the Christ made known amongst them, and the riches of the glory of the mystery among the nations also, which carries with it treasures of wisdom and knowledge far beyond anything the nation of Israel can know, even in its highest estate of blessedness; for "this mystery," made known among the Gentiles, is "CHRIST in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27). How we would delight to dwell longer on this, but Isaiah is our subject.

The Sign of Degrees.

We have the truth which enables us now to solve the *inward situation*, for that which explains one explains all, though differently applied. Indeed, as we have said before, the secret significance of this central section explains the way the promises of the previous three sections are secured, and also the promises of the following three sections. The king, the head of the nation, is "sick *unto death*," as we see in chapter 38. He is to "die, and not live" (ver. 1). The words "*in those days*" (38. 1), like the words "*at that time*" (39. 1), show that one period is in the mind of the Spirit in these typical and prophetical chapters. Death casts its pall over all, even over good Hezekiah, for all have sinned.

But "*the God of David*" his father (ver. 5) intervenes in divine grace (3 × 5) and promises to "*add*" fifteen years to his life, and to deliver and defend Jerusalem (vers. 5 and 6). Here, then, we see the power at work which transcends nature.

Hezekiah asks for a *sign*! When the Lord told Ahaz to ask for one, he would not; but now, on the time dial of that very king Ahaz, the shadow returns "*ten degrees*," by which degrees the sun had gone down (ver. 8). *This sign* is to show us the sovereign super-

natural power of God which is to be exercised for Israel's *inward* as well as outward deliverance and blessing. It is not for us to speculate whether this sign was by refraction or otherwise. It was given by GOD. That is enough for faith.

"*Ten degrees*" has nothing to do with Hezekiah's "*fifteen years*." The 15 (3×5) speaks of divine grace, the 10 simply of man's responsibility. The degrees go back 10 on Ahaz's sundial. The time of responsibility (10) is over. The old covenant is set aside, and the new covenant in Christ's blood is brought in by sovereign grace and power, and Jesus, *raised from the dead*, is the Mediator of it; for He died to become the surety of it. The old was a shadow of what was to come, but our Lord Jesus Christ in resurrection is "Mediator, as Man, of a better covenant" (Heb. 8. 6), and "surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7. 22). He has obtained *eternal* redemption, and made sure the *eternal* covenant.

We can now see how THE SIGN in "the depth" and in "the height" of our first section links with this; for the One promised there as the Virgin's Son must go into *the depth*—into death and into the grave. He must also be raised again by the surpassing power of God, and exalted in *the height*. Death and resurrection must take place before sinners like ourselves or sinful Israel could be delivered and blessed, according to the promises of God.

The Song of Resurrection.

Israel, like Hezekiah, brought back from death, will sing their song of thanksgiving to the Lord by and by: "Thou hast in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back. For the grave cannot praise Thee. . . . THE LIVING, THE LIVING shall praise Thee" (vers. 17-19). A living God praised by a living people through the knowledge of a living Saviour.

The fruitless fig tree (Israel) was cursed on the ground of failure in responsibility; but now the fruit of the fig tree, blessed of God, is used for Hezekiah's recovery (ver. 21). THE SIGN is immediately referred to again in a remarkable way in the last verse (22); and of those who do not see why, one can understand the complaint as to its apparently awkward introduction once more; but it was necessary to remind us who the True Fruit is. Of Israel, of the fig tree, according to the flesh the Christ came, and it is when they turn to Him, and in need, repentance, and prayer, come in contact with Him, according to the prophetic word, that they will be raised up again, and "*go up to the house of the Lord*" (ver. 22), and "sing songs to the stringed instruments all the days of their life in *the house of the Lord*" (ver. 20).

To the solving of the *outward* situation we have only as yet referred. It is deeply interesting, showing as it does the unity of the authorship of the whole book; for this central hinge is divinely fixed, as we have said, to the three previous and to the three subsequent sections. The nails that fasten it are golden, and of the Holy Spirit's inimitable workmanship.

The facts as to the Assyrian enemy, as well as *the sign*, fasten it to the former. (Compare chapters 7. 8. 31., where he is afraid of the Ensign, with our chapters 36. and 37.)

We will have still to note its unity with the latter divisions; but before passing on to behold the divine victory, which settles the *outward* question, we may notice just two unmistakable links of unity. They are important because of the persistent attacks made upon this book on mere literary lines.

These links are connected with "the Sign" given in "the depth" and in "the height." This was the truth which unlocked the storehouse of Isaiah (1.), and the oneness of thought is consistently maintained also in Isaiah (2.), where again we have THE SIGN referred to. In

chapter 55. the "everlasting covenant" and "the sure mercies of David" are secured for delivered Israel. The Christ, the Sign of Isaiah 1., is "the Witness," "the Prince," and "Commander of the people" (vers. 3, 4). The *inward* situation is solved, as we saw in chapter 38., by Israel being brought into contact with the Christ raised from the dead, who had been into "*the depth*" of suffering and death for them (so Isa. 53.), but was raised again from among the dead. Now notice the Holy Spirit's summing up

in the last verse of Isaiah 55. : it shall be for "AN EVERLASTING SIGN."

Look also at the last chapter. Here we see the *outward* situation solved, as in chapters 36. and 37. The city is defended and delivered; and the Christ, the Sign of Isaiah (1.), is seen in "*the height*" of earthly glory; yea, all nations see it. Mark the words: "They shall come, and see My glory, and I will SET A SIGN AMONG THEM" (vers. 18, 19).

Thoughts on Service.

(HUDSON TAYLOR).

SOMETIMES, it may be, while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our own feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things may be the true cause of our want of success.

* * * *

How sadly possible it is to delight in conferences and feasts of good things, to enjoy, in a way, all the ministry that is brought before us, and yet to be unprepared to *go out* from and with these good things in self-denying efforts to rescue the perishing.

* * * *

Some are jealous of being successors of the apostles. I would rather be a successor of the Samaritan woman, who, while the apostles went for meat and forgot souls, forgot her water-pot in her zeal to spread the good things.

* * * *

The Lord's people should always, with tell-tale faces, be unconsciously proclaiming that His service is a service of freedom, that the joy of the Lord is their strength, that He leads His own by right paths, and that He glorifies His own Great Name in them and through them continually.

* * * *

Beware of legalism in relations with God. All works done to commend ourselves to Him by our own merits are dead works, and, like all dead things, offensive to Him.

* * * *

Do not forget the importance of walking according to the light you have while seeking more. If you feel you are called to a work, do not fear as to the way and the time. He will make all plain. The eye of faith looks to Jesus and walks, in spite of wind and waves, on the water.

* * * *

It is always helpful to us to fix our attention on the Godward aspect of Christian work; to realize that the work of God does not mean so much man's work for God as God's own work through man.

* * * *

God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies.

* * * *

If God has "called you" to go out and work for Him, do not expect that He will be less true to you than man would if he were to engage with you to work for him.

* * * *

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITOR).

Will Backsliders be saved at the Coming of the Lord?

W.T.F. writes :

"A man accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour; after about six months' service he fell away. This man knows he is doing wrong by remaining in this state; still, he would rather have the pleasure of this world than carry his cross again. If our Saviour comes and finds him in this condition will he be saved?"

"The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2. 19), and all "that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23) will share in the triumph and blessing of that coming. There will be those who have backslidden amongst these, for their being in the glory of God does not depend upon their doings either before or after conversion, but upon Christ their Saviour. The question is not, "Have they proved faithful?"—who would stand if this were the test?—but, Is Christ faithful? Can His precious blood lose its value or His word fail?

We have been made "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 6), not in our own works. But coming to such a case as our correspondent quotes. We cannot see the heart, and there are many of this kind—stony-ground hearers, in whose souls there has been no repentance towards God. They received the Word with joy, probably circumstances were favourable and their feelings stirred, and they made a confession of Christ. As long as things continued favourable they appeared to be genuine, but the test came and found them out; they had no root in themselves, they had not been "born again" (Luke 8. 13). We have said that we cannot see the heart, it is by the fruit alone that we can judge of men. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . . Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 7. 16-19). This is our guide and we must treat one who persists in evil as one that does not know the Lord.

We do not say that the one in question

is certainly such as we have described, for we know that it is possible for a saint of God to wander very far away from Him. The evil flesh is still within us and we need to be watchful and dependent upon God. It is possible, too, for a saint to stay away from the Lord for years, but what shame will be his when he reviews the wasted years at the judgment-seat of Christ, and how great his loss in that day as well as in this (1 Cor. 3. 13-15, and 2 Cor. 5. 10).

The Work of God amongst Men after the Church has been taken out of the World.

A subscriber writes :

"I have been much interested in the remarks, questions, and answers on the Coming of the Lord and the Tribulation.

"I have apprehended, for many years, the subject exactly as you have presented it. That the Spirit of God in the church is the hindering power to the full development of the mystery of iniquity.

"In view of this, the removal of the Holy Spirit with the church, what will be the power for the testimony of the saints who are brought to light after the removal of the church?"

The Spirit of God is the only power for testimony in every dispensation; no work in men or through them for God is done apart from Him. He moved upon and energized men in Old Testament days, before the church, the vessel in which He dwells on earth now, was formed. He will work in the same way after it has been caught up to its bright destiny as the bride of the Lamb.

He writes further :

"The remnant of Israel will have the faith of Jesus, and they will overcome by the blood of the Lamb, in what way will their testimony be carried on and maintained? . . . The only thought I can arrive at is, that it will be in the power of the Spirit in His sevenfold aspect rather than the One Spirit, but if this were so can we say the Spirit is gone?"

The Spirit will be no longer on earth as dwelling here, but He will still work upon men from heaven, and being God none are out of His reach. (See Ps. 139. 7-12.) In Revelation, as our correspondent suggests,

He is presented in a sevenfold character, or, as "the seven Spirits of God which are before His throne." In this book the seven Spirits are chiefly connected with the judgments of God; this is taught in the symbols used, "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" (chap. 4. 5), and the "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (chap. 5. 6). There is the perfection of discernment and wisdom (the seven eyes), and searching judgment (the lamps of fire), with the Spirit. And all the judgments of God will be executed according to the power, wisdom, and holiness of the Spirit of God. But there are also grace and peace "from the seven Spirits which are before His throne" (chap. 1. 4), and this grace and peace, while having its full application now, will be the portion of those who are true witnesses for God during the interval between the catching up of the church and the millennium. It will be by this grace and in this peace that they will be kept from yielding to the Beast and from receiving his mark.

And further asks :

"John also says: 'Your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus' (Rev. 1. 19. N.T.). What bearing has this upon the fact of the removal of the church prior to the tribulation?"

Tribulation in this passage does not refer to "the great tribulation"—Jacob's trouble—of Matthew 24. 21; nor to that which "shall come upon all the world" (Rev. 3. 10). It is the tribulation which throughout this period of Christ rejection goes along with the confession of His name. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16. 33). "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15. 19). Paul also refers to it when he says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2. 12). The kingdom of the Lord, *i.e.* those who compose it, is in tribulation, He is rejected by the world, and all who are true to Him suffer *with* Him and for His name's sake; their time for reigning with Him has not yet come, because He is still waiting in patience for His throne. The tribulation and the patience connected with His kingdom will cease when He returns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

"Also will not a testimony to the Kingdom continue after the removal of the church?"

Yes. It will continue until the King comes, and it will go out throughout the whole earth.

"The Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of Heaven."

The expression "the kingdom of heaven" is confined to Matthew's Gospel and has reference, generally, to the absence of the Lord from earth consequent upon His rejection as King (see parable of the tares (13. 24); the virgins (25. 1); the talents (25. 14). It is dispensational and embraces in its extent every place where the Word of God has been *nominally* accepted, and includes mere professors as well as those who are truly converted. The parable of the tares teaches this (13. 24). It has become in these days a great political force in the world, *thus utterly falsifying its true character*, and harbours in its branches the emissaries of the devil—the fowls of the air (see 13. 19). This, the parable of the mustard seed predicted (13. 31). It has also become leavened with evil doctrine as the parable of the three measures of meal foretold (13. 33). Yet spite of all the work of the devil in mixing his own children into it, and in using it for his own ends, the work of God goes steadily on in connection with it, and the treasure, the pearl, and the good fish in vessels will abide for His eternal glory, while all that is of the devil will be consumed (13. 44–50).

Sometimes, however, the expression may be used interchangeably with the kingdom of God. But in the main it is dispensational, while the expression the kingdom of God refers to what is moral, *i.e.* it is the authority of God truly acknowledged in the soul and producing fruit therefrom, such as "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14. 17). The kingdom of God was amongst the Jews when the Lord was here, every feature of it was perfectly set forth in Him, and to enter into it men "must be born again;" this solemn statement shows that it is not an outward profession but an inward work. If the passages where the expressions occur are carefully studied the meaning of them will be easily discerned.

The New Birth.

E.F.B. writes :

"In November last the statement occurred in 'Scripture Truth': 'The first thing in the history of the dealings of God with souls is the new birth, for without that there would be no seeking after God.' If this is right, all spiritual aspiration is the outcome of that new birth, and it follows that a believer who is convicted of sin, who hates the sin which in weakness he commits, who knows something of a hunger after righteousness, and longs for a closer walk with God, is born again."

We believe the statement to which E.F.B. refers to be perfectly scriptural ; new birth is an absolute necessity ; without it there is neither life nor fruit in the souls of men for God, apart from it all is barrenness, corruption, and death. *"Ye must be born again."* Now there are some who would put faith *first*, and who make new birth the *result* of believing, but if this be tested by Scripture it will be seen to be error. If faith comes first it must of necessity come from what man is in the flesh, and if so then the statement *"they that are in the flesh cannot please God"* (Rom. 8. 8) would not be true, for faith pleases God, without it it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11. 6).

It cannot be too emphatically said that the popular doctrine that there is good in every man which only needs culture, or the *"help and example of Jesus"* to bring it out into perfection, is fundamentally, radically, and altogether false. All men apart from the sovereign act of God in new birth are dead towards God, dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2. 1). Can a thing that is dead do anything? The life that there is in men by nature is a life of sin, it is a life that is alienated from the life of God, a life that *"is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE"* (Rom. 8. 7). These are strong statements, but they are the Word of God.

New birth is the work of God ; it is by His Spirit and His Word that it takes place, and it should be noted, for it is most notable, that in the chief passages which speak of new birth, faith is not mentioned at all. In John 3. 5 : It is by water, *i.e.* the Word of God, and the Spirit. In James 1. 18 : *"Of HIS OWN WILL begat He us with the Word of truth."* And in 1 Peter 1. 23 : *"Being born again . . . by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."*

These are passages about which there can be no question as to the meaning of them, but there are others. In John 1. 12, 13 it is clear that *"those who believe on His name"* are those who were not born of the will of the flesh but of God, the reception of Christ marked them off as born of God. Again, in 1 John 5. 1, believing that Jesus is the Christ is characteristic of those born of God. We do not say that faith has no place in new birth, for we know from Hebrews 4. 2 that the word does not profit unless it is mixed with faith. But if faith came first it would spring from the will of man, but we are begotten of God. It may come simultaneously as the wound comes with the sword-stroke, but the wound does not cause the sword-stroke, but the sword-stroke the wound. Out of the new birth springs everything for God, all the seeking after God and the yearning for holiness and the knowledge of the truth and everything else which pleases God in man, for there is implanted in man the nature that is of and from Himself ; and the man in whom these things are truly seen is born again.

E.F.B. continues :

"But is this so? There is still the unworthiness, and often the actual sin. Some of us feel that though we are on the side of God, yet the world scarcely knows it. Though we hate sin in others, as well as in ourselves, yet we find that we have little or no influence against it. Can such be born again?"

Hatred of sin, not merely some of the grosser sins which offend the sense of decency, but sin which is insubjection to God, can only spring from a nature contrary to it, and this must be of God, so that true hatred of sin, and indeed the sense of our personal unworthiness is proof that the one who has it is *"born again"* (see Rom. 7.).

But *"new birth"* in itself does not give power ; the desires and yearnings after God are there, they are inseparable from *"new birth ;"* but the power for the attainment of these lies in the *Holy Ghost dwelling within the heart*, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is not connected in Scripture with *"new birth,"* but with the belief of the gospel. So Paul who speaks of the latter does not of the former.

In Romans 5. 5 the Holy Ghost is introduced for the first time in that Epistle immediately after justification

by faith. Ephesians 1. 13 states: "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also having *believed* ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The gospel presents a new object for faith and heart outside of ourselves—that object is the risen and glorified Saviour; faith in Him is accompanied by the Holy Spirit's indwelling, and He, the Holy Spirit, becomes the power by which we walk in superiority to the desires of the flesh, which is still in us, and from which sin comes. He makes us superior to it by keeping before our souls the Son of God in whom our hearts delight, and occupation with Christ is true liberty.

New birth is by the action of the Holy Spirit and the Word upon the man. Eternal life is by faith in the Son of God. The power for a life of liberty and victory over sin is by the Spirit, who indwelling the believer does not occupy his thoughts with either the badness of his flesh nor the progress of his soul, but with his glorious Saviour. We must not put asunder what God has joined together, nor must we confound those things which are so clearly distinguished for us in the Word (see also papers on "The Way of Liberty" and "Divine Love" in this issue).

"Salted with Fire" and "Salted with Salt."

F.P.A. inquires as to the meaning of the statement:

"Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9. 49, 50).

Fire in Scripture is figurative of the holy judgment of God, which tests every man and thing, and every one must be brought to the test, whether saint or sinner. For the wicked this means the fire that never shall be quenched. With regard to the saint, he is in Christ, and his life which he has in Christ is like the pure gold, it bears the test, and is not destroyed by it. Nevertheless his works will be tested; those that have been wrought in Christ, the "gold, silver, and precious stones," will abide; but that which has not been of God—the wood, hay, and stubble—shall be burned up and "he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall

be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3. 13, 15).

The Christian cannot be indifferent to the holiness of God; and God is not indifferent to the state of the Christian, the flesh and all its works must come under His condemnation. So when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven at Pentecost, tongues of fire sat on all those who received Him. This was symbolical of the character of His coming, which character abides. He not only brought blessing, but came as setting aside and being against the evil flesh which had already been condemned in the cross of Christ. If we by the Spirit do not mortify the deeds of the body, then God must step in in disciplinary judgment. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11. 31, 32). It is a terrible mistake to suppose that God looks with a lenient eye upon sinful ways in His children, "for our God is a consuming fire," so that we need "grace, whereby we may serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12. 28, 29). And again, "If ye invoke as Father, Him who, without regard of persons, judges according to the work of each, pass the time of your sojourn in fear" (1 Peter 1. 17, N.T.).

"Every sacrifice salted with salt." This passage takes up the type in Leviticus 2. 13. "And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offerings; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." Salt is the great preservative, and speaks of the power of the truth in our souls which separates from evil and preserves us in holiness to the Lord, and apart from this no sacrifice can be acceptable to God. The Christian is besought by the mercies of God to present his body "a living sacrifice," but the salt must not be lacking, for it must be "holy, acceptable to God our intelligent service." This thought of the separating and preserving power of the truth runs through the Epistles—note especially in the Thessalonian Epistle, chaps. 3. 13; 4. 7; 5. 23.

[Answers to R.S. and to E.T. and others will be given (D.V.) in our next issue.]

Notes and Comments.

(By the late Col. S. L. JACOB).

Obedience.

WHAT God is working up to is that He shall be all in all, and all independence be abolished for ever and ever. Let us thank God for this; nothing can be right till this takes place. What an awful thing it is that Christians—yes, Christians!—should often want to have their own way, for this is a characteristic of Satan. Disguise it, palliate it as we will, the fact remains as to the wickedness thereof. We shall do well to take good heed to the giving of the law, for the law is still good if a man use it lawfully (see 1 Tim. 1. 8-10); it is made for the lawless, etc., and there are many lawless ones who call themselves Christians. There is a very prevalent thought abroad that when God gave the law He was very particular as to obedience, but that since Christ died He is less particular; in fact, that He makes light of sin. This is a very evil thought. One reason of the death of Christ is that it may show us that it is absolutely impossible for God to tolerate any sin whatever, and sin is lawlessness or independence (1 John 3. 4, R.V.).

The Place of the Bondman.

The soul that *willingly* allows itself the least little bit of self-will, that says I may do this or that as long as there is no harm in it, that will not accept the place of a bondman (δοῦλος), as did the Apostle Paul, who delighted in this title (Rom. 1. 1, and many other places), will assuredly lose the joy of communion with Christ and of walk with Him.

We have to learn that we belong wholly and solely to Him, that He has bought us with His blood, and that He has the most absolute right to do with us just as He pleases. Nevertheless, this slavery is perfect freedom, anything short of this is bondage.

Also, it is not an advanced state, it is a preliminary to learning or discipleship (see the threefold test Luke 14. 26-33). It is eternity begun on earth, for the commandment of the Father is life eternal (John 12. 50). It is the answer in the saints to the prayer taught to the disciples by the Lord, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

That to which We Cling becomes Our Scourge.

How many of us cling to something very dear to us in the flesh. Conscience may tell us that it is a hindrance, but we refuse to hear. The thing is very dear to us, as a right eye, a hand, or a foot, and we will not let it go: therefore we frame every kind of excuse for it in order that we may keep it, and thus we stand in the way of our own blessing. Then that which we have clung to will have to be made a scourge with which God will have to scourge us; just as Sodom became to Lot, because he would not give up Sodom; just as, too, Eli's sons became to Eli.

God's Way with us.

How can God, who is love, knowing what sin is, what the flesh is, but refuse it any quarter? Can He say to you, "Oh, sin does not much matter; have your own way a little," when He forsook His own Son while He was the Sin-bearer? Impossible! Therefore in infinite love and grace He tells you that He desires to save you from sin, and that this can only be by your refusing to countenance your own natural will and desire, by your recognizing that He has the fullest right to you in every particular, from the greatest thing to the least little trifle. The evasion of this may cause us the greatest sorrow for many a long year; therefore let us honestly look the

matter in the face, and see to it that we have no reserve with God. We cannot say, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do," but we can say, "Lord, have Thine own way with me, do with me as Thou wilt." This may be in some line of outward service and activity, but in the vast majority of cases it is not a question of outward service at all. In fact, in many cases, service is a mere cloak for self, which desires to be something in its own eyes and in the eyes of others. The lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh are very powerful, but the pride of life, which must have something, be something, here on earth, is incomparably the greatest snare. May God grant that we may let nothing prevent us from entering on the path of discipleship, but rather, as those appointed to death, may we take up our crosses and follow Christ. We shall then find that this seeming death is really life, and that what seemed life was really death.

The Dissatisfied and Critical Spirit.

What is more painful to earthly parents than a critical and dissatisfied spirit in their children, which finds fault with the parents' action, arrangements, and provision? So a similar spirit in the children of God is most hateful to God, and we should show it no quarter. There is no hope of progress while we are finding fault either with people or with circumstances. It may sound very fine to talk of righteous indignation, etc.; but when, as is usually the case, the indignation is called out by the way in which *we* are treated, by *our* not getting *our* just dues, and so forth, it is pure hypocrisy to call it righteous indignation. There can be no righteous indignation as long as there is any thought or care for self; righteous indignation can only be where God and Christ are the object. Righteousness connects itself with God and with His rights, and not with the rights of men, though it is needless to say that all is blessing when God has His rights.

"Esaias is very bold."

(J. WILSON SMITH).

EVERY servant of Christ should be bold. He has nothing to conceal and should have nothing to fear. "The righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28. 1). The possession of the truth, held with a good conscience in the fear of God, raises the soul above all other fear.

We read that Moses "feared not the wrath of the king." He caused that king to tremble. He was bold.

Elijah, standing before the Lord, was fearless in the presence of the godless King Ahab, and foretold a drought which would only be removed at his word. He was bold.

Daniel, though charged to make no petition of God or man for thirty long days, save only of the great king of

Babylon, flung his window wide open toward the desolated house of God in Jerusalem, and, spite of the charge and the lion's den, he prayed three times a day. He was bold.

The apostles Peter and John, though ignorant and unlearned men, held their ground firmly before the council in Acts 4., and maintained the glory of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who, though the stone despised of the builders, had been made "head of the corner," and the sole spring and source of salvation. They were bold and their "boldness" astonished their wicked judges.

Martin Luther declared that, though Worms contained as many devils as tiles on its houses, he would go to

announce the glorious truth of justification by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was bold.

Read Hebrews 11. for a "cloud of witnesses," or "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" for more. They loved not their lives unto the death. The truth of God and the honour of Christ were more to them than all beside. They were bold. We are compassed about by such a cloud!

And what shall we do?

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." He and not they, is our only model; but He "endured the cross, and despised the shame." How supremely bold was He!

The glory of God and the blessing of man hung on His boldness. He came to do the will of God. This meant the full tale of "the sufferings of Christ:" Gethsemane and its bloody sweat, Calvary and its atoning agonies—all so freely endured by our blessed Substitute, so that the work of the enemy should be undone and creation placed on a foundation of righteousness for ever. For this He "set His face like a flint" and He was not ashamed.

"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." The effects of that travail shall be world-wide. It was the conception of this that caused Esaias to be "very bold!" He was so bold as to say: "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (Rom. 10. 20).

Here we have a Jewish prophet, circumscribed naturally and religiously by a rigid exclusivism, relating the fact that God was found of those

who never sought Him by sacrifice or ritual, and was made manifest to them that never asked after Him by prayer or other means.

The river of His grace swept over the boundaries of Judaism and flowed freely over the poor, dark, heathen world.

"Behold me, behold me" was the message through Esaias (chap. 65. 1, 2) which sounded far and wide beyond all the limits of the land of Israel.

It required no little boldness for Isaiah to make such a statement. The eldest son was jealous of the prodigal, and the Jew is jealous of the Gentile.

The natural heart would monopolize the grace of God to itself; but that grace is boundless, free, common to all.

Let us be more bold in the confession of every truth. The apostles prayed for this in Acts 4. 29, and Paul in Ephesians 6. 19.

Esaias is the great evangelistic prophet—the prophet of grace—and he it is who is described as "very bold."

Grace wants bold confessors. Let its lovely accents be fearlessly proclaimed. It "brings salvation to all" (Titus 2.) even though its recipients may be few. It makes known the love of God to a guilty world. It tells out all that He is. It lays down no conditions. It is "abundant" and it reigns "through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Shame to us if we secrete such a story, if we confine it to person, place, or people. Grace is evangelistic and bold. "Esaias is very bold," and that because of the gracious message he delivers.

There are two sides in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus: the sufferings which, during His life, He endured from men, and the sufferings which He knew when, taking the cup He had to drink, He bore the weight of the wrath of God.

The evil we had done was so serious

in the eyes of God and in the eyes of Jesus that, when Jesus charged Himself with it, this evil made Him agonize, and caused to fall on Him the weight of God's wrath. Christ suffered on the cross the wrath of God, and why? Because we deserved this wrath and eternal condemnation. (J.N.D.)

Socialism ; Christian or Anti-Christian? (HAROLD P. BARKER).

IT is to be feared that a great many people are making shipwreck of the faith, by attempting to mix Christianity and Socialism. It is with an earnest desire to open the eyes of such that this paper is written.

Let no one imagine that the delusion is not widespread and far-reaching. The present generation has witnessed the rise of Socialism to a place of power and influence. Countries like France and Spain are steeped in Socialistic principles; in Germany, some of the most able members of the Reichstag are Socialists, and their following is to be numbered by tens of thousands. In other lands movements and upheavals of a Socialistic nature constantly occur, while in England Socialist organizations are multiplying, and its doctrines are being persistently preached in all the large towns.

But it is not only in the political world that Socialism has become a force to be reckoned with. It has invaded the realm of religion, and is making converts to its creed with tremendous rapidity.

One who for twenty years was a prominent Socialist but whose eyes have been opened, says:

"Many P.S.A.'s, Adult Schools, and Brotherhoods are openly recruiting agencies for Socialism, and are led by young ministers who are hardly aware of the dangers that await their compromising attitude to this great peril. All over the country there are Socialist 'churches' and Sunday-schools, where the only 'Gospel' taught is that of a material salvation. . . . There are persons who call themselves Christian Socialists, and even ministers and clergymen are declaring their adherence to the principles of Socialism as being compatible with the doctrines and teachings of Christianity."

Even the well-guarded precincts of Roman Catholicism are being invaded

by this new leaven. "Modernism," greatly to the alarm of the Vatican, is spreading, and there can be little doubt as to the direction in which it leads. Dr. Bartoli, for many years a Jesuit priest, and editor of the principal Catholic newspaper in Italy, but recently brought into God's "marvellous light" through reading the Scriptures, was asked if he had become a Modernist.

"No," was his reply, "I am not. . . . *Modernism, in my opinion, will end in Socialism.*"

And *what is Socialism*, this thing so much to be dreaded and deplored by those who cleave to the Christianity of the Bible? Many a definition has been attempted, but none is entirely satisfactory. There are scores of different sections of Socialists, and no inclusive definition can be made to meet the views of all.

Its essential aim is the progress and glorification of *man*. "Man" is everything in the eyes of the Socialist, and if he gives Christ any place at all in his scheme it is merely that of a contributor to the object he has in view.

The Christian, whose mind has been brought into harmony with the mind of God, makes everything of *Christ*. All things were created, not only by Him, but *for Him* (Col. 1. 16). For His pleasure they exist (Rev. 4. 11). Thankfully do we recognize that this glorious Person became a Man, and because death had "passed upon all men" ("for that all have sinned"), *He* died. In His death, man, as such, was judged by God, and "Finis" was written to his history as far as his relations with God were concerned. But Christ has been raised from the dead, a Man of a new order altogether. Those who believe in Him are made sharers of His risen life. His death is reckoned by God as *theirs*. They have "died with Christ," but by His

quicken power they live. They have a new life that death cannot touch. They belong to Christ, and in the sight of God their links with Adam and his fallen race are severed, and they stand connected with Christ, in the position and favour which is His, as the risen Man of God's delight.

I am aware that language like this, familiar enough to the student of Scripture, will seem mere unintelligible jargon to the man of the world. It could not be otherwise, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14).

The ordinary "man in the street" who calls himself a Socialist, has but the vaguest idea of what the term really involves. He knows that it means upsetting something, and changing the present condition of things so that he may possibly get a chance to rise in the world by pulling others down. The leaders may indulge in big talk about the rule of the people for the good of the people, but any reader of history knows what that phrase means when it comes to actual practice.

Referring to the time of the French Revolution, Hector Macpherson, in his "Gospel of Socialism," says:

"Of course it soon became plain that '*the people*' meant a majority of the people, which again resolved itself into the handful of men, who, for the time being, were able to pose as the representatives of the majority. Dissensions among the leaders produced anarchy of the most terrible description, each leader seeking in the name of '*the people*' to destroy his rival."

As with every other fair and plausible theory, *human nature* is incapable of putting it into practice. With all his boasting of love to his fellows, man is essentially selfish until regenerated and renewed through the Lord Jesus Christ. As to this, hear the testimony

of the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, M.P. Speaking of Socialists, and their great ideal—a universal brotherhood of the human race—he says:

"They put before us a creed of universal self-sacrifice. They preach it in the language of spite and envy, of hatred and all uncharitableness.

"They tell us that we should dwell together in unity and comradeship. They are themselves split into twenty obscure factions, which hate and abuse each other more than they hate and abuse us.

"They wish to reconstruct the world. *They begin by leaving out human nature.*"

Of course, I shall be told that all Socialists are not like this. Perhaps not; there are generally to be found men who are better than the creed they profess or the system they support. But the fruits of the system are easy to recognize. And I propose to quote the testimony of one well acquainted with the inner workings of Socialism, as to this.

Mr. H. Musgrave Reade was for twenty years in the forefront of Socialist organizers and workers. He was one of the seven men who started the Independent Labour Party, and from 1894 onwards was the General Secretary of the Manchester and Salford branch. For some years he was a regular contributor to the pages of "The Clarion," an atheistic and socialistic paper. It was he who introduced the "Trade Union label" into England.

In the year 1900, Mr. Reade was converted to God during a commercial tour in America. In a railway train, convicted of folly, he fell on his knees and cried, "O God, if Thou dost exist, reveal Thyself!" He arose, firmly persuaded that God is. He told his infidel friends that he now believed in God. Of course, they laughed at him and turned their backs on him. Some months after this the thought of his sinful life pressed upon him, causing

sleepless nights. Reading the Scriptures, he came across that wonderful passage, so radiant with the glory of God's love: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This verse brought relief and gladness to his soul, and not long after, the full import of the finished work of Christ dawned upon him, and the joy and peace that come through believing were his.

But Mr. Reade found that the Bible speaks of other subjects than that of one's personal salvation. Says he:

"The whole of the Scriptures showed that mankind, as a race, was going from bad to worse; that the progress of the world was not upward but downward; that unless men accepted God's salvation through Jesus Christ they would end in destruction. . . . It was therefore evident to me that, *either I had to give up the Bible or my socialistic principles.*"

As to the Socialism of which Mr. Reade had been such an ardent advocate, his witness is given in his book, "Christ or Socialism?" (Marshall Bros., London, 1s.), page 49:

"I knew how it was all worked up. I had bottomed the depths of Socialism by a study of the subject for nearly twenty years; I had felt all its hollowness; I knew it was a counterfeit of the devil. I saw that what man needed, and what society needed, was a *Saviour.*"

Full-blown Socialism, as expounded by such well-known leaders as R. Blatchford and Belfort Bax, is in the most direct opposition to Christianity. It can no more be mixed with it than fire can be mixed with water.

Of the grosser teachings of advanced Socialism—the abolition of the marriage tie and family life—we do not here speak. This "strong meat" is more or less reserved for the initiated, while

the milder milk-and-water diet is served up at the P.S.A.'s and "Brotherhood" meetings.

But the very essence of Socialism is that it is *earthly*, and occupies men with earthly things, leading them to ridicule what they call "the cant of other worldliness." How can this be reconciled with Christianity, which is *heavenly* in its character? Christians are "partakers of the *heavenly* calling" (Heb. 3. 1). They share the nature of Him who is the Lord from heaven, the second Man who for ever supersedes the first, and are therefore spoken of as being *heavenly* (1 Cor. 15. 47, 48). Their blessings are not of a material nature, they do not consist of beneficent environment, nationalization of property, or common possession of the means of life, but are of a spiritual kind and are connected with *heavenly* places (Eph. 1. 3). Indeed, so distinctly heavenly is the position assigned to the Christian by the purpose of God that he is viewed as already seated "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2. 6). On the other hand, the Lord Himself declared most emphatically that His disciples are not of the world, but chosen out of it (John 15. 19). He further affirms that the measure of their dissociation from the world is His own: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 16).

Socialism, moreover, not only occupies its votaries with the wrong *place*, but with the wrong *man*—the man that is under God's judgment instead of the Man who has triumphed over death and the power of Satan. It has been well said that the Scriptures give us the history of but two men: the first, *Adam* (including all who are of his race and lineage); the second, *Christ* (including all who are of *His* race and lineage). The first man—that is, man after the order of Adam—has earned the judgment and condemnation of God, and certainly the wages due to him will not be withheld. That order of man, whatever his environment, culture, and material pros-

perity, will be overtaken by the sure retribution that his sins deserve. Those who have turned in repentance and faith to Christ as their Saviour are of His order, severed by His death from the order to which they once belonged, and linked up with Himself in resurrection to share His glory and to dwell for ever, as the sons of God, in the joy of His presence.

Of all this, of God's wonderful plans and purposes for the future, the Socialist is utterly ignorant. He little knows what is in store even for the earth with which he is so much occupied. Does he dream that the very Socialism which he advocates is indicated in the Scriptures as a mark of the approaching end? In the revelation of the future given to King Nebuchadnezzar the course of history was marked out in a way that has excited the wonder of those who have studied it. So marvellous is the forecast that objectors, ignorant of the abundant evidence as to the date of the book of Daniel, have concluded that it must have been written *after* the events had taken place. But prophecy and history are alike with God, and to His revelation we are indebted for all knowledge that we have of the future.

The vision given to the king foretold the downfall of the then powerful and magnificent empire of Babylon. Three other world-empires were to arise in its place: the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and the Roman. All this was set forth under the similitude of a majestic image, whose head of gold symbolized the Babylonian empire; the breast and arms, the dual empire that took its place. The lower part of the image represented the Greek dominion, and the legs of iron the Roman. But this last empire was to undergo strange developments. The legs of iron terminated in feet partly iron and partly miry clay. That is, at the very close of the divinely-given sketch of human sovereignty in the world, an element altogether diverse from what had gone before was to be introduced.

Clay appeared side by side with the iron. The clay is explained to be the "seed of men," and to have no real coherence with the iron (Dan. 2. 43). The "seed of men," of course, means "the people," the pet idol of Socialism, the masses who rise into prominence and seize a place in the sphere of government.

Is not this what has happened? Do we not everywhere see the clay alongside the iron? democracy alongside monarchy? republicanism combined with empire? the "masses" claiming rights long confined to the "classes?"

The next thing in the prophetic sketch, after the appearance of the clay, is *the total destruction of the whole image*.

Socialism and all that it implies is, according to this, the harbinger of the end, when the great system of human rule and government will be utterly destroyed by the intervention of God. The stone, "cut out without hands", that smites the image on its feet then becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth (ver. 35). What can this set forth but the sweeping judgment of God on all that man boasts of to-day, and its supersession by that kingdom which is the theme of so many glowing prophecies, and over which Christ and His saints shall reign?

Empires and republics, parliaments and senates, oligarchies and democracies will go crashing into nothingness, and the *God of heaven* shall "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (ver. 44).

Of course, the writer is aware that the inspired prophecies of Scripture are ridiculed by Socialists, by none more than by the so-called "*Christian Socialists*," who for the most part have never examined the evidence that bears on the subject. The Word of

God, however, has a keen edge, and makes the power of its truth felt even by those who turn away from it with disdain.

Why should not men allow their Creator to point them to the way of true happiness? Why should they imagine that their own plans are better? The blessed God can do for His creatures in-

finitely better than they can do for themselves.

The true Christian knows this, and instead of being caught by the seductive phrases of the day he stands entirely aloof from popular movements, to receive "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. 12. 28). May every reader of these pages be among such!

The Son of God.

(J. BOYD).

The breadth, and length,
And height, and depth; the weakness and the strength;
The mourning and the mirth; pleasure and pain;
The joy, the sorrow; and the loss and gain
Which meet in the incarnate Son of God
No mortal mind can know. With feet unshod
We may draw near, and as we gaze adore,
As all His varied glories shine before
Our ravished hearts. E'en from His wondrous birth
He nothing learned within the schools of earth.
He knew from whence He came, from form of God
To form of servant, found in flesh and blood,
That He might thus to guilty man draw near
And banish from his heart all sinful fear.
But not upon His parents' love He leaned,
Nor from their lips one gleam of wisdom gleaned.
He speaks of God as all His confidence
When on His mother's breast, and ever thence
About His Father's business He went,
A perfect Servant unto Him who sent
Him here below in wisdom's wondrous plan;
Restricting to the limits of a man
Himself, that He might Godhead glorify,
And bring the Father's loving kindness nigh;
While never was He less—His name be blest—
Than the Eternal Son, God manifest.
The Father's light to us below He brought;
The Father's works in goodness great He wrought;
To death He went the might of death to break,
And free from its dread fear our spirits make.
And not in vain for us Himself He gave,
THE VICTIM IS VICTORIOUS O'ER THE GRAVE.

"Freely ye have received, freely give." Why is it that this fullness is so little experienced; why is it not more enjoyed? Simply because we fail to give freely, and thus to make room for more and more blessings by dispersing those we already possess.

Whether we believe it or not, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If we will but be givers, He will minister to us both seed for our sowing and bread for our eating, and we shall always have all-sufficiency in all things, and abound in all good works.

The Word—The Logos.

(EDWARD CROSS).

"THE word of the Lord" in the Old Testament corresponds with "the word of God" in the New Testament. It is the pronouncement made by Jehovah, the Saviour God of Israel, whether addressed to Israel, or to other nations, and whether in judgment or in mercy (*cf.* Exod. 5. 1; 9. 20, 21). This term occurs also in the New Testament, Acts 8. 25; 13. 44, 48, 49; 15. 35, 36; 16. 32; 19. 10; 1 Thess. 1. 8; 2 Thess. 3. 1. The force of it in these passages would seem to be, the preaching to the nations, by Jehovah, the God of the Jews, in the person of Jesus, who is "Saviour and Lord of all."

The expression "the word of God" is not often found in the Old Testament; but see 1 Sam. 9. 27; 1 Kings 12. 22. In the New Testament it is of frequent occurrence. Both expressions, "the word of the Lord" and "the word of God," point to the source and authority of what is said; not as always defining the meaning of the statement, but rather its authoritative value; *i.e.* it is not personal and essential, directing the mind to what it is, but to what it does. It instructs, commands, directs, and engages the mind with what is spoken, rather than with the speaker. Thus, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19. 7). So again, "And God said, Let there be light, and light was," brings the light before the mind; while, on reflection, it is attributed to God who made it.

The Old Testament sets forth the works of God, physically in creation, and governmentally in respect of Israel and the nations. God Himself is not revealed therein. In the New Testament, Peter carries on the same line of truth into the creation of a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." He speaks of the dealings of God; while Paul sets forth His purposes, according to eternal counsel, to fill the universe with His glory; and John brings God Himself before us in the intrinsic nature of His being; what He is personally. Paul speaks of what can be predicated of Him, His attributes, righteousness, holiness, grace, mercy, patience, judgment,

and the like; and shows how He works out His purposes accordingly. It is not his object to dwell on what He is in Himself, but rather on what He purposes to do; what is "the mystery of His will;" and how He shines in our hearts to this end, and lets the light into us. John speaks of Himself, and lets us into the light of what He is. The one is creative, with the glory of the creature in view; the other is creator-ial, with the glory of the Creator before him. In the one, God comes to us in Christ; in the other, the Son brings us to the Father. In the one we have the elevation of man according to his glorious destiny in Christ; the other is higher still, for, "he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." Jesus Himself is the subject of John's ministry, the Λ and Ω of all thought, in the WORD that gives expression to it.

Now, as to this term "the word," let us seek to find out its plain and radical meaning as given by the standard authorities, to which reference as to the following can be made. Any subsequent development or application of it will comport with that.

And 1st, in the Old Testament "dau-vaur," word, the thing spoken, or any *thing*, is derived from a root that means to set in order, arrange; hence, to set words in order, speak. [There is another word, not so much used, "emer," and poetically "imrah," which means rather words, discourse, (*cf.* Gen. 49. 21). It need not concern us further, save to quote Cruden's remark, that the Chaldee paraphrasts, the most ancient Jewish writers extant, use the word MEMRA, which signifies the WORD, in those places where Moses puts the name Jehovah: and as they ascribe to MEMRA all the attributes of Deity, they evidence thereby their belief in the Deity of the Word.]

Then 2nd, in the New Testament, $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, word, is derived from $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega$, to lay together, collect; hence, collect words, read, and finally speak. So that both in the Old Testament and the New Testament the idea in the use of the words is the same.

"Logos" is not the mere outward form and utterance of words, as we say "speech:" *λαλία* is that (John 8. 43). Not to hear His "word," (logos) was a deeper thing, and the root cause in their *hearts*, why their *ears* could not take in His "speech."

Nor was His word merely a "voice" (*φωνή*) crying in the wilderness. The voice was necessary to give utterance to it; but the word was before the voice, which is but the transitory vehicle of the word, which still abides. And so, Augustine, quoted in "Trench's Synonyms," "John is nothing without Jesus; Jesus just what He was before John. John the first in time; Jesus who abides, outside of time, eternally. John is a voice for time: Christ is the eternal word."

"Logos" never means a word in the grammatical sense, as the mere name of a thing (that is *ἔπος* Heb. 7. 9, or some other word), but the word, as the thing referred to, the material, not the outward *formal* part of it. It is properly a collecting in thought, in the mind (ratio) and expressed in words (oratio). But, in either case, it is the thing so collected for expression. Hence it is a word of language, vocal not grammatical, embodying a conception, or idea: and in this it differs from the mere utterance of words (*ῥήμα*), as used in 2 Corinthians 12. 4, "unspeakable words," "unutterable utterances." This same word *ῥήμα* we find again in John 3. 34; 6. 68; 8. 47, also in Ephesians 6. 17 as the spoken utterance of God, and again, Matthew 4. 4, etc.

"Logos," then, is the visible, vocal representation of an invisible thought. Without the word the thought could not be known: without the thought, the word could not be. The word is the adequate and intelligible expression of the thought, *i.e.* of the substance that is behind it; and as accurately and intelligibly representing it, the thought becomes accurately and intelligently known. "The word" is then the intelligible representation of the mind of God; and we have the mind of Christ, that, by the Spirit, we might be intelligent in the word that expresses Him. It is not merely an utterance; it is the matter and form of the thought and the expression, as well as the utterance of it.

It is the outcoming of the *thing* within; the "gathering up" and the "laying together," the "collecting" of what exists in the thought, so as to set it forth in expression. It is the objective matter of subjective thought. Plainly the one must correspond with the other, as the key fits the wards of the lock; otherwise it would not unlock the mind of God. The thought is the parent of the word; without it there would be no word. The word is the product of the thought. Hence the word is *Himself*, and carries the weight of His authority with it. "He is as good as his word" is a common form of speech. His word stands for Himself. And so we read, "His word was with authority" (Luke 4. 36); "He cast out the spirits by His word" (Matt. 8. 16). It was not by the mere sound of His voice (*φωνή*); for the same sound by another would not do it (Acts 19. 13-16). And so the centurion said, "Speak the word only (more correctly, Speak by the word only) and thy servant shall be healed" (Matt. 8. 8). His word was Himself, and the centurion owned Him, so far as he apprehended Him, who He was.

We frequently find "the word" connected with certain attributes or things that qualify it; *e.g.* the word of righteousness, of grace, of truth, of reconciliation, and such like. But in every case "the word" represents the subject with which it is connected. So again, "the word of God," "the word of the Lord," "the word of Christ;" and these may be considered as expressions qualifying "the word," as connected with these Persons; not as representing the Persons themselves. Thus, "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," etc. (Heb. 4. 12), describes the character of the word of God as so set forth; not God Himself personally, nor Christ, but the action of His word on the inner man. This expression is apparently drawn from Jeremiah 23. 29 to which allusion is probably made in this scripture. Again, "His name is called THE WORD OF GOD," (Rev. 19. 13), is a symbolical setting forth of the revelation of God in judgment, personally against the rejectors of His testimony, and though fulfilled by Christ when He comes in power, is not to be confounded with John 1. 1, which has an import of a vastly wider range. So

likewise, "the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23) is most probably an allusion to "the word of the Lord" in the Old Testament with which both Peter and the Christian Jews to whom he wrote would be familiar. It is now announced as the "Gospel of Salvation," and characterized as "quickenings into new life" and as "abiding for ever." For a similar use of the expression "the word of God," as referring to Old Testament Scriptures cf. John 10. 35. It is plain that these passages do not set forth Christ personally, although He is the One who effectuates the import of them all.

In some cases "the word" is found alone, without a qualifying adjunct, as in Mark 2. 2; 4. 14-33; 16. 20. In the corresponding passages in Matthew 13. 19 and Luke 8. 11, 21, what is called "the word" in Mark, is called "the word of the kingdom," or "the word of God" in these gospels. This shows that "the word" here is not used in a personal manner, but impersonally, as meaning the testimony of the Gospel, the subject-matter of the preaching. This will explain also the meaning of the expression, "eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." (Luke 1. 2,) *i.e.* of the ministry of the Gospel during the lifetime of the Lord. "The word" is not used by Luke, as we have just seen in Mark also, in the personal way in which it is used by John. Luke and Paul have for the subject-matter of their ministry the history of Jesus, as a man seen amongst men, and now glorified, and what can be predicated of Him as the subject of history, so as to be set forth "in order" (Luke 1. 1-3). John lay in His bosom, who is outside the range of all history, who passes indeed through all historic times, but who is before and after all. It would be impossible for John to take the same place in reference to the WORD of which he speaks in John 1. 1 that Luke takes in reference to "the word," as he uses the term in Luke 1. 2. Each is perfect in his place; Luke, as giving us the history of Jesus born of the Virgin; John, the revelation of the eternal WORD. Paul tells us that "God was manifested in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16). John shows us God Himself, manifest therein, "the veritable God, and the life eternal" (1 John 5. 20).

And this brings us to John 1. 1:

"In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God."

This revelation is the foundation of the whole Gospel of John. It sets aside the false notion that the WORD became personal first at the time of creation, or at the incarnation. The absolute, eternal, immanent relations of the Persons of the Godhead furnish the basis for revelation. Because the WORD was personally distinct from God, and yet essentially God, He could make Him known. The evangelist uses the title WORD here, not Son, because he wishes to carry his readers to the most absolute conceptions (*Westcott*).

The WORD used here is in the highest sense. It is the sum total of the expression of the mind of God. Plainly it must have been there in the beginning, or it could not have been afterwards. All things were made by it; and therefore it must have been before all things. There could have been no addition, no accretion to HIM. He is the Ω ; but to be that, He must be the A also. We are apt to take it up and apply it to our tiny history of 6000 years. It is our way always—our baby way—to reduce things to our own littleness. But in the beginning He was; long before the world—our little world—was; and with regard to vaster epochs than the times of human history, coming, as it does, as the youngest child in the whole family of intelligent creation. The greatness of "the glory of the gospel story" is that the subject of it outspans all gospel times, and is beyond all human thought and comprehension. Herein lie "the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2. 7-10).

"In the beginning was the WORD." This is not the expression of His inner divine *relationship*. That is expressed by "the word was with God," showing that the Logos did not of itself possess this inner divine relationship. He is called the Logos in accordance with what He was for the world, and by whom God's mind and purpose find their expression. But just as such, He possessed also an inner and divine relationship, "and the word was with God," *scil.* in the beginning "before the world was," (John 17. 5); and this was a relationship of God to God: "and the

word was God." His relation to the world, and to us, rests on this (John 1. 2-4 (*Cremer*)).

"The worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11. 3) and when "God said, Let us make man" (Gen. 1. 26) it was by the fiat of that same Word he was created. God's thought in respect of him was glory, incorruptibility and eternal life, according to His purpose from "before the eternal ages," "before the

foundation of the world," and brought to light in due time by the gospel (2 Tim. 1. 9, 10; Tit. 1. 2). But neither His eternal purpose, nor the act of His creation, nor the bringing to light of His purposes is the same thing as the WORD (John 1. 1). These are the powers and the operations of "the Word," all in their respective spheres. But beside all this, and behind its manifestation, there is the eternal personality of the WORD itself.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4. 18).

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Some of our modern prophets exhort us to look at "the bright side of things," that so we may be able to pass comfortably and happily over life's journey. But if they mean things visible, there is nothing but darkness; in the unseen there is no darkness at all. If anyone imagines that he can look at the bright side of the things that are seen, he is simply under a miserable delusion. There is not so much as a single ray of true light throughout the wide range of this present evil world, of which Satan is the god and prince. How could there be light in a world out of which the Son of God has been cast? Impossible. To talk of the bright side of things in a region of sin and death, where Satan reigns and Christ is rejected, is to offer flat contradiction to the plainest teaching of holy Scripture.

But we hardly think it needful to press this point. Thank God, those who are taught by His Spirit are not in much danger of being drawn aside

by any popular delusion as to human progress, or the improvement of the world. With all who have learnt to make the cross of Christ the one standard by which to measure men and things—self and the world—this question is definitely, because divinely, settled.

It is very evident that the blessed Apostle knew nothing about the bright side of things. He does not say, "While we look not at the dark side of things." Nothing of the kind. He did not look at them at all. He kept his eye steadily fixed on the unseen things. He lived amid those eternal realities of which the living God is the Source, Christ the Centre, and simple faith the power of realization. And herein lay the grand secret of what he tells us in the profound and exquisite passage which stands at the head of this paper. It was this that enabled him to regard a long life of unparalleled toil and suffering as "light affliction and but for a moment." Nor this only; it enabled him to see and own that the light and temporary affliction worked for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." How striking the contrast between the light and momentary affliction and the weight of glory! (C. H. M.)

Serving the Lord by Proxy.

(A. J. POLLOCK).

A CHRISTIAN man lay dying. The best of his days had been spent in making money. He had no doubt as to his salvation, but his heart was sorely troubled. He looked back upon his early Christian life with its new-found joy and brightness. Then he remembered how he had set his heart on money, and how his soul had languished under the withering influence of this desire.

Lying on the confines of eternity, he began to see things in their true light, and he bitterly regretted his mistake. Conversing with a Christian visitor, he said: "Brother, my life has been a mistake. I have been trying to serve the Lord by *proxy*. I have given an occasional pound to help on the Lord's work at home and abroad. I have generally been in my place on the Lord's day; been interested more or less in what I heard and read of others serving the Lord, but, oh! I had little or no heart for His service myself. I see my mistake now, but I can never undo it."

Then, grasping his brother's hand, he said with great earnestness: "Do not try to serve the Lord by *proxy*. His word to all His redeemed ones is—'*Go, work to-day in My vineyard?*' He wants yourself, your heart, your life, your strength: and had I to begin my life again, by His grace I would give Him mine."

Has this no voice to us?

What is it that makes us slack as to the Lord's work? Surely it is *lack of affection for the Lord Himself*. I believe there are two things we all, more or less, neglect, viz., earnest, believing, importunate prayer, and earnest, reverential study of the Word. Love to the Lord would lead us out in these directions, and devoted and intelligent service would be the sure out-

come. Workhouses and hospitals would be visited, villages would be evangelized, open-air preaching would not be neglected; indeed, there rises up the vision of countless channels of service.

The young and vigorous in body can serve God arduously from a physical aspect, where the aged cannot. But whether aged or young, service would flow continually as the result of devotedness.

A touching incident comes to my mind. An aged Christian, with advanced heart disease, was so infirm that he was forbidden the strain of preaching at all. What service could he do? He was very much laid aside. But devotedness finds means of service.

He procured newspapers covering a wide district round his home in the North of England. To every address where a death occurred he sent, with much prayer, two books by post, one calculated to comfort Christians, the other consisted of a plain gospel book, which doubtless God used to hearts stricken by sorrow and in a condition to be affected by eternal realities.

I appeal earnestly and lovingly to the young Christians especially. You have just been converted. Life is opening out before you. Young and vigorous lands open wide their arms of invitation, and promise health and wealth. But an infinitely sweeter voice is calling you. Love claims your affections and all else. Eternity beckons you.

You would be wise if you settled it solemnly and seriously in your soul that you will live for Christ. Let that be the settled purpose of your soul, I beseech you. There is something peculiarly charming when a young life in all its early manhood or womanhood is consecrated and devoted to the Lord. He is worthy!

The Minister of Grace.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

John 20. 21.

THE personal glories of Christ shine resplendently on John's first page, whilst the two closing chapters present Him as the second Man and last Adam—the Minister of grace dispensing life and blessing in resurrection.

All the waves and billows of divine wrath rolled over His soul in the solitude of Calvary, but, like the ark of old, He has outridden the storm, and standing clear of all the ruin in which sin had involved Adam's race, He declares the Father's name, dispenses the spoils of victory, and links others with Himself beyond death, beyond judgment.

In chapter 20. we see Him—

- (i) Declaring a new relationship ;
- (ii) Proclaiming peace and bestowing it ;
- (iii) Imparting a life outside the region of sin and death, a life stamped with the seal of resurrection and the gracious unction of the Holy Ghost.

The Firstborn among many brethren declares the Father's name afresh, telling us we are now to regard ourselves as sons ; henceforth the liberty, joy, and blessedness of the Father's house is ours. The legal day of bondage over, the *Son* makes us free indeed ; we are in the servant's place no longer.

The declaration "*My Father, your Father*" enfolds and unfolds this new relationship. Linger over the words "*My Father*" (there is a sense in which He as the eternal Son can use those words which will ever be true of Christ and of Him alone). But all that the Father is to Christ as the risen Man from the dead He is to us.

That Father is ours, with whom the Son rejoiced before all worlds, whose image He was, whose nature and being

He declared, whose will it was His delight to do, on whose account He had lived, in whose love He abode, whose bosom He never left, whose perfect love He knew—yes, that Father is ours.

This Father was also His God—" *My God, your God.*" That God upon whom He had been cast from His mother's womb, who had sustained Him and supplied all His needs ; whom He had found His unfailing resource ; whom He had glorified, and who had declared Him to be His Son, with power, by resurrection. *This God is declared to be ours !*

In order that the "many sons" might enjoy the place of nearness to God their Father, two things were absolutely necessary—*life* and *peace*. We were sinners ; we needed a sacrifice that would set our souls at rest. Peace has been made by the work on Calvary. Christ's hands and side witnessed to the reality of His death, they also proved that in resurrection He was the same One who died. Delivered for our offences, He was raised again for our justification. Faith lays hold of these two grand facts, and peace with God is the result. The work that gives peace to the soul is a work done by another, *outside ourselves*. The soul gazing thus at Christ finds in Him joy and gladness, peace and rest.

But the risen Saviour does not stop here. He again says, "Peace unto you." This second peace is not the peace He *made*, but the peace He *enjoyed upon earth*. He imparts His own peace to His disciples as He sends them forth in service ; thus sent by Christ—as He had been sent by the Father—they are to enjoy the peace which always marked His pathway.

He next communicates to them His

own risen life. He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This was not the actual gift of the Holy Ghost as a divine Person; but the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which gives freedom from the law of sin and death. It is this life beyond death and judgment which is now imparted to us; the Spirit is life—Christ, the last Adam, is a life-giving Spirit.

The way we get life naturally is distinct from the way we get life spiritually. As natural men we trace our origin to Adam, whose life has been TRANSMITTED to us through many intervening generations. Not so the life we get from Christ. He is a life-giving Spirit and communicates His own risen life individually and directly to every true believer; there is no intermediary. That is why we can say "Christ is our life." We cannot say Adam is our life, for he is dead; but Christ ever lives, and ever lives to sustain, as well as communicate, life in the power of the Holy Ghost. It becomes thus our known, enjoyed portion, subjectively possessed, though presented objectively in the last Adam, who is a life-giving Spirit—"he that *hath the Son hath life.*"

In chapter 20. He had unburdened His heart. In His earthly ministry He had longed to make known these precious unfoldings, but until the baptism of death was accomplished He had been straitened, but now all can be fully revealed; He had declared the Father's name often, but here He declares it again. He had spoken peace and forgiveness to many a weary heart; now a solid ground had been found for their peace to rest upon; for all blessings, whether life, relationship, peace, rest, or joy date from Christ risen.

Chapter 21. continues the gracious activities of the blessed Lord. He is there in mercy ministering to their temporal needs and tenderly caring for their bodies; as the Advocate exercis-

ing Peter's conscience and restoring his soul, and as Master instructing and directing His servants.

Our bodies belong to Christ. He is the Saviour of the body; our every want and need is known to Him. The God whom He calls "My God" is the same one of whom Paul speaks as "My God" in the Epistle to the Philip-pians, and whom Paul pledges to supply their every need from His treasure-house of wealth, the risen Christ in glory.

Nothing can exceed the grace of the Lord's action here; the disciples had spent a long dark night of toil—anxious, wearing toil—resulting in bitter disappointment. But the morning dawned, and on the shore the Lord appears; the great Shepherd of the sheep seeking the weary wanderers, to whom He says, "Come and dine."

He not only invites, but provides. The fire is there, the fish and bread laid thereon, all is ready. Peter and the others are invited to the warmth of the Lord's fire, and learn how infinitely superior it is to the world's fire (chap. 18. 18).

Their lack of affection and care for Him had not altered His affection and care for them.

Is it not so to-day? Providential mercies and kindnesses are often showered upon ungrateful hearts; we change, He changes not, nor does He once forget, though oft forgot, His love is unchangeably the same. He never ceases to care for the temporal needs of a backslider, keenly as He feels the desertion and unfaithfulness of such.

If, however, as their Lord and Shepherd He cared for their wants and woes, He would have them know Him as the Advocate, the restorer of their souls, the One who would fit them experimentally for the worship and service of God; hence the interview with Peter after they had dined. The scene is well known and has often been

dwelt upon. Peter, the man who had a revelation from the Father as to the Christ, the Son of God ; Peter, into whose hands the keys of the kingdom had been given ; Peter, whose self-confidence was so great that he conceived it possible for all his fellow-disciples to forsake the Lord *except himself*, this very man had denied his Lord with oaths and curses. What a lesson for us ! As sure as we begin to think highly of our own spiritual attainments and look down upon others we are in the greatest danger. The man who is truly near the Lord is the one who is most convinced that it is by grace, and *grace alone*, he stands ; that nothing but almighty power can preserve him from sinking as low as Peter.

The Lord touched the root of it all in Peter when He said, " Lovest thou Me *more than these ?* " The root having been reached, Peter ceases to speak of himself. Mark the way of the Lord with his once erring disciple ; He does what you and I would have shrunk from doing ; He puts the dearest object of His love into Peter's care and says, " Feed My sheep ; " " Feed My lambs."

May we not gather from this that however deeply a saint has failed, the advocacy of Christ can produce such searching self-judgment that self-confidence is destroyed and the heart con-

strained to say, " Lord, I cannot trust myself ; Thou knowest all about me." Also, that *a man who cannot trust himself is the man whom the Lord can trust with His interests.*

In the end of the chapter the Master is seen in company with His servants. He shows them that He knows the end from the beginning : that He has some who are to die a martyr's death, and others who are to wait until He returns.

The path of a servant is not an easy one ; he has peculiar trials ; his life is often a living martyrdom : he is frequently misunderstood by those he seeks to serve, and may have to say, like Paul, " The more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." How good to know that the Master whom he seeks to serve knows what it is to have been neglected, misunderstood, and despised ; let us be satisfied with His smile, seek to learn His will, and follow Him at all costs.

We are not to inquire, What shall this or that man do ? but we are to listen to the voice of Him that says, " Follow thou Me." That will furnish us with *enough occupation for the rest of our days*, whether ended like Peter's, in a martyr's grave, or caught up by the Lord when He comes. The one grand, simple direction for every servant is, " Follow thou Me."

"It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty" (Isa. 29. 8).

During his last days Verlaine, the brilliant French poet, was occupied in covering the squalid furniture of his squalid rooms with gold paint. The reason of the poor fellow was gone, and it pleased his disordered fancy to reckon the worthless furniture of his miserable lodging as the golden garniture of palaces. But Verlaine's yellow furniture did not sell for gold, and the

day inevitably comes when those who have lived a worldly and godless life awake to the vanity of the things and pursuits for which they gave and suffered so much, when those who have lived for the seen and temporal things, instead of the unseen and eternal, will surely suffer loss, even though they themselves are saved—" yet so as by fire."

The Hidden Manna.

(T. OLIVER, D.Sc.).

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. 2. 17).

WHEN the Israelites first saw God's provision for them on the top of the dew of the morning they said to each other, "Manna" (or Manhu), that is, What is it? for they wist not what it was (Exod. 16. 15). How this illustrates strikingly man's attitude towards Christ, the true bread of God which came down from heaven. His life's history was punctuated by incessant query: Who is this? "And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies?" (Luke 5. 21). "And they that sat at meat with Him (in Simon's house) began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" (Luke 7. 49). Herod was perplexed and said, "Who is this, of whom I hear such things?" (Luke 9. 9). When Jesus made his final entry into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? This attitude bears out that He came unto His own and they did not receive Him and that the world knew Him not. The darkness had no comprehension of the light.

The manna was a small round thing, comparable with the minute particles of hoar frost (Exod. 16. 14). Its insignificance was calculated to arouse the contempt born of the natural pride in the mind of man. Even so, Christ, becoming small, making Himself of no reputation and assuming servant's form (Phil. 2. 7), did not come up to man's expectations of the Messiah. Men love display and great things. Naaman, the leper, thought that Elisha should have done some great thing towards his recovery (2 Kings 5. 11).

That is, however, not God's way. In this present time He works not by exhibition and external display but by the revelation of hidden wisdom. Into that small manna God compressed the significance of something incomparably great.

The Lord Jesus as the bread of life, veiled His glory, came down from heaven into this wilderness world, gave His flesh for the life of the world (John 6. 51), ascended to the right hand of God, where He is now hid in the heavens, the true embodiment of that omer of incorruptible manna which was put in the Ark of the Covenant in the most holy place (Exod. 16. 32).

"The heavens—which now conceal Him
In counsels deep and wise—
In glory shall reveal Him
To our rejoicing eyes;"

The portion of the overcomer is then to feed on Christ, the hidden manna. "Whom having not seen, ye love" (1 Pet. 1. 8).

The Book of Revelation is singularly associated with the declaration, "I, Jesus." He is the faithful and true witness; in spite of obloquy of men and malice of Satan He overcame in lowly dependence upon God, and He is able to sustain all those who follow in His steps.

Eight hundred years ago, in the midst of darkest Romanism, Bernard in his monastery at Clairvaux had tasted of the hidden manna, and had experienced much of its sweetness when he penned the lines:

"The love of Jesus what it is
None but His loved ones know."

Saviour, come, we long to see Thee,
Long to dwell with Thee above,
And to know in full communion
All the sweetness of Thy love.
Come, Lord Jesus,
Take Thy waiting people home!

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 19.

The Trial.

Matt. 26, 57 etc. Mark 14, 53 etc. Luke 22, 54 etc.

IN studying these closing scenes of our Lord's life on earth, two striking characteristics of the Gospel narratives should be noticed—the absence of any doctrinal statement connected with the death of Christ, and the freedom from all attempt to work on human feelings. We know the Spirit of God alone can produce right ones. On the other hand, we have a simple and brief account of the Creator and Judge of all men standing before the tribunals of His creatures receiving their sentence on Himself along with the atrocious exhibition of what man is capable of against perfect goodness when he is unrestrained by power—Jesus Himself passes through all in the spirit of His own words, "the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" The conflict and prayers of Gethsemane are the secret of the calm of the judgment hall and Calvary. From a comparison of the three Gospels, it becomes evident that after our Lord had given Himself up to the mob of servants and others who came with the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders as mentioned by LUKE (22. 52), He was brought before four tribunals:

First, an informal gathering at the house of the high priest.

Second, a formal assembly of the Jewish Sanhedrim on the following morning.

Third, Herod's court, then present at Jerusalem.

Fourth, the court of Pilate, the local representative of the Roman power.

MATTHEW and MARK furnish the account of what took place before the first of these, a gathering clearly for the purpose of obtaining witness against Him, so as to secure His death under a legal form. We read in MATTHEW, who gives us the special guilt of the Jew, that "the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death." In thus

acting they were really imitating the sin of Jezebel and making use of her devil-taught device to secure scriptural sanction for a judicial murder (1 Kings 21. 10 and Deut. 17. 6).

In the present case the silence of Jesus suffices to confound the false witnesses. Disappointed with the ill-success of his agents, the high priest rises to pronounce the adjuration according to Leviticus 5. 1. To be silent now would be to disregard God's name; and, ever perfect, the Lord answers at once in the confession of the truth, adding a word as to the change which was to follow on His death. The Son of Man would be no longer among enemies in weakness, but be found at the right hand of power and coming again in the clouds of heaven. On this confession the high priest calls for sentence against Him on the charge of blasphemy (Lev. 24. 16).

MARK, who gives us the personal history of the Lord Jesus, is in close agreement with MATTHEW, but he omits mention of the high priest's adjuration which is more suitably found in the first gospel.

LUKE, who gives principles rather than historic details, omits the first trial and passes on to give the result of the formal gathering of the Sanhedrim in the morning. It is called "their council," and appears to have been gathered for the purpose of witnessing the Lord's confession made on the previous evening. On this occasion He, knowing the purpose of the question, "Art Thou the Christ?" exposes their hypocrisy and assures them of His session at the right hand of the power of God, without adding, as before, the testimony of His return. He then confesses Himself Son of God, which again secures His conviction.

The hours of darkness intervening between these two pretended trials were occupied by the servants of the Jewish leaders in heaping mockery and insult on the unresisting Victim of their malice (Matt. 26. 68, Mark 14. 65). These

brutal outrages are repeated again, with the addition of the crown of thorns and the scarlet cloak, by the Gentile soldiers of Pilate. Man is thus seen using the occasion of God coming to win his heart in lowliness and grace to spit in His face and refuse Him with every expression of contempt. The mention of purple by MARK in place of the scarlet of MATTHEW has been explained as part of the mockery of the soldiers, who used one of their own scarlet military mantles to *represent* the imperial purple along with the other sham insignia of royalty—the crown of thorns and the reed sceptre (*Lange*). LUKE, while telling of the insults of Herod's soldiery, omits all mention of the two preceding scenes. This is not the place to dwell upon this appalling manifestation of man's nature, but we should take to heart how every class of men there present, the Galilean Herodians, as well as the heads of the nation at Jerusalem, together with the Gentiles, unite in displaying a wanton scorn and cruelty which should make us, as another has said—pause, and judge ourselves.

In the morning, those who had sought false witness to put Jesus to death now take counsel against Him with the same intent. MATTHEW thus emphasizes their evil will, while MARK's statement is merely historical (Matt. 27. 1, Mark 15. 1).

The result of their deliberations is seen in the charge of blasphemy being entirely dropped before Pilate; it was not one the Roman governor could take account of, and that of sedition is substituted for it. The governor is in no way deceived; both MATTHEW and MARK tell us, "he knew that for envy they had delivered Him." His attempt to escape from his dilemma by sending to Herod is only

found in LUKE, who shows how these evil men, who had been rivals in their respective spheres of authority, are now made friends by an exchange of courtesies, while caring little for the justice they were responsible to administer. LUKE thus characteristically affords a foreshadowing of the future alliance between the revived Roman empire and the apostate king in the land (Isa. 28. 14, etc.).

In this gospel, moreover, with its special testimony to the Gentiles, the sin of Pilate is specially marked, in that, while desirous to release Jesus (ver. 20) and having declared there was no guilt in Him, he nevertheless yields to the popular clamour, releases a seditious murderer, and "delivers Jesus to their will." What a travesty of justice!

MATTHEW, who, as we have often noticed, exhibits the ways of divine government with the nation, tells of its leaders taking on themselves the guilt of His death in those momentous words, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Another point suitably found in MATTHEW is the striking way in which testimony is rendered to the nation as represented by its religious leaders. There is, first, Christ's own confession; second, the words of Judas, "I have betrayed the *innocent* blood" (27. 4); third, the words of Pilate as he vainly washes his hands before the people, "I am innocent of the blood of this *just* person" (24); fourth, the rent veil and the earthquake (51); fifth, the words of the centurion and his comrades, "Truly this was the Son of God" (54); sixth, the empty Sepulchre; seventh, word was brought to the chief priests of all that had been done (28. 11).

(C. E. H. WARREN).

Matthew's Gospel (chap. 19).

THE Galilean ministry of the Lord that occupies most of the Synoptic Gospels is now over. Judea is before Him, to be reached from the other side of Jordan: great multitudes being witnesses of His healing power. A question of the Pharisees as to divorce leads Him to go back from the law, treated as provisional, to God's institution of marriage. The man and his wife had become one

flesh, and the bond was indissoluble. The case of sin against the relationship was not really an exception, for then the two had ceased to be one flesh by the will of the flesh coming in. The bond was broken by sin. Still there was a path outside these relationships in the power of the things of the kingdom, not for all but according to the gift and calling of God.

It is evidently in the same connection that the Lord receives the little children as representing the spirit suited to the kingdom in the absence of thought of self, in such contrast to what obtains in the world, though grace alone can produce it in any of us. All that is fairest in nature is found to fail under the test of the cross, as illustrated in the next incident from verse 16: one comes whom, as Mark tells us, the Lord loved, discerning in him so many traces of God's work in creation as natural amiability, sincerity, and the like, amid the wreck of sin. The young ruler was satisfied with his position under the law; his conscience being deceived by the letter of it was unawakened as to sin. He desired to know by what additional good-doing he might have eternal life. By a change of reading the answer of the Lord here is, "Why askest thou Me concerning goodness? One there is who is good." There was no use in speaking of God's goodness till the idea of his own was disposed of. Therefore the Lord is but taking him up on his own ground in referring him to the law as the revelation of what God required of one who would stand before Him on the principle of man's goodness. He quotes generally the second table, only reserving the last commandment, which forbids the desires of the flesh. For now He would apply this in principle: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Where was his heart now? Linked up with the earth by his possessions here. And he turned away sorrowful from heavenly treasure, and the cross that answers to it upon earth. Nature at its best breaks down before such a test.

Yet possessions on earth had been a token of God's favour, but that was before Christ had been rejected by the world. Now they were a positive hindrance because of the treachery of our hearts. Exceedingly amazed, the disciples ask, "Who then can be saved?" and they learn that this was only possible by God's power, which, as well as His goodness, is now revealed in the Gospel. The Lord had not yet touched the question of eternal life: no ray of the light of it shone under the law: it was only to be found in the path of the surrender of earth's advantages by the faith that

attached the heart to Christ. But when Peter, no doubt sincerely, takes the ground of the disciples having forsaken all and followed Christ, though with an eye on reward, the Lord owns what His grace had wrought in them, and promises them in the day of His renewal of all things, when He should sit on the throne of His glory, that they should have their place judging the twelve tribes of Israel (only given in Matthew); and then, enlarging the application, everyone who had forsaken what the heart clings to naturally in this world for His sake, would receive a hundred-fold and inherit eternal life. But a word of warning, if of encouragement, is added: many that are first in nature's energy would find it slacken and fail before testing, while those who were slower at first in distrust of themselves would, by resources outside themselves, be first at the finish; while the tendency to a mercenary spirit of so much recompense for so much surrender, as disclosed by Peter's "what shall we have therefore?" (ver. 27) is met by another parable of the kingdom of heaven (chap. 20. 1-15). If there were those whom the Householder called early to the work and He gave them as was agreed at the close, what right had they to complain if He called later ones and, in His goodness, gave them the same. Thus sovereign grace inverts the statement of chapter 19. 30, that had to do with our responsibility, "the last shall be first and the first last;" for though the call goes out to many, few are chosen—a principle, be it observed, that would admit of the Gentiles, though called so late, and that, not merely into equal privilege with those first called of the Jews, but so that the last should be first. The parable is given only, and it will be felt perfectly, in this gospel where the dispensational ways of God are brought out.

The instruction is resumed by the Lord as generally, with this omission, in the other gospels, on His way up to Jerusalem. Taking His disciples apart, He tells them plainly of what is before Him there: He was to be delivered to the Gentiles to be crucified, and the third day to rise again. But the cross was not in their thoughts. The mother of Zebedee's sons would have for them the nearest places to Him in His kingdom in

glory. These would only be assigned according to His Father's counsel, but the present question was (and a test for us all): Could they drink of the cup that was before Him (more fully given in Mark), that is, have part with Him in His rejection and suffering? The ten are indignant at having been anticipated in asking what they too would have sought. What hearts we have! What self-seeking can mingle with even true attachment to the Lord. It was but natural that the princes of the Gentiles should seek positions of pre-eminence and authority, but in no way suited to the followers of Him who came not to claim

service but to serve, and to give His life a ransom instead of many.

Thus we have reached what in the Synoptic Gospels divides between the ministry of the blessed Lord's life as given in them, and the closing scenes of it at Jerusalem. But it may be profitable, if the Lord will, to attempt to take up the links in Mark and Luke before entering into the close. The main facts are the same though often grouped very differently, and with what is special to each, according to the scope of the Gospel. The restoring of sight to the blind in the vicinity of Jericho is the starting-point with each. (J. ALFRED TRENCH).

The Heart's Longing.

(JAMES BOYD).

O TO be here for my Saviour!
O to be true to His Name!
Here in His place of rejection,
Here where they put Him to shame!
O to keep spotless my raiment,
Safe from the soil of the world!
O with the faithful to follow
Under His banner unfurled!

This is my infinite longing
Here for His pleasure to be.
Thou who hast died to redeem me
Help me to glorify Thee.

Thine am I, mighty Redeemer!
Thine am I, bought by Thy blood!
Back from the brink of destruction
Brought to the bosom of God!
Sins done away with for ever,
Satan, whose fetters I wore,
Bruised in his stronghold and broken,
Death can appal me no more!
This is my infinite longing, etc.

Now with the faithful I find me,
Those who confess Thee as Lord;
Those who to Thee all the greatness,
Glory and honour accord.
Join we our voices together,
Sing we Thy praises again,
Here where despised and rejected
Thou by Thy creature wast slain.
This is my infinite longing, etc.

Not a path pleasant and peaceful,
Marked by the favour of man;
Not the world's friendship I look for,
Rather I welcome its ban.
Here where the Master had sorrow,
How could the servant have bliss,
Were he not guilty of treason
Black as the evil abyss?
This is my infinite longing, etc.

Boldly, great Captain, to battle
Strong in Thy strength I would go.
Say to my soul, I am with Thee:
Fear not the face of the foe.
Timid am I and fainthearted,
Fain from the conflict would fly;
Make me, O, Saviour immortal,
Ready if need be to die.
This is my infinite longing, etc.

Glad on my vision the glory
Gleams from the place Thou art gone,
Through the deep gloom that surrounds
me,
Here where I wait for the dawn.
Haste Thee, Bright Star of the Morning,
Break thro' the clouds of the night,
Come in Thy beauty and glory,
Majesty, mercy, and might.

This is my infinite longing
Here for His pleasure to be.
Thou who hast died to redeem me
Help me to glorify Thee.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 9.

(H. J. VINN)

The Outward Situation—*continued.*

IN chapters 36. and 37. of our immediate section of Isaiah, Jerusalem is face to face with the Assyrian, their enemy. The proud waters which have overflowed the land seem about to overwhelm them with death and destruction. This is the picture, given here by God, of the *outward situation*. Thus it will be again at Jerusalem. But "the living God" (37. 4 and 17) will defend and deliver the city, by the working of His mighty power; and it shall not only be delivered, but Jerusalem shall become like a new creation, and the Lord shall rejoice in it, and the voice of weeping shall be heard in it no more.

But she would not have her Lord when He came to her in lowliness. He would have gathered her under His protection, but she would not. She spurned His love, and He was indeed the MAN OF SORROWS. The enemy, too, was allowed to rise up in all his proud hatred against Him. Here we find that Jerusalem has to face the enemy, to face death and threatened destruction. But, like her Lord whom she rejected when He came, she offers up "supplications and entreaties with strong crying and tears" to the living God, who is able to save from death. Like Him who, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, opened not His mouth (53. 7), she now, before the enemy, holds her peace and answers him "NOT A WORD: for the king's commandment was, Answer him not" (36. 21). Here the king's dependence upon God was manifested, and in this he was like the Lord, when He stood before His accusing persecutors, He answered not a word. "Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And He answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled

greatly" (Matt. 27. 12-14). Again, when brought before the cunning King Herod, who with "his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him," we read "he questioned Him in many words; but *He answered him nothing*" (Luke 23. 9). There is also a further likeness to the oppressed and afflicted One in Israel's condition at this time. He spoke of the trouble and grief connected with His suffering and death, as that of a woman in travail; and here Jerusalem says: "This day is a day of trouble . . . the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (37. 3). She has yet to learn the truth herein hidden, the truth of resurrection. The blessed Son of God went on to show that sorrow, trouble, weeping, may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning! How? "The child is born." "Grief is turned into joy." "The woman no longer remembers the trouble, on account of the joy that a man child has been born into the world" (John 16. 21.) The Lord was speaking of His resurrection, and we know Him now as risen, and our joy no man taketh from us, while He Himself "is anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions." What joy will fill the hearts of believing Israel by and by, when they behold and accept "Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, *raised from among the dead.*" Then also "all the kingdoms of the earth shall know that He is Lord, even He only" (37. 20).

Laughter is connected with resurrection. "Isaac," the resurrection man, means "laughter;" and when the risen Christ takes the throne, the Lord will laugh (Ps. 2.); when the captivity of Zion is turned, the people will laugh (Ps. 126.); they will say, Our mouth is "filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." "The Lord

hath done great things for us ; whereof we are glad." So here, "the virgin, the daughter of Zion," despises the *outward* enemy now, and laughs (ver. 22). God has interfered in resurrection power.

Look how this vividly pictured deliverance is again connected with Isaiah (2). The Lord says here : "The daughter of Zion hath despised thee." "I will defend this city to save it for My own sake, and for My servant David's sake" (37. 35). I will deliver it out of the hand of the king of Assyria (38. 6). Now read Isaiah 52. : "Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem . . . loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. . . . Ye have sold yourselves for nought ; and ye shall be redeemed without money . . . the Assyrian oppressed them without cause" (vers. 1-4). Again : "Save us . . . that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord, even Thou only" (37. 20). So we read in chapter 52. 9, 10 : "He hath redeemed Jerusalem. the Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Again : "*The children* are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (37. 3). Now note chapter 66. 9, 10 : "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth ? saith the Lord. . . . Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her." Why ? She is "delivered of a MAN CHILD" (ver. 7). Who hath heard such a thing ? A NATION born at once ! "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her *children*" (ver. 8).

It will indeed be like "LIFE FROM THE DEAD." As "the new heavens and the new earth" which the Lord will make (66. 22). Behold, He says, "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (65. 18). It is resurrection power. It is new creation work, though not, of course, in the complete sense in which the assembly knows it in

Christ. AN ENSIGN shall be lifted up against the enemy when He comes in "like a flood" (59. 19), and the Lord will not rest "till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (62. 7).

We now turn to the judgment on the wicked, on the enemy who threatened from without ; and mark again the connection with the last part of Isaiah. The rebellion and rage of the enemy here is *against the Lord* (37. 28, 29), and the host is smitten (ver. 36), and "behold they were all dead corpses." In the last verse of Isaiah : "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have rebelled *against Me*."

I have purposely treated this central section differently to the others, to show the absurdity of the attack on the book as a whole, and that we may see the importance of discovering the mind of God in the Scriptures.

The Resurrection Sign.

We cannot close this section without looking at the other SIGN given. It is a *life out of death sign*, in beautiful harmony with the rest.

How admirably suitable is the language used here. In glowing colours the Holy Spirit shows us this striking sign, shining in vividness and freshness upon the dark background of the enemy's overwhelming devastation of the land. "This shall be a SIGN unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself ; and the second year that which springeth of the same : and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward : for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion : the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this" (37. 30-32). Here, again, we find resurrection pictured, and unmistakable unity with Isaiah 2. See chapters 60. 20-22, and 61. 3 :

"The *planting of the Lord*, that He might be glorified." Also 55. 13: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an EVER-LASTING SIGN that shall not be cut off." Why all this life out of death? How does it come about? Because of that other "*Plant*," the "*tender Plant*"; the One that had no "*lordliness*" in their eyes; for He was amongst them in "*lowliness*." They saw no beauty that they should desire Him (53. 2). He was wounded for their transgressions, He was bruised for their iniquities. Through His stripes they will get healing. He was "*cut off out of the land of the living*" (53. 8). Hezekiah, typical of Israel, cried, because of his "*cutting off*" and going to the "*gates of the grave*," that he should not see the Lord "*in the land of the living*" (38. 10, 11).

So Christ was actually cut off, and men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death. Is that the end? Hezekiah was made to live, as Israel will again presently through divine grace. Hezekiah thought his "*end*" had come, but his days were prolonged. What, then, of the Lord, the Christ? His days are prolonged too: "*He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand*" (53. 10).

This, then, is the glorious explanation of it all. His days are prolonged for ever in resurrection, and others too as "*His seed*" live together with Him. Christ is already risen. He is alive for evermore, and has "*become the First-fruits of them that slept*."

What a day of rejoicing it will be for this remnant of Israel when they learn that the Seed Royal, the Seed of David, has been preserved in Jesus Christ our Lord, *raised from among the dead*. Death seemed to have blighted all the hopes of those who trusted in Him that He should have redeemed Israel.

They saw Him slain on a cursed tree and buried in the grave. It appeared as though all was over for Israel; for Jerusalem; for the throne of David; and for the world. All seemed to be enveloped in thick darkness and in the hopelessness of death. The night-pall of deep despair seemed to settle upon all and to cast its chilling folds across every promise and every hope.

But the resurrection morning changed everything; it broke with terrors for the ungodly, for "*behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven*" (Matt. 28. 2). The soldiers of Rome were keepers of the tomb, but they shake and become like *dead men* at His presence. But it broke gentle as the dawn to those women who visited the sepulchre early, for the angel of the Lord said to the women, "*Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: FOR HE IS RISEN.*" The night is gone! The darkness is past! The battle is over! The victory is won! Israel shall soon sing, as it is written: "*When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing*" (Ps. 126. 1, 2). The enemy is smitten! Jerusalem is free! Look once more at our chapter, 37. 36: "*The angel of the Lord went forth . . . and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*"

Hezekiah sang inside, "*THE LIVING, THE LIVING SHALL PRAISE THEE!*" "*For the grave cannot praise Thee! Death cannot celebrate Thee!*"

The situation outwardly, inwardly, and prophetically looked hopeless, but the Sign in "*the depth*" and in "*the height*" has satisfactorily solved every difficulty. Let it once again be said, JESUS CHRIST OF THE SEED OF DAVID, WHO WENT INTO DEATH, RAISED FROM AMONG THE DEAD, AND, EXALTED, EXPLAINS IT ALL.

A Word of Exhortation.

(THOMAS OLIVER).

HOW great are the horrors of fallen humanity! They are seen in various ways in every unconverted person, and, alas! so often in many of God's children.

How great are the splendours of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus as seen 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, 22).

No human thought can fathom, or human language give expression to the one or the other.

If we meditate upon the wonders of God's revelation of Himself in Christ in the Word by the Spirit, the certain results will be that all that is antagonistic to God will be then more clearly seen and refused by those who love Him. The Eternal Son who became man that He might suffer and die will command the worship of the soul because of His greatness, His grace, and His loveliness.

The sacred fact of the Holy Spirit indwelling 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. 24-28); 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.

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.

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).

In view of our Lord's speedy return, may the call to the saints in Ephesus in the day that is past command our earnest attention. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," (or, shall shine upon thee) (Eph. 5. 14).

The Lord does not require anything outside of that which He has given to His people, to accomplish His present purposes, whatever they may be.

The great cause of neglecting the Scriptures is not want of time but want of heart, some idol taking the place of Christ.

"Cleave to the Lord."

(J. T. MAWSON).

The First Gentile Church. (An Address).

Read Acts II. 19-30.

IN these verses there is a divinely-given description of the first Gentile church that was ever formed, and, as it is often God's way to give us a pattern of what He intends any new thing to be at the very beginning of it, we should study the features of this assembly with great interest.

HOW THE GOSPEL REACHED THEM.

The gospel was carried to Antioch as a result of the persecution that had arisen in Jerusalem at the martyrdom of Stephen. And in this there is encouragement for us when opposition meets us in the work and testimony of the Lord. The devil hoped to effectually stamp out the name of Christ when he let his fury loose upon the Jerusalem brethren; he only drove the gospel into a wider field, so that the purpose of God was fulfilled in that it reached the Gentiles. So God makes the wrath of the devil and men to praise Him.

THE PREACHING—THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS.

Those who were scattered abroad through the persecution went as far as Antioch and preached to the Grecians the LORD JESUS. The titles of our Lord in Scripture are not used in a haphazard way; every one of them has its special meaning, and we shall be greatly helped in understanding the Scriptures if we grasp the significance of the names and titles of the Lord as they occur. Here the disciples preached the Lord Jesus. They proclaimed the lordship of Jesus. This is sadly lacking in modern preaching. Men often take up THE NAME with very little reverence.

They talk of *St. John*, *St. Paul*, *St. Peter*, and would not think of using the names of the apostles without the prefix, but when they speak of the Son of God He is simply Jesus of Nazareth and nothing more. Not so these early gospel preachers; they proclaimed His glory and called upon men everywhere to yield subjection to Him as the One whom God had made supreme over all.

They preached the name of JESUS in all its precious meaning. It was to them, and it is to us who know Him, the sweetest name on mortal tongue. It tells us of Him, the Man of sorrows, who in lowly grace came down to save us. It tells us of that lovely life in which the infinite tenderness of His heart was ever in manifestation. It tells us of how He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Wonderful name!

JESUS—it speaks a life of love,
Of sorrows meekly borne;
It tells of sympathy above
Whatever makes us mourn.

But this is the name that has been cast out by men, for He was despised and rejected. With the beasts in a stable at His birth, and with thieves on a cross at His death, such was the world's award to Him. But God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ. He hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name. The crowns of immortal glory shine upon His sacred brow. He is supreme over all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Every knee shall bow before Him and every tongue confess that universal lordship is His by right.

THE GRACE OF GOD THROUGH HIM.

But there is more in the title "Lord" than authority. He has been put into that place of power to dispense the grace of God to men, and that is a very important side to this great title. In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans you will find salvation is constantly connected with Him as Lord. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus . . . thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10. 9). Salvation is connected with the Lord. He is the dispenser of the grace of God. This is illustrated, in type, in the case of Joseph. He was made ruler or lord over all Egypt, and all were commanded to bow the knee to him; but in that position he was the dispenser of Pharaoh's favours. To all the Egyptians who sought any favour from Pharaoh the king said, "Go to Joseph." The Lord Jesus Christ is upon the throne of God to dispense for men the grace of God. The One who loved us so much that He laid down His life to save us is now the One who administers all the grace of God, and all who would have that grace which saves eternally must go to Jesus the Lord.

They preached the Lord Jesus, the only One in whom men can find all that they need, "and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord." They believed the glad tidings that were brought to them concerning Christ, but they not only believed, "*they turned to the Lord.*" And here we may discern what many lack. People believe the gospel, but make no progress. What is the matter? They have believed unquestionably, but they have not turned to the Lord. If you turn to the Lord you turn your back upon the world. You find in the Lord, in whom all the grace of God is, a new source of supply. Up to the

time of your turning your springs were in this world. You went to it for sympathy and help and pleasure. Now you are right about face. The world is no longer the source of your supply. Instead you say to the Lord, "All my fresh springs are in Thee."

In difficulties, in sorrow, in weakness, in temptation, or in service, do we at once turn to Him? Are our eyes in that direction moment by moment? If we have truly turned to the Lord we are looking to Him alone, and from Him there comes the supply of grace to meet our every need, for His supplies are all-sufficient.

These people at Antioch believed and turned to the Lord, and the news reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to see what was going on, and when he came and *saw the grace of God* he was glad. The grace they had received and were receiving from the Lord was something that could be seen; it affected their lives in every department of them, and Barnabas was glad when he saw it. It is a good thing when the grace of God is seen. There is nothing so delightful to the anointed eye as the grace of God. It pleases the eye and rejoices the heart. There is no sight like it on earth.

A GOOD MAN.

Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Would to God we had a few more men like that! What kind of a man is a good man? The man who is occupied with evil, even if he is bent upon putting it right, is not a good man, because every man becomes affected by that with which he is occupied. The good man is occupied with good. He will look for what is good in his brethren and rejoice when he sees it, and he will help to produce it in them by ministering Christ to them and praying for them. The one who is occupied with good is a good man. We are so constituted that the mind affects the whole person, and if the mind is affected by

the things of the world we become worldly in ways and walk. I may not know it, but others will know it. If I am occupied with Christ and good, that will come out; I may not know that it is coming out, but others will see it. Moses when he came down from the mountain wist not that his face shone, but the Israelites beheld it. Poor Samson got into sad company, left the service of Jehovah to dally with sin, and in consequence he lost his Nazariteship, and wist not that his strength had departed from him, but the Philistines knew it. Christians, that with which the mind is occupied is that which affects and forms our character; it comes out in our lives, and others take note of it, whether it be good or bad.

THE GREAT EXHORTATION.

When Barnabas saw the grace that was manifested in those disciples, he exhorted them that "*with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord.*" He had just that one exhortation for them. It was the most important thing that he could have said to them, and it is the most important thing that can be said to us. We need it just as much as they needed it. It matters not how much we know; if we are not cleaving to the Lord we are worse than useless with all our knowledge. It matters not how little we know, if we are cleaving to the Lord we shall make progress.

Mark—he did not say "Cleave to the Shepherd" or "Cleave to the Saviour." Why? The Shepherd will cleave to us with the hand of omnipotence, for thus He holds His sheep in spite of every threatening foe, and whom He saves are safe for ever. But as LORD *we must cleave to Him* if we are to rightly bear witness to Him in this world, for all the grace we need is in Him. Just as a general, when he goes to war, will not permit, if he can help it, the enemy to outflank him and cut him off from his base, for he knows that if he is cut off from his base defeat will overtake

him, so we, in an enemy's country, must cleave to the base of our supplies. We must keep in constant touch with the One in whom our resources are. Those resources are in the Lord. Thence the necessity of cleaving to Him with purpose of heart. We cannot do without the grace of God, for it is the Christian's vital breath. It is as necessary to our well-being as the sea is to the fish and the atmosphere to the birds, and all the grace of God comes through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"MUCH PEOPLE WAS ADDED TO THE LORD."

It is not without significance that just at this point we read of the blessing flowing out and men being gathered in. The testimony of these disciples was in power, for their words were backed up by happy Christian lives. They were doers of the word as well as preachers of it. Where this is lacking we cannot expect to see people added to the Lord, and when worldly means are used in the attempt to convert men the case is even worse. Yet with shame be it said that the professing church has harnessed to her labour pleasures that have been conceived in the minds of godless men, and she hopes thus to draw men to Christ. They are being dragged by these methods in the opposite direction, and disaster irretrievable must be the final end of them. To add people to the Lord we must ourselves first be in living touch with Him, for only so can the grace of God find a channel through us whence it can flow out to others. We must cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.

ALL - THE - YEAR - ROUND CHRISTIANS.

Barnabas departed to Tarsus to seek Saul, and brought him to Antioch, and for a WHOLE YEAR they assembled with the church and taught much people. If you cleave to the Lord you will cleave also to those who are the Lord's. You know what makes a

swarm of bees, every bee cleaves to the queen; hence the swarm. If I cleave to the Lord and you cleave to the Lord and every one of us are cleaving to the Lord, we shall be kept very close together, and together we shall grow in the truth.

The only way Christians can be kept together really and happily, and grow unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, is by cleaving to the Lord. Now here the assembly of God met together, and for a whole year they continued. The whole year is a perfect cycle of time. All seasons are included—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. What we want to-day is all-the-year-round Christians. Some Christians are very bright in the spiritual summer-time, in the special gospel meetings, or when helpful ministry is being given for God's people. But when things get flat and the summer sun ceases to shine, when the winter-time comes on and things are not so prosperous, then they grow faint of heart and weary. They are not all-the-year-round Christians. The testimony of the Lord not only has its apparently prosperous times, but sometimes the winter winds blow and the storms seem to rage about it. Look at Paul in 2 Timothy. He had to say, "All they in Asia have forsaken me." They could not stand the winter-time. He had to say, "No man stood with me." Those Christians were not all-the-year-round Christians. How can we be such? By cleaving to the Lord. He is just as sufficient for the winter-time as for the summer-time. He sends down the spiritual sunshine upon us, and He permits the clouds to gather about us sometimes for our good, but He permits no circumstances in the which He cannot sustain us, and in which we cannot thankfully witness for Him.

It is right that certain animals should hibernate during the winter storms, for thus hath God made them, but it was never His intention that Christians should retire into themselves when

days of adversity come, yet many act like this. They think perhaps that other Christians are brusque and cold towards them, and they shrink into themselves. They are not cleaving to the Lord, or they would thaw the frost in others by the summer warmth of their own hearts; or they would be like the hawthorn bush, as the late J. B. Stoney used to say, beautiful it appears in the spring-time, when the blossom blooms thick upon it, but in the winter-time, when the frosts come it puts out its scarlet berries, and the birds that would otherwise starve are fed. Beloved Christians, if we cleave to the Lord we shall be like the hawthorn bush when the frosts come. We shall put out the scarlet berries for the good of others. Christians of that stamp are badly needed to-day. God grant that we may be such.

THEY WERE KNOWN AS CHRISTIANS.

These disciples made progress, they grew in the knowledge of the Lord. That is what the Lord would have. We do not desire *sensation*, but there is something we must be far more afraid of than sensation, and that is *stagnation*. These did not stagnate, they made progress, and we read: "The disciples were first called *Christians* at Antioch." Not amid the bright days of Pentecost were the disciples called Christians. That name was reserved for these Gentile believers. It was a term of reproach at the start, but what an honour to bear it. The people watched them and listened to their talk, and they were so much like the Christ, they talked so much about Him, that that was the only name they could give them. "The disciples were first called *Christians* at Antioch." Oh that we might be called Christians because of what we are; that in the home and place of business we may be known as Christians because we are Christ-like; that they may say, "Well, so-and-so is a Christian, we are sure of that!" How can this be? We must

cleave to the Lord for this. This kind of thing does not spring up from the flesh. These figs cannot be gathered from the thistle of fallen human nature. We must be in touch with the Lord. Our roots, so to speak, must be in Him. When that is the case, these things that will make people call us Christians will be manifested in us.

The Lord Jesus was sufficient for your soul's salvation. You knew it was no use for any one else to put their hands to that great work. You were satisfied to let the Lord Jesus do it. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him. Let Him be sufficient for you all along the Christian pathway, as He was sufficient at the start of it. Be just as simple in your faith in Him to-day as you were then. Every difficulty will then disappear, for as you cleave to Him that grace will flow unhindered to you, and it is that grace which will carry you forward, and in the power of that grace you will be known as a Christian.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

There is still another beautiful touch to complete the picture. There came from Jerusalem at this time a prophet called Agabus, and he prophesied there would be great dearth throughout all the world. This was a very serious crisis, for the whole world was to suffer from the dearth. What do these Christians do? Do they say, "Well, we had better get in a stock of corn; we had better lay up for a rainy day and see to it that we are well provided for?" No, they say, "When this dearth comes it will go very hardly with these dear disciples at Jerusalem. We had better think of our brethren's need and make a collection for them." They were not thinking about themselves. It was not a question as to how the dearth would affect them. It was a question as to how it would affect others. They were thinking about others, and that, dear friends, is the mark given us in Scripture of divine

love, the love of God being in the heart. If thou seest thy brother in need, and shuttest up thy bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in thee? These people had the love of God dwelling in them. They were not selfish. They were not self-centred. They thought about others. That must have been delightful to the eye of God. If the grace that was in these Christians delighted the heart of Barnabas, this love in activity must have delighted the heart of God. It must have been a pleasure to Him to look down into this world, across which might be written in large letters that ugly word "selfishness," and see this company of Christians so unselfish that they did not think of their own need, but earnestly cared for others. That was the manifestation of His life in them.

But how do we stand, who are believers on the Lord Jesus in regard to this? We are the children of God, and the children of God should bear the character of their Father. He is the giving God. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." God commendeth His love towards us in what He has done. Are we called *Christians*? Do we deserve the name because we are like Christ, in whom God was perfectly revealed? Shall that wonderful love of God find a channel for its expression through us? God is seeking channels through which He may express Himself in this world. There in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ He was fully expressed. Every detail in His blessed character was manifested in Jesus. His nature was fully revealed. But the light of the world has been cast out, and now "ye are the light of the world." We are to be here holding forth the Word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom we shine as lights. The glory of God is shining forth in the face of Jesus on the throne of God. That glorious light—God fully revealed—shines forth from that blessed countenance, and it has shone into our hearts to give the

knowledge of God. But it does not shine into our hearts to be kept there. WE have this treasure in earthen vessels that it may shine out again in this world, where our lot is cast. God is seeking channels through whom He may express Himself. How can we become those channels? Only by cleaving to the Lord. As we cleave to the Lord, we shall be, by the grace we receive from Him, the channels of the expression of what God is in His love in this world, and so will be fulfilled indeed those wonderful words spoken

by the Lord to His disciples: "As My Father hath sent Me into the world, even so have I sent you."

Thus we see, as we pass over these few verses, how important a matter it is for us to be cleaving to the Lord. Everything, whether it be our own soul's progress, the blessing of men around us, or the glory of God through us, depends upon this. The Lord grant that each one of us may be greatly stirred up to "*cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.*"

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITOR).

"The Wheat and the Tares."

R. M., New Zealand, inquires

"Whether the parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matt. 13) refers to the present period or to a time subsequent to the translation of the Church."

The similitudes of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13. refer to this present age. The Tares, the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven present it in its outward form. It is that which professedly owns allegiance to the Lord during His absence from the world, but into which Satan has succeeded in introducing evil and corruption. The truth as to the church and its translation to heaven does not belong to the teaching of this parable. The field in which the good seed and the tares are sown is the WORLD (ver. 38), and the responsibility of the servants of the Lord, into whose hands His work in the world was committed during His absence, comes into question. Here there has been terrible failure. "Men slept" (ver. 25). The servants became indifferent to their Master's interests, and the watchful enemy sowed tares amongst the wheat. J. N. Darby says of this: "The kingdom here below no longer presents as a whole the appearance of the Lord's own work. He sows not tares. Through carelessness and the infirmity of men the enemy found means to sow tares. Observe this does not apply to the heathen or the Jews, but to the evil done among Christians by

Satan through bad doctrine, bad teachers and their adherents."

The translation of the church is not the subject of the parable, as we have said, though "gather the wheat into My barn" doubtless takes this in. The great teaching is the present mixed character of things in the world where the name of Christ is professed, which only the discriminating judgment of God can remedy. This will be done in the "time of harvest," a period which is spoken of as "the end of the age," when the Son of Man shall take up the universal government, and the parable extends in its view until then. The uniting of men in ungodly societies, unions, and federations, which is such a feature of these times, seems to be the beginning of the binding of the tares into bundles.

"The Sheep and the Goats."

B. R. H. D. inquires

"If the goats (Matt. 25) go straight away into everlasting punishment or go through the Millennium and form Satan's army at the battle of Armageddon. If the former, will they re-appear at the great white throne?"

Armageddon will take place before the millennium (see Rev. 16. 16), and seems to coincide with the time of the judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25.). Those who are there condemned to eternal punishment will not go through the millennial reign of Christ; this is the portion of those who receive Him and

His messengers (ver. 34), and not of those who reject Him. We believe that they will go directly into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; nor can we conceive their re-appearance at the great white throne, for the judgments of the Lord will be complete and irrevocable. He will not need to pronounce a sentence twice. Millions will be born during the millennium, and from these Satan will find his ready dupes, who shall gather under his banner to fight against the Lord (Rev. 20.).

"The Heart sprinkled from an evil conscience."

R. S. asks

"For an explanation of the passage: 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.'"—Hebrews 10. 22.

This passage gives that which answers to the consecration of the priests (Exod. 29.). They were sprinkled with blood and washed with water. It presents for

us what is characteristic of Christianity. So full is the efficacy of the blood of Christ that the question of the believer's sins is settled never to be re-opened (ver. 17), and we are brought by the Holy Ghost into the full assurance of this faith. We do not shrink from the presence of God in fear produced by an accusing conscience, as did Adam in the garden, but because of that blood we can say there is "not a spot within." And as to our persons, we are sanctified; this was God's will concerning us. We are His, not our own, and as such we can approach Him. There is no sense of unfitness. He Himself has wrought to remove all this. The Word has come home to us in its sanctifying, cleansing power. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15. 3), and "He that is washed . . . is clean every whit" (John 13. 10). The "body washed" answers to our being born of water and the Spirit, and the sprinkled blood meets every demand of the awakened conscience.

Grace.

THE Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life—and all His dealings with me are on the same principle of *grace*. The great secret of growth is, the looking up to the Lord as *gracious*. How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me, as when He died on the cross for me. This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common every-day circumstances of life.

It is Jesus only who gives abiding rest to our souls; and not what our

thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks of that which is in ourselves as its ground of peace—it receives, loves, and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus in whom is *His rest*. . . . Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him is sin—but then it is not thinking of my own sins, and my vileness, and being occupied with them that will humble me—but thinking of the Lord Jesus, and dwelling on the excellency in Him. We are entitled to forget ourselves, we are entitled to forget our sins, we are entitled to forget all but Jesus.

(DARBY).

"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

"He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure.

"Thine eyes shall see the king in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."—ISAIAH 33. 15, 16, 17.

The Beloved of the Lord.

(T. OLIVER, GALASHIELS).

"The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him" (Deut. 33, 12).

WE are apt to think that the expression "the beloved of the Lord" can only be applied to one who is very highly favoured, and that is granted. The man or the woman who is loved by the Lord is indeed very highly favoured, but it is the favour in which every child of God stands. There is gradation in Christian experience and growth, for we read of babes, young men, and fathers, but there is no thought of gradation in this favour. The testimony of the Word of God goes to show that the "beloved of the Lord" has equal significance with the "redeemed of the Lord." These are they who have heard His quickening voice and into whose hearts "redemption's glory" has been shed. All these have been taken "into favour in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 6, N.T.).

There is a striking analogy between

"the beloved of the Lord" and the disciple whom Jesus loved in the following passage: "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved" (John 13. 23). John was not loved by his Master more than Peter or James or even the doubting Thomas, but John was conscious of being loved. Hence he was found reclining on his Master's breast.

It is to be noted that the dwelling in safety is conditional on being "by Him."

"Close to Thy trusted side,
In fellowship divine."

Our safe dwelling and preservation from the wiles of the tempter without and evil within depends upon our trusting to the covert of His wings (Ps. 61. 4), and that in turn will be proportional to the measure in which we are enjoying the love of the Lord.

Christ the Test of Everything.

(JAMES BOVD).

The Origin and Antiquity of Man.

THE publication of the investigations, the discoveries, the disappointments, the speculations, and the expectations of Professor Schäfer, and other members of "*The British Association*," has set Christendom agog. The theories put forth by these wise-lings are hailed by some with evident delight; by others, and among them some leading ecclesiastics, with an uncertain kind of reserve which gives one the impression that they are not very sure of their ground as Christians; and by others, thank God, with regret and utter rejection.

The first party are openly, or at heart, infidel, and hope people are fast coming to the conclusion that Christianity is about played out; and therefore do they welcome anything that gives a blow to the Bible. They think that, if they could get rid of the Holy Scriptures, they would be rid of responsibility to God, and that Christ, as Judge of the living and the dead, they might safely forget; and that anything, even everlasting oblivion, would be better than the prospects held out to them in the gospel. The Lord and His Anointed they cannot away with,

therefore they would prefer to have to trace their genealogy back to an anthropoid ape, a squirrel, or a toad that sucks the vapour of a dungeon, than be God-made men and women.

The second party, religious but unconverted, would prefer to have the blessings of the gospel left intact ; but the consequences of living a life of self-will and forgetfulness of God would, in their opinion, be better eliminated from the minds of men. If people only attend to their religious duties—and what these are they are themselves the best judges—all will be well ! God is merciful, and the failures of His erring creatures are not so heinous in His sight as some parts of Scripture would lead us to believe ! Then, of course, it would not do for a Christian ecclesiastic to give up the Bible altogether !

The third party are those who have seen something of their sinfulness in the sight of a holy and righteous God, of their amenability to His judgment, condemnation, and wrath, and have fled to the only refuge—Christ and His precious blood. In His death they see a way of salvation opened up for lost and guilty man, the world-wide love of God declared, their own personal sins judged and put away for ever, and God glorified. And in the resurrection of Christ from the dead they see the triumph of God over the power of the enemy ; death and Him that has the power of it both annulled, and life and incorruptibility brought to light by the gospel. Such are lovers of God, lovers of Christ, and lovers of the Bible, and have proven themselves ready at any time to seal their testimony with the last drop of their heart's blood.

I have said they love the Bible. They believe it to be a revelation given from Himself "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It is able to make them who believe in Christ wise unto salvation. It is a light to their feet, and a lamp to

their path. It is a true witness regarding heaven, earth, hell, and the lake of fire. By reading it humbly and prayerfully one gets acquainted with the knowledge of God ; His thoughts are therein recorded ; His will unfolded ; His purposes enrolled ; and in visional representations we see them accomplished and fulfilled. It is more to be esteemed than our necessary food, for not by bread alone do we live, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Yet the Bible is not the object set before us in the gospel for our faith. No ; Christ is that. Thank God, we have not to study the Book from beginning to end to see whether we can believe every sentence of it in order to have our sins forgiven. No, Christ is the object of the faith of the Christian. He believes Him to be the Creator (Heb. 1. 10 ; John 1. 3, 10 ; Col. 16 ; the Upholder of all things (Col. 1. 17 ; Heb. 1. 3) ; the Man who is set at the right hand of God, and under whose feet everything is placed (Eph. 1. 20, 22) ; the Son of God, the Man Christ Jesus, the propitiation for our sins, the Judge of living and dead, to whom every knee must bow, and who must be confessed as Lord by every intelligence in heaven and in earth, and in the infernal regions (1 John 2. 2 ; Acts 10. 42 ; Phil. 2. 9-11), into whose hand all power is committed (Matt. 28. 18), and who knows all things (John 21. 17). This is the One who is the object of the faith of the believer, the One whom He knows to be "the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20).

Now this glorious person has authenticated the first five books of Moses ; and quoting from them he confounded the Sadducees (Luke 20. 37). He says also that if men did not believe the writings of Moses they were not likely to believe His words (John 6. 46, 47). Now when people talk about men having been a million or more years upon the earth, and as having been evolved from a mollusc, a squirrel, or

an ape, it may look all very learned and interesting; and for the moment it might appear well not to take the first three chapters of Genesis as literally correct, or a pure revelation from God; but then a true believer will at once say to himself: If this be so, what comes of Jesus the Son of God? If you give up the truth of the Book of Genesis, you must also give up the truth of the Son of God. Almost the whole Old Testament has been authenticated by the New. Therefore to discredit the Old is to discredit the New; and to discredit the New is to discredit our LORD JESUS CHRIST; they stand or fall together.

It would only be waste of printer's ink to quote from the sayings of these men, for their addresses are little else than mere confessions of the inutility of their investigations. They are hoping that they may arrive at something by and by, and they are sure not to be hampered for want of time, for a few million years is little more than a moment in their mode of reckoning; but for the present they have nothing definite and conclusive to present to their hearers. How many millions of years were consumed by the squirrels in the "cultivation of their senses," while they "led an unobtrusive and safe life in the trees," before they were big enough and "powerful enough" to venture to take their place on the earth, and "to hold their own" there against all opposition, we are not told, but we are told that life did not arise from "immediate supernatural intervention," and therefore Milton's lions "pawing to get free" is just as faithful a picture of the beginning of things as is the first of Genesis, for neither of them is worthy of credence!

Then men from whom we might have expected better cotton to all this kind of rubbish, because of "the light that science has thrown on the first of Genesis." Light on the first of Genesis! Science has thrown no light at all on the chapter, nor on any verse in the

whole revelation of God. Light on the first of Genesis indeed! Science is darkness itself, and revels in a darkness which might be felt. And were I asked to prove what I say, I would point to the meetings of "*The British Association*," and to what is heard from the midst of that gathering regarding slime, squirrels, and monkeys; and when you have found your way out of that labyrinth of speculation and darkness of human thought, you will, with a sigh of relief, give thanks to God, and that with determination never to return that way again unless you prefer darkness to light.

What a relief it is to turn to the Word of God! With what grandeur and dignity the making of the heaven and the earth is told! First, the creation of the heavens and the earth are attributed to God; and the simple and dignified way in which the statement is made goes right home to one's inmost soul as the truth of the living God Himself. Then we see the earth in a state of ruin, and upon this ruin the six days' work begins, and all in view of a dwelling-place for man, who was to be made in the image and in the likeness of God. What power! what majesty! what wisdom! what authority! what creatorial glories burst forth before the vision of the soul! Let any one ponder the speculations of these men, and then read the first chapter of Genesis, and see whether the contrast is not between that of earth and heaven, between the mind of man and the mind of God.

It was man, the one who was to take the place of head, centre, and ruler, who was in the thought of God when His Spirit began to move on the face of the waters; hence every living creature that God made came into being, bearing some analogy to him, its head; some nearer to him than others; some at a very remote distance indeed; but none so far removed from him to be outside his dominion (Gen. 1. 26). But as to himself, he had a link directly with

God, which no creature had. While he had a link with all that was beneath him, he had also a link with that which was above him, even with God Himself, who had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and thus caused him to become a living soul. And in this lay all his dignity and superiority over everything upon the earth. His link with his Creator is his glory. Take that away, and you have reduced him to the level of the brute creation.

The sad thing about it all is, that man prefers even such a humiliation as this to the position of responsibility to God. Therefore the fact that every living creature stands in relationship with its head, and to him bears some analogy, be it from that which seems to stand nearest to him to that which apparently is at such a distance as to be almost without analogy at all, is used by the godless and infidel mind of man to prove his theories of evolution, and for no other reason than to get rid of the Lord and His Anointed. If men would only reason downward, instead of upward to man, they might see the unintelligent creation so formed that it might stand in relationship to its intelligent head, who was to have dominion over it for its good and for his own happiness.

But if all has been lost and ruined by the fall of the earthly head, who has by his transgressions made himself subject to death and to eternal judgment, we shall see recovery in the heavenly Head, but in a new and spiritual way, and only of those who submit themselves to Him ; and we shall see a new creation under Him, which shall bear some trait of the heavenly Man ; though, as in the first creation, so in the second, there will be families which shall be nearer, and others which shall be more distant ;

the nearer bearing the greatest analogy to the exalted and heavenly Head, the last Adam, and Christ of God.

When this has come to pass where will these wiselings be who despise the revelation God has been pleased to give of Himself, and pride themselves in their own investigations and speculations, which result in nothing but wildernesses of error ? They expect to see the chemist manufacturing life, and destroying death ; for in their judgment we should be going back to semi-barbarism to imagine that man was a fallen sinner, and that death came by sin.

Well, thank God, we have a *test* that can be easily applied to all that comes forth from the greatest men upon earth, and that *test* is *Christ*. I ask myself, *How does what I hear affect Him ?* He may be of little account to-day in the thought of those who bear His name. He may be almost as thoroughly rejected in Christendom to-day as He was by His earthly people when they put Him upon a gibbet ; but He sits supreme in heaven at the right hand of God, waiting until His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. Then the drivellings of men will be all over. Every problem will have been completely solved, and it will be seen in the light of that day who have been wise and who have been foolish upon earth. It will be a terrible day for the Christ-despiser, for it will be the despised Nazarene who shall sit upon the great white throne, and who will reward every man according to his works.

May both reader and writer find Christ a perfect test to which everything that is presented to us in this corrupt profession may be subjected ; and may we be ready to welcome Him at His coming again.

“Every Scripture is God-breathed.”

A glory gilds the Sacred page,
Majestic, like the sun :

It gives a light to every age ;

It gives, but borrows none. (Cowper).

Gideon's Two Signs and their Significance. (A. J. POLLOCK).

THEY were very dark days in Israel. The land was suffering sorely because of the evil of God's people. They sowed their corn, but reaped no harvest. The Midianites came up at harvest-time with their cattle and tents as grasshoppers for multitude, and destroyed the increase of the earth.

At this juncture God raised up a deliverer in the person of Gideon. Gideon's family being poor in Manasseh, himself the least in his father's house, and his father a worshipper of Baal, he felt backward in responding to God's choice, and desired a sign by which he might be fully assured of God's purpose. So we read:—

"And Gideon said unto God, If Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, . . . behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

"And Gideon said unto God, Let not Thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray Thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground (Judges 6. 36-40).

The thoughtful reader will inquire what is the meaning of these signs. As oft-times in unexpected places in the Old Testament Christ is prefigured—His person, His atoning death, His triumphant resurrection—so here these signs prefigure Him.

Gideon asked for a sign that would prove God to be ready to save His people from their oppressors. On a far larger scale, and in regard to spiritual oppression, God has proved His willingness to save. How?

Gideon's signs illustrate how. His first sign was that of a fleece of wool saturated with dew, while all around was dry. Is this not a picture of the Lord Jesus in this world? All in this world (apart from God's acting by His Spirit) was dry and sapless as far as God was concerned. There was not a drop of refreshing moisture for God in the world. All was dry and moistureless.

A wondrous significance must be attached to the life of the Lord Jesus. It could be said of Him prophetically seven centuries before He appeared:—

"I will heal their [Israel's] backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him. I WILL BE AS THE DEW UNTO ISRAEL: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (Hosea 14. 4, 5).

This will yet be true of God's ancient people. Look at them to-day. Scattered, peeled, despised among the nations: their very name a byword for tortuousness and dishonesty, as is instanced by the common saying, To 'jew' a person. But when Christ gets His rights, when a nation is born a day, how different will everything be. He will, indeed, be as the dew unto Israel, and Israel shall flourish.

But *personally* He was ever that in Himself. Incomparably beautiful under the eye of God, every thought, word, action was fully and absolutely delightful to His Father. He was, indeed, as the fleece wet with the dew of heaven amid the barren sterility, the moral Desert of Sahara, that reigned on every hand.

Was not the Lord of glory, the eternal Word, the full expression of God, and Himself God living in this world, a wonderful sign of which Gideon's saturated fleece was but a faint foreshadowing—a sign that God would bring salvation? Indeed He was, and the contemplation of Him thus fills the heart with adoring wonder.

Yet we must go further. The life of the Lord, incomparably beautiful as it was, could not have brought salvation. That life was a means to an end, and that end was a sacrificial death. For the distinct purpose of dying did He become man.

"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).

And this brings us to Gideon's second sign. This time the fleece of wool was dry, whilst all around was dew. How touchingly does this remind one of the cross of Christ. In order that the dew of God's grace might rest upon the dry and arid waste of humanity, God forsook Him, who was as the dew of the morning. More than a thousand years before, the Holy Spirit, with His mind full of what was to happen upon the cross, indited a psalm, which could not apply to David, the writer, which could only apply to one Person, and that Person in one set of circumstances. It could only apply to the Lord Jesus and His sacrificial death upon the cross. Hear His lament:—

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd" (Ps. 22. 15).

How truly can the language referring to Ephraim be applied to the

Lord, not in connection with Him personally, but *substitutionally*:—

"Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become *dry*, and his fountain shall be *dried up*" (Hosea 13. 15).

Wonder of wonders! We see Jesus forsaken on the cross. The only One who fully delighted the Father's heart, the One to whom He was indebted for the display of Himself, was abandoned to the fierce judgment of God. The east wind of God's fierce wrath, the blazing indignation of His absolute holiness, like the scorching wind of the Lord from the wilderness, was concentrated upon Him, who was the delight of His heart. Mystery of mysteries!

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

God forsook His Son that His attitude towards this world might be one of grace and blessing, that the dew of His goodness might rest upon it.

It is not a little significant that Gideon chose the fleece of wool for his signs, for the lamb slain was ever the chosen sign of redemption, and the glorious Person, whom we have been considering, bears as one of His most wonderful titles, "*The Lamb of God.*"

The reader will do well to ponder these things until his heart is filled with a sense of who the Lord Jesus was and what He did, till overflowing worship is the result, reaching Him as He is and where He is—in the glory, and of this HE IS WORTHY.

Atonement.

Everything is based on atonement—the perfect infinite glorifying of God as to good and evil. This, as a moral foundation, is the centre of all blessing and makes the blessing dependent on it immutable. It is not the founding

of blessing on creature responsibility—as was the case with angels, Adam, and Israel under the law—but on God's having been *already* perfectly glorified in respect of every moral question which *could* be raised. (Darby).

Toledoth—Generations.

(EDWARD CROSS).

THE book of Genesis is commonly entitled the "seed-plot of the Bible," and one of its characteristic features is the "Toledoth" that it contains, giving an account of creation and the history of the human families from Adam to Joseph, *i.e.*, typically to the glory of Christ in the world to come.

"Toledoth," derived from a word to "bring forth," to "beget," means generations, races, history of families or accounts of them, and the *origin* of other things, as Genesis 2. 4, "This is the origin of the heavens and the earth."

A similar idea is found in Matthew 1. 1: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ." Here it is His royal pedigree, as in the line of succession from Abraham and David.

There are 11 "Toledoth" in Genesis: 1 of creation and 10 of the human families till Joseph, as follows, viz. :—

(1) Genesis 2. 4: The Toledoth of the heavens and of the earth.

(2) Genesis 5. 1: The book of the Toledoth of Adam.

(3) Genesis 6. 9: The Toledoth of Noah.

(4) Genesis 10. 1: The Toledoth of the Sons of Noah.

(5) Genesis 11. 10: The Toledoth of Shem.

(6) Genesis 11. 27: The Toledoth of Terah.

(7) Genesis 25. 12: The Toledoth of Ishmael.

(8) Genesis 25. 19: The Toledoth of Isaac, Abraham's son.

(9) Genesis 36. 1: The Toledoth of Esau, who is Edom.

(10) Genesis 36. 9: The Toledoth of Esau, the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir.

(11) Genesis 37. 2: The Toledoth of Jacob.

i.e., we have *one* Toledoth for the physical creation, and *ten* for the families of man.

Notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, and a different rendering given of Genesis 2. 5-7 from that of the A.V. to enforce this contention, it would seem that the Toledoth of Genesis 2. 4 refers to chapters 1.-4., giving an account of creation with all contained in it—plants, animals, and man—including the history of the fall and its consequences. It began well; it ended ill—in hope (Rom. 8. 20).

In these few chapters we have, cut in granite letters that cannot be effaced, the imperishable truth of universal history in all its moral features, which *saute aux yeux*, stands out unmistakably to the eyes of all who are not blinded to the light. They tell of the absolute creative power of God; of His supreme goodness in the creation which He made; of the subtle and destructive power of sin; of the unalterable purposes of grace, working redemption through blood that "speaketh better things than that of Abel;" and of the evil course of this world, countervailed by "another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen. 4. 25).

So much for the Toledoth of creation, and the bright hope set forth in this first section, that "at evening time it shall be light" (Zech. 14. 7).

THE BOOK OF THE TOLEDOTH OF ADAM (Gen. 5. 1).

It is the history of a fallen race. Driven out of the garden of Eden, Adam begets a son in his own likeness, and, having lived his allotted life, he dies; and so do all his posterity, until we come to Enoch, who stands out as a striking exception to the general rule. He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him, "for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Doubtless, he was a type of the church, which will be "raptured" before the great tribu-

lation (1 Thess. 4. 13-17; Rev. 3. 10), in contrast to Noah, who is a figure of those who come through it (Rev. 7. 9-17).

This Toledoth ends in violence and wickedness; "and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." "But Noah found grace in His eyes."

THE TOLEDOTH OF NOAH (Gen. 6. 9).

"He was a just man and perfect in his generations; and, like Enoch, Noah walked with God" in a scene of corruption and violence pervading all the earth.

Two things characterize this section:—judgment for the world, and salvation for all in the ark; closing up with an "everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." But this new world fails already in the person of Noah, in whom it was set up; and the consequences of Ham's unfilial conduct still cleaves to his posterity, in the curse that has never been removed.

THE TOLEDOTH OF THE SONS OF NOAH (Gen. 10. 1).

This is a very interesting section as mapping out the great outlines of the divisions into which the nations of the world, proceeding from the three sons of Noah, have been divided, and "their sons born to them after the flood." This ends in Babel, the product of the pride of man, seeking to build them a city and a tower—co-ordination and security—whose top would reach unto heaven, that they might be independent of God. Hitherto they were one people, and they had one language; and "now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." This is just the active principle that governs the world to-day. With its confederacies, its trade unionisms of various kinds, and the activity of its will, working up to

the mystery of abominations, and calling down the judgment that falls upon it, as we read in Revelation 17. and 18. Who that has eyes to see, does not see it in all the happenings of our own time?

So much for the history of the world around; we come now to the signaling of the line of faith, in which the purposes of God are to be fulfilled.

THE TOLEDOTH OF SHEM (Gen. 11. 10).

The striking feature of this list, in contrast to the Toledoth of Adam, chapter 5., where "they lived, and they begat, and they died," is that here it is only said they lived and they begat. Death is no longer the prominent feature. We seem to enter at once upon a region of life and productiveness, until the Toledoth brings us on to Terah, and thence to Abram, and his brother Nahor (chap. 11. 26); and then again prepares the way for Rebekah (chap. 22. 20-23), and in due course for Rachel (chap. 29. 5, 6), and thus we come to Joseph, which is the great purpose of the whole book (chap. 30. 22-24).

THE TOLEDOTH OF TERAH (Gen. 11. 27).

This gives us the history of Abraham and of Lot, with the episode of Hagar and Ishmael; the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah; and the sons of Abraham by Keturah, with their descendants. They are named apparently to show that they are none of them in the line of promise (Rom. 9. 6-8), for "Abraham gave all he had unto Isaac" (chap. 24. 36; 25. 5); but to the rest he gave gifts, and sent them away from his son Isaac, while he yet lived, "eastward, unto the east country" (vers. 6). Thus all the glory of the coming kingdom is being prepared "from long-back"—*dès longtemps*—(Ps. 93. 2), and all is moving, as foretold, on the irresistible wheels of time, to the consummation of that day when He comes to whom it all belongs.

Abraham is called the "father of the faithful" (Rom. 4. 11, 16), and the "Friend of God" (Is. 41. 8; James 2. 23). The first feature in his history is his God-awakened desire for something better than what was to be found in his own surroundings, either natural, tribal, or domestic. "The God of glory appeared to him," and his soul was filled with divinely-begotten expectations beyond the limitations of his own circumstances (Gen. 12. 1-3). Then, the next great landmark in his history is when the expanse of the heavens is opened to his uplifted gaze, "and he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15. 5, 6). Great indeed was the prospect thus set before him; but there remained still a greater and a deeper mystery—*supernatural*—to be unfolded to him—the power of God over death, as witnessed in the resurrection. This was the crowning victory of Abraham's faith, and by it he obtained the confirmation on oath, as well as an extension, of the promises already given to him (Heb. 11. 17-19; 6. 13-18).

Three great principles are exemplified in his history, viz., faith, fear, and obedience (Gen. 15. 6; 22. 12, 18); and on them the dealings of God with His people are based through all time to the end. They are summed up by James in a few words, thus: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2. 21-23).

THE TOLEDOTH OF ISHMAEL (Gen. 25. 12).

The Lord had promised to Hagar that He would multiply her seed exceedingly, so that it should not be

numbered for multitude (Gen. 16. 10); and we have here accordingly the names of "twelve princes, the sons of Ishmael, according to their nations." "They dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria" (chap. 25. 18), *i.e.*, "they stretched across the desert to the Persian Gulf; peopled the north and west of the Arabian peninsula; and eventually formed the chief element of the Arab nation" (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*). By the subsequent marriage of Esau with Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28. 9), the two peoples were intermingled, destined as they were to play a very conspicuous part in the history of the world; yet the Toledoth of Ishmael is confined to seven verses only.

THE TOLEDOTH OF ISAAC, ABRAHAM'S SON (Gen. 25. 19).

As in the case of Ishmael and Isaac, the child "after the flesh" is set aside to make way for the child of "*promise*" (Rom. 9. 8, 9), so here, "while the children are still in the womb, that the purpose of God according to *election* might stand," Esau is set aside for Jacob (Rom. 9. 11; Mal. 1. 2, 3). This has ever been an offence to the pride of man; nevertheless, plainly, first, God has the right to choose, for He is GOD, and, second, His choice is right, as the event proves (Heb. 12. 16).

And now, amid all the wanderings of Jacob, we come at length to the birth of Joseph (Gen. 30. 22-24), the fore-runner of another Son, who presages the future glory and security in blessing of the "beloved" people of God, to be received in due time through Joseph (Gen. 49. 27; Deut. 33. 12).

THE TOLEDOTH OF ESAU, WHO IS EDOM (Gen. 36. 1).

He is allied with the daughters of Canaan and Ishmael, an unhappy compound, that unites the pride of man with

the worship of nature and degraded beastiality, in "perpetual hatred," and deadly opposition, as seen to-day, to the accomplishment of the purposes of God in Christ (Ezek. 35. 5). Idumœa, the Greek form for Edom, was the name given later on to the country lying between the valley of the Arabah, on the western side of the Salt Sea, and extending to the Mediterranean. It seems to betoken the confederacy of "all nations," when the sword of heaven shall fall on "the world," in "the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion" (Isa. 34. 8).

THE TOLEDOTH OF ESAU, THE FATHER OF THE EDMITES IN MOUNT SEIR (Gen. 36. 9).

This gives the various tribes with their dukes, or sheiks, into which the sons of Esau were divided, and the "kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."

Note, that while the Toledoth of divine purpose dates backward by descent, as the Toledoth of Isaac, Abraham's son, and that back to "Adam, who was the son of God" (Luke 3. 38), this Toledoth starts the whole family of the Edomites in Mount Seir. They are children of pride born to destruction (see Obadiah). "All that is of the world is not of the Father:" it does not derive from Him, and it falls finally under the judgment of the Son (John 5. 22, 27).

Meanwhile "Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a *stranger*, in the land of Canaan."

THE TOLEDOTH OF JACOB. JOSEPH . . . (Gen. 37. 2).

Everything here has an end, and every expectation begotten of the Spirit of God will be fulfilled to those who wait for it. "All the promises of God are in Christ Yea, and in Him

Amen, to the glory of God by us." Joseph comes at last. The eternal purposes of God (πρόθεσις) according to His good pleasure (εὐδοκία), after the counsel (βουλή) of His own will, will be fulfilled in blessing for Israel and for the world, for heaven and for earth (Ps. 96., 97.), and every crown wherewith He can be crowned shall "be on the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of Him that was separate from his brethren." (Read Gen. 49. 22-26; Deut. 33. 13-17, and meditate thereon.)

This is the Gospel and the writings of John. This is the beginning and the end, where there is neither end nor beginning. This is the Zaphnath-Paaneah, the Bread of life to the world. This is "the veritable God and the life eternal;" the greatest of the great, in Being and in State; yet here in form so lowly, in the likeness of man, and in ways so self-emptyed, that He made NOTHING of Himself (John 5. 19), that God might be EVERYTHING in Him. He learned the first principle of government—obedience—in the things which He suffered (Heb. 5. 8). He is exalted to the highest point of power and of administration (Gen. 41. 38-45). He was faithful to God in the hour of temptation (Gen. 39. 9). Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and placed His name peerless (Phil. 2. 9) in the house of Peers (Heb. 1. 9).

He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold for a servant! Whose feet they hurt with fetters (Luke 24. 39): he was laid in iron until the time that his word came: the Word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him—even the ruler of the people—and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance—to bind his princes at his pleasure, and to teach his senators wisdom" (Ps. 105. 17-22). "Blessed be Thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise" (Neh. 9. 5). Amen and Amen.

Misunderstood.

(JAMES BOYD).

“Therefore the world knoweth us not because it
knew Him not” (1 John 3. 1).

MISUNDERSTOOD : with spirit unobtrusive
We pass along this world's unquiet way ;
Friends faithless fail us, foes with words abusive
Assail our ears, and thus we fill our day,
Misunderstood.

Misunderstood : how could it be expected
That light would be by darkness eulogized ?
Or love by hatred ? Was not Christ rejected,
Reproached, reviled, dishonoured, mocked, despised,
Misunderstood ?

Misunderstood : it may be they accuse us
Of things which to our minds have never come ;
Buffet with falsehood foul, bespate, abuse us—
Pass on, my soul, to slander deaf and dumb,
Misunderstood.

Misunderstood : why should we worry o'er it ?
It comes, like all things earthly, to an end.
Our living Lord and Master meekly bore it,
And suffered death, by every human friend
Misunderstood.

Misunderstood : not this our grief, but glory ;
The earthly never can the heavenly know.
Not wiser grows the world, tho' old and hoary,
And therefore must the sons of God be so
Misunderstood.

Misunderstood : but here we must be careful,
Lest hard and haughty should our spirits grow.
Make us, O Lord, more watchful and more prayerful,
That we may bless when we are cursed, altho'
Misunderstood.

Misunderstood : when we are manifested
Before His judgment-seat, and in His sight ;
And when the work and motive both are tested,
Then every soul shall in that living light
Be understood.

Yes, understood : O haste that day eternal,
When every eye the Christ of God shall see,
When bright shall shine His saints in bliss supernal,
And every workman and his work shall be
WELL UNDERSTOOD.

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 20.

The Crucifixion.

Matt. 27. Mark 15. Luke 23.

THE Spirit of God has been pleased to give us four accounts of the last hours of our Saviour, and all must feel the supreme claim they have on our prayerful contemplation. Only the Spirit who indited them can lead us intelligently and profitably in our study. JOHN'S Gospel stands apart from the other three, and we are not considering his record at the present time, but it may be said that he presents to us the Son in manhood as the true burnt offering, laying down His own life in obedience to the Father's Will. In chapter 19. 30, we should read "He . . . delivered up His Spirit" (*cf.*, 10. 17, 18). So also we read in this Gospel alone, "He bearing His cross went forth." The other writers mention the bearing of the cross by Simon of Cyrene. The cause or occasion of the transfer of the burden is nowhere stated, and it seems wiser and more reverent to leave it thus, than, as is commonly done, to find the reason in the inability of physical weakness.

MARK, with his usual attention to detail, is the only writer who gives the hour of the Crucifixion; it was the third hour, according to Jewish reckoning. JOHN, writing much later than the other evangelists and using Roman reckoning, gives the sixth hour, for an earlier occurrence (19. 14).

MATTHEW and MARK exhibit only a few verbal differences as to the period we are considering. They describe the insulting mockery of all classes, the passers-by, the priests, the scribes, the elders, and last of all of the robbers in their dying misery. At midday the scene changes, a preternatural darkness spreads over the land; just before it passes, as the time of prayer and of the evening sacrifice draws near (Acts 3. 1, Ps. 141. 2), the Saviour is heard, in loud voice, proclaiming Himself forsaken of God, thus giving to all the true import of that dread hour which stands absolutely alone in time or eternity. With another loud cry which we know from John was the triumph of victory, "It is finished," He *expires*, so the word

in MARK 15. 37 should be rendered. In MATTHEW, it is rather "He *dismissed* His spirit" (*ἀφῆκε*).

It should be noticed in these first two Gospels, which give our Saviour's cry of abandonment, that His death is presented as taking place without the alleviation indicated by the two utterances found in JOHN and LUKE, respectively, "It is finished" and "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Each presentation is perfect in its place, but if we put them together we learn what is so deeply interesting, that, to cite a well-known writer, "the soul of Jesus passed into His peace, that He might give up His spirit—which no one took from Him—to God His Father." His soul, which living had "gone morally through all the full depth of the—to us—unfathomable suffering of the atoning work." The difference between the truth given through MATTHEW and MARK on the one hand and LUKE and JOHN on the other will thus be evident. The first two Gospels present Christ to us as the true sin-offering, suffering without any mitigation the penalty of man's sin, in both judgment and death. The aspect of the Cross presented here, constitutes, along with the lake of fire, God's eternal witness to His intolerance of sin. In accordance with this it may be noticed that only in these Gospels do we find the refusal of the narcotic draught whereby suffering might have been alleviated (Matt. 27. 34, Mark 15. 23). The gall mentioned in MATTHEW was a poisonous plant with fruit like grapes (Deut. 32. 32). MARK mentions myrrh as another ingredient. It appears to have been customary to administer this to those condemned to a painful death.

LUKE exhibits quite striking differences; Christ is here the dependent and obedient Man of Psalm 16., confiding in God in view of death itself; the fine flour anointed with oil of Leviticus 2. or, as the same chapter presents Him, green ears of corn of the first-fruits roasted by the fire, corn

beaten out of full ears, with oil and frankincense, all is tested by the fire of the altar and issues in a savour of rest to Jehovah. All the grace of God is in that blessed Man; hence we hear Him praying for His murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He welcomes the dying thief to be His companion in Paradise, and after death the same grace reaches the poor Gentile centurion, who "glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man." The record in the other Gospels that He owns Him Son of God, may indicate advance in spiritual apprehension. Our souls may well bow in adoration to the God who acts thus in the supremacy of grace over all man's sin. His purpose to bless through Jesus knows no defeat. All this is given in the Gospel of the Son of Man, who, having first overcome in the conflict of Gethsemane, now passes through death in communion with the Father, saying as He expires, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Ps. 31.). The forsaking of God is entirely omitted and the rending of the veil, though mentioned, does not here seem to occur as the consequence of His death, as in MATTHEW and MARK.

The incident of the great concourse of people with the women who bewailed and lamented Him is suitably found in this Gospel only, the absoluteness of His isolation not being so prominent here. To them the Lord speaks in solemn warning of the days to come, when man's sin would reach another climax, ultimately under Anti-christ—the dry tree—in the dead and corrupt Jewish nation which would soon be found in the throes of national dissolution at the hand of the

Gentile masters they were now choosing in preference to their own Messiah. Probably the same company is referred to in verse 48. These, whether believers or not, had no sympathy with the crime of the nation, but were powerless to influence the determined purpose of the rulers.

While LUKE records these evidences of human sympathy, and, as we have seen, the work of grace in man's heart, MATTHEW gives prominence to the consequences of the work of atonement, in the rent veil, mentioned also in MARK and LUKE, and, in what is found here only, the earthquake and that remarkable anticipation of the resurrection which was given as a witness to "many" (27. 53). In figure, heaven is opened, the powers of darkness defeated, and death vanquished.

This crowning sin of the nation, with its rulers, forces Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus (MATTHEW), an honourable counsellor, who waited for the kingdom of God (MARK), a good man and a just who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them (LUKE), into a real though tardy separation, and he is used to fulfil Isaiah 53., which foretells how the great Servant-Sufferer would have His grave appointed with the wicked, but would find it with the rich after He was slain. Thus it came to pass that the body prepared of God (Heb. 10. 5), in which His will had been so perfectly fulfilled, was taken by His over-ruling providence out of hostile hands and became the object of loving care on the part of a true disciple.

C. E. H. WARREN.

Mark's Gospel.

IN turning to MARK again (see Vol. iii, 189) the facts that form the personal ministry of the Lord, which is the special scope of this Gospel, are mainly the same as recorded in MATTHEW, though not always in the same arrangement of them. In MARK they are given in their historic order, as suited to the record of service rendered under such unparalleled circumstances as that of the Son of God in this world. There is neither the dispensational framework, as we have seen in

MATTHEW, nor the moral connection of LUKE, with the revelation of grace towards all contained in that Gospel. Here it is just the blessed Lord unweariedly passing from one scene of gracious ministry to another, precious details being preserved of His manner of action, His very looks, and words sometimes in the common language of the people, and how He was affected inwardly—all giving wonderful verisimilitude to the narrative.

Some characteristic features may be noticed. In chapter 5. 1-21 instead of the brief account of two demoniacs coming out of the tombs as in MATTHEW, MARK and LUKE occupy us with but one of them, made prominent evidently by the power of Satan over him, especially as expressed by his name Legion as it was brought out by the Lord's question; and also by the beautiful fruit of grace in him attaching him to his Deliverer: he is found by those who came out to see what was done, "sitting at the feet of Jesus (LUKE), clothed, and in his right mind," his only desire to be with Jesus when rejected out of their coasts, thus the more fitted to be sent to his friends to tell them of how great things the compassionate Lord had done for him--details of the deepest interest not within the scope of MATTHEW. Similarly in the case of the woman with the issue of blood, met with when the Lord was on the way to the ruler of the Synagogue's dying daughter, we have the lovely expression not merely of her faith in a secret touch of His clothes, and the instant answer to it, but of the way the Lord led her out into the light to own all the truth.

Approaching Jairus' house the word reached them that his daughter was dead, it was no use troubling the Master further. But the word of the Lord to him was, "Be not afraid, only believe." And in the presence of Peter and James and John and the parents He took her hand and bid her arise; and having restored her to life, He, in touching care for the child, directs that she should be given food.

His rejection in His own country (chap. 6. 1-6), given in MATTHEW at the close of the similitudes of the kingdom of heaven, has doubtless its historic place here: He could do no mighty work there, save for a few sick folk upon whom He laid His hands and healed them, marveling at the general unbelief. And we are led on to the first sending forth of the twelve ("He began to send them forth") by two and two, with power given them over unclean spirits. The terms of their commission, which in Matthew 10. limited them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, with the testimony to be resumed when they were once more found in their cities, with all the intervening circumstances, are not given here, but

simply that they were to be without natural provision for the journey,* though their testimony would be final for those who rejected it. The whole of Matthew 11., too, upon which so much turned in that Gospel has no place here. But we have, with much fuller detail, the terrible circumstances under which Herod, notwithstanding the impression made upon him by John the Baptist, had beheaded the Lord's faithful servant; and which accounts for his uneasy conscience when he heard of Jesus, whose name was spread abroad, lest it should be that John was risen from the dead. Next, the Apostles gathered together unto Him, full of all that they had done and taught. He led them apart into a desert place for needed quiet and rest, for with many coming and going there was no leisure even for food. But quickly sought out in their retirement by the multitude, the compassion of the Lord went out to them as sheep without a shepherd, and the scene of the feeding of the five thousand, made familiar to us by the narratives of the four evangelists, comes out with special vividness in MARK, where He bids the disciples give them to eat, silences questions as to the means at their disposal by the command to make all sit down by companies on the green grass; and we see them arranged in ranks of hundreds and fifties with superabounding provision for all.

The sequel of His constraining the disciples to cross the sea in face of a contrary wind, while He dismissed the multitude and departed to the mountain to pray is as in MATTHEW, and His coming towards them walking on the water; only that Peter's stepping out by faith into the same path, impossible to man save as sustained by divine power, which had such an important bearing upon what was to follow for His disciples in that Gospel, is not found here. But when He would have passed by them, and they all saw Him and were troubled, He immediately talked with them and calmed

* A slight difference may be noticed in the details given. The "save a staff only" might seem to conflict with "nor a staff" in Matthew (for all critical authorities read the singular); but the point is that in Matthew they were not to "provide" or procure (*κτήσασθε*) these things. In Mark they may take (*αἰρωσιν*) for their journey what they already possessed (so Bengel and Alford). They were to "be shod with sandals," not "shoes" as in Matthew.

their fears, and joined them in the ship, when the wind ceased; and MARK emphasizes their amazement, tracing it to their not having allowed the miracle of the loaves to have its place in their hardened hearts. When they reach the land where once the Lord had been besought to depart, the whole countryside bring their sick that they might touch but the hem of His garment and be made whole.

In chapter 7., on the occasion of some of the disciples eating bread without washing their hands, and the religious leaders of the people calling attention to it, the Lord exposes the hypocrisy that would cover up evil by external forms; and the downward steps in departure from God by the religiousness of the flesh that pretends to draw near to Him may be traced. They teach for doctrines the commandments of men (ver. 7); laying aside the commandment of God they hold the tradition of men (ver. 8); next they reject the commandment of God to keep their own tradition (ver. 9); and finally make the word of God of none effect through it (ver. 13). Then in the ear of all the people He states what ought to be simple enough, that defilement comes not from what enters into a man but from what comes out of him. Yet such the baneful influence of the system they had been brought up in, that in the house the disciples ask Him of what appears to them to be a parable, and, more fully given than in MATTHEW, the Lord exposes the depths of the heart's evil, the sink of every defiling thing. But if man's heart must be revealed, God's heart will be too. He departs to the very northernmost limits of the land, the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and there retires from publicity, as often in MARK—what a lesson for the servant, from the Son of God, the perfect Servant—but He

could not be hid; need and faith knew where to find Him even if it be in a Gentile, Canaanite too, with a devil-possessed daughter. True, she was not of those who had the children's claim, but she humbly takes the dog's place beneath the table as He gives it her and finds that there are crumbs for the dogs from such bounty as His, so the heart of God comes out. "For this saying, go thy way the devil is gone out of thy daughter." It cannot but be noted that with MARK's accustomed fullness of detail we have not here her first appeal to the Lord as "Son of David," nor the silence of the Lord so unusual with Him, with the request of the disciples that He should send her away, leading to the decisive statement of His mission as not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—all so strikingly in place in MATTHEW.

Returned again to the normal scene of His labours in Galilee, we have from MARK alone the case of one who could neither hear nor tell his need, and the tender ways of the Lord in His service of love are beautifully illustrated. He took him apart from the crowd, who had no part in the work of God, and we are allowed to follow the interesting touch of His finger on both ears and tongue, His look directed to heaven, His sigh over the distressing consequences of sin upon earth. We hear the very accent of His voice, as by a word of Divine Power He makes both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. Again, He charged them to tell no man, but without avail: beyond measure, astonished, they spread it abroad, saying, "He hath done all things well." What could be more characteristic of the whole Gospel; as in MATTHEW, who groups together a number of these cases of healing, that they should glorify the God of Israel? (Ch. xv, 30. 31.)

J. ALFRED TRENCH.

"I know not where His islands lift
 Their fronded palms in air:
 I only know I cannot drift
 Beyond His love and care."

Notes and Comments.

(By the late Col. S. L. JACOB.)

The Responsibility of Christians with regard to the Truth they know.

WE may be quite sure of this, that God grants no monopolies to any Christians, and that if He grants the knowledge of His truth to any, it is with the object that this truth and light should have a formative effect within, and then when this has taken place, that which is within will be in display without, so that others may be attracted by that which is of Christ.

It is useless to talk of having truth or light unless it is formative, and if formative it must be in display. Without this the only result must be greater condemnation. The Lord does not give for our own enjoyment merely, but for the setting forth of Himself; and it has been well said that as soon as ever the people of God cease to be a delivering people they will immediately need deliverance themselves. Mark, for instance, the rapid declension from conquest and victory under Joshua to bondage and slavery in the times of the Judges. Those, therefore, who have the truth are responsible to set forth the truth, and this is true of all, though all are not called to public speaking. I Thessalonians I. and Philippians I. show how this was true of the churches of God at Thessalonica and at Philippi.

The Essential Quality for Service.

If I were asked what quality is most essential in the Lord's servants, I should, I think, answer "*sobriety*." By this I do not mean a natural quality (though the Lord gives talents to every man *according to his several ability*), but the divinely pro-

duced characteristic of going on steadily and quietly, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, not unduly elated at prosperity, not discouraged by adversity, not subject to panic, but steadily pressing forward at all times, whether with wind and tide or against them, carefully sifting all that is heard, slow to believe evil of a Christian, listening to no whispering or tale-telling, quiet, sober, and reliable, because always leaning on the unseen Presence. Such an one will not act in haste, which is dangerous, but will weigh and meditate; but once a decision is arrived at, will be firm and able to stand against much opposition. He will not be restless and turn from one thing to another, but press forward even when others are turning back. The work is of God, and His word is "Forward," therefore he goes on.

The Present Application of Dispensational Truth.

What does the King say to the righteous when He sits upon the throne of His glory, and all nations are gathered before Him? "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. 25. 34-40).

Is this not written for our learning? Does the fact that dispensationally this applies to the nations after the church has gone make us think that there is

no application to those who in the present day succour or neglect the witnesses of Christ? If we think this, our dispensational intelligence will only be a curse to us. We do well to remember that whatever the dispensational interpretations may be, yet in every passage there is a present application to the saints of God quite apart from the special dispensational meaning. We have lost much by not understanding this.

It is most remarkable that in the vast number Old Testament Scriptures quoted in the New (omitting those which personally apply to Christ) all but a very few are quoted for present application, though dispensationally they belong to a future day. We do well, therefore, to remember that *all* Scripture is written for *our* learning, so that we may profit by all. (See Rom. 15. 4 and 1 Cor. 10. 11.)

Worldly Methods in so-called "Christian Work."

(H. P. BARKER).

IT is to be feared that the Jesuits are by no means the only people who act on the false principle that "the end justifies the means." To what questionable devices do those who rank as "Christian workers" often stoop in order to achieve the object they consider desirable! It may be that their aim is to "attract the young people;" to "increase the attendance at the services;" "to reach a larger number with good influences," or some similar object.

And are not these objects good? That is not the point, kind reader. The question is: By what methods are our aims to be furthered? Is it open to us to employ any and every device in the service of our Master?

In the New Translation of the New Testament (*J. N. Darby*) the last clause of the thirteenth verse of 1 Corinthians 2. is very significantly rendered, "communicating spiritual things *by spiritual means*." Is it, then, permissible for the servant of Christ to use worldly and carnal means in the pursuit of his service?

In this connection the following terrible narrative shall stand as our answer to the question. Comment upon it is needless. It is taken *verbatim* from "The Intelligencer" (April, 1912).

* * * *

"A tramp once entered an evangelistic meeting. At the close, it was thrown open for anyone to speak. He rose and said:

" 'This is the chapel I used to attend when I was a little boy. My father was an officer in this church. He used to sit in that pew. There were seven of us boys in our Sunday-school teacher's class, and we very much loved and respected that Sunday-school teacher. She used to take us home on Saturday afternoons, used to have us at her home, and we used to have music and refreshments, and then we had a look over the lesson for the following day.

" 'After a bit, *in order to keep hold of us, she introduced us to cards*. She showed us how to play them, and she showed us a number of tricks, and so

on. We soon began to ask her to have a little less of the lesson and a little more of the cards, and to show us a few new tricks. Shortly after that we began ceasing to go to her house at all, and we took to cards and cigarettes at other places. This soon began to be a little more pronounced, and then we took to gambling, and as a matter of course we left the Sunday school and her evening class altogether.

“‘I want to tell you what has become of those boys. Two of those seven boys have been hanged; three others are in State prisons for life; the sixth one, if the police knew where he is, would be there too. I am the seventh, and if the police knew I was here I should be behind bars in double quick time. All I have to say is that I do wish my Sunday-school teacher had never taught us boys how to play cards!’”

* * * *

In view of a story like this (related

by one known to the writer as a Christian whose word may be relied on), what shall we say to the billiard tables, whist drives, card parties, and the like, provided by Y.M.C.A.'s and by certain “churches” and chapels? Are these things “spiritual means?” Does anybody seriously imagine that he is doing God service by promoting amusements of this kind among the members of his class or congregation? What will be his dismay in the day when every man's work will be tested to find that he has been training souls for the betting-ring, the gambling-den, and the drinking-saloon rather than for the kingdom of God!

With God the Holy Ghost still present with us, what need have we for questionable methods of any kind? Shall we be losers or gainers if, discarding all such means, we lean wholly and unreservedly upon His omnipotence? If filled and controlled by the Spirit of God, what is there that He cannot work through us for the glory of Christ?

The Need of Grace.

“The whip and the scourge may be righteous, but there is no winning the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness which reigns among the saints of God, but grace, through righteousness, unto eternal life. Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John 13.) have been retained! How many brethren, alienated for all time, that might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the *conscience* merely with the heart ungained—with the heart, I may say, *almost unsought*! We have not overcome evil, because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken readily the judge's chair, and have got

back judgment; but the Master's lowly work we have little done.

“But how little yet do we understand that mere righteous dealing—absolutely righteous, as it may be—will not work the restoration of souls; that judgment, however temperate and however true, will not touch and soften and subdue hearts to receive instruction that, by the very facts of the case, are shown not to be in their true place before God. Man is *not all conscience*; and conscience reached, with the heart away, will do what it did with the first sinner among men—drive him out among the trees of the garden to escape the unwelcome voice.” (Darby)

We can endure any of the trials of life, we can bear any of its burdens, be undismayed by any of its hardships when

we are sure of the heart of God, confident that over all is One who understands even if we do not.

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 10.

(H. J. VINE).

“Behold My Servant.”

Isalah (2). Section 1. Chapters 40 to 48.

THE pre-eminent perfections of the second main portion of Isaiah now come before us. These chapters speak, as did the first section, with divine and excellent eloquence. They are set in holy writ by the Holy Spirit of God as gems of such unrivalled beauty, that even the enemies of inspiration are forced to acknowledge their exalted and incomparable worth.

Reaching forward prophetically to the time when “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”; to the time when the heavens shall be planted with the redeemed, for God’s praise; to the time when all shall shout and sing aloud for very joy; these chapters tell us of the servant of the Lord, who shall bring it all to pass in righteousness and in truth; of the One in whose hand “the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper”; of the One who shall astonish many nations, and before whom kings shall stand in silent wonder, for, as they see His royal majesty in that day, they shall remember that He was once “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

But who then is this honoured Servant who first suffers so sorely, and afterwards ushers in such universal blessedness? Who is He that shall fill and flood this anxious, thirsty world with the knowledge of the one true God, ruling the restless nations with a righteous sceptre in peace, prosperity, and equity?

Matthew 12. 18–21 gives the Holy Spirit’s answer to the question, and provides the key of entrance to the wealth which is so ample and abundant

in Isaiah (2). These verses are quoted from Isaiah 42., and show that this distinguished Servant is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, our precious Saviour.

“Behold My Servant.”

God, who invites us to behold Him, enables the delivered believer by His Spirit so to do. Many Christians are self-occupied, or struggling with sin in the flesh, and are not at leisure from themselves to contemplate this lowly Servant, who fills the heart of God with such infinite delight. Such need to know the freedom which is in Christ Jesus, through His death, where sins and sin were judicially put away. When this freedom is known the heart is at liberty to rejoice in the perfections of this lowly One. He is God’s chosen Servant, God’s Beloved, His soul’s delight; the One upon whom His Spirit is. He shall show forth judgment to the nations for the glory of God; yet He is the One who neither strives or cries out; who will not break a bruised reed nor quench a smoking flax. Yet He shall not fail, but in victory He shall establish the truth in the earth; and in His name, not only Israel, but the nations also shall hope. This is our Lord Jesus Christ, well known to those who have come to Him in faith, even now during the period of His rejection.

He came to His own, to Israel, but they *received Him not*; He was in the world but it *knew Him not*; unknown in the world and rejected from it, He has been welcomed to God’s right hand; and to the children of God, those who have received Him, He is known as the Son of God. They

boast in Him; He fills them with joy and worship; and His love bestowed so bountifully upon them, before the day of His world-wide glory, satisfies them abundantly. Nevertheless, they look forward to the time when He shall be universally honoured, when "He shall come down like showers upon the new mown grass, when truth and righteousness like flowers shall spring up where He shall pass." But their portion is to be translated to the Father's house, to be with Him there (John 14.); then after this they see His name praised on earth, and all nations call Him blessed.

"Yea and Amen."

Patriarchs and prophets, princes and poets, men of God in all ages have looked forward to that day. Abraham saw it and was glad, his heart exulted. God has given great and gracious promises concerning it, and whatever promises of God there are, "in Christ is the Yea, and in Him the Amen" (2 Cor. 1. 19-20). He has secured eternal redemption through His death; and as the risen Man, He will carry out every promise for the glory of God. His trustworthiness and divine capability have been proved amidst sore testings and trials, even to death. This true Servant is both prudent enough and powerful enough to firmly establish all. He is both loving enough and lowly enough; both righteous enough and gracious enough; mighty enough, great enough; meek enough and wise enough; high enough, holy enough, just enough; yea, He is altogether perfect, and of Him it can be said with certainty, "*The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand*" (Isa. 53. 10). THE YEA of all is in Him, and also THE AMEN.

"There is None Other."

Search through all the cities, the centres of commerce and civilization; inquire at all the colleges, the seats of learning and science; ask among

all the rulers—the emperors, kings, princes and legislators—of the earth; search, inquire, ask: "*Is there any other?*" The reply is unmistakable: "*There is none other!*" His faithfulness to God and man has been evidenced already; and though man refused Him, God has shown His approval of His Servant by exalting Him to His right hand, to await the day when His enemies shall be put beneath His feet. Let it not be thought, however, that all men have refused Him, for millions have individually trusted themselves for time and eternity into His hands, only to prove the perfection and greatness of the salvation that is in Him. "*Neither is there salvation in any other*" for Israel nor for the nations of the earth. In His limited sphere of service, recorded in the Gospels, we see the divine ability and faithfulness of this perfect Servant. Soon this will be shown universally. It is true of our Lord Jesus Christ in perfection, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16. 10). He is the trusted Servant, and it is this word "servant," which is the key to Isaiah (2), as the "sign" was the key for Isaiah (1).

The City of the Great King.

We must now ask: What is to be the happy and honoured metropolis, *the earthly centre* of the coming glory, the city of the great King? The last two chapters of the Bible show us *the heavenly centre*, the universal metropolis. It is the heavenly Jerusalem, the assembly, the Lamb's wife. But *the earthly centre* is shown in Isaiah to be Jerusalem *upon* earth; not *over* the earth, as the heavenly city in Revelation.

Isaiah 40. says, "Speak to the heart of *Jerusalem*" (ver. 2). Later we read, she shall be "called Hephzi-bah (my delight is in her)," and her "land Beulah (married)" (62. 4). Again, "behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (65. 18). And

again, "the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. . . . Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. . . . Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (60. 3-20). What a glorious metropolis this will be! It will be the earthly city of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will give to it its beauty and character; as also, in a far higher way, to His heavenly bride, the assembly, which will shine with the very glory of God. But even the earthly city will partake of the character of new creation, and shine in great splendour.

The National Servant.

Another important question is: What nation is to be the national head of the system of nations in that gladsome day? It must be a nation which has kinship with the King, and His city, Jerusalem, as its proper centre. It must also be directly descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This nation must also take character from its personal Head, its King and Priest. To hold such a pre-eminent position as the national head of the world, and *the national servant* of the Lord, it must be immediately under the Lord Jesus Christ, the Seed of David, raised from among the dead, *the personal Servant* of the Lord, and it must take on of His character. Israel alone can answer to all this, as we shall see.

It is patent to all, that they have meanwhile become, as God foretold, "*the tail*" of the nations, through their sins. Judgment will fall upon the lawless in Israel, for "all are not Israel that are of Israel." A remnant, however, will be brought to Christ, and become this highly-privileged nation, having righteousness in Him.

As our Lord Jesus Christ is *the*

personal Servant and the King of Israel, so this remnant blessed in Him become not only *the national servant* but as we see in the closing chapters, as individuals, "*the servants*" of Jehovah. In the singular the word "*servant*" is last used in chapter 53. 11, where we learn that our Lord Jesus Christ, *the righteous Servant*, instructs others in righteousness. This is important to grasp, for "*servants*" are always spoken of afterwards, and their first mention is in 54. 17, where they are identified with the nation, "*the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.*" We are now in a position to understand such wonderful Scriptures concerning Israel as these: "Thou, Israel, art *My servant*, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend. . . . Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel" (41. 8, 14); "Sing, O ye heavens: for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and *glorified Himself in Israel*" (44. 23); "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified (60. 21); finally, "the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth *before all the nations*" (61. 11). It is because of their immediate connection with Christ, that they thus become God's national servant in the world eventually.

"THE SERVANT" then is the key to Isaiah (2). Pre-eminent in poetic and prophetic perfection, tender and touching in their consolations, these chapters "speak to the heart" (40. 2); because they are filled with the loveliness of His service, suffering, humiliation, and exaltation also; and are illuminated with the wonderful wisdom and everlasting love of Him who is altogether lovely in the esti-

mation of the heart which truly knows His love.

"COMFORT" is the first word of Isaiah (2), denoting its inward and more private character; whereas Isaiah (1) is public and political. And as we have there so much of the *official* glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so here we find more of His marvellous *moral* glory. This accounts largely for much of the difference in style (where there is also some similarity) in the two books.

A simple illustration may help. A man writes a book upon the political history of a nation; another book from his hand is compiled from letters to his family. A difference in style and language in the two books would be expected, and it would be folly on that ground to say that the one person did not write both.

There is no excuse for those who deny that Isaiah is the one writer used of God to give us both; for in doing so, they question the authority of our Lord, and the accuracy of the Holy Ghost. In John 12. 37-43, both parts are strikingly linked together as the word of Isaiah, pointing to Christ; but it is significantly added, the reason why some of the leading men in that day did not confess Christ was, that "*they loved glory from men rather than glory from God.*" It is the same to-day.

If a man is in nature's darkness, and not in God's marvellous light, though he be the most learned of men, he will not be able to see the perfections of God's Word, nor understand that Christ is in all the Scriptures, and the chief object for which God has given them to us, so that cheer, comfort, consola-

tion, and hope may fill our hearts abundantly as we learn of Him and the greatness of His work.

The Divisions of Isaiah (2).

Isaiah (2) falls naturally into three distinct sections of nine chapters each: $3 \times 9 = 27$. We cannot always depend upon the chapter divisions of the Bible; but in this case, each of the three sections are subdivided thus $3 \times 3 = 9$. This is a striking fact. The number 3, the number of the Godhead of infinite wisdom, being significantly stamped upon this portion of holy writ; which the hand of the destroyer seeks to tear to pieces. This should be a warning against the literary lawlessness of the day.

Each of the 3 sections of 9 chapters closes, after comforting the true heart, with a solemn pronouncement of punishment for the lawless among the professing people of God. See end of section 1, 48. 22: "*There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the lawless*"; and the end of section 2, 57. 21: "*There is no peace, saith my God, to the lawless*"; lastly, 66. 24: "*Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*"

Let it be only remembered, that "the desires of the mind," as well as of the flesh are, in the unregenerate man, lawless; and we shall not be surprised at the present-day impious and persistent attacks upon the sacred Scriptures of truth. It will, however, brace up the mind of the true believer, to be more persistent in following that which is good, seen in divine perfection in Christ alone.

The love of Christ is not an absorbing, but a radiating love.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
My Saviour, my eternal Rest!
Then only will this longing heart,
Be fully and for ever blest!

We have often been surprised at grievous falls in ourselves or others; but if we fail to watch against the flesh, it is not really at all surprising such should be the result. Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling.

Questions and Answers.

The Full Assurance of Salvation.

"Is it possible for a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ to have full assurance of salvation?"—*W.F.H.*

IT is. And there are at least three reasons why doubts and fears as to this should be for ever banished from the mind of the one who truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are (1), the greatness of the Saviour, (2), His resurrection from the dead, and (3), the testimony of God in His Word.

(1) *THE GREATNESS OF THE SAVIOUR.*

If an angel, even the greatest of them, had come to save sinners, we might well have had doubts as to the result, for an angel is but a creature, and could not have measured the infinite demands of God's justice in order to satisfy them, nor could we have been sure that his power would be sufficient to overthrow the dominion of the devil and death, in order to set sinners free from them. But God did not send an angel, He sent His Son. "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son" (John 3. 16). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4. 10). God knew the greatness of the work, and He sent One who was able to accomplish it; so that we may say, if the Son of God has taken up our cause we need fear no more, for He will carry it through to a successful issue. He cannot fail, and if He is my Saviour my salvation is eternal.

Think of the greatness of this Person. It is written of Him: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 1-3). He is the Almighty and Eternal Word, the Creator of worlds, and He became flesh and dwelt among us (ver. 14), and to Him the Baptist could point and say: "Behold the Lamb of God" (ver. 29). He only could fathom the depth of our need and

meet it. He only could tell the greatness of our sin against God and expiate it. He only could know to the full the demands of God's justice and satisfy them. He only could grapple with the power of death and overthrow it. All this He has done. To His Name be eternal praise!

How glorious is the light that breaks upon the soul when the greatness of the Saviour dawns upon it. Hope sure and certain drives dark despair from out the heart and fills it with gratitude and praise! Yes, we may have full assurance of salvation because of the greatness of the Saviour.

(2) *GOD HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.*

The Scripture says: "And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (1 Cor. 15. 17), so that this becomes a question of vital importance to us. If God has not raised Christ from the dead, it means that He has failed. Sin has proved itself too strong, the work too great, the judgment of God too heavy. The devil has triumphed and there is no Saviour. We are yet in our sins, with nothing before us but a hopeless and woeful eternity. But Christ is raised. God hath raised Him, and His resurrection is the proof that sin has been atoned for, the work of redemption accomplished, God's judgment borne, Satan defeated, and that salvation—full, free, and eternal—has been secured for guilty men. The raising of Jesus is God's seal upon His finished work, His divine and immutable attestation of the absolute perfection and atoning value of His sacrifice. That work was done for us, ungodly sinners, for "Christ died for the ungodly." He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 4. 25; 5. 1). We may

have full assurance of salvation because our Substitute is now clear of all the judgment which was ours. "*God hath raised Him from the dead.*"

(3) THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD.

In the Word of God we have reliable authority upon which to base our confidence. What it states must abide eternally true; it is as stable and unchanging as the throne of God. In the Word of God we have the testimony of God as to the greatness of Christ and the completeness of His work. He tells us that it was for sinners that Jesus died, and we believe it because He says it. He tells us that the blood of Jesus

cleanseth from all sin, and we believe it because He says it. He tells us that Christ is risen from the dead and that through His name the forgiveness of sins is preached to men, and we believe it because He says it. But God also tells us that "by Him (Christ Jesus) all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13. 39). And we must believe this also because God says it. If we can say that we accept God's testimony to Christ and His work, and that He is our only hope and trust, we are amongst the "all that believe," and God declares that they "are justified from all things," and we may have the full assurance as to this because *God says it*.

(EDITOR).

"The Adoption."

"Explain the use of the word "adoption" in Ps. 8. 23 and 9. 4, and its meaning there."—

J. B., Transvaal.

Romans 8. 23 reads: "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The Christian has already received the Spirit of adoption. He can freely use the most wonderful of all invocations, for he can cry, "Abba Father." He can address God in terms of the highest, holiest, and most sacred intimacy, and that because the Spirit of God dwells within him; he has been brought into the relation of a child, through faith in "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." He is in spiritual liberty and can worship the Father in spirit and in truth. But his body is still subject to the common groan of creation, and thus we wait for the redemption of our body. When it takes place, at the coming of our Lord, then our adoption will be complete.

Romans 9. 4, "... Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption." Here the

adoption applies neither to the soul nor the body of the individual believer, but to Israel as a nation. Other glories attach to the same people, but Israel is God's firstborn (see Exod. 4. 22). It ranks highest in all the families on earth in the mind and purpose of God (see Amos 3. 2, and Deut. 32. 8). To it belongs the adoption—the place of national sonship. The meaning of the word adoption is sonship—the place of a son. It gives the thought of priority, and rank and position. It is important to distinguish between childhood and sonship in the present dispensation. We are God's children by being born of Him—and only so—but, as thus born, we are also sons as sealed with the Spirit. John gives us the former and Paul the latter. The word "adoption" is only used five times (Romans 8. 15, 23; 9. 4; Gal. 4. 5, and Eph. 1. 5). (J. WILSON SMITH).

The Church and the World.

"In our Lord's prayer in John 17, much is said of the world; and the same teaching is found in John's Epistles. Is it possible to indicate the dividing line between the church and the world? What do the former and latter embrace?"—J. H., Boscombe.

These two questions open up a wide field of truth of a deeply important nature.

I propose, however, to answer them

only briefly. The truth as to each is distinctly and abundantly set forth in various parts of the New Testament, and in arriving at a scriptural answer to

the second question, the first is virtually solved.

We are not now considering the sad declension—indeed the utter ruin—of the Christian profession here on earth, nor how it has fallen under the deadly influence of the world with which it has become allied, so that, as a vessel of testimony for God it has utterly failed. We are dealing now with the church as it is according to God's purpose and grace, as the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit here; and as the body and bride of Christ.

We may say then, briefly, that the church is the fruit of divine love and divine counsel, and of the atoning death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus; and is formed by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. Christ in glory is its Head—a Christ rejected and crucified by *the world*. It is His body, and the vessel for the display, both now and in the ages to come, of the infinite grace, the all-surpassing wisdom, and unfailing glory of God. "The church" embraces all these blessed facts and truths—and more also.

"The world," on the other hand (as used in the Scripture in John alluded to, and elsewhere in the New Testament,) embraces "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2. 16). It is that system and state of things resulting from Satan's subtlety and deception, and man's sin; and is now the sphere of Satan's power and

activities against Christ. The devil is the god and prince of it; and therefore darkness, hatred, and death—as also deceit and violence—abound in it. But in the church is found life, light, truth, righteousness, and grace. It is essentially *heavenly*, and will be displayed as the heavenly city—the New Jerusalem—in the millennium.

The dividing line (to answer now the first question) is *the cross* (see Gal. 6. 14), and the death and resurrection of Jesus, and indeed, we may add also, the power and efficacy of His precious blood, and the Holy Spirit's presence (see John 16. 8-15).

As with Israel in relation to Egypt, the dividing line was first the blood, then the pillar of cloud and fire—symbol of God's presence—then the Red Sea finally and absolutely separating them from Egypt. The Red Sea typifies the death (and for God's people the resurrection) of Christ; while Egypt sets forth this present world under Satan's sway; hence we read in Galatians 1. 4, that our Lord Jesus Christ "gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." The destiny of the church is heavenly glory; the destiny of the world is *destruction*; and the judgment of the religious world (claiming the church's place) being the most terrible of all. See Revelation 17. and 18., and for the church's place in glory see Revelation 21. and 22.

(S. M. ANGLIN).

Separation from Evil and Division.

- (1). What is the difference between separation from evil and division?
- (2). Are "vessels to dishonour" mere professors only? (2 Tim. 2. 20).
- (3). Can 2 Corinthians 6. 14-18, be applied to the same persons and purposes as 2 Timothy 2. 19-21?—*H. D., Cheltenham.*

No. 1.—How comforting and encouraging it is to have the Word of God to turn to, especially in days such as the present, when the carnal mind of man has written confusion upon everything that professes the name of Christ upon earth. May both reader and writer have their confidence so increased in its infinite perfection and ability to meet the whole need of the believer in his earthly path, that nothing shall be able to divert him from even one of its simplest statements.

As to the first question, separation from evil is always necessary. "That Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" is the desire of the heart of Christ, expressed regarding His own in the ear of the Holy Father (John 17. 15). But this evil is supposed to be in the *world*, not in the Christian community. The latter is composed of those who were, when in the flesh, nothing but evil, but who have been washed, sanctified, justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6. 11).

But all the evil that is rampant in the world is ever ready to spring up in the Christian assembly (for the flesh is in us, if we are not in it), and it will spring up if we are not watchful.

But if it springs up in the Christian assembly it must be purged out (1 Cor. 5. 7), or if this is impossible I must purge *myself* out (2 Tim. 2. 21). This is likely to cause division where no division should be (1 Cor. 1. 10), but for this the Lord will not hold me responsible, as it is He Himself who has enjoined this principle of separation from evil upon me. In this case the sin of division must lie at the door of the one who brings in the evil.

No. 2.—“Vessels to dishonour” are evidently men like Hymenæus and Philetus, who taught doctrines which were destructive of the Christian faith. Upon their vital relations with God we are not called to pronounce: “The Lord knoweth them that are His.” I leave them, at His command; and in leaving them I leave them to Him to deal with. I must not look upon such as true Christians, though the Lord may see something of Himself in them that is hidden from me.

No. 3.—2 Corinthians 6. 14–18 refers to the unconverted world. The iniquity spoken of in 2 Timothy 2. 19–21 refers to that which may be found inside the profession of Christianity. From both we are to maintain a rigid separation.

The instructions given to us in the Scriptures for our walk are much more simple than we are ready to think. With the ungodly we cannot, dare not, walk; nor should we have the least desire to walk with such. But let us be careful that we do not separate from the godly. Psalm 4. 3 tells me that “The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself,” and that is the comfort of the man of God in his distress. God cannot be against the godly. Now if I reject the ungodly I am doing the thing He tells me to do, and the world at least must admit that I refuse to walk with bad people. But if I reject the godly I am at variance with Him who has set such “apart for Himself,” and all that the world can see in me is a man who will have no one but those who agree with himself. I am at variance with God, and no testimony in the world.

(JAMES BOYD).

The Antiquity of Man.

A correspondent suggests that since Professor Lankester has come to the conclusion that man has been on the earth not less than a million of years—see “Science from an Easy Chair” (*Daily Telegraph*)—and since the fact of the great antiquity of man is also taken for granted in “Harmsworth’s Popular Science,” and that the *Daily Mail* has also called attention to the same, we ought to revise our views as to the first two chapters of Genesis, in order to make them agree with this phase of modern thought.

The correspondent writing upon this subject makes the very common mistake of *taking for granted* the foundation upon which he builds his ingenious theory. In his first paragraph he speaks of the notice taken by a certain newspaper of “THE TRUTH of the antiquity of man.” In paragraph two he refers to “THE UNDOUBTED FACT of man’s great antiquity.”

At the outset, I must object to this loose use of language. Does not your correspondent know that the wild theories promulgated by such as Professor Ray Lankester and Professor de Mortillet (who in his “La Préhistorique Antiquité de l’Homme” named 230,000 years as the probable period of man’s existence

on the earth) have been withstood as palpably *false* by men of equal or superior learning? So far from the antiquity of the human race running into scores of millenniums being an “undoubted fact,” it has been denied and disproved by those who are thoroughly entitled to speak with authority on the subject. The fact that certain popular magazines and newspapers take the opposite view only serves to condemn such papers as unreliable and misleading.

In view of the wide extent of ground to be covered, you will not expect me to enter into anything like an adequate discussion of the matter in the pages of “Scripture Truth.”

Those desiring fuller information may

refer to Rev. Geo. Rawlinson's "The Antiquity of Man Historically Considered." From the geological standpoint, Prof. Friedrich Pfaff's "The Origin of Man" and Pattison's "The Age of Man" may be consulted. The last two may be had bound in a small inexpensive volume issued by the Religious Tract Society.

We believe the teaching of the Scriptures to be that Adam was the first human being, and that only a few thousand years (probably about six), have elapsed since the day when his Creator gave him being.

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

New Birth and Eternal Life.

Referring to an answer given in the August number of "Scripture Truth" on the above subjects, the following questions are asked: Did not the Lord make new birth dependent upon faith, in John 3. 14-16, and other scriptures? Is there spiritual life as distinct from eternal life? Were not those, spoken of in John 12., sons of God by believing?—J.A.L., Ireland.

IT has been truly stated that faith cannot come before the new birth or else it would have been of the flesh, and would be the contradiction of what the early verses of John 1. emphatically bring out as to the state of all flesh. In verses 5-11, when the light of all that God is was perfectly revealed in the Son become man, it shone in *darkness*; so dense was man's moral blindness that he was unconscious of the presence of the Son of God in the world, and God had to send out a man to bear witness that the light was shining. The Creator was in the world that He made and the world knew Him not: even His special circle of Israel received Him not. So that in order that there should be anyone to receive Him it necessitated that God should work, and thus a family of faith was formed. But how? As many as received Him (ver. 12) (which is identified with believing in His name) were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God. The right or title given them to become children of God was indeed dependent on their receiving Christ, and this upon their being born of God. No one believed in His name but those who were so born, and being born they believed (see 1 John 5. 1). The faith that received Christ cannot be separated from that operation of God's sovereign grace.

The second question will best be met by our observing the way the truth comes out to Nicodemus in John 3. The new birth will be what is alluded to, doubtless, as spiritual life. The Lord Jesus

makes it as distinct from eternal life as the earthly things, of man's necessity in view of the kingdom, are from heavenly things. Even to see the kingdom of God as manifested in the Person of the Lord Jesus, much more to enter into it, a man must be born wholly anew. But so far the Lord has only been insisting on what that teacher of the Jews ought to have known from Old Testament Scriptures. It is only when He goes on to testify of heavenly things, of the Son of Man being lifted up in the necessary judgment of all that is of the flesh, and the Son of God being given in the revelation of all that God is in His own nature of love to a poor lost world, that He introduces eternal life, as the portion of whosoever believes in Him—these two aspects of the cross coalescing in this blessed result. Spiritual life as involved in the new birth is thus distinguished in Scripture from eternal life; which will be all the more evident if we bear in mind that the new birth was not new in the ways of God in grace, but had been the source of whatever was of God in the saints of old from Adam down; whereas eternal life was only referred to in two passages of the Old Testament, both looking on to the millennial conditions in which it will be enjoyed and not as we know it now. But what really underlies the difficulty many have found in this subject is, that two distinct aspects of life are involved in it, which are often mixed up specially in the English mind, for we have only one word for both. There is the *life by which we live*, and the *life we live*. The distinction is easily seen if we think of natural life. There is on one hand the

vital principle, animate existence, of which we speak little comparatively ; on the other, the life lived and led continuously, which so largely takes its form and character from our environment. In the spiritual domain, the growth of our souls, and in intelligence of the mind of God, depends very largely upon our entering into this difference. It is that between the intrinsic divine life, which was always the same in all dispensations, and by which the Son at all times quickened whom He would (John 5. 21), and the character and new conditions of that life as revealed in the Son of God become man. It was such a life as had been in Him with the Father from eternity (1 John 1. 1, 2), but for the first time brought to light in His Person on earth, and thus presented objectively to faith as in John's Gospel ; while, by His death and resurrection we are brought into it, to possess it in Him as our life, as in the first Epistle of John.

From John 17. 3 we learn that the distinguishing feature of that life, what gives it its deepest character, is to know the Father whom He was addressing, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Indeed, that chapter brings out the whole range and fullness of eternal life, in the position that the Lord Jesus takes therein and in which He claims to have us associated with

Himself on the ground of His finished work. We see it to be a life of heavenly relationship with the Father, of absolute separation from the world ; and at the close (verses 22-24) He leads on to that aspect of it yet future, that in which Paul ever presents it, where it shall be ours, not as now in a scene contrary to it, but in the home of that life with the Father and the Son for ever.

Let us then not miss the precious unfolding of eternal life in the Person of the Son of God in the Gospel and Epistle of John, the writings of Paul in which all the development of the Christian life is found, and which gives it its whole form and character in the new relationships, associations, and objects that belong to it, by identifying it with the divine life, ever essentially the same, or the vital principle involved in the new birth in every soul thus blessed since the world began. The latter is in no way excluded by the former. On the contrary, there could be no condition or character of life without the life itself being there first. The Lord give us a deeper understanding of His mind in His Word, applying it by His Spirit to our hearts and ways and all that is connected with a life of such wonderful possibilities and privilege in communion with the Father and with the Son that our joy may be full.

(J. ALFRED TRENCH).

A Divine Harp.

Angels desire to fathom the wonderful ways of God with regard to man. It is from the heart of man, descended to the lowest step in the scale of intelligent beings, resembling, alas ! the beasts in his desire, Satan in his pride, a weak slave in his passions ; strong, or at least proud, in his spirit and in his pretensions ; having the knowledge of good and evil, but in a conscience which condemns him ; by reason of sufferings, sighing after something better, but incapable of attaining it ; having the want of some other world than this material one, but fearful of getting to it ; having the feeling that we ought to be in relationship with God, the only object worthy of an

immortal soul, but at an infinite distance from God in his lusts, and animated by such a desire for independence, that he is unwilling to admit God to the only place which becomes Him if He is God, and seeks, consequently, to prove that there is no God ;—it is from the heart of man, capable of the highest aspirations, with which his pride feeds itself, and of the most degrading lusts with which, however, his conscience becomes disgusted ;—it is from the heart of man, that God forms the divine harp on which all the harmony of His praise can resound, and will resound for evermore.

(Darby).

The Two Persuasions.

(M. C. GAHAN).

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

"I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus."—Rom. 14. and 15., 1-7.

AMONGST the many practical exhortations furnished for believers in the Epistle to the Romans, there are none of greater importance than those dealing with the subject of "doubtful disputations," so frequently arising amongst the Lord's people.

These may originate in the smallest and most trivial matter, or in matters of doctrine or practice of more serious moment. Beginning with what appears to be mere harmless debate, they may ere long break out into a tempest uncontrolled and uncontrollable by any human effort: "debates" fostering "envyings" which in rapid succession produce "wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Cor. 12. 20). "The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3. 5).

The Apostle, in this portion of the Epistle to the Romans, sets himself under divine guidance to check, at the very outset, incipient movements that threaten overwhelming disaster to the Lord's people, and the arresting of all divine progress in the soul.

The principle that the Apostle lays himself out to expose seems to be the perfectly natural and plausible one that superior intelligence in the things of God is of primary importance, and that it calls for the refusal of any alternative course, other than its unqualified and unhesitating acceptance by others. But whether such superior intelligence be real or assumed, the danger arising from such a principle is one and the same, viz. conflict, leading to more or less serious consequences. The Apostle's exhortation practically illustrates his language to the Corinthians in the matter of jealousy as to gifts. "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12-31).

It is by no means to be assumed as a final settlement of differences between Christians that both may be right; nor yet that in the judgment of charity they can "agree to differ"; for this would be the *denial of authority competent to decide* between the divergent parties; but rather is the mutual harmony of such to be founded upon the principle of charity and toleration exercised by both.

Nor is the value and importance of divine intelligence to be ignored, rather its existence is to be fully recognized, for the Apostle distinguishes "him that is weak in the faith" from "he that is strong"; and yet presses the importance and necessity of these going on in unity and harmony, without judging one another on the one hand, or despising one another on the other. The one whose intelligence is not at the highest level, but acts on more or less legal ground, may fall into the error of *judging* severely as licence that which another, in the exercise of his Christian liberty, may be spiritually free to do: while he who enjoys such liberty is in danger of *despising* him whose spiritual perceptions are not up to the standard of his own. Hence the exhortation, "Let not him that eateth *despise* him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not *judge* him that eateth"; for both occupy common ground as to acceptance before God, "for God hath received him." Again, each is the servant of the Lord to whom he is alone responsible: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant: to his own master he standeth or falleth." Two current disturbing questions seem to have been prominent in the Apostle's mind, viz. that of eating certain kinds of food, and the observance of days, and these serve as *illustrations* of the general principle which the Apostle lays down as the

basis of forbearance and amity, viz. "Let every man be fully persuaded *in his own mind*," i.e. let each be governed by the convictions of his conscience *acting upon, not beyond, the light he has already attained to*; his motive rather than his action being of the greater moment. He regards the day, or he does not regard it, as *to the Lord*. He eats or does not eat, *to the Lord*, in the sincerity of his heart and conscience. Whether he lives or dies his whole relations are *to the Lord*. Living or dying, he is *the Lord's* for Christ's claims extend to both worlds, by virtue of His death and resurrection. "To this end Christ has died and lived again, that He might rule over both dead and living" (N.T.).

Moreover, *judging or setting at nought*, a brother will have to be accounted for "*at the judgment seat of Christ*." For all these very solemn reasons, judging one another, should have no place; for these and such like questions are distinct from those of morality, false doctrine, dishonour to the Lord or disorderly walk as to which the consciences of the saints are naturally at one, and provision for dealing with which is found elsewhere in the Word of God. Differences of opinions arising from diversities of *convictions* are alone in question here.

But while the Apostle secures harmony in mutual forbearance amongst Christians, as to the matter of conflicting conclusions, he turns immediately to another aspect of the question. The searchlight that ever has the tendency of being directed *outwards* upon others is here turned *inward* upon self. If judgment is to be exercised at all, let it *first* be exercised upon oneself. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, *that no man put a stumbling block or occasion of falling in his brother's way*." If, in the exercise of *the law of liberty*, I cause my brother to be grieved, I transgress against *the law of love*; "now walkest thou not charitably; destroy not him with thy meat for

whom Christ died." Between the law of liberty and the law of love there should be no conflict. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3. 17). Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is likewise love, and the practical exercise of the spirit of charity and toleration is the witness of that liberty being truly of and in the Lord.

But this persuasion which provides for and secures toleration and forbearance one with another, on the principle of being fully persuaded in one's own mind is eclipsed by another and a higher order of persuasion. The Apostle introduces it in the following words: "I know *and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus*." The question is lifted here on to a higher plane than that *in which the conscience simply balances with legal exactitude the limitations of its liberty*, labouring thereby to retain a good conscience, and the approval of God, though this must be maintained at all costs.

But a more accurate translation of one little word helps perhaps to the clearer understanding of the Apostle's meaning, as bearing upon the subject in hand: "I know and am persuaded **IN** the Lord Jesus," which seems to imply that it was not spiritual intuition or inspiration brought to bear upon the question of the moment, or any direct and immediate communication from the Lord concerning the matter in hand, such as would have been the legitimate deduction, had the Apostle expressed himself as persuaded *by* the Lord Jesus. It is rather that he had before him *the whole new status of the believer viewed in the light of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus*, to which reference has already been made (ver. 9).

In this very Epistle the Apostle had already doctrinally and experimentally brought out the whole divine revelation as to Christian position in relation to a new order of life, viz. "newness of life" (chap. 6. 4), and a new con-

trolling motive and principle, viz. "newness of spirit" (chap. 7. 6); the believer by the death of and resurrection of Christ having undergone for God a transfer from Adam to Christ. When the believer experimentally appropriates this it emancipates him in spirit from the old order, and all that was connected therewith, of which ceremonial and legal observances as to meat and drink and days formed a part (Gal. 4. 10-11; Heb. 7. 18-19).

Paul being in the full intelligence, doctrinal and experimental, of this new status, brings that knowledge to bear upon the question of meats and days, and determines for himself that legal observances of any kind tending to bring the spirit of the believer into bondage concerning such things, have ceased for him *in the new risen status of the Lord Jesus*. Partaking in "newness of life" of that status; "the oldness of the letter" is superseded by "newness of spirit." The very derivation of these great things from Christ in glory, the risen Lord, breaks the

links with legal requirements, out of and from under which, Christ as Man died. This gives a remarkable force and application to the expression "persuaded *in the Lord*."

From this vantage ground the Apostle reviews for himself and the people of God generally the problem as to how to reconcile those differing and conflicting convictions that so frequently agitate Christians, endangering the unity of the Spirit, and threatening disaster and disruption. At the same time he solves the problem in divine wisdom by enunciating the simple principle that *the law of liberty is to be curtailed by the law of love*, if its exercise should prove a stumbling-block to a weak brother. In other words, *Light should make way for love*; and that without giving up one jot or tittle of the full revelation of the Christian's new status of liberty in Christ, *as a matter of spiritual enjoyment for faith*. "Hast thou faith, *have it to thyself before God*."

(To be continued.)

The Knowledge of Christ.

Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing a Welsh mountain. When you are at the base you see but little; the mountain itself appears to be but one half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the foot of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles around you and are delighted with the widening prospect. Mount still, and the scene enlarges, till at last, when you are on the summit and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Now, the Christian life is of the same

order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of Him. The higher we climb the more we discover of His beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge"? Paul, when grown old, in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, "I know whom I have believed," for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like the ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of Him to whom he had committed his soul. Child of God, get thee up into the high mountain!

Answers to Correspondents.

(EDITOR).

Can the Assembly control the Lord's Servants?

J. H. inquires

"Whether Barnabas and Saul were sent out on their first missionary journey by the church at Jerusalem or Antioch, and if the same order ought not to be observed here?"

They went out from Antioch, but the important thing to note in Acts 13. 1-3 is that the going forth of these servants of Christ emanated from the Holy Ghost. The church at Antioch did not choose them for this service; their part was, in obedience to the direction of the Spirit, to put the hands of fellowship upon them and send them forth with their prayers. So that their mission originated with the Holy Ghost and was prosecuted with the hearty fellowship of the assembly.

In those days, before things were in the broken condition in which we now see them, the presence of the Holy Ghost was evidenced in a very distinct way—His voice in the assembly was supreme; now He is largely quenched and hindered by the self-will of men in their plans and organizations. Yet His presence is still here and is a great reality to faith. He is able still to call and direct the servants of the Lord, and all who are in communion with God will gladly accord their fellowship to and prayers for those who are divinely called to serve the Lord. It is not the place of the church to call and command, but only to recognize the right of the Holy Ghost to do this.

The Condemnation of the Lord by Pilate.

W. E. T. writes:

"Can you help us on John 19. 11. More especially the last clause of the verse: 'therefore he that delivereth me unto thee hath the greater sin.'"

Pilate's self-importance was evidently offended by the Lord's silence before

him, thence his petulant assertion of the power with which he was invested. The Lord does not deny the place of authority or power in which Pilate sat, but He bears witness to the truth that he could have had no power over Him at all were it not the will of God. To that will the Lord was ever submissive.

"He that delivered Me to Thee." We believe that the Lord referred to the high priest as the representative of the Jewish nation. Pilate declares: "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me" (chap. 18. 35). Their sin was greater than Pilate's, in that they had the oracles of God and stood in relation to God as "His own" (chap. 1. 11), the people who ought to have recognized and received their Messiah when He appeared amongst them.

The Word—the Logos.

J. W., Glasgow, inquires

"As to the meaning of the expression, 'And this was a relation of God to God' in the article 'The Word—the Logos' (foot of page 283, September issue)."

The expression "And this was a relation of God to God" is a quotation from Dr. Cremer—and is, I think, quite allowable. The Logos is plainly set forth as in relation to someone. To whom? to God. But then who is it that is in relation thus to God? the Logos. But then the Logos is God—not an inferior something, which would at once destroy the Deity of Jesus. And so the Athanasian creed says, "and yet there are not three Gods, but one God"—and Dr. Cremer's statement is perfectly justifiable. In fact, it is the great burden of John's Gospel. (E. Cross).

J. M. D., Glasgow.

The quotation on page 126, April No., from Dr. Bettex is from his "Christianity and Modern Science," published by Marshall Bros., London. Any bookseller will procure it.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 11).

Four Certainties.

(H. NUNNERLEY).

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2 Tim. 3. 14).

PAUL'S Second Epistle to Timothy graphically depicts the outward ruin and inward corruption of the last days of the professing church—days in which our lot is cast—yet no Epistle contains more absolute certainties for those who hold to God's word amongst the wreck around. It speaks of things of which we may be fully assured, which we are to hold fast, and *continue* in.

God hath Saved us.

One of these solid resting-places for faith is the absolute statement that God "hath saved us" (chap. 1. 9). There the fact stands recorded in the imperishable Word of God; it is an absolute certainty, faith may rest upon it with *full assurance*; it is a solid foundation, an immovable rock, on which we can stand with doubts banished, fears dispelled, conscience relieved, the heart set at rest, because *God hath saved us*, and He has told us so.

This statement does not conflict with other scriptures which refer to present salvation from Satan, self, sin, and the world, or those which look forward to the final act when our bodies will be fashioned like to that of our glorified Saviour. No; God who calls those things that be not as though they are, God who tells us "whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified," this is the God *who hath saved us*, and would have our souls in the full joy of the great salvation which is the fruit of His counsels.

How cheering God's "haths" are! What rest they give! He *hath* made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, He *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness (Col. 1. 12-13); He *hath* given to us eternal life (1 John 5. 11).

God hath called us with an holy calling.

Not according to our works is this call; it is the outcome of the purpose and grace of God before the world had an existence; it constitutes us "holy" before we have wrought a single good work. We are saints or—"holy ones"—by calling, and are spoken of elsewhere as "holy brethren" (Heb. 3. 1), "holy priests" (1 Peter 2. 5), "a holy temple" (Eph. 2. 21).

Because Christians *are holy* their walk and ways are to be marked by holiness; they are to be "holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1. 15). Salvation and holiness are inseparably linked; let us beware of sundering that which God hath joined together. We are not saved because we *are holy*, but we are holy because we *are saved*—saints to start with—and our walk and ways are to manifest the holiness of our calling; we are *to be* what *we are*, saints—or "holy ones"—work out in our lives practically what we are positionally.

God hath abolished death.

We also learn that death is abolished (2 Tim. 1. 10). Sin entailed death, sin separated man from God, raised a moral barrier—it is this which is abolished. Death as a physical fact remains, it is the last enemy to be destroyed; but death as the judgment of sin and the stronghold of Satan is a conquered foe; the cross was its death-blow. Christ by dying removed the barrier sin had brought in, and so completely abolished it and destroyed him that had the power of it that myriads will be caught up when Christ comes without even passing through physical death. All that made death dreadful as God's judgment is gone, and gone

for ever; every believer can say "death is ours," it is a way into life, for Christ's death is our death; we can sing, "death and judgment are behind us."

Life and incorruptibility have come to light.

The gospel is good news of a mighty Victor, who has burst the iron doors of death's prison and risen alive and triumphant. A risen Saviour, once dead, is now alive in the glory of God having a life He can impart to others, a life which corruption can never touch. This is a new revelation; none knew this before Christ died and rose, but it has now come to light, and we are to walk in the light of it, and enjoy the blessed fact that this life is ours. "This is the record that God *hath* given to us eternal life, and this life is *in* His Son." The seed of this life is incorruptible (1 Peter 1. 23), the inheritance that awaits us is "incorruptible" (1 Peter 1. 4), and the bodies in which we shall enter upon it are also incorruptible (1 Cor. 15. 42), and He who is our life is a living Man in the glory of God, so that we can know whom we have believed.

Our Saviour ought not to be a stranger to us, we are privileged to *know Him*, as well as enjoy and participate in the wonderful blessings which He has made ours in dying for us. Paul knew Him so well that he *committed all into His hands*, assured of His competency to keep, through all the changing scenes of this life, everything He held dear, until the day of manifested glory. What he had committed to Him he does not specify, but we may rest assured that all we may place in His keeping is eternally secure. Scripture exhorts us to commit our "way" (Ps. 37. 5), our "works" (Prov. 16. 3), our "souls" (1 Peter 4 19) to the Lord; doing this we may rest in peace, knowing all is safe we commit to His blessed hands.

These certainties, these realities, are assured to us now on a more solid basis than even Paul's oral teaching; they are written in the imperishable Word of God. The Scriptures are "*sound words*," "*wholesome words*" (1 Tim. 6. 3), "*faithful words*" (Titus 1. 9), containing "*sound doctrine*," they are able to make a child wise to salvation, and completely equip the man of God. These faithful words must not be disconnected from the One of whom they speak; they are to be held in "faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The "Holy Scriptures" are so full of the glories of the Person of the Son of God that the living and the written Word are indissoluble; the one is the expression of the other.

What a solid resting-place the Scriptures provide! They abide for ever, they remain unchanged, they administer reproof where needed, convey instruction in righteousness, correct our thoughts, and present doctrine in its pristine purity. They furnish and fit us for an evil day; they do not change like our varying feelings; we can ever turn to them and find their statements unaltered.

These divine certainties if truly received and believed as the word of a God who cannot lie would free us from all fear. What an anchor amid the breakers around are these certain, true, infallible statements:

GOD HATH SAVED US.

GOD HATH CALLED US.

GOD HATH ABOLISHED DEATH.

GOD HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND INCORRUPTIBILITY TO LIGHT,

and God hath revealed these things for our comfort and stay in this the darkest moment of the history of the professing church, when every truth is persistently attacked by an ever restless foe, and all the foundations are undermined.

The Essentials of Private Prayer.

(T. OLIVER, GALA.)

"Daniel went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6. 10).

PUBLIC prayer is apt to engross attention, but public prayer will be of little avail apart from private prayer. Hence the consideration of the essentials of private prayer cannot fail to be helpful. One often feels tempted, in the matter of private prayer, to think that our God has forgotten our existence and that He has no ears. But the lack of answer may be due to our neglecting the essentials which cause the fervent prayer of a righteous man to avail (James 5. 16).

I had been praying about a certain matter for about eight months, three times a day formally, and many times informally, and I was just on the point of giving up when light on the above scripture came, bringing distinct encouragement.

There were four noteworthy points about Daniel's prayers.

(1) "HE WENT INTO HIS HOUSE."

From this statement we should learn that we must withdraw ourselves from the pressure of worldly cares. How often we approach God in prayer with our minds working on our business and other secular matters, and in such a state fail to have any sense of an audience with Him.

(2) "HIS WINDOWS BEING OPEN IN HIS CHAMBER."

The lesson we may draw from this is that our souls should be open—open to the searching light of the presence of God, without guile before Him, saying "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139. 23, 24). Thus every motive will be tested, and our souls free to be invigorated and lead by God. The

inertia of spiritual training may keep us saying very correct things in prayer after the spiritual stimulus has vanished. A fly-wheel will run long after the power has been cut off, and the faster that fly-wheel was running, the longer it will run; but the great point to notice is that, no matter how fast it was running, it ultimately will come to a standstill. So with us, deep spiritual exercise of yesterday will not suffice for to-day. Communion must be progressive. We cannot get near God with closed souls.

(3) HIS WINDOWS WERE OPEN "TOWARD JERUSALEM."

Doubtless Daniel was considered a crank by everybody. People might have said, "Daniel, why do you look, to Jerusalem? Jerusalem is a defenceless ruin; little better than a rubbish-heap; inhabited by the poor, the pariahs of civilization. Look at great Babylon, the pride of the nations, the wonder of the world; a city in which you are honoured. Why do you regard not Babylon?" But Daniel was controlled by the unseen. His heart was in communion with God's thoughts and occupied with His interests. Jerusalem might be in ruins, but God had spoken of it for blessing; the word of God was precious to him. He looked for a city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God. So in the anticipation of the advent of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21. 2) we have a stimulus for earnest private prayer. To pray aright we must have before us the end of all prayer, namely, the fulfilment of God's purpose, whether as to the church, which shall yet appear as the New Jerusalem made meet to be the bride of the Lamb, or as to the coming kingdom

over which the saints shall reign with Christ. Jerusalem means the possession of peace, and we can have little stability unless peace reigns in the soul.

(4) HE PRAYED AS HE HAD DONE
"AFORETIME," THAT IS, FOR
SEVENTY YEARS.

What encouragement to those whose hands tend to hang down ! There was Daniel persevering not for eight months merely, but for seventy years, from boyhood to hoary age, praying thrice a day for scattered Israel. There was little evidence of restoration of the kingdom, yet he kept his eyes steadily fixed on Jerusalem, in spite of all the blandishments of Chaldea and Media.

He had the mind of God as to the instability of all the pomp and splendour which was round about him, and was firmly established in the certainty of those promises that God had made. May we seek to be like Daniel in having our souls closed to the world, open towards God, controlled by the unseen more than the seen, and marked by steadfast perseverance in prayer (Acts 2. 42).

"Let us not be weary in well-doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6. 9).

"The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (Jas. 5. 7).

The Tabernacles of God.

(JAMES BOYD).

Blessed be Christ, the Lord of earth and heaven !
Blessed be He who bore the cross and shame !
Blessed be He who hath sin's fetters riven !
Blessed forever be His holy name !
Blessed the glory that to Him is given !
Blessed be He of universal fame !
Blessed, thrice blessed, be the Lord of glory !
Blessed, thrice blessed, be the Gospel story !

Called us He has in His compassions tender
Out of the darkness into living light !
Who would not praise to the Redeemer render ?
Glorious dispeller of our darksome night !
Merciful, marvellous, Divine Defender !
Thine is the kingdom and the power and might !
Lord universal ! Life's Originator !
Than the best better ; than the greatest greater !

Into this darkness He hath brought the Father,
Made us to know Him in His matchless grace,
Died to be able the redeemed to gather
Home to His heavenly and hallowed place ;
Drew us from distance and from death, yea, rather,
Set us as sons before the Father's face :
There in the love and in the life eternal,
There in the brilliant beams of bliss supernal.

Gave us His Spirit, that delights eternal
Might by His people be perceived and known.
Fair is the country and forever vernal
Thus to their spirits by His Spirit shown ;
Leading their hearts from pleasures hodiernal,
Fading and failing, soon forever flown,
Up to a region and a rest unfading
Far from deceiver and deceit degrading.

Soon to that region He shall safely bring us,
There in that dwelling which is His and ours ;
Sorrow envenomed never more shall sting us ;
There shall felicity in faithful bowers
Dwell for eternity, while joys enring us ;
There shall we worship with supernal powers ;
There shall we see Him who has died to save us,
And not the grace alone but glory gave us.

Yea, and on earth He has disclosed a dwelling,
Here where His Spirit has His blest abode,
Here where His saints their songs are ceaseless
swelling,
Here where their offerings His altar load,
Here where with transport still their tongues are
telling
Tales of His benefits on men bestowed.
Here in the structure every stone is living,
And in this darkness light of God is giving.

Great is the house, and great is He who built it,
Great is the Person who within it dwells,
Great is the value of the gold that gild it,
Great is its wealth, which all the world excels.
Great was its price—the blood of Him who spilt
it—

Great is the story which its glory tells,
Great is the mystery of its holy places,
Great is the wisdom its design embraces.

Yet tho' the Spirit dwells on earth among us,
There is that better place for us in store :
Travellers thitherward nor crowd nor throng us,
Few haste to enter at the heavenly door :

Yet will our Saviour not so sadly wrong us,
As to declare it better is before,
Had He determined in this waste to leave us—
Never, no never, would He thus deceive us.

Christ in the way of righteousness is guiding
Souls thro' this Rephidim to living streams,
And to the fountains where are found abiding
Blessings beyond the boundary of dreams.
There, where with lavish hand His gifts dividing,
Love of the Father on its objects beam.
There shall we find eternal satisfaction,
Far from the world's disturbance and distraction.

John—from the desert where he saw the harlot
Drunk with the purple blood of martyrs slain,
Covered with precious stones and gold and scarlet,
Proud o'er the rulers of the earth to reign;
King, prince, and potentate, and peer, and carlet,
Bending before her in respect profane—
Rose to the City bright with jasper gleaming,
Rose from the nations and their mad blaspheming.

Saw the Metropolis, and heard the thunder
Peal with the praises of the heavenly Lamb,
Waking the welkin and the wide world under,
Rising as incense to the great I AM.
Wondered at Babylon's pollution, wonder
Swelled as he witnessed where in glory swam
God's mighty masterpiece of fair creation,
Light of the Messianic dispensation.

Paul, carried upward to this land Elysian,
Heard things unspeakable; and how shall I
Tell what my soul hath, in ecstatic vision,
Heard in those empyreal courts on high?
Things which to publish have I not permission,
Language of mortals things like these defy.
God, for His people, has in grace prepared them,
And by His Spirit have we seen and heard them.
There I have walked about the twelve foundations;
There have I gazed upon the golden street;
Watched the arisings, the transfigurations;
Saw the saints worship at their Saviour's feet;
Marked the magnificent administrations;
Saw where the heavenly and earthly meet;
Knelt in the kingdom of the living Father;
Saw His sons glorified before Him gather;
Felt the pulsations of the heart of Jesus;
Felt the pulsations of the heart of God;
Felt on my spirit free the balmy breezes
Wafted from sanctuaries yet untrod;
Tasted the power that the soul releases,
If for a moment from the earthly clod;
Heard in the rush of the seraphic legions
Mercy administered to far off regions.
O that my tongue could to the whole creation
Tell what my spirit hath with joy explored!
Summits of ecstasy and exaltation!
Circles of mystery, admired, adored!
Heights to which never man's imagination,
In its most elevated flights, has soared!
Heights which thro' mercy we shall soon inherit,
Brought there in body, and in soul, and spirit!

The Activities of Grace.

(W. BRANWELL DICK).

THE life of our blessed Lord was one of ceaseless activity; from morning till night, and sometimes, as in John 3., from night till morning, He was ministering to needy souls; once it is recorded of Him and His disciples that "they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6. 31). Then if we look at Paul, the model servant, what a pattern we have! He was CONVERTED (Acts 9. 1-20), and without this no person can be a gospel messenger. He was COMMISSIONED (Acts 26. 16-18); and this is true of every disciple of Christ. He was CONSISTENT, and this is a *sine qua non* for all who warn, persuade, and beseech men (2 Cor. 5. 9-21), he was CONFIDENT (Phil. 1. 9-21), and we cannot know God without having unbounded

confidence in Him. He was CONSTANT (Acts 20. 31), and this we shall be if we are following our precious Lord. If we read carefully the last-quoted scripture we see how Paul worked. He taught "publicly and from house to house" (ver. 20), declared "all the counsel of God" (ver. 27), "night and day with tears" (ver. 31), and as a result he could say, "I am pure from the blood of all men" (ver. 26).

Constrained by the mighty love of Christ, and impelled by the thought of "judgment to come," he proclaimed the one, and faithfully warned as to the other. May we in this respect heed his exhortation:

"Be ye followers of Me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11. 1).

"Modern Thought."

(F. HARRIS).

I hate vain thoughts: but Thy law do I love.—Psalm 119. 113.

IT is of the utmost importance that we should take a true standpoint from which to survey the world of thought, so that we may estimate at its true value that which those who are called "thinkers" set forth for our acceptance.

Such a standpoint is given plainly and clearly in the Word of God, and that must needs be the true one; moreover, than it there is none other.

We are slow, even as Christians, to give up the proud notion that something exists in man—specially in those who tower mentally above their fellows—which may be relied upon for our guidance or help in things which concern the soul and its relations with God.

Nevertheless, when we turn to the Word of God, and read His thoughts therein, and learn His estimate of men and the imaginations of their hearts, we find that the very reverse of reliance must be placed on everything that proceeds from men as such; than this nothing can be clearer.

The Word of the living God gives the *divine* standpoint, and however humbling it may be to our pride as men, however contrary to our ideas, we are there told that "every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart, was *only evil continually*" (Gen. 6. 5). (See also Gen. 8. 21, where the same is repeated in view of all man's future history on earth.)

Whatever men may exercise their minds upon, or however great the measure of their wisdom and the success of their research as pertaining to earthly things, they are thereby brought no nearer to God, for, according to the infallible Word of God, their conceptions and mental devices in all that pertains to God and to their relationship with Him are "only evil," and

that continually, and the reason of this is that man is self-centred.

This is the teaching of the Holy Ghost in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. There he proves that *all* have departed from God, and become "vain in their imaginations, that their foolish heart is darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1. 21-28.)

The outflow of thought, therefore, from the minds of men cannot possibly lead Godward. All the various philosophies of the day, all the religions, all the systems of thought—and how numerous they are—are the outcome of that impulse of man's heart which developed so rapidly at the beginning, the impulse which took away—*away from God*—though it sought at the same time by many cunning devices to fill up the blank which distance from his Creator inevitably brought with it.

So that, even if we admit that in any one of these systems of thought or religion some genuine desire after God exists from some sense of the existence of this blank, yet, in so far as it is a system, the outcome of man's heart, and professes to lead to God, it must from the very nature of its origin be false, and useless as a guide.

Apart from God's revelation of Himself in His Word and by the Son, there can be no *true conception* of Him, while, since we have this perfect revelation of Him, no supplement thereto by fancied human wisdom is needed; indeed any attempt at this is a wile of the devil to blind the eyes of men to the true way.

In the Epistle to the Colossians the Apostle warns the saints of God against the folly and danger of seeking any-

thing from philosophy and vain (or empty) deceit, "after the rudiments of the world and NOT AFTER CHRIST."

Here the two are put in keen opposition ; each is destructive of the other.

That which is "after Christ" must be destructive, from its very nature, of that which is "after the rudiments (principles) of the world," and vice versa. If we adopt the one we destroy the other thereby.

But what folly on the Christian's part to seek for light or help from these false principles ! "Ye are complete in Him" is the word to all who have saving faith in Christ—in Him in whom dwelleth "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What need have they then for the thoughts and speculations of unregenerate men ?

Yea, rather, why should they descend to the grovelling of the human mind, in its darkness and ignorance, when the bright, clear sunshine of divine wisdom and knowledge is always available in Christ. Why should the Christian imagine that the brightness of the sun might be made a little brighter by the aid of some taper light, which in reality is no light at all, but only darkness ?

All fullness dwells in our glorified Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and from Him, "all the body . . . having nourishment ministered . . . increaseth with the increase of God."

There is no room here for the emanations of the human mind as food for the soul. "Complete in Him who is the Head of all principality and power, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." What necessity is there for aught else ?

The aim and object of Satan, who is behind all these systems of thought,

is to detract from the glory of Christ, and this is the effect of them all in the souls of those who receive them.

The Christian's testimony to Christ, if he listens to any of these teachers or leaders of thought, must inevitably be rendered ineffective, if it be not destroyed altogether.

"I hate vain thoughts:" says the Psalmist, "but thy law do I love." Here then is the contrast : the thoughts of men and the Word of our God.

Shall we not, as Christians, resolve to have nothing to do with the thoughts of men, but that the Word of God shall be our increasing delight.

We wish to emphasize by this paper the sharp and strong antagonism between the thoughts of men and the Word of God, the former being the outcome of the heart which loves not God, nor wants to know Him, but wishes to trust in something of its own creation, which it may designate God, but which is not the living and true God—not God as revealed in Jesus. For us as Christians the Word of God in its naked simplicity, wisdom, and power, furnishes us with all we need (2 Tim. 3. 16-17), ministering to us, as it does, by the teaching and power of the Holy Ghost, all the fullness of our divine Head ; ever directing us to Him who loves us, and "who of God is made unto us *wisdom*, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Also according to that Word shall men be judged. "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day." Solemn thought as regards those who, while professing Christ's name, pay small attention to that Word which He has declared they shall be judged by.

I think every one ought to help, as far as in him or her lies, to RESCUE SOULS, and I think the more you are in concert with the mind of Christ the more you will do so. I often say : if I

were very near Him I could not get along side a sinner without telling him of the Saviour, and a saint without talking to him of Christ—his life in heaven.

(J. B. Stoney.)

The Word.

(EDWARD CROSS).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1. 1, 2).

THE absolute deity and eternal personality of the Word, as set forth in the opening verses of the Gospel of John, is a subject of paramount importance; and, as its import is supreme, so we may be at once prepared to find that it is correspondingly set aside—either enfeebled through ignorance or misapprehension, or opposed by resolute denial. In fact, from the time of the apostle John, through whom the revelation of it was fully made among the so-called fathers of the early church, not one of them, save Irenæus, was what we should now call "sound" in the faith of it. Justin Martyr, *e.g.* held that Christ existed in the Father as His word, or reason, and became a distinct person only for the purpose of creation. He denied the possibility of the supreme omnipotent God's being shut up in the narrow limits of a human body; and his theological notions were not confined to himself. Clement said that "He, the Word, it is who gives philosophy to the Greeks by inferior angels;" and, again, that "All things useful to life are given by the Word, but philosophy, more especially to the Greeks, was given to them as a special covenant, to be a foundation of philosophy according to Christ;" and so of many of the others.

The root of this was, apparently, the idea that there was an unknown God, who dwelt in the depths of silence, and could have no connection with matter. Hence sprung "emanation," and the notion of a Demiurge, an inferior Creator, resulting in gnosticism, the plague of the early church. In all these theories "Logos" was an inferior being, though divine; and from this resulted in another form "arianism," the doctrine, more or less, of the Alexandrian Ante-Nicene Fathers (not Irenæus), which was combated by Athanasius, when it came formally

to a head in Arius. Hence, too, arose asceticism, and with it celibacy with all its corruptions. Matter, according to Plato, held the soul down, as a nail, to the earth, and it was to be mortified; hence marriage was to be forbidden—"a doctrine of demons," says Paul (1 Tim. 4. 1-4),—not for more devotedness, as in certain cases might be (Matt. 19. 10-12), but as an evil thing in itself for the gnostic, who aimed at perfection.

An extended summary of all this, with its direful consequences, may be found in *Coll. wigs.*, Vol. 18, by J. N. Darby, from which the above is taken. It shows the fatal effects of playing false at the start with this supreme and fundamental truth of the absolute deity and eternal personality of the Word. It is like poisoning the spring of life from which every movement flows; and this not only spiritually, but physically; for the question is now in high debate, and the arch-priests of modern science, with the accumulated light of ages, intensified by the progress of the present day, are busy discussing, within the region of phenomena, what life is, whence it comes, and how it is operated, and they cannot find out. Scripture says that it is outside the region of phenomena, alike in its essential nature, for "in Him was life," and in all its characteristics, for "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" and that He was the "originator" of life (*ἀρχηγός*) as well (Acts 3. 15), by whom "life and incorruptibility are brought to light" (2 Tim. 1. 10). But Him they "killed;" and it is no wonder, therefore, that their speculations ever since have been in the dark.

Now, the tendency, even with those who had a measure of faith in Jesus, was to think of Him *as they knew Him*, *i.e.* in His human existence, and of

His relations from that standpoint with God His Father. Moreover, it was a great length to go ; but it was not far enough. The Jews thought of the Christ as born into this world, and as abiding for ever. True, so far as the terms go ; but reaching no further than a temporal being, emanating from humanity, however divine the process. But He says to them, "Before Abraham was, I am ;" *i.e.* He is the Absolute, outside the course of time altogether, while through it all ; and to think of Him in His essential being we must not connect Him with the flux of time at all, nor in the relations connected therewith, however much it is true also that He assumed those relations therein. This is the subject-matter, the key to the understanding of John's writings—"the veritable God and eternal life."

Now, as to the relation existing between the persons of the Godhead in eternity, it is evident that we are incapable of knowing anything about them beyond the scanty intimation revealed to us in Scripture. At the very best, "we see now through a dim window obscurely" (1 Cor. 13. 12). But what is revealed "we know ;" and thus we know that, as regards its eternal existence, "In the beginning the Word was," and in its personal relationships, "the Word was with God," and in its essential nature, "the Word was God." Not that the Word was *divine* merely (*θεϊος*), but the Word was GOD (*θεός*). Therefore the relations subsisting between those so named were as between one person of the Godhead and another person of the Godhead, *i.e.* between God and God, so far as words can express it, for it was in Godhead they existed ; yet, not as setting forth a plurality of Gods, seeing there is but one God, as the Athanasian Creed says, when speaking of the Trinity, "yet there are not three Gods, but one God." This compromise of words shows at once our finite incapacity to grasp or to express the infinite.

But it is of supreme importance to apprehend that the Word is God absolute ; yet not God in the entirety of the Godhead, for that would exclude the Father and the Spirit. And this is clearly set forth in the form of the expression in the original ; for while the definite article goes with "the Word," showing that the whole Word, or "the Word" in its entirety is thereby affirmed, there is no article with "God," showing that the Godhead in its entirety is not therein included ; or, in other words, the proposition, "the Word was God," is not reciprocal.

In regard to the "Word," the remarks in Lee's Hebrew Lexicon, *sub voce*, are of interest. He says :

"Dauvaur=something, anything ; more especially, the matter in hand ; matter, or thing, enouncing or enounced ; a word, Gr. *λόγος*." And in reply to those "who would object to every and any particular designation of the person of God, as is the case with infidel philosophers to-day," he says, "If we can conceive of a time at which there was no creation, and consequently no creatures, at such a time a particular and personal revelation of the Deity could have no object, as there could be none to whom it could be made ; but if we conceive of a creation taking place, in which there would be rational agents, it would be necessary to their welfare that they should have information of this sort ; and such they could never have, as certain, by any means short of a particular revelation of God and that made by Himself. Hence we read of 'His goings forth being from everlasting,' His being 'firstborn of all creation,' 'brought forth before the hills,' etc., intimating, as it should seem, that even prior to the creation and with reference to that event the Deity assumed and existed in His personal and individual character. All of which . . . ensuring the reverence due to the Son from His intelligent creatures."

And he goes on to say :

"Hence, perhaps, this personal reve-

lation of God was termed by believers 'Jehovah,' *i.e.* the *essence, being*, or the like, in contradistinction to His incomprehensible character, as filling eternity, etc.; and hence we read in the O.T. of His appearing in the *form of Man*, and of *man* being made in His image; without in the least affecting His all-pervading, upholding, and incomprehensible character and attributes. Now, if we conceive of this essence *proceeding, coming forth, i.e.* being revealed, for the purposes above-mentioned, from the invisible and incomprehensible ocean of divinity, the term 'dauvaur' (word) would, from its original signification, *viz. going forth*, etc., not be an inappropriate term to be used as descriptive of His person. . . . Hence the equal God-head of the Son, which would be no

less divine after its particular and personal revelation, and even incarnation, than it was before; no less God, because proceeding and coming forth from the Father, than it was before, when enjoying equal glory in His bosom and was thus united with His incomprehensible being; although, as it regarded only the Manhood assumed, the Son could say 'My Father is greater than I.' This usage of the term 'dauvaur' (word) originated perhaps in a metonymy thus: as the *Word* of God, and hence *God* Himself, could be revealed only by Him who was named the Son (Matt. 11. 27); hence the person Himself, making this revelation, received the name of the *revelation*, or *Word*, so brought to light, and was styled the "Word," and hence the "Wisdom" of God."

Opportunities.

IT is related of a well-known scientist, that on one occasion he was on a Highland moor, pursuing some botanical study. At the moment, he was examining a heather bell under a microscope, when a shadow was cast before him. Looking up, he saw an aged shepherd at his side. After words of greeting, he handed to his new companion the lens and the flower. The old man gazed again. Then with tears in his eyes he said, "I wish ye'd never shown it me. I've trodden on thousands of them."

If in the light of the judgment-seat of

Christ and of eternity we could see the precious opportunities for service to the Lord and of giving pleasure to His heart that we have missed and trodden under foot, would not our regret be keener a thousandfold than that of the old shepherd? We believe it would. The thought should stir up our souls to seek for grace from God that we tread on no more, but live henceforward redeeming the time (R.V. margin, "buying up the opportunity"); not as fools but wise. So that in some measure there may be restored "the years that the locust hath eaten."

Joy and Peace in Believing.

O JESUS, at Thy shining,
The shadows flee away!
Upon Thy breast reclining,
My strength is as my day!
Thy love, Thy grace abounding,
Met all my sin and shame;
O for a harp—resounding
The music of Thy Name!

Henceforth, I fear not sorrow;
Each bitter cross and pain
Precedes a blessed morrow,
When loss shall turn to gain
Since Jesus is my Saviour,
'Tis all alike to me,
If in a lordly palace
Or lowly cot I be.

There is great danger, in these days of abundant information, of gathering mere geological specimens of truth—if I may so express it—and having a fine stock of them in our heads, instead of having

them in our hearts, in the power of the unction from the Holy One, teaching us in such a way as to humble us, and fill us with real knowledge of our blessed Lord Jesus.

Divisions : Are they Justifiable ?

(H. J. VINE).

THROUGH the grace of God we have been set "in Christ" in the place where we reside. The Holy Spirit so addresses the saints of God, "*in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi,*" "*in Christ . . . in Colosse,*" etc. The surpassing power and love of God have so wrought that, no longer afar off, we have become nigh in Christ Jesus through His blood. This is true of all the saints; and where it is rightly apprehended, divisions and division-makers will be studiously avoided (Rom. 16. 17), and all glorying in parties and party leaders, in sects or schools of opinion, will be considered shameful, and of the flesh. Where righteousness, faith, love, and peace are pursued by those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, there will be no allowance of these things. Those who are marked merely by a cold, rigid, negative position, simply "*separated from unrighteousness,*" as they say, are always in danger of falling into these evils; and, indeed, they do, for they have nothing to preserve them from them. But with those who are truly *separated to the Lord* it will be otherwise, for as cleaving to the Lord, abiding with Him, they will be approved of God.

Does not the Scripture : "For there must be also heresies among you" (1 Cor. 11. 19), justify division ?

No. It has been often taught that 1 Corinthians 11. shows that divisions are necessary. Pamphlets have been issued basing *their arguments* upon this false supposition. This is one of the scriptures by Paul which men have twisted, perverted, and wrested to their own undoing (2 Peter 3. 15, 16). But it teaches the very opposite. There are no outward dividings supposed in this scripture at all; for no less than three times in the two verses (18. 19) the Apostle says the trouble in question is "*among you ;*" they still came "*together in assembly*" (ver. 18), and they still met "*in one place.*"

What wilful perversion then it is to use this scripture to justify the heartless and dishonouring dividings of the beloved saints of God all over the world ! This certainly is not following righteousness.

No. That is not what 1 Corinthians 11. 19 says. The passage reads, "There must also be sects [or 'schools'] *among you*, that the approved may become *manifest among you.*" We are simply told what must be the condition of things *amongst believers* WHERE THE STATE IS WRONG, as mentioned in verse 18. Paul was never ready to believe bad reports about the saints; he cultivated confidence in them rather, through the Lord; but here he says, "I *partly* give credit" to the report, that "*when ye come together in assembly . . . divisions exist among you.*" The divisions were the evidence of their bad state when they came together. Jealousies existed between rich and poor; therefore these divisions in their midst. Consequently the Apostle says in the next verse, sects or schools must also be amongst them as the outcome of their bad state, that "the approved," who would have none of these things, might become manifest among them.

The word used in this verse is altogether different to that used in verse 18. There we have the word "division" (σχίσματα). In verse 19 it is αἵρεσις, meaning "schools," or "parties," after some men's own opinions; and where there is a bad state in a gathering, such as is described in verse 18, these "schools" spoken of in verse 19 must also appear in that gathering. The bad state fosters such, though they still come together "*in one place*" of meeting. The approved are manifest amongst them. But mark, not by going out from amongst them. Note again, particularly, the important words, so often repeated, "*amongst you.*"

Since there is no justification in 1 Corinthians 11. for the wilfulness and

violence done by the makers of division, what are the Saints of God to do amidst such conditions?

Separated from unrighteousness TO THE LORD, the approved will hold to the one Head, and therefore to the one body. They will refuse divisions. They will not say "I of Christ," but hold all the saints as His. Cleaving to the Lord, abiding with Him, they will hold firmly in faith and affection all His own. There is one Head and one body. There is one Shepherd and one flock.

There is one Father and one family. They will also look at the gifts as given in view of all. The evangelist, as well as the double gift of pastor and teacher, is given with a view to the perfecting of all the saints, for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4. 11-13). The gifts are not given for parties or sects. Christ who gave the gifts is the Head of the assembly, not of a party; He is the Beginning, Firstborn from among the dead. The first place must be His in all things.

The Light of the World.

(J. S. OLIPHANT).

IT is a solemn thought that the light of the world was put out of the world when Christ was rejected and crucified. It has been the night of the world ever since. The light of the world shone in darkness, "and the darkness comprehended it not." "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

The light of the world is *not* here now, but there is light in the world where darkness still reigns. Christians are children of the light and children of the day. They do not belong to the world, they are not of the darkness, hence they are exhorted to "walk as children of light" (Eph. 5. 8).

The church, Christ's body, was formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven to be a light and witness of Christ in the darkness of the world that had crucified Him; but this only continued whilst the church on earth answered to her heavenly calling and walked in separation from the world. At the beginning the light shone brightly and was seen in the devotedness of the saints in their unity and in their testimony to Christ their absent Lord.

The church in this aspect as a witness is addressed in Revelation 2. and 3. Decline commenced in the first of the seven assemblies, as the words to Ephesus prove: "I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love."

We live at the close of this dispensation when the state described in the last of the churches, "Laodicca," is developing everywhere; a condition of things which leads to the professing church being spued out of Christ's mouth as a false and nauseous thing, neither hot nor cold, and an unfaithful witness in the world.

The testimony of Scripture is so plain as to the course of events in the profession, that no one who studies the Word can be surprised or dismayed because the "perilous times" have come which are spoken of by the Apostle in 2 Timothy 3. It is a very solemn moment, for we are not only in the unbelieving world where darkness reigns and of which Satan is the god, but in Christendom, where light for Christ once was; there the darkness is deepening and error increasing. The Apostle Paul had to write in his day, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work"; and the Apostle John had to write, "Even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

If we are alive to the increase of infidelity and socialism with the denial of divine revelation in the world, and the corruption and apostasy from the truth where the name of Christ is professedly owned, we must feel how great is the responsibility which lies upon

all who love the Lord and the truth to be faithful to the heavenly calling by which we are called, and to Christ as the exalted and glorified Head of the church which is His body.

Christ Himself remains the only standard for the church and the Christian. There can be no other standard than "the faithful and true Witness."

But He is also the resource of all who desire to be true to Him.

We must know each for himself his own place as a member of Christ's body, and by faith hold fast the Head in whom all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells. The unity of Christ's body never can be destroyed, and against the assembly which Christ is building the gates of Hades never will prevail.

Christ remains unchanged. He has overcome the world and He is our life, and we have the light of life. Light and life are inseparable. When on earth the Lord's words were, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The darker the moment, the greater the need for us as individuals to cry to the Lord to help us to shine for Him as lights in the world. We have been brought out of darkness into light, and we have passed out of death into life. Death and darkness are descriptive of the condition of this world in the sight of God; but the light of the revelation of the Father in the Son, and the possession of eternal life and of the Holy Ghost, bring the Christian out of the world lying in the wicked one into the new world of the Father and the Son, there the knowledge of the Father is the portion of the babes and the love of the Father the common portion of the family.

The only antidote to the lies of the enemy and to the corruption manifested on every hand is the Truth; and the truth not only as contained in the written Word, but formed in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost. The truth must first be known in its power to free from evil in the world

and from sinful selfish flesh. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," said our Lord to those who believed on Him; and "if the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." The Son has bestowed upon us eternal life and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and brought us to share the Father's love in that world of love and light and joy, into which He Himself has entered. It is plain from 1 John 2. 15 that the love of the Father, which satisfies the soul where it is enjoyed, is the true antidote to the world-snare in all its forms of lust and will. We are only separate in heart and soul from what we have judged as evil, and we can only be witnesses for Christ in the power of the Spirit in man's world if we are clear of man's world ourselves.

All this goes to prove that the *first* need of the soul in an evil day is to be established in grace, and in the full consciousness of the place of acceptance it possesses "in the Beloved;" and as a member of Christ's body and of the family of God. The light all comes from Christ in glory, and thither we must turn our gaze.

Three things are characteristic of the Christian:

(1) He rejoices in the Lord, the glorified and exalted Man, recognizes that His body is on earth united to the Head in heaven by the Holy Spirit dwelling in the members, and by the same Spirit he cries Abba Father.

(2) He recognizes the presence of the Holy Ghost in the house of God, and the authority of the Word of God.

(3) He expects the return of the Bridegroom to take His bride to Himself.

But knowledge of truth will not alone suffice. Our souls must be habitually cast upon God and the word of His grace which is able to build us up; and, if the eye is single, the whole body will be full of light.

The Lord told His disciples when upon earth that they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

If the salt becomes insipid it is no longer fit for anything, and this is an illustration of the present state of profession, which is form without power, or knowledge and pretension without the unction of the Spirit and the grace of Christ, and none who are in such a condition are truly shining as lights. The hindrances to the shining of the light are the flesh and love of the world; and, as light is inseparable from life, there must be the bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus if the life of Jesus is to be manifest in our mortal body.

We *are* light in the Lord and children of light, and Christ dwells in us; but the question raised to-day is not only what we are in the sight of God, but what we are in the sight of men in our daily walk and ways, when so little of Christ is seen where His name is professed.

"The truth as it is in Jesus" is our having put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and having put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. He who is our life in glory closed our history in Adam as men in the flesh on the cross, and has set us up in a new power by the gift of His Spirit; and if He is not seen in our lives, what is the secret of it? It is because our hearts are seeking satisfaction outside Himself, forgetful of the cross where the judgment fell on Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

The important thing in the midst of the universal breakdown is to be satisfied with Himself, and to have His approval. Courage and an exercised conscience go hand in hand in the pathway of His will.

Yet nothing in us can be depended upon. It is not our satisfaction that is power, but the being satisfied with His love to us. His eye is never off us. There is not a single member of His body that He is not occupied with, not one that is not always under His eye amongst the myriads of His redeemed.

All are of Himself, and dear to Him as His own flesh and purchased by His own blood. His heart is here because His church is here, the object of His never-changing love.

God is not turned aside from His purposes by the failure of His people and the work of the enemy. He cannot deny Himself. All that is in Christ is for us, as in the early days of the church. Satan may rob souls of their proper joys through carelessness and worldliness and bad teaching, but divine relationships abide; and the reason for the loss of power on our side is easily to be found if we are willing to be searched by the candle of the Lord.

There is only one path through the world, and the Lord Himself has trodden it. His was a path of light and love and subjection to the Father's will, and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. Confusion and schism and scattering down here cannot blot out the path of faith, nor hinder the power that sustains the pilgrim in that path.

But we want the steadfast gaze on the One who has trodden it—the author and finisher of faith—the single eye, and an undivided heart, with purpose to cleave to Him.

Humiliation becomes us because of our failure as witnesses, but we can speak well of Himself, and be found in the spirit of the cry, "the Spirit and the Bride say come."

The bright morning star is seen before the dawn of day, and surely we can discern the work of the Spirit at the present moment awakening many hearts, not only to expect the Bridegroom, but to join in the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus."

We may be conscious of our feebleness, but this is no hindrance to God's power; as the Apostle says; "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us"; and again: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power

of Christ may rest upon me." Christ's power is perfected in weakness, but the manifestation of life in the power of the Spirit is only as we, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body.

If we appropriate the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood we dwell in Christ and He in us; and if we feed on Him we live by, or, on account of, Him. The feeblest saint is not of the world; and, fed on this spiritual aliment, he practically lives in another sphere of life.

The exhortation in the writings of the Apostle John is, "Now, little children, abide in Him." He who found a resting-place on the bosom of love is the

one fitted to describe the results of abiding. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

As to the babes in the family, he says: "If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." There can be no development. The revelation is perfect and complete. That which they had heard from the beginning consisted in all that was revealed in the Son become incarnate: "Jesus Christ come in flesh." "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God."

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 21.

The Resurrection and Attendant Incidents.

THIS glorious foundation of a living hope, for the saints of God, is presented in all four Gospels with instructive variations; these it is now our privilege to study. So conspicuous are the differences that some writers, with more boldness than reverence, have asserted the impossibility of harmonizing the narratives. Those who believe in inspiration will find another solution of the difficulties, and consider that the Spirit who gave those records can instruct by the variations in a way which no harmony of the Gospels ever does.

One point common to all four accounts is here worthy of notice, the prominent place occupied by the women in connection with these terminal scenes in the gospel history. We may learn in them the character of the affection which should mark all believers, but which is not found in the same way in the apostles.

In comparing the accounts, MATTHEW'S is seen to stand apart from the others in several particulars. Perhaps the most striking is the importance attaching to Galilee as the place of gathering to meet the Lord. Jerusalem seems only regarded in connection with the guilt of its leaders, and under the government of God is set aside. All the meetings with the risen

Christ mentioned in the other Gospels as occurring in the city or neighbourhood are omitted, with the exception of that with the women. These, who had just received the angel's message to the disciples, have it confirmed to them in a personal interview with the Lord Himself. They, unlike Mary in JOHN 20., are permitted to hold Him by the feet, one of the indications that this chapter does not bring the revelation of what is peculiar to Christianity. This will, I hope, come out more clearly in the next number. It may suffice to say now that, although the disciples are mentioned as "my brethren," a comparison with Mary's commission (John 20. 17) suggests that in MATTHEW Jewish connection is implied rather than Christian relationship (*cf.* chap. 25. 40). This setting aside of Jerusalem, though spoken of as the city of the great King (5. 35) and the holy city (27. 53), to indicate the unchanging character of divine purpose, is quite in accord with the place the city has in the history given in the first Gospel (see chap. 2. 3; 4. 15; 20. 18; 22. 7; 23. 37, etc.). Similarly, in the chapter we are considering, the terrible and heartless guilt of the Jerusalem leaders is exhibited in the worst colours. The fact of the resurrection cannot be denied; the

soldiers of the guard around the grave are confronted with an angel in the majesty of heaven, who rolls away the stone and discloses an empty tomb. Tidings of *all* that had taken place is brought to the chief priests, but the truth must be concealed. A lie is fabricated for the soldiers to utter (the elders being in the plot), and their falsehood earns them a large sum of money. In MATTHEW alone are we introduced into those secret counsels of enemies all eager first to prevent and then to conceal this triumphant witness of divine power. Thus Jerusalem is left with a lie commonly reported among its inhabitants, and grace takes its course from Galilee. All this illustrates God's governmental ways with Israel which this Gospel makes prominent.

MARK in the first eight verses of chapter 16. gives the incident of the visit of the women to the sepulchre, but not their meeting with Jesus. We hear nothing of the guilty conduct of Israel's chiefs, and this part of the chapter closes abruptly with the mention of the fear and amazement of the women. They are unable at first to carry out the command of the angel and are slow of heart to believe themselves. The last twelve verses seem an appendix, and relate the meetings in Jerusalem and Emmaus omitted in MATTHEW. Most readers will remember that these verses are bracketed in the Revised Version with the note that they are wanting in the two oldest Greek manuscripts. Their title to be included in Holy Scripture is defended on the ground of their being found in the versions that are older than these manuscripts. Without going further into this much-debated question, it may be pointed out that the brief record of events in this part of the chapter fits in well with the character of the Gospel. We do not find as in MATTHEW the presentation of the Messiah of Israel according to promise and prophecy, but the personal history and testimony of the true Servant of Jehovah. Across every page of this Gospel might well be written Jehovah's words by Isaiah "Behold my Servant" (43. 1; 52. 13; 53. 11). The last reference is peculiarly applicable here, because, if rightly understood, it sets forth Christ's twofold service, fulfilled in this Gospel: "by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant instruct many in righteousness," or "turn many to

righteousness" (Dan. 12. 3), "And He shall bear their iniquities" (see *An Exposition of Isaiah*, W. Kelly, pp. 420, 431).

LUKE's account has an interest of its own, from the minute account of the Emmaus incident, but he first gives, in 24. 1-12, the fact of the resurrection on the testimony of the angels, whose words do not include any appointment for a meeting in Galilee as given in MATTHEW and MARK. In fact, in this chapter, with a special application to Gentile readers, Jerusalem is as prominent in the Lord's words and ways as in MATTHEW it is slighted. In what follows it is beautifully in character with this Gospel of the Manhood, that the purpose of the Spirit is evidently to establish the identity of the risen Saviour with the Jesus the disciples had known and loved in "the days of His flesh." So we find the word "Himself" added to His name (ver. 15). "Jesus Himself drew near"; (ver. 36), "Jesus Himself stood in the midst" (the reading here is doubtful). Similarly and forcibly His own word in verse 39, "Handle Me and see that it is I *Myself*." Precious testimony for hearts slow to believe! Here also, in presence of the apostles, and those that were with them, He eats the broiled fish (the addition of the honeycomb is questioned). The grouping of the facts in moral sequence so characteristic of this Gospel is not difficult to discern here. Two disciples are seen in sorrow and disappointment leaving the place to which a closer knowledge of the Lord compels their instant return. To these Christ is revealed, first by the *word* on their way, secondly in *His person* in the house. It is the latter which moves them to return to the city. There He is found in the midst of "His own," illustrating how He is known in the assembly. The commission for service with its needed endowment of power from on high follows, and Christ's own blessing, given with outstretched hands as He is ascending, links the disciples with Him in His own place, where He now is. This blessing is a suited introduction to the teaching of the Acts and the Pauline epistles.

As some have difficulties as to the order of events on the resurrection day, the following is given as the most probable solution. Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of James and Joses, with other

women who followed Him from Galilee, visit the sepulchre on the evening of the crucifixion (Mark 15. 47; Luke 23. 55). They rested the Sabbath day, from Friday 6 p.m. to the same hour on Saturday. The day of rest having closed, they bought (the term is aorist not pluperfect) spices and visited the sepulchre again (Matt. 28. 1), which may be rendered "late on Sabbath as it was the dusk of the next day after Sabbath" (Mark 16. 1). Early in the morning of the first day of the week, but after sunrise (Mark 16. 2), the women come with the spices they had prepared to embalm the body, but have been preceded by Mary of Magdala, who arrives when it is still dark

(John 20. 1). When she returns to the sepulchre, having told Peter and John that it is empty, the rest of the women have been there, have seen the angel and received his message; Mary remains and sees Jesus first. He afterwards shows Himself to the other women and confirms the angel's message as to the gathering in Galilee. Mary's message is far different and is only related in John 20. MARK's statement (16. 8), that the women "said nothing to any one," must be understood to apply to the angel's message; after seeing the Lord Himself it is clear they told the apostles (Luke 24. 10).

C. E. H. WARREN.

Mark (continued), Chap. 8.

THE second feeding of the multitude, given here pretty much as in MATTHEW, has a different character from that of chapter 6., though the same power wrought in both. Here there is no "Give ye them to eat:" it is the patient, compassionate grace of the Lord, who, taking account of the many with Him, in a wilderness, divers of whom had come from far, would not send them away fasting. The disciples are as much at a loss to know how this was to be done as if they had not before proved His power under similar circumstances. But with seven loaves and a few small fishes He satisfied them, as the seven baskets of the broken pieces left were proof: seven doubtless pointing to the completeness of spiritual resources still to be found in the blessed Lord, if through Israel's rejection of Him they were not now connected with the number twelve as before, which number stands for administration in man.

LUKE does not give the latter miracle at all. The patience of the Lord with Israel, though in constant evidence everywhere, is not his subject. The rejection of the Lord is brought on so early in that Gospel (chap. 4.) that the way was clear to bring in all that was so morally new, which was now to supersede the special dealings of God with that nation.

Next, in the same order as in MATTHEW, Pharisees seek a sign from heaven. That He sighed deeply in His spirit tells how He felt it (vers. 11, 12). No

sign should be given to such a generation. Leaving them by ship, He takes occasion to warn the disciples against the pretended zeal of the Pharisees and the worldly, servile spirit of the Herodians. They thought He alluded to their having brought with them but one loaf. What a lack of all perception and intelligence was this; as the Lord points out to them, eyes, ears, memory, all at fault. Nothing could be more significant at this point than the incident, only recorded by MARK, of the blind man of Bethsaida who meets them; not as setting forth the moral blindness of the nation and its leaders, but even of His own disciples, and the patient grace of the Lord's ways with them. He leads the blind man apart from the mass, moistens his eyes, puts His hands upon him, and when he could only see partially, He put His hands again on his eyes and made him look up, and then he could see plainly. But he was not to go back to the town nor tell it to any one in the town.

Thus we have been permitted to trace the Lord in the patient unwearied service of divine love from one scene of human need to another, with the omission of so much recorded by the other Gospels that would have only hindered the appreciation of the service as a whole: the *omissions* as true to the underlying purpose of MARK as what finds its *record* in the others. The moment was now come (ver. 27) to raise the question of how such a testimony as had never been rendered on earth was telling on the hearts of men,

On the way He asked His disciples. "Whom do men say that I am?" There was the current idle hearsay of the world, some suggesting John the Baptist, others Elijah or one of the prophets. He was then divinely sent, but no one sought seriously to know who He was or what His message. Such is the heart of man. The Lord turns from the prevailing indifference to the disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Peter confesses Him to be the Christ. But it was now too late to make Him known as such. Instead of what belonged to Him as a living Messiah in Israel, He was about to be "cut off and get nothing" (Dan. 9. 26, marg.). Not the throne of the kingdom but the cross of shame lay before Him. It is the turning-point of the Gospel of MARK: "And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly."

Yet it was not the great resulting organic change that MARK is given to bring out. He does not give Peter's full confession of Christ as in MATTHEW, nor the momentous announcement of the assembly that was founded on it. It is rather the consequences of His death and resurrection as affecting the path of His followers, in the world that rejected Him. And how immense the change! What an apparent blighting of hopes long cherished of the earthly blessings of the kingdom, when they seemed to be so near realization! The flesh, even in an apostle, rises up to resent what involved its death. But "turning about and looking upon His disciples," the ever-faithful Lord, knowing what a stumbling-block it would be in the way of others, rebuked Peter as Satan; for he had been doing the enemy's work, and this was the result of minding things that be of men instead of those of God. It was not the grosser things of the flesh that influenced him, but just those of man and his world, out of which the Lord was passing by death. And MARK records that to the people, as well as to the disciples, the Lord opens out, as in MATTHEW, that this is the character of the path in which He must be followed, if it led, as it eventually surely will, to the glory of the kingdom. The test would

be the true confession of the blessed Lord and of His words in face of the opposition of the world; as both MARK and LUKE bring in the warning here, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Chap. ix.

The kingdom should be introduced in power when the time was come for it, of which the Transfiguration was the witness and visible representation to the chosen witnesses who were with Him on the Mount. We have had it before us in these studies (see pages 97 and 226). But, in what follows in MARK, the prevailing note is His death and its consequences for all as to this world. As they came down He forbade them to tell of what they had seen till He was risen from the dead, when it would be an immense confirmation to their faith and testimony (2 Peter 1. 16-18). They are arrested for the moment by the thought, and question among themselves what this rising *from the dead* should mean. Orthodox Jewish belief held the resurrection of the dead (John 11. 24; Heb. 6. 2). But to rise from the dead, while others were left under the power of it, was wholly new to them as even to many now. But they are more immediately interested as to Elijah's coming that the Scribes spoke of. The Lord affirms the truth of it: Elijah should come and restore all things, but meanwhile the Son of Man must suffer much, and be set at nought, as it was written of Him.

On His return ("the next day," LUKE) MARK records the astonishment of the multitude on His reappearance, and, with much more detail (as usual with him), the helplessness of the disciples in the case they had had to do with in His absence, of the poor man's son ("mine only child," LUKE) afflicted with a dumb spirit. The awful malignant power of the enemy, that had from a child sought to destroy him, was manifested in the very presence of the Lord. But principles come to light of great moment for His servants. The father says, "If thou canst do anything have compassion on us and help us." The answer of the Lord is literally, "The 'if thou

canst ' is to believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." All turns upon the faith that counts upon Him. Humbly the father pleads, " I believe, help thou mine unbelief." The people were running together, and the Lord rebuked the "unclean" spirit (as constantly in MARK), charging him to come out, and enter no more into him. He had seemed to succumb under the last fearful assault, but Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up; and he arose. The work of deliverance was complete. Privately the disciples have to learn from the Lord that it is not Satan that is the difficulty, but self. Only in dependence upon God, and withdrawal from what operates on the flesh, is power over such an enemy found.

His service is nearly over. He passed through Galilee and would have no one know it. For He taught His disciples that, delivered into the hands of men, His death was at hand; and that after He was killed He should rise the third day. But they understood it not, and were afraid to ask Him. The reason was not far to seek: other thoughts filled their minds—they had been reasoning by the way as to who was the greatest, and were ashamed to own it to the Lord. This leads to the incident of the child in its lowliness, whom the Lord takes in His arms, applying the lesson to rebuke their self-exaltation as only here, though MARK also records what is common to MATTHEW and LUKE, that whosoever should receive one such child in His name received Christ, and, in receiving Him, the Father who sent Him.

But the spirit of self-seeking betrays itself in more specious forms. Even John it is who forbade one casting out demons in His Master's name (just what they had been unable to do themselves), "because he followeth not us." It is the self-importance of the company, that shuts out from him the glory of Christ. For if Christ had been before his eyes, would he not have rejoiced in the power of His name as proved anywhere and by whomsoever? It was no question here of Pharisees heaping dishonour on Christ, in attributing His manifested power over Satan to Satan himself as in Matthew 12, 24-30, in which case he that was not with Christ was against Him, "and he

that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Here, "Jesus said Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part"—identifying Himself with them in such grace, even when He has to rebuke their selfishness. So far from any clashing in the principles of these verses, both are found in LUKE (9. 49 and 11, 23) and in the same connections. MARK alone adds that even that which is least—a cup of water given in His name—will not lose its reward. What a Master we have to serve! On the other hand, to be the means of stumbling one of the little ones that believe on Him would be to their everlasting ruin. And the incomparably solemn warning follows, as fully given by MARK, against allowing anything in oneself, and that in the professed service of the Lord, that would be a snare. The unsparing judgment of self is one's only safety, and that in what the body values most (see 1 Cor. 9. 26-27); be it the hand, or foot, or eye. It is better to enter into the kingdom of God with the loss of them than to be cast into the unquenchable fire of hell.

The principles are then stated that govern all this. "Every one shall be salted with fire." Man as such cannot but meet the judgment of God. But there are those who are accepted on the ground of sacrifice. The fire in their case has done its work, in the sacrifice of Him who has endured the judgment of God for them. They shall be salted with salt. Salt, namely, the holy energy of grace in separation to God, must not be wanting in any sacrifice. The test will come, whether in the holy government of God, the discipline of the Lord (see 1 Cor. 11. 31, 32), for those who are His, or in the lake of fire for those who are not. There may be the profession of that which is the only preserving principle, without its reality, which is hopeless for the state of the profession: for "if the salt has lost its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it?"—or as LUKE has it in chapter 14. 34-35, "it is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill; they cast it out." The Lord closes with, "Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another" (see Jas. 3. 17).

(J. A. TRENCH).

Some Subjects of Interest.

THE great indifference on the part of the multitudes to the gospel is generally deplored by Christians who are zealous for the Lord and love the souls of men. Regarding this indifference a correspondent writes us as to what may be one of the causes. He suggests that perhaps the lives of Christians may not be altogether blameless in the matter. Being himself employed in a large business house, and so knowing the feelings of business people, he asks what effect an invitation to a gospel service can have from one who is constantly shopping at closing hour? Or what influence Christian masters or mistresses can have upon their servants if their conduct towards them is harsh, niggardly, and mean? And in this connection he quotes two important passages of Scripture, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4. 5); and "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3. 8). These things are not small matters, for by them, the details of our lives, the gospel is either commended or falsified. The evangelical life is needed as well as the evangelical word, and the evangelical life is one of forgetfulness of self and thoughtfulness of others, of kindness and compassion; it is the life of Christ reproduced in His disciples. If our lives are out of harmony with the word of our testimony, we must not be surprised if our words are treated as empty sound, or, worse still, if the name of our Saviour is blasphemed because of us.

The Lack of Interest in the Gospel.

gospel, should not expect his fellow-Christians to have a hall ready filled for him, so that his work may be principally in the hall. 'Publicly and from house to house' one would judge from Scripture to be God's order. If evangelists would carry Christ to men and women in their houses, as well as preach Him from the platform, we should hear less about little blessing. I feel as if we were only gazing across the field instead of going into it to labour. I am not pleading for a sensational work, where people's natural feelings are played upon, and scores or hundreds of conversions are counted, and a short time after comparatively nothing of it is left to be seen or felt except the after-damp. Evangelists who are 'men of the day' will be sober men, men who commend Christ as God's power in every part of the work. Their aim will be to make God manifest, and they will do this, even in the way they get the people together to hear the Word. A true evangelist is an overcomer, strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, continuing in God-taught things, learning nothing from a Christendom which is giving up God in any part of his work. When people complain, he is ready to show that God is just the same as ever He was, and that He (God) will not depart from His own way to accommodate any one, and that He (God) has withdrawn nothing He ever gave the saints as such. May God increase—greatly multiply—and send forth such men, carrying Christ as the power of God into the dwellings of men and women, and such shall find far more of God's work going on than they ever dreamt of, when they trusted so much to public meetings and the platform. And what a number of saints of God will also thus be met with who need some solid work built into their souls. I by no means underrate the public preachings, if God lays on the heart of a godly person to go to labour at a place, He goes in the light and consciousness that he has a work to do there, and he is going to do it, God being his power for it (1 Sam. 17. 45-46; Acts 16. 10). The saints in that place may not be very spiritual; if so He will help them. No

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With regard to the recent correspondence on the subject of gospel work we have received the following notes which emphasize the individual character of this service.

Gospel Work is an Individual Service.

"An evangelist, sent into the world to seek souls by the preaching of the

doubt it is very desirable to find saints in happy fellowship with the gospel (they may be that, and yet not happy with every preacher in his preaching and his ways in his work). But suppose they are not in happy fellowship with God in His gospel work—are rather lukewarm—what is he to do? Bring them into touch with God." (*A. Bookless.*)

It is important that the preacher of the gospel, whether he be able to devote his whole time or only part of it to this service, should lay hold of this side of things. It is a happy thing, undoubtedly, when the saints of God are in hearty accord with the gospel, and show this by their co-operation and prayers. This is pleasing to the Lord, as is evident from such scriptures as Romans 16; Philippians 1. 7; 4. 15; 2 Thessalonians 3. 1. And if Christians are in a right condition of soul there will be this fellowship in the work of the Lord, for it is a part of the outflow of the divine life within them; but the servant of Christ must fulfil his service and prosecute his mission, under the Lord's guidance and according to the truth, even if he does it alone, wherever opportunity offers.

* * * * *

While there are those who have been undoubtedly fitted of the Lord to preach the work publicly and from house to house, yet each Christian has his responsibility thereto. In this connection we append notes from another contributor.

The responsibility of the Saints.

"We had heard the expression 'Local Responsibility' frequently of late years, and we knew that the subject had caused not a little exercise to many of God's dear children. We were therefore all attention when a valued contributor to your pages used these words in the course of an address. "LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY," said he, "MEANS CARRYING THE GOSPEL TO YOUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOUR."

We confess this was to us an entirely new view, but the more we considered the matter the more were we convinced that in regard to the gospel he was right.

Believing that all your readers will—on reflection—endorse this weighty remark,

we proceed at once to inquire: To what extent are *we* seeking to answer to *our* "local responsibility?"

There appeared recently in the pages of "Scripture Truth" an interesting correspondence as to the Sunday evening gospel preachings. We desire, however, to raise the larger question: Does our responsibility cease when we have devoted ONE HOUR OUT OF EVERY 168 HOURS to the gospel?

We submit that gospel preaching should not be limited to one day per week, and we also suggest that it is not the monopoly of those who speak in public. "EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE EVANGELISTIC."

"GO ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15).

Many have been led by this command to go to distant parts of the earth. God bless them, every one, and add to their number a thousandfold; their devotedness puts us to shame; and we believe they are ranked amongst the nobility of heaven. We venture to ask, however: What about the heathen at home? What about our "next-door neighbour?" Can it be that we are ashamed to speak to them? God forbid! The man of the world does not hesitate to discuss worldly matters; the politician fearlessly shows his colours, nor is he backward in pestering his neighbour for his vote, and shall *we* be ashamed of Christ? NEVER!

We remark, further, that it is our privilege and responsibility to "carry the gospel" to ALL in the place where we live, be it hamlet, village, town, or city. They may not come to us, but our Lord's word is "GO."

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should GO and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you."

Our Lord has taken us up in His grace and has fitted us, as He alone can, that in this the world of His rejection, and during His absence, we should be what He was when He was here: the expression of what God is; and that we should do what He did—preach! Beloved fellow-

Christians, shall we bend our ear to hear Him say to each one of us—"GO?"

(W. B. Dick).

* * * * *

Another correspondent sends the following quotation from the sayings of a departed servant of

What, and How Christ. "Brethren, **to Preach.** answer the deepest

questions of the heart, and men will find you out. We hear a good deal about preaching to the times. What times? He preaches to the times who preaches to shattered lives and broken hearts. He preaches to the times who preaches hope to the hopeless, and the forgiveness of sins to those who groan under the darkness of despair." To this we would add: Thus will every preacher preach who preaches Christ, the once crucified but now exalted Saviour; and outside of Him there is no answer to the deepest questions of the heart, there is no bread for soul-hunger, no hope for the hopeless, no forgiveness for the despairing and lost. The word of truth declares: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 12).

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But every servant of Christ, no matter what line his or her service takes, whether amongst young

The End or old, sinners or saints, **in View.** should serve as

THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST

(John 15. 14, 15). It is their high privilege to know His thoughts and purposes, and to be in communion with Him as to the end of all the work that the Holy Spirit is doing through His servants in this world. This end is undoubtedly the building up and completion of the assembly which is the body of Christ. It should be carefully considered by all who serve the Lord in the gospel, that the evangelist, equally with the pastor and teacher, is a gift from the victorious and ascended Christ "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, **FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**" (Eph. 4. 8-13).

Is this the object you have in view, whoever you are who preach the Word? Or is it the building up of some sect, cause, or church of your own which is

less than the church of God? If the latter then your gospel is marred and warped by your own limited and sectarian view. Or is the salvation of the souls of men the only object you have in view? A most blessed object surely, but not **THE END** of the Holy Spirit's work; the end is the finding of the members of Christ and the gathering out of a bride for Him, for His heart's full and everlasting joy; and that unto God there might "be glory **IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS** throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3. 21). The blessed work of saving souls is elevated and made a thousand-fold more blessed when this is understood and the work is done according to this great purpose of God. Let us never divorce the gospel from the church.

* * * * *

To be a truly efficient servant then, and so a joy to the Master's heart, and good and faithful in His

The Divine reckoning, one must be **Plans.** conversant with His purposes and plans.

These plans have been clearly drawn up by Him who is the great Architect of the assembly, and according to these plans, made before the foundations of the world, He is building what He has called with intense affection "**MY ASSEMBLY**" (Matt. 16. 18). It is blessed to be in communion with Him in this matter and to learn His thoughts from His Word, and in this connection the Epistle to the Ephesian Church is especially necessary, and it will be noted that in this Epistle the Holy Spirit of God is much spoken of, for it is only as strengthened by Him and taught by Him that we are able to comprehend the truth and realize the great end for which souls are being won.

Then we can go to the quarries of this world and get out of them "the great stones and costly," which shall fit into the building (another aspect of the church) which is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (*i.e.* upon the testimony which they in the power of the Holy Ghost rendered to Christ), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone: "**IN WHOM** all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 20, 21).

The Two Persuasions.

(M. C. GAHAN).

Romans 14., 15. 1-7.

(Continued from page 335.)

BY the grace of divine concession and consideration for others' consciences, in those matters which are not of vital moment, an entrance may be gained for the light that liberates from a legal spirit and a legal walk. On the other hand, the light that one possesses who sees Christian position clearly, may operate injuriously if insisted upon, apart from divine intelligence in another, as to the full effect of Christ's death and resurrection, just as the effect of glare is injurious until the natural eye, by a gradual process, becomes accustomed to the light. *Christian liberty is the result of ministry applied by the Spirit in liberating power.*

When Jesus had communicated life to Lazarus and Lazarus came forth from the tomb, it was as one who brought with him the witnesses of his immediately previous estate, in the grave clothes with which he was bound. It was to those around, *in the full liberty of life*, that Jesus turned and said, "Loose him and let him go."

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of," by doing what might offend a weak conscience.

But the kingdom of God, in its essential character, is not identified with meat and drink or materialism *in any form*; but rather with the abstract principles of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," which may be pursued and enjoyed in common, *alike by those somewhat under legal influences, and by those who are in the fuller apprehension of the results of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* Thus these principles of righteousness and peace and joy furnish the foundation elements of *Christian fellowship*, by whatever path reached, and provide common ground upon which *all* can unite and walk together in the unity of the Spirit and "in the uniting bond of peace."

Whether, therefore, intelligent or un-intelligent in the deeper truths of Christianity, "he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."

It is much then, though not all, to be "fully persuaded *in one's own mind*," but there lies one step beyond to which the Apostle would have each one attain, viz. the liberty that is inseparably connected with "being persuaded *in the Lord Jesus*," carrying with it as it does the conviction "that *there is nothing unclean of itself*." Apart from this knowledge and persuasion, "to him that *esteemeth* anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean;" and this estimate according to conscience, weak though it may be, calls for recognition, the alternative being twofold, viz. the grieving of the weak brother on the one hand, and the infraction of the law and spirit of love on the other.

Exhortation follows: "Let us then follow after the things *which make for peace and things whereby one may edify another*." Love is evidently the ruling principle here. Again, if "Christ died" for the weaker brother, and if his spiritual progress is directly "the work of God" in him, liberty as to mere meat and drink, or anything whereby the weak brother may be caused to stumble, ought not to be exercised by one with clearer light, for such a course would have destructive results as to another's soul progress: "For meat destroy not the work of God." If it be true, as surely it is, that "all things are indeed pure," let it be also remembered that "it is evil for that man who eateth with offence," *i.e.* to his conscience. If "happy [*i.e.* blessed] is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth," let such reflect that "he that doubteth is damned [condemned or self-condemned] if he eat, because he eateth not of [in the liberty of] faith: for what-

soever is not of faith is sin [to such]." (See on this point 1 Cor. 8.) The principle that each one should be fully persuaded in his own mind serves then, in the Apostle's mind, to secure fellowship and unity amongst the Lord's people UNTIL fuller light reaches the weaker brother; when that same fellowship and unity will be established for *both* on the permanent foundations of revealed truth as to Christian liberty in Christ: when, too, the apostolic appeal to the Galatians will be mutually appreciated: "Stand fast therefore *in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5. 1).

The apostle Paul has a further word to say about this principle: "Though I have . . . all knowledge . . . and have not charity, I am NOTHING" (1 Cor. 13. 2).

Again, when pressing upon the Philippians profound truths with reference to the death and resurrection of Christ as bearing upon their walk, with a view to the maintenance of fellowship amongst the saints in their different stages of soul-history with God and the heavenly calling, he introduces the same principle of grace and toleration: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [*i.e.* of full spiritual intelligence], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, *God shall reveal even this unto you*. Nevertheless, whereto we have [in common] already attained, let us walk together in the same steps." [*New Trans.*] (Phil. 3. 15, 16).

But a word of warning is needed here. It was one thing for sensitive consciences to abstain from meats, *lest they should act contrary to the mind of God*, but quite another abstaining from meats when incorporated as a doctrine into an apostate system, as in 1 Tim. 4. 3. But here, again, the corrective of such doctrines and principles lay in intelligence as to Christian position; for these (meats) forbidden by the apostasy "God hath created

to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe *and know the truth*. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, *if it be received with thanksgiving*."

The summing up of the Apostle's exhortation is found in chapter 15. 1-6, where He who was presented in chapter 14 as MASTER to whom each is individually responsible; as LORD unto whom, whether living or dead, all live; and before whom as JUDGE all shall give an account, is introduced in the lowly circumstances of His earthly pathway AS MODEL AND EX-AMPLE.

The transition is most striking and forcible in its appeal to every true heart; the dignity and glory of His person adding much to the illumination of the Apostle's words: "*Even Christ pleased not Himself*." Rather did He appropriate to Himself the reproach attaching to others; whether of Jehovah who was dishonoured by the nation, or the remnant whose sorrows and infirmities He bore. "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" (Ps. 69. 9). Thus from "the Scriptures" Paul extracts a *ministry* of "patience and comfort" as to relations one with another.

Finally, in prayer, he turns to "the God of patience and consolation" on their behalf, that He would *grant them* "to be likeminded one toward another, according to [or after the example of] Christ," which practically amounts to a prayer for Christ-likeness, inevitably tending to one-mindedness, and thus to the glorifying of God in the character of "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who finds His supreme delight in all that reflects the graces of His Son amongst the household of faith: "Wherefore receive ye one another [not to doubtful disputations, but] as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (ver. 7). "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; *only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh but by love serve one another*" (Gal. 5. 13).

"Let the Whole Line Advance."

(HAROLD P. BARKER).

"Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel."—Phil. 1. 27.

NEARLY a hundred years ago a critical moment in the history of Europe had arrived. Napoleon and Wellington were facing each other upon the fields of Waterloo. Their armies were drawn up in battle array. Upon the issue of the impending conflict hung the fate of nations.

The day wore on. Attack and counter-attack followed one another in quick succession. At length Napoleon determined to stake everything upon one last desperate effort. He brought up his reserves, the Imperial Guard, and flung them upon the opposing forces.

The onslaught was met unflinchingly by the British, and Wellington, galloping to the front, gave his famous final order, "Let the whole line advance!" And advancing with a run, the conquering army swept forward to complete victory.

* * * *

Long and weary, through the changing centuries, the battle has raged between the hosts of the Lord and the legions of the foe. The tide of victory has ebbed and flowed. At times the powers of darkness seemed almost to have prevailed. Then, with the standard lifted high by the Spirit of God, a rally has been made, an onward rush, a valiant onslaught upon the high places of the enemy.

But the battle is nearing its end. The centuries are dying; time is short. Satan seems to be marshalling his phalanxes for the great final attack. He is bringing up his reserves. Mohammedanism is sweeping down from Northern Africa upon the central regions, occupying the ground in the face of the messengers of the gospel. Buddhism is sending its propagandists to the West. Hinduism is girding its loins afresh and infusing new energy and determination into its millions of

adherents. Romanism is tightening its grip, wherever it can, upon the so-called Protestant nations. Traitors abound within the ranks, still calling themselves by the Christian name, but serving the enemy as "Higher Critics," "Millennial Dawnists," "Christian Scientists," and so on. Spiritualism is spreading with amazing rapidity. Socialism, invading the realm of religion, is diverting men's thoughts from heaven, and fixing them upon the things of earth. Truly they are "perilous times," the enemy's reserves are pressing relentlessly on.

What is to be done? Do we not hear the voice of our great Captain saying, "*Let the whole line advance?*"

There are those that have been standing idly by, spending their energies in ecclesiastical disputes. Let them take their places in the line of battle! Others have imagined that the conflict is not for them, that they are too weak, too ignorant, too poor, too incapable. Let them fall into line and prepare to advance. Let every deserter rejoin the colours! Let every loiterer stand at attention and wait his Lord's word of command.

Christians, you that are wasting your lives chasing butterflies, playing with toys, immersed in things of earth, seek to realize the urgency of the moment. Are others to do the fighting, and you be carried to heaven on a bed of roses?

You who have been turning your weapons against your brethren (whom in your hearts you love, in spite of your bitter words), do you not note the onward sweep of the hostile forces? Cease your wrangling, and, shoulder to shoulder with your fellow-servants, march against the enemies of your Lord and of His truth.

Let none plead to be exempted. The

poor, the blind, the crippled, the life-long invalid, the Christian boy and girl, the busy mother with her housekeeping duties, *all* who love the Lord may take their places in the advancing line of battle.

* * * *

"But how? What am I to do? What is required of me?" Take these questions into the presence of your Lord and Master. Are you prepared for *Him* to answer them? Suppose the answer means toil, self-sacrifice, weariness, suffering? What then? Do you want *that* answer?

Of course the one great method of warfare, in which all may bear their share, is *INTERCESSORY PRAYER*. Yet how little is this practised. We pray for ourselves, our friends, those within our own little circle of acquaintance and interest, but how often do we deliberately set ourselves to advance the kingdom of God by our prayers? Thank God for the abundant evidence as to the power of earnest and persistent prayer!

"There are noble Christian workers,
The men of faith and power,
The overcoming wrestlers
Of many a midnight hour;
Prevailing princes with their God,
Who will not be denied,
Who bring down showers of blessing
To swell the rising tide.
The Prince of darkness quaileth
At their triumphant way,
Their fervent prayer availeth
To sap his subtle sway."

Many are the testimonies borne as to the results of intercession. Dr. Pierson remarked: "Every step in the progress of missions is directly traceable to prayer." Robert E. Speer says: "Every element in the missionary problem depends for its solution upon prayer." James Gilmour, writing from Mongolia, where he spent long years in the service of Christ, said: "Unprayed for, I feel like a diver at the bottom of a river with no air to breathe, or like a fireman on a blazing building with an empty hose."

Another way in which all, or nearly all, may help is by *money*. Do not

think that I am going to make a financial appeal! If there is one thing utterly nauseous to a Christian who walks with God it is the prominence given to money in connection with evangelistic and missionary work. Still, it is one of the ways in which very effectual help can be given. Surely *no* child of God should fail to participate in the service of the Gospel in this way. Those who cannot give pounds can give pence. May God exercise us all as to this.

But it is more than probable that the call may come to one and another of my readers with something further in view than this. What if the Lord wants *you*, not merely your prayers, your money, your interest, but *yourself* for His work whether at home or in the foreign field? He wants *all*, everything else goes for nothing, unless we first give our ourselves to the Lord (2 Cor. 8. 5). But some are called to abandon everything for this service. What if you are one of these?

Dr. Duff, the veteran missionary in India, wrote: "There was a time when I had no care or concern for the heathen; that was the time when I had no care or concern for my own soul. When, by the grace of God, I was led to care for my own soul, then it was I began to care for the heathen abroad. In my closet, on my bended knees, I then said, 'Lord, Thou knowest that silver and gold to give to this cause I have none. What I have I give unto Thee. I offer *myself*. Wilt Thou accept the gift?'"

* * * *

Is the reading of this paper to have any effect on *you*, dear Christian reader? Will you not let it be the means of inducing you to seriously face the question of your life-work? Too many of us are merely "playing at Christianity." God help us to *do* something for Him to whom we owe so much!

"I spent long years for thee,
In weariness and woe,
That an eternity
Of joy thou mightest know.
I spent long years for thee;
Hast thou spent one for Me?"

Worship.

WORSHIP is the rising up to God from the heart of the believer, or from the church, of His own thoughts about His beloved Son and what He has done.

Confession is not worship. We have constantly to confess before worship, because we cannot worship while there is a spot on the conscience; but if we stop there it is not worship. It is when we have passed through the blood of atonement, and, if needed, have used the sin-offering and trespass-offering, that we have fellowship with God, which is, being led by the power of the Holy Ghost into God's estimate of the beauty of Christ.

It is when resting in the Spirit between the Father and the Son that I have fellowship with God—not telling of my sins, for God's mind is not filled with my sins, but with that in Jesus which has put my sins away.

Worship is being nothing, and having God's thoughts about Jesus rolling

through my soul. When the Lord Jesus is everything, I am acting in the power of the life which is by and by more fully to be manifested. If we act upon this life we shall, then, from Jesus risen, have the flood of glory in our souls, for we are in Him now, and have the mind of God about His Son.

God is not occupied with what we are but with what Christ is. God wants us, as His children, to know, not only that we are within the Father's house, but within the Father's bosom also. He wants to have our minds filled with a volume of thoughts about His Christ. When a saint is full of this, and it ascends up to God, that is worship; and there is transforming power in Christ to change us into His likeness, while we are in communion with Him, and with the Father about Him. Worship is the being lost in wonder at what we find in God and in Christ. (Darby).

"Go ye therefore."—"Let us go."

We appeal to all our brethren, young, middle-aged, and old. We are in mid-winter, and it is not usually considered the season for open-air work, though in unconverted days it was quite all right for a football match; it is also the time for classes and multitudinous engagements, but if we are to heed the Word of the Lord we must do it now. Let *us* GO out, move from point to point in the place where we live and proclaim the gospel simply—faithfully, boldly—tenderly; let us tell out THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

We also appeal to our sisters. Procure a supply of gospel tracts and GO from house to house distributing the same and speaking a word for Jesus. It is by personal dealings more than anything

else that men and women will be compelled to hear the gospel. What a story we have to tell! What a Saviour of whom to speak! What a salvation to present! Shall we then withhold from our fellow-men the most magnificent tidings that ever fell on mortal ears?

God's purpose *will* be carried out, His house *will* be filled, His Church *will* be complete; but He offers to us the immense distinction of being "workers together with Him" (2 Cor. 6. 1) in the great work that He is doing. Eagerly do men grasp at the honour of serving an earthly potentate, and shall we be less eager to serve our gracious Lord? He is coming quickly; the day of service here will soon be ended, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6. 2). (W. B. Dick).

Begin with the Lord.

THERE is an old saying, "The beginning is half the battle;" but in the case of the Christian the beginning is the whole battle. The manna was gathered before the sun arose—the support for the day was secured before the day was entered upon—enough for the whole day.

Your first step will be an index of your next and because of grace, of your last. If the beginning be of the Lord, the end will be of the Lord. Many mistakes may intervene, but the blessed Lord will bring you back to your best days. You will sing as in the days of your youth. (J.B.S.).

Questions and Answers.

"I go to prepare a place for you."

What is the meaning of the Lord's words, "I go to prepare a place for you?" (John 14. 2). "What special preparation is here referred to, since in Matthew 25 He speaks of the "kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world?"

TO have a high place in the earthly kingdom with the Lord reigning as King was the hope and prospect before the minds of the disciples, so that when He told them that He was leaving the earth and going back to His Father their hearts were filled with sorrow. Then it was that He revealed to them the wonderful fact that in going away He would prepare a place for them in His Father's house. They were to share with Him the joy and blessedness of a home in His Father's house on high with Himself—more blessed and sweet than any place of honour or power in the kingdom could be. Until, however, He went there as Man, after making full propitiation for sins, there was, there could be, no place for man in that place of intimacy and blessed relationship with the Father. *His presence there prepared the place for His disciples* and for all who now believe on Him through their word, so that all such may truly sing:

"High in the Father's house above,
Our mansion is prepared,"

in preference to the line of another hymn:

"He is fitting up my mansion,"

which, I think, conveys a wrong and misleading idea.

The Lord was rejected by the world, no place was given Him here but the cross, where He died that we might live with Him; and this means that there is now no place for "His own" here but of strangers and pilgrims, but He has prepared a place for them in the Father's house in heaven, and perfectly fitted them also for that home of love—as is stated by Himself in the previous chapter (13.), where he says to Peter, "He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean *every whit*." And in Colossians 1. we learn the Father Himself has "made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Our blessed Redeemer and

Lord by His presence here on earth once, and

"The precious stream of water and of blood,
Which from His side so freely flowed,"

prepared *His people* for those heavenly mansions, and by His presence there as Man (though ever the Son in Deity) prepared *the place* there for them. This accords with the message He sent to His brethren when He was risen: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father: and to My God, and your God."

In Matthew 25. the Lord speaks, not of heavenly blessing, but of an earthly kingdom prepared for a people on earth; hence He says, "from the foundation of the world." When God laid the foundation of the earth, He had in view and purpose this glorious kingdom, where Christ should have His rightful place and over which He should reign as King, and where those who honoured Him, even in caring for and ministering to His brethren when they were despised and in reproach, would be owned and blessed and honoured. But all is of sovereign grace, whether as regards the heavenly company, whose place was to be His WITH the Father, or the earthly people who are blessed OF His Father ("Come ye blessed of My Father"). In the case of earthly blessing, their "names are written *from the foundation of the world* in the book of life of the Lamb slain" (Rev. 13. 18). In the case of the heavenly, we have been "chosen in Him *before the foundation of the world* that we should be holy and without blame before Him [the Father] in love" (Eph. 1. 4.). Those who believe the gospel in this present period belong to the heavenly portion and place; those who will have the earthly portion and blessing will be gathered out from the nations when this present period has closed at the coming of the Lord for His church. The heavenly saints will, however, in addition to their heavenly portion, reign over the earth with Christ. (S. M. Anglin).

"There am I in the Midst."

What is the meaning of "There am I in the midst?" (Matt. 18. 20).—A.F.

"There am I in the midst of them" is not a promise, but a consequence resulting from two or three being gathered together in, or rather, to (*eis*) His name. If the condition were fulfilled the consequence would follow, of His presence in their midst. The fact of its being to His name (this being expressive of His person and authority, and that those gathered are representative of Him) implies that He is absent from this world in which they are, but the Holy Ghost is here, and therefore spiritually His presence is known. That is, the Holy Ghost does not take the place of the centre of gathering, but enables those He has gathered to "The Name" to realize that they are in the presence of Him who is the risen Lord, Son of God, and Head of His body the church. While it is true that the Holy Ghost is that other Comforter, nevertheless, it is the Lord Himself who comes to His own. The collective blessedness and holy responsibility of such a privilege cannot be overstated. It is the nearest approach for us to the full joy of seeing Himself in glory in the midst of all His own, and for Him the anticipation of that day when He shall see of the travail

of His soul and be satisfied. At the same time, it is the greatest incentive to follow Him in the path where He has been disallowed indeed of men. This then is the great characteristic of the Christian assembly in contrast to the Lord's actual presence in the Millennial day, when the name of Jerusalem will be Jehovah Shammah, "the Lord is there."

It is important to note that in Matthew 18. 18 the Lord speaks of the authority to bind and loose which would belong to the assembly, this also being dependent on His presence; but doubtless, in view of the assumption that might come in with regard to this, He adds in verse 19, 'again I say unto you,' providing until the end, for two or three who in agreement on earth should approach the Father; such having no other object but His name, should have His presence in their midst, as the centre of worship and the power of control. No human thought or arrangement can have place in such a gathering, the direction of all must be left to Him; and nothing allowed that is inconsistent with Him whose name is "the holy and the true."
(James Green).

A Suggestion.

There are ways of helping in the work of the Lord abroad open to those who cannot leave home and go forth into the lands of darkness. The printing-press is a mighty engine for the spread of the truth. In *many* languages monthly periodicals are issued and distributed far and wide. The number of writers in these is necessarily very limited, and often the pages are filled up with poor and wishy-washy material. May I suggest, then, to those who write for the English magazines, whether those intended for children, for the unconverted generally, or for believers, that they might *learn a foreign language, in order to communicate the truth therein to the readers of the various magazines issued in that language.*

It is far, far easier to learn a language

sufficiently to write in it than to speak it. The *Dutch* language would give one access to readers in Holland, South Africa, and the Dutch Colonies. *Russian* would enable one to reach thousands in that vast empire. *Spanish* would put one in a position to write in the numerous periodicals that circulate not only in Spain, but in Mexico, Central and South America, Cuba and the Philippine Islands. *Italian* would serve as a means of approaching in this way thousands of Italians in Canada and Argentina, as well as those remaining in their native land. *Malagasy* would enable one to render the same service to the people of the largely Christianized island of Madagascar—an island five times as large as England.
(H. B. Barker).

Christ in Isaiah.—No. 11.

(H. J. VINE).

“Behold Your God.”

Isaiah (2). Section 1. Chapter 40.

HAVING surveyed the general structure, we may now turn to our glorious subject, and may our souls be sustained by the Holy Spirit, so that we may behold with glad hearts the glory of the Lord, which shines in these chapters.

At present, when Israel reads, “the veil is on their hearts,” so that they do not understand; but for those who are in the light, all veils are done away in Christ. In the liberty which the Spirit of the Lord gives they can behold and understand the glory of the Lord, and in consequence they take on of His character and become like Him.

“Like Him in faith, in meekness, love,
In every beauteous grace;
From glory unto glory changed,
Until we see His face.”

The Lord our God.

It is divinely decreed “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5. 23). It is therefore not surprising that in these chapters, where our Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in His humiliation, there should be hidden in the first (chap. 40.) a testimony to His deity. The voice of one is heard crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way!” This is the voice of John the Baptist. But whose way is being prepared? All four Gospels unite in perfect harmony to answer this important inquiry, as also does Isaiah 40. 3. It is the “way of THE LORD,” a “highway for OUR GOD.” *Matthew*, taking up the runner’s cry of Isaiah 40., records the testimony of John as to Jesus, “He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to bear” (Matt. 3. 11). *Mark* pre-

serves another part of that testimony, “I indeed have baptised you with water: but He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost” (Mark 1. 8). *Luke* records how that John, in the midst of the moral wilderness of Israel, was the “Voice of one crying in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of THE LORD, make His paths straight.” *John* shows us the Baptist not as servant only, but as an adoring beholder of the Lord, and as such he says, “He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He might be manifested to Israel, therefore am I come baptising with water . . . this is the SON OF GOD” (John 1. 30-34).

Isaiah 40. also looks on to the time of His glory, following a revival of the Baptist’s ministry, which was so violently ended for the time being. As a result of that revived ministry He will be received by the repentant of Israel. Then “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (40. 5). Then Jerusalem shall lift up her voice with strength, and “say unto the cities of Judah, BEHOLD YOUR GOD!” (ver. 9).

When He came in lowly grace His people spurned Him; He went to John the Baptist, associating Himself with the repentant remnant of that day, and took His place as Man and as of Israel, in the waters of baptism. But as He came from those waters, God the Father’s voice was heard saluting Him, and the Holy Spirit’s presence was seen upon Him. He is God the Son, and Son of God! He came down in lowly grace to where Israel was, but is He to be put on the level of other men? No! He is, as Thomas owned, and as Israel will

say in the day of their repentance, "THE LORD OUR GOD."

A repentant remnant of Israel was saved at His first coming, and passed into the assembly, which is destined to fill a higher place than Israel. The assembly, His body, and heavenly bride, is the fullness of Himself who fills all in all. Israel, as we have seen, blessed and righteous in Him, becomes the distinguished national servant of God, with high honours and dignity. "Righteousness exalteth a nation"; so we read: "I bring near My righteousness . . . and My salvation . . . for Israel My glory" (46. 13); again, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (45. 25). There was no man to lift them up; they had sinned, they had fallen, and to all appearance irretrievably; but *the Lord their God* came to where they were; He wrought in grace, and wisdom, and righteousness; and He says, "all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (49. 26). This last divine title occurs but thrice in the Old Testament, and all three times in Isaiah (1. 24; 49. 26; and 60. 16). Before Israel can be exalted they must abandon seeking righteousness by their own works; this they will do, and find it in Christ, where it is alone to be found, as Romans 9., 10., and 11. explains. Righteous in Him, they become the servants of the Lord, and the national servant of which we have spoken. Revelation 7. is interesting in this connection; "*the servants*" are there sealed; twelve thousand out of each tribe, to become the nation of *administration* (which the number "12" signifies), upon the earth. All nations shall then know that THE LORD, HE IS GOD.

The Arm of the Lord.

Looking on to that day, verse 10 of chapter 40. tells us, "His Arm shall rule for Him." Verse 1 of chapter 53. raises the important question,

"To whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?" The *Hand* of the Lord is often mentioned; but not less than ten times in Isaiah (2) do we read of the *Arm* of the Lord. It is called His "mighty Arm," His "holy Arm," His "glorious Arm." It is seen outstretched for service, and in victorious strength, serving for the glory of God and the blessing of men. It reaches down from above. It acts with divine energy among the peoples, putting on strength; it is made bare in the eyes of the nations, bringing salvation, it is trusted; leading the redeemed, it makes an everlasting name, a glorious name for God in the earth; but to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed now?

Romans 9., 10., 11. shows how Israel has turned away from the Lord's outstretched hands; for they sought righteousness and salvation by their own works, and not by faith. There we are also shown that "CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4); but of Israel it is said, "they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Esias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" A few only, a small remnant, recognised the Arm of the Lord, and believed on Christ. In John 12. the Holy Spirit declares plainly who the Arm of the Lord is. Notice particularly verses 37 to 41, in which Isaiah 53. 1 is quoted. There we are told of the many signs which Jesus did, showing who He was; but they believed not on Him, as Isaiah foretold. In spite of all the wonderful works which He did as the gracious and mighty Arm of the Lord in their midst, they believed not. Yet He is the glorious Arm of the Lord, strong and trustworthy, as thousands can testify to-day. The second mention of this strong Arm in 40. 11 is very beautiful, and most comforting to His own for all times, "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with HIS ARM, and carry them in His bosom, and

shall gently lead those that are with young." It is the blessed Son of God, in the activity of divine love. When He appeared amongst His own, and declared who He was, the Jews took up stones to stone Him. But He spake of His sheep, of His precious flock, and said: "*I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE.*" Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him" (John 10. 28-31).

With what gladness should we give thanks to God, that in His unfathomable grace the Arm of the Lord has been revealed to us.

"We'll sing of the Shepherd that died,
That died for the sake of the flock,
His love to the utmost was tried,
But firmly endured as a rock."

In Isaiah 40. 10 the Arm of the Lord is seen in its governmental authority. In verse 11 it is seen in its loving activity, gathering the lambs, and folding them to His bosom, where they are carried safely; and where the warmth of His love is consciously known.

It is the believer who rejoices in this.

To faith and not to sight these things are made known. The One who holds His sheep in eternal security is the One "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand!" (ver. 12); Who takes up the nations as an atom! (ver. 15); Who stretcheth out the heavens as an extremely attenuated fineness! (Heb. dok. ver. 22). Let us ever remember that it is by waiting upon the invisible God in faith that strength is gotten; strength to "mount up"; to "run"; yea, to "walk and not faint!" (ver. 31). The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary! (ver. 28). Wait, therefore, upon Him; yea, trust implicitly in Him, who has through redemption's work folded us to His heart of love with His gracious Arm. Oh, the folly of idolatry, shown up in these chapters so strongly! Oh, the dishonour to God! Oh, the debasing effect upon the idolators themselves! Mark, too, in Christendom, the dire effects of idolatry and superstition; only compare them with the results of faith. The wide differences are clearly patent, to those who are able to see. The true believer needs neither idol or image. To him the Son of the Father's love, our Lord Jesus Christ alone, is the image of the invisible God.

"His Glory is Great."

(D. SCOUGAL).

BRING the harp, the pipe, the psalter,
Wake the reed and strike the chords,
Praise His name without a falter,
"King of kings and Lord of lords,"
Christ the Man on earth who died
Now in heaven is glorified.

Swing the gates of heaven asunder,
Lift the portals of the sky,
Vision of adoring wonder,
Christ as Man ascends on high.
He who laid His glory down
Fills the throne and wears the crown.

He to whom the prophets pointed
Glowing with celestial fire,
With the oil of joy's anointed,
Than the highest seated higher.
To the cross He stooped, but now
Glory, honour, crowns His brow.

Once from heaven to earth descended
Mighty God in human guise,
To the throne of power ascended,
Heaven exults and earth replies,
Praise, eternal praises bring
To the Saviour, Lord, and King.

Scripture Comments.

"Where are the Nine"?

"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"—Luke 17. 17.

ONE of the most distressing features of the present day is that so many Christians who have received blessing from the Lord are content with being recipients and rarely take the more blessed place of GIVERS—to God and to men.

It is as though some think—though they would surely be ashamed to say it—that having made sure of heaven by faith in Christ they will now settle down on earth; being themselves blessed they have no hallowed ambition to respond to the love that

has saved them, or to be made a blessing to others. This is ingratitude of the most shameless type, only to be illustrated by the nine lepers, who, being cleansed by the Lord Jesus, departed without a word of thanks. Well might He ask then—and now—"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

Let us not rob God of glory, ourselves of joy, and others of blessing, but prove by lip and life how much we appreciate the grace that brought salvation to us. (W. B. Westcott.)

God's Commands are God's Enablings.

If you are *sure* that a certain path is God's will for you, never ask what the *consequences* of taking that path will be. The difficulties may be insurmountable from a human standpoint; they are as nothing when God is brought in.

Unbelief cried out with trembling knees and blanched lips, "*And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*"

Belief cried out with confident and ringing faith, "*Neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread to us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.*"

Aye, and the bigger the giants the bigger the meal. The greater the difficulties, the more glorious the help of the Lord. "*MORE than conquerors,*" is a wonderful word. There must be enemies before there are conquerors.

(A. J. Pollock.)

The Works of the Son of God.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."—John 21. 25.

It is difficult, perhaps at first, to accept the closing words of John's Gospel as a literal statement of fact. A little thought, however, will convince us that they are by no means exaggerated. The fourth Gospel presents to us the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, Infinite and Eternal. Bearing this in mind, it will be seen how impossible it must

ever be to adequately describe all that He did. Ten thousand writers, however engrossed with so great a subject, must of necessity leave out some feature of the mighty and blessed works that Jesus did. Clearly an infinite theme cannot be compassed by finite minds, and so the words of John are vindicated.

(W. B. Westcott.)

Made Free from the Law of Sin and Death.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—Romans 8. 2.

If I have in my hand a piece of steel and release my hold upon it it becomes subject to the law of gravitation and falls to the ground, nor has it any power in itself by which it can release itself from that law. But is there no way by which it can be set free from the law that holds it? There is. Bring the influence of a powerful lodestone to bear upon it, and at once it is released from the law of gravitation by the operation of the law of magnetic attraction.

So, the whole bent of our fallen nature is downward, and the struggles described in Romans 7. prove that, no matter how strong our desires after the good, we have no power of ourselves by which we may release ourselves from the law of sin and death.

But a new power intervenes on our behalf: the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He is set on high as the object of our faith, having been raised from the dead. He is there also, as the object of our hearts, having borne all our condemnation in death, and as we turn from our sinful, wretched self to Himself we feel the upward pull of the

mighty magnetism that is in Him. But there is in the steel a nature that answers to the magnet; formerly there was nothing in us that answered to Christ, but now, in the infinite grace of God, there has not only been given to us a perfect object for our faith and love in Christ Jesus, but a subjective state has been produced within us which answers truly and without variation to the attraction of Christ, as the steel to the magnet. This state has been brought about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who, identifying Himself with believers, henceforward becomes characteristic of them so that to them it can be said, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

The possession of a new life, and the power of it in the Spirit enables us to rise up out of the sphere of sin and death in which men are held as in the grip of a giant, to Christ, whom we love, and to the sphere of life of which He is the eternally blessed centre. Thus are we "set free."

(J. T. Mawson.)

David's Logic (Ps. 66. 18, 19, 20.)

I find David making a syllogism in mood and figure, two propositions he perfected.

"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But verily God hath heard me, he hath attended to the voice of my prayer."

Now I expected that David should have concluded this:

Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart.

But far otherwise; he concludes:

"Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."

Thus David hath deceived, but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God's head. I will learn this excellent logic; for I like David's better than Aristotle's syllogism, that whatsoever the premises be, I make God's glory the conclusion.

(Fuller, 1645.)

Comparative Studies in the Synoptic Gospels.—No. 22.

The Commissions.

Matt. 28. 16-20. Mark 16. 15-20. Luke 24. 46-53.

IN different ways, divine grace shines out fully in the Lord's parting words to His servants in each of the Gospels. The consideration of this display of grace must yield unmingled delight; but there is another side, which, if not recorded in the Gospels themselves, cannot be ignored when thinking of the commissions, that is, the manner in which they were fulfilled. Into this, as is ever the case where man is concerned, failure has entered, as the book of the Acts and church history abundantly testify. Here we have only to study the Scriptures before us.

In MATTHEW we see the rejected King surrounded by His followers, a small remnant out of the nation (probably the five hundred mentioned in 1 Cor. 15. 6) on a mountain in Galilee. He tells them how all authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to Him. In the faith of this, they were to go forth and make disciples of *all the nations* (R.V.), baptizing them according to the full revelation of God made known in the Lord's ministry. Their instruction was to be from His own commandments and not the law of Moses, and the Gospel ends with the blessed assurance—"Behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age." The Ascension is not recorded.

If we compare this with LUKE, the differences are striking. Here the risen Son of Man is found in the midst of the believing remnant *at Jerusalem*. Having made Himself known to them, He opens their understandings to understand the Scriptures, and discloses His purpose for their service in these words, "Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from among the dead, the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem." The Ascension from Bethany follows. No mention is made of a Galilean meeting-place, and, so far as this Gospel tells us, no such meeting took place. Moreover, they

were to remain at Jerusalem until the endowment of power by the presence of the Spirit should be realized. How are we to account for these striking differences? It was noticed in the last number how, in MATTHEW's Gospel, Jerusalem and its leaders are viewed as suffering, in the government of God, the consequences of their guilt in connection with Christ. So here, no testimony goes either from Jerusalem, or to it, in grace. In LUKE, on the other hand, grace is seen abounding over all man's sin; hence the Gospel was to be proclaimed *first* in Jerusalem. Is there then no flowing forth of grace in MATTHEW? Far otherwise; if sin closes up one channel, the grace of God will find others in which it may flow. Shortly before this the Master had forbidden His servants to go into the way of the nations (10. 5, 6). His closing commission reverses this absolutely, and now they are given no word towards Israel, but according to the exact terms used, they were "to make disciples of all the nations." This does not necessarily imply that all who compose the nations would become disciples, but that, *as nations*, they should submit to the rule of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom according to 24. 14 is really the carrying out of this commission, and the results will be seen in that day when, before the Son of Man sitting on His throne of glory, *all the nations* will be gathered (25. 31). And still later the *nations* will walk in the light of the heavenly city, when the glory illuminates it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof (Rev. 21. 23, 24).

The messengers of the King who carry out this commission we are considering may be identified with those called "my brethren" in 25. 40, a title indicating more Jewish connections than Christian relationship.

We may conclude therefore that the mission in MATTHEW is an enlargement of that earlier one in chapter 10., which was limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Historically it was not taken

up by the apostles and waits its fulfilment, when the church having been removed to heaven, and the Jews brought back to their own land, the Spirit of God works afresh to send out a believing remnant of Israel to proclaim to the nations the coming King (Rev. 14. 6, 7). It should be added that in giving a dispensational *interpretation* to this commission, according to the scope and line of teaching in the first Gospel, it is in no way intended that a present *application* should not be known and enjoyed. What servant of the Lord has not delighted in the words of His Master, "All power is given to Me—Go ye therefore," and again, "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age."

On the other hand, the mission in LUKE was taken up by the apostles. They began at Jerusalem. Subsequently, by arrangement with Paul and Barnabas, the ministry to the Gentiles was carried out by them (Gal. 2. 9) "to take out of the nations a people for His name" (Acts 15. 14). The grace that has so characterized LUKE'S Gospel is revealed here in its aboundings over man's sin. If according to governmental righteousness, as set forth in MATTHEW, Jerusalem is left until she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sin (Isa. 40.), LUKE shows the unchanged grace in the heart of Jesus, who bids His servants begin at Jerusalem and tell them *there* of a way open to forgiveness by repentance (Acts 2. 38).

The Ascension from Bethany is only found here. "Jerusalem is but the public starting-point of this ministry, as it had been the last scene of His witness. For themselves it was Bethany and heaven which were connected in the person of Jesus" ("Synopsis."—J.N.D.).

Bethany was situated on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

Hence in Acts 1. 12 the disciples are said to return to Jerusalem from thence.

MARK gives the gospel mission in its simplest elements, adding that there would be an exhibition of miraculous powers in those who had believed, without saying how long such manifestations would continue, nor whether they would be seen universally. The Ascension is stated with the utmost brevity. His work fulfilled, He sits down in the place of highest honour. But a blessed link is maintained between the Master and His servants; while they fulfil His commands on earth, He works with them from heaven and the word is confirmed [*cf.* 1 Cor. 1. 6] by signs.

The commission in John 20. does not come under our heading, but it would be well for the reader to study that chapter along with the scriptures we have examined. The way in which verse 23 of that chapter has been used to support Popish and prelatical pretensions indicates the need of a true understanding of its import. The fact that the company in the midst of which the risen Lord stands is composed of others besides the apostles (Luke 24. 23), and that all are addressed, deprives these pretensions at once of any weight. All are saluted with peace, all have their mission from the lips of their divine Master, all receive the Spirit as the power of the new life imparted, and, finally, are empowered to forgiveness or retention of sins, *in the sphere of this ministry and authority*. That sphere is, of course, limited to earth and does not affect the question of forgiveness between God and the repentant sinner (Acts 2. 38; 22. 16; 2 Cor. 2. 10, 11). May what has been written lead to a fuller appreciation of the wonder of divine inspiration and thus a more intelligent study of the Scriptures of Truth.

C. E. H. WARREN.

Mark (continued), Chap. 10.

THE facts and subjects of the Lord's instruction of chapter 10. have been before us in MATTHEW (p. 291), and in the same order. Yet it may be noticed that if His death was constantly before the Lord in the preceding chapter, and the disciples shrank from further insight into it (ver. 32), here He formally com-

mits it to them as necessarily characteristic of the path in which He must be followed. To the "certain ruler" (LUKE) He presents the cross; to the disciples, if He went before them, it was to their amazement towards Jerusalem, where men sought to kill Him; to the sons of Zebedee, who desired the nearest places

to Him in His glory, He could only assure the fellowship of His sufferings.

Now while He recognizes all that is of God in nature—affirming as He does the binding authority of marriage as God had instituted it for man from the beginning of the creation (2. 12), and is indignant at the disciples' rebuff of those who brought young children to Him, for in them was represented the spirit in which alone the kingdom of God could be received (MARK recording that He took them up in His arms and blessed them), appreciating also the traces of what God had wrought in humanity as it came from Him in the blameless young man who ran and kneeled to Him in evident sincerity, even so far as to say He loved him—yet the effect of the path He was taking comes out all the more impressively—that man as such cannot stand before God. The greatest advantages of the flesh made it the more manifest that only by divine power and goodness, when there was none anywhere else, could anyone be saved. The way to eternal life, as to God, was by the cross. This was the test to which all must be subjected. Had the disciples truly left all and followed the Lord! There would be a "hundred-fold" compensation, "now in this time"—who has not proved it?—"with persecutions, and in the world to come," however little that was in their thoughts, "eternal life." But

for this His death, to be accomplished at Jerusalem, was the essential basis. Yet "as they followed they were afraid, but again He took them and began to tell them"—as MARK and LUKE give it fully—His sufferings by death at the hands of men, and that the third day He should rise again.

The heavenly glory of Christ in which James and John desired to be associated with Him was to be reached in no other way than by the cross. Could they take that way? They little knew themselves that said "We can," even when what it involved was fully set forth.

For Himself the blessed Lord keeps the place He had taken, not of power to dispense the best places in the kingdom, but of subjection to His Father's will, and of lowliness and service in carrying it out. He had come not to be waited on, as some great one of the world, but He, the greatest, to give His life a ransom for (*anti*, instead of, substitutionally) many. The ministry of the Lord, as in the Synoptic Gospels generally, closes at this point. From the Transfiguration onward His death as the Son of Man is constantly in view, and kept prominently before His disciples as giving a new character to everything for them. There only remains, as to the history, His last journey to Jerusalem to suffer, and what took place on the way. But LUKE must again claim our attention in what leads up to these last events. (J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

No Compromise.

It is a serious matter to compromise the truth and honour of God by giving countenance to that which vitally affects the character of the gospel. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1. 8, 9). If he is accursed who preaches any other gospel than that of the Apostle, the man who upholds any other gospel by his presence and co-operation cannot hope to escape, in part at least, the same curse.

"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" (2 John 9-11). The doctrine of Christ, embracing, of course, His Deity, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, is absolutely essential, and the man who does not hold this doctrine is not to be received into our houses. All friendly intercourse with him is positively forbidden, because the claims of Jesus Christ are infinitely above the demands of courtesy, and we can escape the guilt of partaking of his evil deeds only by complete separation.

(J. H. Brooks.)

Ultra-Violet Rays.

(T. OLIVER, GALA.)

WHEN sunlight is passed through a wedge of glass, it is refracted or bent out of the straight line in which it was travelling away from the edge towards the broader portion of the wedge and is separated into its coloured constituents, the nature of which may be determined by receiving the image on a white screen. This image consists of coloured bands ranging through every hue in the rainbow, from red to violet. There are other constituent elements in sunlight which are not rendered visible in the spectrum by this simple experiment, and since these are more refrangible than the visible portions of the spectrum, they are called the ultra-violet rays. The presence of the ultra-violet rays may be shown by placing a strip of white card, which has been painted thickly with a paste of sulphate of quinine moistened with dilute sulphuric acid, beyond the violet end of the spectrum. The surface of the card will emit a blueish glow or light of peculiar quality, constituting the phenomenon of fluorescence. One day, while pondering over this experiment, I was struck with the analogy which holds between the behaviour of the little strip of pasted card and what may be called the normal state of the Christian.

The light of the glory of God shining from the face of Jesus Christ is streaming down into this dark world, yet not a ray is visible to the eye of the natural man. "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). "But 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).

God was manifested on earth in the person of Jesus, who left the palace of glory and came down into this sin-

stricken, unprofitable earth, though never ceasing to dwell in the Father's bosom, nor losing for one moment the perfect sense and enjoyment of the Father's love. He veiled His glory and became a Man, manifesting in His life what God is, declaring by His words and deeds the love and grace of God to men, and this to the most enlightened religious people existent on the earth at the time.

Yet men did not recognize in Him God manifest in the flesh. The light shone in the darkness, but the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1. 5). The natural man being darkness could not understand light from God. The eyes of men are not one whit sharper to recognize God now than they were two thousand years ago, and that in spite of all the learning of philosophers and their searchings after the essence or nature of God by the examination of the wrinkles in their own minds, and in spite of the vaunted greatness of the human mind, so tritely expressed in the aphorism of the late Sir William Hamilton, one of the greatest of nineteenth century philosophers.

"On earth there is nothing great but man;
In man there is nothing great but mind."

The mind of man is still as dark as ever with reference to the knowledge of God and divine things. Ignorance of God caused the Athenian philosophers in the days of the Apostle Paul to erect an altar to the *Unknown* God. The same ignorance still shrouds the minds of their progeny in the present day. But it is not the wish of God that in this day of grace He should be concealed in clouds and thick darkness as in the former dispensation. He wishes to be known. He wishes to be seen, even if man cannot pierce His nature by the strivings of his mind. But those who have been brought to God, and who have been made the recipients by His abounding grace of

the power to recognize divine things ; whose eyes have been endowed with spiritual perception ; whose hearts let in the rays of heavenly light, are no more children of darkness, but children of the light. Their proper function in this world is to render visible some of the glory and excellencies of Christ to the eyes of those who are still strangers to the grace of God. " 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).

" No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us " (1 John 4. 12).

The Judgment Seat of Christ.

" For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. "—2 Cor. 5. 10.

I LOOK BACK NOW AND SEE how the high and holy God has spared, and kept, and led, and hindered me from falling, and lifted me up when I fell ; has not withdrawn His eyes from me—not merely through a great salvation, but never ceased leading and watching over me, making everything to work for my good—followed my character, circumstances, dangers, and difficulties, and ministered needed grace and correction through the intercession of Christ. Am I unwilling to know all this ? I believe it *NOW*. I can trace it in a thousand cases when I look back ; I believe it in every case. When I appear before the judgment seat of Christ I shall see it all perfectly. What a scene of grace it will be ! How I shall delight and adore when I see it all, as I adore and am thankful for it *NOW*. Were it judgment, it must be the judgment of all Christ's work and my condemnation certain. But it is not, and cannot be. But it is

knowing as I am known, and seeing God IN ALL HIS WAYS with me. But it has another and *PRESENT* effect. We are manifested to God. " We shall all be manifested. " Now *FAITH* anticipates this, and it has thus a practical sanctifying effect, it keeps us under God's eye. We are, says the Apostle, manifested to God (not merely shall be)—now this is most important, we all need it ; we all need our consciences to be in God's sight in passing through this world according to the judgment He has of things.

The subject in itself is one of the most solemn, and at the same time most blessed ; and this so much the more as we understand it rightly.

I believe that each act of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then.
(J. N. Darby.)

The Love of Christ.

There is a love which you have never yet fully responded to ; never fully comprehended. That love encircles you now, and if your heart is free, and ready to take it in, the Lord will give you to know more of its depths and heights. In human love we long for opportunity to express our poor little atom. Think how His heart must delight in making known the infinite love

that has made us His object ? " Who loved me and gave himself for me. " With what indifference we treat His love ! Not intentionally, but from pre-occupation with other things. If we would only let Him fill our hearts, we should go on our way singing—too happy to contain ourselves—and we should rejoice His heart also, as we responded to His love.

Questions and Answers.

The Passover and the Lord's Supper.

Since both the Passover and the Lord's Supper have reference to the death of Christ, in what way do they differ?

THE primary and ostensible object of the passover was the commemoration of the deliverance of Israel as God's earthly people from the judgment of God and from Egypt, on the ground of the blood of the slain lamb. It became (after its first institution in Egypt) a standing memorial and reminder of God's intervention on His people's behalf to deliver them from the bondage and misery in which they had been; and to bring them to Himself (Exod. 19. 4). In *this* respect it was analogous to the Lord's Supper, which is a precious memorial of the death of Jesus as God's Lamb, who shed His own blood to redeem us and "bring us to God"—yea, as worshippers before the Father. So we read in 1 Corinthians 5. 7, "Christ *our* passover is sacrificed for us."

But besides the truth of the passover being a *memorial*, it was also a *type* of the atoning death of Jesus, and pointed onward to its fulfilment in His coming as the Lamb of God to give His life and shed His blood to "save His people from their sins," and redeem them (see 1 Peter 1. 18).

The passover was a shadow of this up to the very night when He kept it with His disciples, immediately before instituting the Lord's Supper. After this it was supplanted and ended by His death for all who believe on Him; though doubtless

the disciples understood this but very dimly then, and for some time after, as they kept up the observance of the feast of the passover as *Jews*, while as Christians celebrating the Lord's Supper.

We may say then (replying definitely to the question raised) that in relation to the Lord's death, the passover was a type and shadow of it, which probably was not understood by any one person down the ages before the time of His death except the Lord Himself.

The Lord's supper is a memorial—a precious remembrance—by His own, of that same atoning death, as something now past for ever, but well understood as to its meaning and blessedness in the clear light of the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and indeed of the Lord Himself, both on the night of its institution (see Luke 22. 19, 20) and from the glory after His resurrection (1 Cor. 11. 23-34).

As the passover continued to the time of His *first* coming, and then was ended by His death and superseded by something better; so the supper He instituted is to be continued by the faithful until His *coming again*; when faith will be swallowed up in sight even as death will be swallowed up in victory. "For as often as ye eat *this* bread and drink *this* cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *until* He come." (S. M. Anglin.)

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

Is the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) a parable, and what is the teaching of it?—A. P., Norwich.

I do not think there can rightly be any question regarding the parabolic nature of this scripture. "Abraham's bosom," the "great gulf," the drop of water from the finger of Lazarus, all proclaim it to be one of the parables of our Lord. It is not said to be a parable in Scripture, but neither is "*The Good Samaritan*" (chap. 10.), "*The Great Supper*" (chap. 14.), nor "*The Talents*" (chap. 19.), though these are all parables; that is, they are

allegories by means of which moral lessons are conveyed.

There are two parables in Luke 16., and they hang so together that there is no understanding of the second without the apprehension of the teaching of the first. And in contrast with chapter 15., which is spoken to the Scribes and Pharisees, these are spoken to His disciples. Chapter 15. sets forth the grace of God

in its blessed activities for the salvation of lost and ruined men. Chapter 16. sets before us the effect of that grace, where it is in any measure apprehended, in the conduct of its subjects, and also the eternal consequences of its reception or rejection by men.

Israel had been God's steward in the past dispensation. *Earthly* possessions were theirs by the gift of God. But Israel were unfaithful, and had wasted the goods committed to their trust. Now they were to be no longer in this favoured place. Grace taught those who came under its power to look beyond earth, and instead of using the goods which were still at their disposal for their own fleshly gratification, to use them with a view to everlasting habitations, when all would be over with their sojourn here. It was on the principle of "laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life" (1 Tim. 6. 17-19; see also Hebrew 6. 18). It is no question at all of the grace by which one is saved, and that altogether apart from works, but it is the teaching of that grace that has saved us, leading us to sacrifice all present advantages in view of what is future and eternal.

In the previous dispensation earthly riches were a sign of the favour of God to those who possessed them; but that dispensation was now at an end, for Christ was in rejection, and man's unfaithfulness proved so that He was no longer to

be God's steward, though still having in possession His Master's goods which He may use in view of the future, but being put out of His stewardship, He must find some abiding-place outside the present life. The covetousness of the Pharisees (ver. 14) prevented their going in for things which were matters of faith, because they were unseen, and in their estimation too visionary to be trusted. They went in for the good things of the present life, as though they could use the things of God as they pleased. Therefore the Lord lifts the curtain of the eternal world, and shows them that there everything is reversed.

Lazarus has a name in heaven: he is well known there. The rich man is nameless. It is "*a certain rich man.*" His folly was exhibited in his cleaving to earth when the dispensation that gave the earth to man on the ground of his faithfulness was closed. He should have gone in for habitations in heaven.

Though in their separate state, they are still viewed as in their bodies, in order that the true nature of their circumstances may be made known to us, for we know nothing about spirits. The one is in the best place a Jew could think of, and the other in utter misery.

The parable also teaches, what is denied by many, the consciousness of the soul after death, and the reality of bliss in heaven and torment in hell.

(James Boyd.)

Overcoming the World.

1. "In what way did Christ overcome the world?"
2. "What is it to be an overcomer? John writes in his first epistle of the young men as having overcome the wicked one, and in Revelation 2. 3, we have several references to overcomers. The world is a system antagonistic to God, of which Satan is the god and prince."—J. H., Boscombe.

GRANTED that the world is such a system, it is clear that no more wonderful words could be uttered than those in which our blessed Lord said: "I have overcome the world" (John 16. 33). They were spoken at the close of His testimony and had reference to it as a whole. Who that knows himself and his natural susceptibility to respond, more or less, to the subtle overtures of that ensnaring system but truly owns how often he has been ensnared? Not so with

the Lord. That He overcame, in every particular, that terrible world which knows not the Father and cannot receive the Spirit, is traced throughout the Gospels. There we may read of a path absolutely unsullied by every surrounding snare, for "He knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." The prince of this world found nothing in Him.

It was by His essential holiness that He overcame. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

He was ever subject to the word of God, as the temptation in the wilderness illustrates. He came to do the will of God. That was His meat.

There has passed through this world One, and only one, who proved Himself scathless and victorious. He was weary in body; He slept; He was hungered and athirst; He wept and sighed deeply in spirit, but He never once yielded to the world. He prayed, and that in agony; He allowed Himself to be bound, blind-folded, spat upon, smitten, and crucified, but there never was a single moral surrender to "the system that is antagonistic to God."

And so, having reached the other side, and while viewing His saints exposed to the world in its varied forms of temptation (see Rev. 2., 3.), He said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (chap. 3. 21). He can relate His own victory and thereby encourage

His still contending people, confronted as they are by the world.

2. We overcome just in proportion to our refusal of the world. This means conflict, and for it we may find abundant grace.

Lastly, the "young men" (in 1 John 2.) had overcome the wicked one in his special anti-Christian doctrines. This is one of the lines of the epistle. None-the-less, they were charged to "love not the world."

So long as our conflict lasts we cannot have overcome; but we should always be overcoming because we, as children of God, have the power of His Spirit to do so. We should on that ground wage a successful battle against every foe, whether it be the world externally or the flesh internally, or that enemy who would dispute our footing in the heavenly places (see Eph. 6.).

"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (J. Wilson Smith.)

"Behold My Servant."

What is the meaning of Matthew 12, 19, 20.?

It was just the moment when the hatred of the religious leaders of the nation against Christ was taking its most malignant form, and about to go to the length of attributing to Satan the works that He was doing by the Spirit of God amongst them (ver. 24) that God recalls that which He had written long before by the prophet Isaiah, chapter 42. 1-4. The One whom they were despising was none other than His servant, His choice, the delight of His soul, the One on whom His Spirit rested for the accomplishment of His purposes of grace, which should reach far beyond the limits of Israel, to the whole Gentile world. On the one hand then, is man's judgment of Christ, seeking only to destroy Him (ver. 14); and on the other, God's judgment and appreciation of Him. This judgment Christ is now showing amongst the Gentiles, not by the assertive power of His rights, by public manifestation that men in the

streets would be compelled to acknowledge, but in lowly grace, to those who like broken reeds have no strength, and like smoking flax are just ready to perish. He will neither break the one nor quench the other; He will bear with the weakest, supporting them in the power of His own strength, He will not put out the feeblest spark in the heart that turns to Himself, but fan it into the flame of real devotion to His person. Such is His present action of grace, still delighting the wandering and the lost to seek; but the day will come when in victorious power He will set aside man's judgment of Himself and assert the judgment of God; then the world shall know that He is God's beloved Son; and, as the prophet adds, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth," so that the sway of His truth shall be established to the most distant parts. "The isles shall wait for His law." (James Green.)

Typical Outline.

The Material (Genesis 1.) universe and the condition of men, and God's work in them.

PRISTINE BEAUTY.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (ver. 1).

"He created it not 'tohu'" (waste) (Isa. 45. 18).

"God hath made man upright" (Eccles. 7. 29).

"In our image after our likeness" (Gen. 1. 17).

RUIN.

"And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (ver. 2).

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12).

"Ye were sometime darkness" (Eph. 5. 8).

"Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3. 19).

THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (ver. 2).

(The waters are typical of men in subject to God. See Rev. 17. 15; Isa. 57. 20).

"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3. 5).

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6. 3).

LIGHT.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (ver. 3).

"God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 6).

SEPARATION.

"And God divided the light from the darkness" (ver. 4).

"What communion hath light with darkness? . . . be ye separate saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6. 14-17).

DISTINCTION.

"And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night" (ver. 5).

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thess. 5. 5).

FRUCTIFYING INFLUENCES HENCEFORTH FROM ABOVE.

"And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so" (ver. 7).

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. 32. 2).

" His heaven shall drop down dew " (Deut. 33. 28).

" The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God " (Heb. 6. 7).

ORDER AND FRUITFULNESS.

" And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear : and it was so.

" And God called the dry land Earth ; and the gathering together of the waters He called Sea " (vers. 9, 10).

" And the Earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding after his kind, and the fruit tree yielding after his kind, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind : and it was so " (ver. 12).

LIGHT BEARERS.

" God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day,

* * * *

" And the lesser light to rule the night :

[by reflected light, typical of the church]

* * * *

" He made the stars also " (ver. 16).

" Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above " (James 1. 17).

" The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt " (Isa. 57. 20).

" God . . . did visit the Gentiles to take *out of them* a people for His name " (Acts 15. 14).

" Being fruitful in every good work " (Col. 1. 10).

" Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit " (John 15. 8).

" I am the light of the world " (John 8. 12).

" The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings " (Malachi 4. 2).

" The seven golden candlesticks . . . are the seven churches " (Rev. 1. 20).

" Ye are light in the Lord " (Eph. 5. 8).

* * * *

" Ye shine as lights in the world " (Phil. 2. 15).

" They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

LIFE IN THREE SPHERES—SEA, HEAVENS, AND EARTH.

" And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven " (ver. 21).

" And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and the beast of the earth after his kind : and it was so " (ver. 24).

" For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the *Gentiles* ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering : for My name shall be great among the *heathen* saith the Lord of hosts " (Malachi 1. 11).

* * * *

" I will sow her (*Israel*) unto Me in the earth " (Hosea 2. 23).

(There are three spheres from which God will find fruit and in which He will be glorified—the Gentile nations, Israel, and the Church, and these may answer to the sea, the earth, and the heavens.)

“Blessed be the Lord out of Zion” (Ps. 135. 21).

* * * *

“As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (1 Cor. 15. 48).

“If you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3. 1, 2).

“Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3. 21).

DOMINION AND RULE.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (ver. 26).

“His Son . . . who is the image of the invisible God” (Col 1. 15).

“Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and did set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet.

. . . We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2. 7-9).

“His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself for the administration of the fulness of times: to head up all things in Christ, both the things in the heaven and the things upon the earth” (Eph. 1. 9, 10. N.T.).

“He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15. 25).

RELATIONSHIP.

“Male and female created He them” (ver. 27).

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Eph. 5. 32).

“Come hither, I will shew you the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21. 9).

“Let us be glad and rejoice, give honour to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19. 7).

REST.

“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and did rest on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for in it He had rested from all His work which He had created and made” (chap. 2. vers. 2, 3).

“If they shall enter into My rest” (Heb. 4. 3).

“There remaineth therefore a rest [keeping of sabbath] to the people of God” (Heb. 4. 9).

(H.D.R.J.)

Home.

(JAMES BOYD.)

MY home is where my Saviour is,
In light, and life, and holy love ;
And He is mine, and I am His,
In blessing creature thought above.
For me that place is now prepared,
And of its glories I have heard.

No spot on earth, in His esteem,
Is good enough wherein to place
The objects of His love supreme,
The Spirit-born, the heavenly race.
His Father's house alone is meet
Wherein His blood-redeemed to seat.

Less would my soul have satisfied,
When hunger-bitten I retraced
My steps across the great divide,
Which severs affluence from waste ;
A servant's menial place had met
The famine which my soul beset.

And this was my sublimest thought,
For not for *love* had I returned ;
The mercy now so humbly sought
Long had my haughty spirit spurned ;
Nor had I ventured back again
Had not by famine pride been slain.

But with a fatherly embrace
The vagabond I was He met,
And in a son's eternal place
Me with rejoicing great He set ;
And in a robe, the very best
That heaven could furnish, I was dressed.

The mirth, the music, dance, and song,
From end to end of heaven heard,
Broke from the hierarchal throng.
The Father gave the glad some word :—
Let this propitious day be crowned
With merriment—the lost is found.

And midst that festive multitude,
Whose joy was all on mine account,
I ate the heavenly living food,
And drank from love's eternal fount ;
More welcome, even on that day
Than if I ne'er had gone astray.

Forgiven ! Ay, if that were all,
Tho' surely much it be indeed,
It had not given me right to call
My Maker *Father*, nor to read
In His own Son's eternal place,
My heritage before His face.

Yet this relationship is mine,
Designed before His works of old,
And brought to pass in power Divine,
By circumstances uncontrolled.
But had that love and power been less,
Endless had been my soul's distress.

The fatness of His house I eat,
And more than satisfaction find ;
I who once envied swine their meat,
And would off husks have gladly dined,
But could not, even when I would,
Have fed my hunger with such food.

For Him who loves me thus I wait,
He comes to claim me as His own.
And bring me to His glory great,
The joys of which I now have known.
Then shall I, in His likeness dressed,
In body, spirit, soul, be blest.

O day of days for Him and me,
When I shall gain the heavenly goal,
And He who died to save me, He
Shall see the travail of His soul ;
And I shall praise Him as I would,
For all His mercies multitude.

A Word of Admonition.

IT is deeply sorrowful when subtle questions upon the Person of Jesus arise. They tend to dry up and confuse the soul, to cause the spirit of worship and of love to be lost, and in its place to put intricate questions, as if the mind of man could resolve the way in which the humanity and Divinity of Jesus are united.

I entreat you with all my heart not to try to define and to discuss the Person of our precious Saviour ; you will lose the savour of Christ in your thoughts, and you will get in its place only the barrenness of the human mind in the things of Christ, and in the affections which belong to them. It is a labyrinth for

man, because he works from his own resources. . . .

Deep is my conviction of man's incapacity in this matter, and that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of Divinity and humanity in Jesus.

May God grant you to believe all which the Word teaches with regard to Him—Jesus. It is our food and sustenance to understand all which the Spirit has given us to understand, and not to seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define, but to adore on the one hand, and to feed upon on the other, and to love in every way, according to the grace of the Holy Spirit. J. N. D.

ADDRESSES GIVEN IN EDINBURGH, OCTOBER 23rd, 24th, 25th.
REVISED BY THE SPEAKERS.

The Pearl of Great Price.

(EDWARD CROSS.)

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.

"Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Matthew 9. 45, 46.

MATTHEW 13. gives us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. There are seven parables in the chapter. The first parable is not a similitude of the kingdom, but sets forth the service of the Lord as the sower of the word, which was in fact the word of the kingdom, from which all the rest spring. The remaining six parables are similitudes of the kingdom, divided into two sections, viz., the first three (vers. 24-43) presenting the kingdom in its outward form, in what we commonly call Christendom, and addressed to the multitude; the last three (vers. 44-48) presenting the hidden purpose of God, the secret workings of His grace, in the treasure that was there before the mind of Christ, which He unfolds now to His disciples, after He had sent the multitude away (ver. 36). This, as the subject-matter of what is of such value in the eyes of the Lord, has ever been, as it is to-day, the object of the special attack of the enemy, and which, by every means in his power, he seeks to thwart, to disturb, or to deny. There is nothing new in this opposition. The priceless value of this pearl to the heart of Christ, and the hopes of the Church connected therewith, are belittled, or refused to-day, as ever, to the detriment of His delights, and the joy and blessing of His own, and the wells of this refreshment are stopped, as the Philistines stopped the wells that Abraham had dug, and filled them with earth. But in the purpose of God the destructive efforts of the enemy were to be countervailed, "And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his

father; and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them" (Gen. 26.). The whole truth of the Church, in that which characterizes her, her calling and her hopes, were long buried in the dark ages of Christendom, practically from the very times of the apostles themselves, as the literature that has come down to us from earliest Christian times shows; until, within a comparatively short time since, the Lord has seen fit to open again these secret springs of blessing, lying hidden, and yet on the very surface of the Scripture, and revived the light and understanding and hopes of the Church afresh.

The teaching that the Church will go through "the tribulation" is an attack upon this. Why should the Church go through the "tribulation"? It would be incompatible with her nature, her calling, and her destiny, as revealed in Scripture. That others, who belong to the place where the tribulation is bound to come, should for that reason go through it, is of itself a sufficient reason, if there were no other, that those who do not belong to that place should not go through it. They are not of this world even at its best. Their call is "out from" it; their destiny is "outside" of it; their characteristic feature is that "they are not of it;" and their present interests and all their hopes are "above" it. Why then should they go through the tribulation that will come upon it, even as a matter of purification, seeing that their future is not involved in the glory that will be consequent upon it? No: the Church's hopes are heavenly, and to

heaven she expects to go, not into "the temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," seeing that the promise is given to her to be kept from that "hour" (Rev. 3. 10).

That this hope should be, as ever, the object of attack, and the truth of it beclouded is not surprising. See what the enemy would gain by it, in the retrospect of the Church's history in the dark ages in the past, when this heavenly hope waned in her breast, and her conduct accordingly sank to the level of the world around. See, again, of what joy in the exhibition of her beauty the Lord was deprived, and what blessing and spiritual power was lost to her, too, as she lay bedraggled and bespattered in the corruptions of the world, which had refused her Lord. Of old it was said to the Queen in Psalm 45., the offspring of His royal choice, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him." This was the place, analogously, to which the Church was called. It was in this respect she failed, as the deceiver seduced her from her loyalty (2 Cor. 11. 2, 3). It is back to this the Spirit of God has been recalling her, will recall her, as the preparation for His coming, that she should be ready to receive Him. Of this we are assured, by the parable of the virgins (Matt. 25. 1-13), when the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom," awakes the sleepers to go out again to meet Him. Note, that while Matthew 13. gives us the present similitudes of the kingdom, [Matthew 25. gives the final phrase of it, "Then *shall* the kingdom of heaven be likened," etc.]

The expression "kingdom of heaven" is apparently taken from Daniel 4. 26. Nebuchadnezzar had regarded himself "the tree whose height reached unto heaven and the sight thereof to all the

earth," and "this great Babylon" that he "had built for the house of the kingdom," as the centre of all majesty and power; but he was to learn the lesson that "the heavens rule," and the Most High who sitteth therein. Moreover, Jerusalem was the capital on earth, and not Babylon, and Christ was "born King of the Jews," and King He was by right, though rejected, and hence we have in Matthew 13. not the kingdom itself, but "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," *i.e.* the things connected with the kingdom during the rejection of the King, when the seat of authority is transferred from Jerusalem and located in heaven, where the King is, until He returns, as Son of Man, Lord of all, in His glory to sit on the throne of His glory in His coming kingdom (Matthew 25. 31, etc.).

The Gospel of Matthew opens in a very remarkable way. The personal and divine glory of the Lord is set forth strikingly, and the miracle of His birth through the virgin, in the fulfilment of the prophecy that announced Him as Emmanuel:—"God with us." Moreover, His name was to be called Jesus, *i.e.* "Jehovah Saviour," because He was "to save His people from their sins." And accordingly wise men came from the regions of the rising of the sun, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"

In the opening chapters of the Gospel the kingdom is presented to the Jews, in the blessedness of its precepts (chaps. 5.-7.), and the powers that accompanied it (chaps. 8., 9.), and in the fullness of the proclamation that made it known all the country over (chap. 10.). But the imprisonment of John Baptist by Herod, and the utter regardlessness of the cities where most of the mighty works of the Lord had been done (chap. 11.), prepares us for the pronounced hostility and blasphemous rejection by the religious leaders of the people, of "the kingdom of God that was come among them" (chap. 12. 28).

Rejected by the people at the instigation of their leaders, He, in return, rejects them, and disavows His natural relation to them as one born among them, and proclaims henceforth that, "whosoever doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother" (chap. 12. 46-50).

Thereupon commences (chap. 13.) "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," as connected with heaven locally, the place where the King now is, during the period of His rejection. In Luke and elsewhere the same is called "the kingdom of God," connecting the thought, morally, with God, whose kingdom it is (cf. Psalm 145.).

We have then, in the similitudes of the kingdom of heaven: First—the three parables that set forth its outward form, as we see it accomplished in the history of what we call Christendom, viz., the parable of the wheat and the tares (vers. 24-30), the parable of the mustard seed (vers. 31, 32), and the parable of the leaven (vers. 33-43); and Second—the three parables that set forth the intrinsic excellency of that which was before the eye of God.

And first—the treasure hid in the field. Verse 38 tells us that "the field is the world," and for the sake of the treasure in it, secret, hidden as it is from the eyes of man, Christ has bought it all. What that treasure is, is not yet revealed. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head." Yet it is all His own, and He will be glorified in it, for He has bought it. But even that fact they dispute, and His right and title over them thereby (2 Peter 2. 1). He is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords;" yet He sits on no earthly throne; He is Prime Minister of no parliament; nor is His vote recorded at any election, and His voice is not heard in the politics of the world. But He will reign "in truth, in meekness, and in righteousness"

(Psalm 45. 4); He will redress the rights of the widow and the fatherless (Psalm 72.); and in His "goodness and mercy and power," He will "open His hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Psalm 145).

Then, secondly, the "pearl of great price" betokens what is the present object, during all this period of His rejection, of the heart of Christ. That is the Church, of which He speaks again (Matt. 16. 18), for which He gave up everything, as the merchantman, "when he had found one pearl of great price went and sold all that he had and bought it." So "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25). He sacrificed all His earthly glory, *pro tem.*, that He might satisfy His supreme delight in the possession of His heavenly Bride. He who touched Jerusalem touched the apple of Jehovah's eye (Zech. 2. 8). What shall be said of him who touches that which is nearest to the heart of Christ? To dislocate her from the place in which His love has put her would be to undertake an evil work indeed.

Thirdly, in the parable of the net, we have the gathering *in* of the good fish now, the present work of the servants of Christ; finishing up with the work of the angels at "the end of the age," in gathering *out* the wicked from the just, and casting them into the furnace of fire (ver. 49). With that work we have nothing to do. Compare again verses 38-42.

From these similitudes in the Gospel of Matthew we may turn for a moment to the way in which the coming of the Lord is spoken of in 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

As in Matthew 13. 39-43 and 49, 50 we read that "the wicked are severed from the just," and again, Matthew 24. 37-41, "two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left," *i.e.* taken away in judgment, and

left for blessing, so now we read in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18, by contrast, "we which are alive shall be caught up—raptured—to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall be ever with the Lord." These two events are in direct contrast—the one is the taking away the wicked from among the just for judgment, the other is the rapture of the saints for blessing. This is the most immediate and vital point in connection with the coming of Christ as the special "hope of the Church." The coming of Christ, or, as it means more literally, His "presence," means a great deal more; it includes all connected with the kingdom; but what is unique and our special hope is the "rapture." Accordingly the Apostle speaks in a general way of His coming (1 Thess. 1. 10), for which the saints were waiting, as the Apostle himself was (chap. 2. 19), and this hope was a powerful incentive to holiness (chap. 3. 13); but beside all that, he instructs them further in the special and comforting hope of the rapture (chap. 4. 13-18). Then in chapter 5. 2, etc. he speaks of "the day of the Lord," which must be kept clearly distinguished from "the coming of the Lord;" for as the latter expression is fraught with blessing, that which characterizes the former is judgment, and only judgment, as preparatory to the glory that is to follow after (cf. Isa. 2. 12; 4. 6).

Now if the "rapture" of the saints (1 Thess. 4.) is to be distinguished from "the day of the Lord," the question arises which of these events precedes the other? On this matter 2 Thessalonians 2. is decisive. There were those already who were seeking to "deceive" the saints, saying, "that the day of the Lord had come," was then present, for so 2 Thessalonians 2. 2 should be

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read—not, "the day of Christ is at hand"—and the great and incontestable proof that it had not come was the fact of the saints being here, and not "raptured"—"we beseech you," he says, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him," *i.e.* the "rapture" in which he had instructed them (1 Thess. 4. 17), that they should not suffer themselves to be disturbed in mind, or deceived by any such deceit. The devil of old had deceived Eve into believing that they would not come into the judgment pronounced on disobedience; he now seeks to deceive the other Eve by assuring her there was no escape for her from the judgment that was predicted as coming on the apostate world. That judgment cannot come until "the apostacy comes" first; not merely *an* apostacy, of which there has been many, but the last and final revolt of man from the recognition of God in any form, and from anything that claims man's homage to anything but himself. An apostate Christendom will fall under that judgment; Israel, as an earthly people, as apostate, will fall under it; while there will be also amongst them an elect remnant who will be brought through it. But the saints "in Christ," dead or living, are neither earthly in their hopes, nor apostate in their character; and it is our "comfort" to know that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be raptured to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall ever be with the Lord." Amen.

All this is figured in Enoch, who represents the saints raptured before the flood, while in Noah, the saved remnant of Israel who come through it are represented.

The Secret of God.

(JAMES GREEN.)

Acts 26, 9-18.

1 Cor. 15, 8-10.

Eph. 3, 1-11.

IT is with the thought of helping some who, perhaps, may not have distinctly before their minds and hearts what the thought of God is for His saints in this present time of the Lord's absence from earth, and also to stir up all our minds by way of remembrance, that I have read these scriptures.

We must always be losers, unless we have very clearly before our hearts, what are God's thoughts for His people at this particular period. The effort of Satan, in one way or another, is to divert us from these thoughts as they are now revealed. If he cannot take away from us the precious truths we have learnt of the gospel, his energies are directed to sap the foundations of affection for Christ in our souls.

Let me call your attention to Ephesians 3, 5, where the Apostle speaks of "the mystery" which he says, "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." God has dealt in various ways with the sons of men in the ages and generations which have elapsed since He placed them upon this earth. He set ADAM in a place of responsibility in order that, by dependence upon God and obedience to Him, he might be His representative to the creation; from that place he fell, and the principle of obedience to God was for the moment lost. The effect of Adam's act of disobedience worked in the hearts of men until the whole world became so corrupt that it had to be destroyed by the flood.

Then God sought to establish government in NOAH, saved through the judgment; but Noah's incapacity for this was soon manifest in his failure to

govern himself, and his descendants speedily fell into the hands of Satan, and yielded themselves ready victims to the dominion of demons, under the outward form of idol worship.

Out of this condition ABRAHAM was called, and to him was committed the revelation that the God of glory was the Almighty God. The faith of Abraham laid hold on this, counting that God was able even to raise the dead, for in presence of the fact that God was almighty, it followed that with Him nothing was impossible. But the family of whom Abraham was head departed from this great truth, and we find them groaning beneath Egyptian bondage, having no confidence that the God of their fathers was able even to take them out of the land of Egypt.

God's answer was to raise up MOSES, typically drawn out of death, and making him the head of the people, brought out another thought:—Was it possible for men to obtain life on the ground of law? Life had been lost by disobedience, now men shall have a holy, righteous law; can life be regained by obedience to that law? Israel, not knowing themselves, accepted its conditions, only to fall under the judgment of God in consequence of their utter failure to keep it. Nevertheless, grace established the nation in the land of Canaan, under the sway of God, who had fulfilled His promise to their fathers; but Israel did not abide in His goodness, and at last desired the rule of man rather than the rule of God. Then God brought in a man of His own choice, DAVID, and making him the head of the kingdom, deposited in him the promises and blessings relating to His anointed king. Again departure rapidly set in, and Israel fell in the fall of their kings, the

captivity closing their sorrowful history until God's good time.

All these dealings of God with men were earthly, the heads of the various dispensations gave character to them, but this character was wholly connected with that which was here on earth. True, there was in individuals the faith that reached out beyond, and laid hold of the eternal realities of God, but that was another thing, and did not involve any revelation of the thoughts of God in relation to heaven.

At length God's Son came, the true seed of David, and the One who in His own blessed Person was the revelation of God. He was presented first to the nation as the Messiah of Israel, but they filled up the measure of their sin in ascribing to the power of Satan the works of love and mercy which He was doing by the Holy Ghost. What marvellous patience is seen in these various dealings of God, His long-suffering, His tender compassion, and when their sin had reached its height in the crucifixion of His own beloved Son, the risen Christ was presented once more to the nation (in answer, doubtless, to the Lord's prayer, "Father forgive them"), for their acceptance, as the Apostle Peter announced (Acts 3. 20), but even that was rejected, and everything closed for the Jew in the martyrdom of Stephen. Pardon me for going over these things, but I feel that it is important we should have distinctly before our souls, God's dealings with the sons of men after an earthly order, so that we may have clearly before our hearts what He is doing at the present time, and unless we do know that, we shall not be able to stand in the evil day, because if the true centre of God's thoughts is not a fixed thing in our hearts, we are in danger of being carried about with every wind of doctrine.

With the rejection of the risen Christ, the ministry which had been confided to the twelve apostles under-

went a change; up until then it had been connected entirely with Jews and the earthly kingdom, and although a great thing had taken place at Pentecost, viz. The baptism of the Spirit, the full import of this had yet to be made known.

The tenth chapter of the Acts shows how slowly the Apostle Peter took in the truth that the church was to be composed not only of Jews but of Gentiles; still, even in this, the eternal secret of the heart of God was not yet made known. For this purpose Saul of Tarsus was chosen, a man with an intelligence which set him above his fellows: characterized by great natural force of mind; with the highest education of the day, and with all the position birth could give him from a religious standpoint; such a man is found persecuting to the death all that called upon the name of Jesus. To him, as to one born out of due time (marking the unusual character of that which now for the first time was to be made known) is revealed the light of the glory of that same Jesus. One single moment suffices to show to him the worthlessness of all his learning, his intelligence, his religious zeal; and to bring him down with his face to the earth, to listen to the most wonderful words ever told to mortal man; he hears the voice of the risen, glorified, exalted Christ saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME." How utterly unable one feels to say much about the wonder revealed in these words; they speak of things altogether beyond that which the mind can grasp. But God addresses Himself to the affections He has formed in the soul, so that the heart, won by His own infinite love, is led into the understanding of this deepest secret, hitherto hidden in Himself.

"It is the heart and not the brain,
Which to the highest doth attain,
And he who follows love's behest,
Far exceedeth all the rest."

Beloved, do not attempt to grasp "the mystery" by asking for explana-

tions in order to satisfy the mind, but may each of us follow the example of the Apostle, and bow our knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; it is thus we may learn it, attracted by the love and grace that takes up the most worthless objects in order to display itself. Paul could say, " To me who am less than the least of all saints," to me who " persecuted the church of God," is this grace given, and by that grace " I am what I am."

CHRIST, the Head of His Body, the Church—such a thing had never been revealed before ; there had been the head of a race, Adam ; the head of the family of Israel, Abraham ; the head of the kingly house, David ; Nebuchadnezzar was made head of the Gentiles ; but never had it entered the conception of any mind that there should be a Head in heaven and a body here on earth, united by one Spirit. This it was that lay in the Lord's words to Saul of Tarsus.

In connection with that which was earthly, things were inherited, promises were handed down, received by tradition from the fathers ; and now Satan uses this rudiment of the world to weaken in our souls heavenly realities, by getting us on the line of deriving from one another, and receiving truth on the ground of tradition. Men of God that we may well look up to have taught us what they have learned from the Lord in glory, but unless we receive the truth in our hearts from Him who is the Head in heaven, it will have no power with us. We may be led to a certain extent into an outward position consistent with the truth, but let opposition come, let us be tested, and unless we have received it from the Lord, failure will surely follow. That is, I think, the reason so many dear saints are carried about hither and thither : because they do not hold " the Head," and receive the truth in their souls from Him from whom all supply comes to His members here.

Could anything be more wonderful to the heart that loves Him, than to be connected in this blessed unity with Him where He is, exalted to the highest place. A name given Him above every name, a name that leaves every other name far beneath it. No wonder that as the glory of that light filled the soul of the Apostle, he could say that he counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

God has revealed the eternal purpose of His love, to sum up all things in Christ, and He has given Him a body to be the expression of Himself. It was in His heart from eternity, and now in bringing it to light He has brought eternity to us. Times and seasons belong not to those who are called with this calling. The Lord has been seated in heaven nearly two thousand years as we count time, but long as this period seems to us, it is not reckoned. The present interval has nothing to do with time, it belongs to Eternity and eternal purposes altogether, and when time and seasons shall resume their course and shall finally be closed, the church shall abide to all eternity, for His own praise and His own glory. May our hearts be deepened in affection for Christ, so that earthly hopes and expectations may fade in the glory of that light. Yes, the Lord is coming, coming for all His saints ; not only coming

" To bid the whole creation smile, and hush its groan."

Blessed moment indeed that will be, but He is coming in order to take His church, His bride to Himself. For her He gave all that He had, yea, even Himself, and He is coming for her, first of all to satisfy the love of His own heart, and that she may be to Him the answer to all His toil and all His sorrow. As a bride adorned for her husband, she will be for His affections what nothing else can be ; the peculiar purchase of His own precious blood, the pearl of great price. To come forth in

the morning of His glory as the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Everything that has failed in the hands of men will be taken up by Christ. All the purposes of God for man, the promise and mighty power declared to Abraham, kingly rights of David, Gentile supremacy and Messiah glory. But he will associate His church with Himself in taking up all these. She is His body and His bride, and in the revelation of Himself through her all the glory of God shall be displayed, and the nations shall walk in the light of it. The bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be that in which the intelligences of the whole universe, shall learn the marvellous grace of the heart of God (Rev. 21. 23, 24; Eph. 3. 10).

What the Lord cherishes to day in our souls is affection for Himself, the true answer to all questions is the knowledge of His love. He is the Head of His body, and in that mystery all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid. The heart taken up with Himself knows, taught by the Holy Spirit in His word, that He will not leave His own here.

The church so dear to Him will be

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taken out of this world. The mighty, eternal, marvellous work of God for the glory of Christ will be completed before times and seasons return to their course, and the storm of judgment bursts upon this guilty scene.

There is a practical effect to be wrought by the knowledge of these things; there should be a walking worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, a meek and lowly pathway outside of all party names and religious circles. Let the soul once get entranced with the glory of that Name which is above every name; then satisfied with it, we shall seek to be gathered to that Name alone. That Name will gather all His own out of this world, that Name is sufficient to gather to Himself the whole church of God, while we wait for Him.

If we love Him we shall take in our affection also His church, scattered and divided as it is in our eyes; but His eye seeing it according to His own thoughts as it will be in that day when He will present it to Himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish (Eph. 5. 27).

The Love of Christ

(WM. BARKER.)

John 13. 1-17, 34.

I HAVE not read these verses that I might enlarge on the subject of feet-washing or deal with the deep spiritual truth that lies underneath that simple and lowly service of our gracious Lord and Master. But I would say a few words, as the Lord shall enable me, on the love of Jesus—what lay behind it; even of the LORD JESUS, as we Christians delight to call Him. And here we have a theme in which the youngest believer may rejoice, even as it makes the eyes of older ones to beam with joy and gladness.

Now mark the words with which the Holy Spirit has been pleased to speak of it: "Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them *unto the end.*" The love of Christ, then, is as unchanging and eternal as Himself.

Let us dwell for a moment on those words "*His own.*" They describe a circle within which all Christians stand, they compass them about on every side. What idea springs up before your mind as those words fall upon your ear? Perhaps some one says, "They

speak of purchase—we are His own because He has bought us with a great price. Poor worthless things as we are, we have been bought, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” True; and no saint for a moment would deny it; but are they suggestive of nothing more? Suppose you are on a visit to a wealthy friend. He shows you over his broad acres and over his grand house with its elegant appointments, and tells you in the pride of his heart that all your eyes behold is his by right and title. It is his property. Is there nothing more than that in the words on which we are commenting? Sometimes a husband looks into the eyes of his wife with affection—tender and strong—and calls her, in precious accents, “*his very own*,” or the fond mother, standing by the cradle of her firstborn, takes her little darling up in her arms, and in all the warmth and ardour of her maternal affection covers that child with kisses and calls it “her own.” Does the idea of property enter into that? Nay; but affection, love—deep, unutterable love. It is so with the Saviour and His own. They are loved by Him with a love that no tongue can teach or words express. How blessed to know that *we* are among those who are thus loved!

It is joy to us to think of Christ's love to His church. He gave Himself for it. She is the one pearl of great price, to possess which, and to make it His very own the merchantman sold all he had. His church He cherishes and nourishes, and will nourish and cherish till that hour when she shall shine in all the beauty of her Divine Head.

But while thus speaking of the love of Christ to His church we rejoice to know that each dear believer has his or her place in the love of Jesus that no other saint on earth will ever fill. How very simply that comes out in the Bethany chapter of our Gospel! I mean John II. 5, where it says: “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her

sister, and Lazarus.” The little word “and” distinguishing each dear name of that beloved family. Martha had her place in the love of Jesus, Mary hers, and Lazarus his, just as you have *yours*; so that each of us may say in the words of the Apostle Paul, “The Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.” Oh, the love of Christ is wonderful! The Apostle Paul, in that second prayer of his in the Ephesians, speaks of it as that which passeth knowledge. And yet he prayed that the saints might know it! A paradox, some will say. Yes, but a paradox that is plain enough to every Christian understanding. We know it in measure, though it cannot be known in all its fullness. In the knowledge of it we may grow, though it be an ocean whose depths none can fathom and whose shores none can reach.

And, having loved us, He will never cease to love us. No breakdown or failure on our part can ever chill the love of Christ or turn it away from its object. That blessed One, having loved us, will love us right to the end! Think for a moment of what was soon to come to pass in reference to the Lord's own disciples, and those that had companied with Him during those three years of His earthly ministry: one was about to deny Him, and all of them were about to forsake Him and to flee. But, in spite of the denial of the one, and the forsaking of the rest, He loved them still with a love that never faltered or gave way. Oh, bless God, for the unchangeableness of the love of Christ! To that love the weary heart may turn, and I dare say in an audience like this there are many weary hearts. Sometimes you are downcast, are you not, under the sense of your own individual failure and shortcomings? It is so with you dear young Christians, if your experience answers to mine.

When I was a lad living in the city of London I would go forth in the morning resolved to be true and loyal

to Christ that day. But I went forth in my own strength, little as I suspected it, only to find that my resolutions were no stronger than straw. It is then that the heart is tempted to suppose that with such breakdowns there must be some change in the heart of Christ and in His love. How blessed it is to know that when He took us up He knew all our life history, from the start of it to its close! He knew all that we had been and all that we should be, and yet it pleased Him to make us His very own and to number us among His saints! Think much then of the unchanging love of Christ. Let your heart live in the light and sunshine and warmth of it all your days.

One of the greatest needs of the moment is devotedness to Christ. I know it is easy for one to stand upon this platform and insist on the need of devoted lives, and to enlarge upon the beauty of devotedness in the abstract. But tell me, all ye who enlarge upon it, what will produce it? What will change our poor life into a life devoted to Christ in glory? I will tell you. The knowledge—the growing knowledge—of that love that passes all human thought. Get to know Christ, get to know the love wherewith you are loved, and it will colour and mould your life as nothing else will. Oh, beloved, devotedness to Christ will never be brought about by mere toil and effort. Never! But keep in His company, beholding His beauty; live in the faith and enjoyment of His everlasting love, and, unconsciously to yourself, yours will be a devoted life. Many a saint has got a sight of Christ upon the cross, and we must begin there; but oh! for a sight of Christ in glory—not simply as a Saviour from coming wrath, though He *will* be that, but as the One whose exceeding excellence throws all the world's glory into the shade and makes us strangers here.

“I have seen the face of Jesus
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have heard the voice of Jesus—
All my soul is satisfied.”

Now, mark well the Lord's words: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The Lord speaks of a *new* commandment. It was no new commandment to love. The Law enjoined those who were under it to love. It laid them under the obligation to love God with all their heart, soul, strength and mind, and their neighbour as themselves. The newness of this commandment lay in this, that they were to love one another *as the Lord Jesus had loved them*. Out-side, tribulation, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, storm, tempest, but in that inner circle of “His own,” nothing but love.

The blessed Master of us all, as His day upon earth was drawing to its close, and as the dark shadows of Calvary were crossing His holy path, gathered around Him His own in that upper chamber, and speaking to them in tones—tender and earnest—laid upon them this solemn obligation to love one another as He had loved them. And observe what follows: “By *this*”—Brethren, as you read those words let the whole weight of your voice rest on that little word “*THIS*.”—“By *this* shall all men know that ye are My disciples.” They should be known as *His* disciples, not by their great spiritual endowments; not by their power to work miracles; not by the number of their converts, though they might be counted by thousands; but by *THIS* they should be known, even by their love one for another. That is the beautiful, simple, heavenly badge by which the disciples of the Lord Jesus were to be known. Without this, what is the worth of anything? We may study our Bible with diligence and be as familiar with its great and grand doctrines as with the streets of the city in which we live; but what is the worth of it all if LOVE be lacking?

You remember 1 Corinthians 13. 1-3:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Think of that! Here is a man with so eloquent a tongue that he can command at pleasure the attention of listening crowds, possessing the gift of prophecy, he can tell us things to come. At every Conference and at all Bible readings he takes the lead, for all mysteries are plain to him and his mind is enriched with knowledge of every kind. As for difficulties, mountains fly before him; as for money, though he is the master of millions, he is content to live in an humble cottage that he might have the more to give to the poor, and rather than be untrue to his principles he would give his body to be burned. But—oh, fatal but!—he is lacking in love. Such a man, with all these extraordinary gifts and shining qualities, is written down in God's

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book as "NOTHING!" Let us not forget it.

It is very easy to love those that love us; easy to love those that see eye to eye with us and go to the same meetings and sing out of the same hymn-book; but to love them that do not see eye to eye with us, to go on loving them *because they belong to Christ*, that is divine love. If we did thus love, how many of our difficulties would vanish away, and instead of flinging hard and stinging words at one another, we should be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving, even as we have been forgiven. Shall we not kneel down and look up into the face of Him who is our Lord and Master, and say, "Lord Jesus, teach us to love all Thine own because they belong to Thee. Teach us to love them as Thou dost love them, and help us, Lord, to be known by all men as Thy disciples by this sweet and heavenly badge."

Brethren, I know what I have said to-night will only die away as an echo on the ear unless the unction of the Holy Spirit be with it. The ministry that has the edification of the saints in view needs your prayers, for the most heavenly ministry will profit nothing apart from the unction and power of the Holy Spirit.

The Way of Victory.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Judges 6. 7-16; 7. 19-22.

"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (v. 12).

"Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel, . . . have not I sent thee?" (v. 14).

"Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (v. 16).

OUR feeling is one of deepest gratitude to the Lord for the gracious way in which He has ministered to us in these meetings. We have not only been reminded of the fact that He is our glorious Head in heaven, but we have also had a practical proof of the deep interest which He takes in

His members upon the earth, and our hearts have been made glad as we have listened to the ministry that has come to us from Himself.

But we do not live our lives in such meetings as these. We have our responsibility in the home and daily routine, and in connection with our

fellowship one with another in the truth of God. That responsibility is to work out into practice those blessed truths which we delight to listen to. It is here that failure has come in, and it may be that there has arisen in our thoughts the great contrast between the truths we hear and the lives we live. Perhaps we have been made to feel how little the joy and the power of these blessed things of God and His Christ have been with us. We are going back again to those circles where lie our responsibilities, and is the future to be as the past, or shall the spiritual poverty and disaster give place to spiritual prosperity and victory? We desire the latter—earnestly do we desire it. The question is: How can it be secured?

THE GOD OF DELIVERANCES.

The first step, so it seems to me, is to be conscious of the poverty, and need, and weakness. If this is not confessed there can be no advance. Woe betide those who boastfully claim to be rich and increased in goods, for they "know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." To feel and to acknowledge our failure, to go low in the confession of it before God, this is the way of blessing, for God will meet us there. And He is the same God who presented Himself to Israel in our chapter. They could not have been poorer than they were, but when that poverty was felt, and they cried to the Lord in their distress, then He met them, and He met them as the *God of deliverances*. He carried their thoughts back to what He had done for them in the past; how He had brought them out of their captivity by a great deliverance; "how He had dried the waters of the great deep, and made the depths a way for His ransomed to pass over," and had planted them in a rich inheritance, driving out all their foes before them. He wanted them to know that He was just the same God as He had ever been; they had changed, but He remained

the everlasting God, whose strength cannot wane or falter. And we have this selfsame God to turn to, the God of deliverances, and if in our felt-weakness we are with Him what matters it howsoever strong the foe may be? If God be for us who can be against us?

In the eyes of men nothing could have been weaker than those few unlearned fishermen in the presence of the proud and bigoted leaders in Jerusalem; nothing could have been weaker than that aged and chained prisoner standing alone before the might of Imperial Rome; nothing could have been weaker than the German monk witnessing for the truth before all the pomp of an apostatizing church, grown powerful in her departure from Christ; and nothing, perhaps, appears weaker than two or three seeking to keep the Lord's word and not to deny His name. But out of these weaknesses in the past, these servants of Christ were made strong, for God was there, and the God of Pentecostal days, and of Paul, the God of the Middle Ages in whom Luther trusted, is the same God with whom we have to do to-day—the everlasting God, whose purposes cannot fail, and against whose will no device of the enemy can prosper, and His power is at our disposal as our faces are turned towards His goal for us. Let us believe this, beloved brethren, and in simple and holy faith rely upon Him.

THE CAUSE OF EVERY DEFEAT.

But mark the solemn words at the end of verse 10: "*But ye have not obeyed my voice.*" Herein lies the secret of the poverty and distress which had overwhelmed Israel, and herein lies the secret of every difficulty and defeat, of all lack of spiritual prosperity and power. If we have to mourn to-day the poverty of the church generally, or the lack of freshness and blessing in our own souls, we may trace this condition of things back to disobedience to the Word of God. Take

such a word, for instance, as that in Colossians 3. 12-15. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

If we had been obedient to such a word as that, would there have been the poverty, the spiritual destitution which we deplore? But it is only by the power of the unchanging God that we can walk in obedience to His word, yet that power has been put at our disposal; it is vested in Christ for us. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power." What a thought! All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in the Man who died for us, and there is not a power in the universe that can hinder those vast resources flowing down to us. If we are holding the Head, obedience to the Word will be our delight, and will be the natural outflow of the life derived from Christ the Head.

THE UPWARD PATH.

But how does this power show itself, and who are they who can count upon it? Gideon's history, I believe, has been divinely given to us that in it we may see this illustrated. He is introduced as threshing wheat in the secret place to hide it from the Midianites. I gather from that that he could not do without the wheat, and that he prized it highly; he was determined not to be robbed of it by the Midianites. The wheat speaks of Christ. Is He so indispensable and precious to us that we delight, in secret, where no eye but the Father's, who seeth in secret, is upon

us, to thresh out and feed upon the truth as to Himself? Are we determined to "hold this fast" which we have at all cost, and refuse to yield one bit of truth or ground to the foe? It is here that victory begins; it is here that we may become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Not in the public meeting, or before the eyes of our brethren does the path of victory begin, but in secret exercise of soul before God.

"Art thou weaned from Egypt's pleasures?
God in *secret* thee shall keep;
There unfold His hidden treasures,
There His love's exhaustless deep."

It was to this son of the Abe-ezrite that the messenger of God was sent with this wonderful salutation, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Every element of victory was there, and this should yield much cheer to us; only let our souls delight themselves in Christ, and the world, the flesh, and the devil are powerless before us.

A second feature in Gideon was that he sorrowed over the broken and fallen condition of Israel. This was also a proof of power in him and marked him out as a suited vessel for the Lord. And to us it should be a constant grief of heart that the saints of God are in the condition in which we see them. Indeed, the more our souls feed upon Christ in secret, and become familiar with Himself and His thoughts, and with His love and care for His church, the deeper will be our exercise of soul as we view that church robbed of the precious truth, fed upon pernicious doctrines, led upon evil ways, and divided and broken by faction and schism. Such exercise will be pleasing to the Lord, for it will disclose a heart in sympathy with His own as to His interests on earth.

Still another indication that Gideon was the subject of the gracious work of God appears. He had low thoughts of himself. In his own eyes he was of a poor family and himself the least of,

all in it. He was a "nobody," and, indeed, the man who thinks himself to be somebody is just the man who will not be used of God to help His saints, for he is not with God, nor God with him. But in the presence of the One who made Himself of "no reputation" dare any of us have high thoughts of self? We have but to contemplate the surpassing lowliness of Him who, taking the form of a servant, humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, to see how out of place is every lofty thought. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. May these three distinctive marks of the grace of God be seen in us all: (1) The appreciation of and holding fast the truth as to Christ. (2) Love and care for His saints. (3) Low thoughts of self.

There are many details as to how God led His servant along the road of exercise to the final victory, full of interest and instruction, which we must pass over to-day. Suffice it to say that as a result of all that God taught him, he was able, at last, in a conquering faith to link his name with God's, and to cry "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." His whole thought and purpose was bound up, and one with the Lord's, like that other good soldier who could say, "The testimony of the Lord, and of me His prisoner." The testimony of the Lord was everything to Paul. The glorious gospel of God concerning His Son, the risen Man, in whom is secured all glory for God and blessing for men; for this he lived, aye, and died also. May we, like him,

being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, stand without shame or fear in this same testimony.

But this is not to be done in the strength of men; we must fall back upon the power of God. It was not by methods learnt in the military schools that Gideon overthrew the Midianites. Trumpets, pitchers, and lamps—these were their weapons. To this we have a reference in 2 Corinthians 4. 6, 7. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of the 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.*"

Yes, that is it; if the glorious light of the knowledge of God which has shone into our hearts, and which we carry about with us as a priceless treasure, is to shine out in the darkness about us, the power must all be of God. So that we come back again to that with which we began, that all the power for victory in the path of faith and testimony is in God, the everlasting, unchanging God, the God of deliverances. He must work in us to bring us into subjection to His thoughts and make us serviceable to Himself, but the end is assured.

Let us set out, in confidence in Him, along the road of His will; His power will sustain us in every step we take upon it until He brings us to final victory, and then shall we with joy bear witness to the fact that Himself has done it all.

Afternoon, October 25th.

Soon shall eternal triumph yield
 Repose from off the battlefield;
 All power of evil trodden down,
 The waving palm . . . the glittering crown. . . .
 Then, Blessed Lord, we'll shout to Thee
 Of full and perfect victory.
